VOL. IO NO. 5 August/September 2008

Serving the Active and Retired Members of IAM District Lodge 190

# District 190 welcomes Local 93 to "family of locals"

s of August 1, Local 93 is now a part of District Lodge 190. "We want to welcome the membership of Local 93 into the family of locals of District 190," says Directing Business Rep Jim Beno. "We've already had a presence in San Jose with Local 1101. Adding Local 93 to the mix gives us nearly 2,000 members in San Jose. That will give us a boost in organizing and in political clout."

Local 93 has 850 members, mostly working in the San Jose area in machine and manufacturing facilities. Its largest shops are Northrop Grumman in Sunnyvale, where they build power propulsion systems for subs and aircraft carriers; Berke Industries in San Jose, a flooring company; and BAE Systems (formerly FMC) in San Jose, which provides research and development for the Bradley Fighting Vehicle.

The local also has automotive members in Salinas, satellite trackers at Vandenberg AFB in Santa Maria, a service contract with Fort Hunter Liggett, and members working in a variety of industries such as cement, machine, automotive, defense, service contract, technical and electronics across Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties.

"This local is very solvent, and I believe our members have been well-represented. However, changes in the economy have impacted our numbers over the years. Originally, this local was District 93," explains Area Director Bob Nielsen. "We had



DBR Jim Beno and Area Director Bob Nielsen seal the deal at the Local's San Jose offices.

eight local lodges and 10,000 members. But as industry shrank in the area, we went down to four locals and then merged into one local four years ago."

Nielsen, who started at FMC as a welder in the 70s and quickly became active in the union as a shop steward, has been on the IAM staff for 25 years. He started as a Business Rep, moved up to Assistant Directing Business Rep (ADBR), and became DBR of District 93 in 1995.

# Industry changes impact union

"This district used to have members in hundreds of shops," says Nielsen. "But with manufacturing changing and moving to lower wage areas—first to the sunbelt in the

1980s and then to Mexico in the 90s, many of our shops closed. NAFTA definitely had a negative impact on our members. Over the years, we've gone through so many plant closures, including shops that had been open for 30 and 40 years."

Nielsen says that when he started at FMC, the plant encompassed blocks and blocks of large factory and warehouse buildings and

had 3500 members. "Now, we have 140 members there—and that's up from 60 members just two years ago."

"In the 25 years I've been here, we only had two small shops decertify—the others just closed," says Nielsen. This includes North American Transformer, which had 300 members, and numerous small machine shops, which closed when the larger industries they serviced, such as General Electric, went away.

At one point, the District had nine business reps and eight clerical staff; now it's down to two and one. "And even that's changing in the next month," Neilsen says. "I'll be retiring as will our long-time office manager, Sandy Lytle, who's been here for 33 years."

But 18-year veteran Business Rep

Sam Saiu will not be alone in the office. As of September 1, Local 1101 will be moving over to share office space, divide Business Rep duties, and provide clerical support for Local 93.

When he retires, Neilsen will split his time between San Jose and Hawaii. As his last official act, he's hopeful that he'll complete negotiations on the Northrop Grumman contract, the local's largest. "I just hope to get this finished so nobody else has to take it over mid-stream," Nielsen adds.

"In the very old days, every contract was richer than the one before. Now, we have to do everything we can just to stay even. But I'm not complaining," Nielsen adds. "It's been great to work somewhere where you enjoy what you do and feel like you're doing the right thing. Of course, there have been new challenges every day—sometimes that makes you want to pull your hair out, and sometimes that's just what makes it interesting."

### **Future** is bright

Beno says he believes that having Local 93 and 1101 together will enhance the District's ability to organize the unorganized in the San Jose area—not only in the automotive sector, which is Local 1101's strength, but also in machine and manufacturing, where Local 93 is strongest. "In September, when the two locals combine office operations, that should increase efficiency and enable us to provide better service to the members."

## **International Convention to set new financial structure**

When the IAM convention delegates gather in Orlando, Florida in September, they will hear speakers, pass resolutions, endorse candidates for national office, and amend the union constitution. "One of the most important things our members will do in Florida is change the financial structure of the union," says DBR Jim Beno. "This means changing the dues structure to help put the International Union on a more stable financial footing. All of our members will feel this change in their pocketbooks," Beno added. "For some, they'll be pleased to have a few extra dollars that they previously paid in dues every month. Others will find themselves paying more."

Beno says that the goal is to develop a structure that supports the international union and that is fair for all the members. The last time the dues structure was changed substantially was in 1976. Since then, the union has evolved, facing major



changes in numbers, industries and pay scales. Therefore, "our financing method has to change," says Beno. "What we do at this convention will set the financial foundation of the union for the next 30 years."

Proposals are being submitted by local and district lodges across the country. What they all have

in common is the recognition that the international union needs more solid funding.

The International has proposed changing the dues structure to a flat 2% on straight-time earnings. If the delegates agree to this structure, it will change the amount that people pay in dues. Most likely, members on the lower end of the wage scale will pay less in dues than they're currently paying, while those on the higher end will pay more.

Beno is one of five members of the Law Committee. This group will hold hearings at the convention to get input from the membership. The Committee will then recommend a proposal for the delegates to vote up, down or amend.

"I just ask that our delegates keep an open mind, so that out of the process comes a structure that everyone can live with," Beno said.



## UNION PEOPLE



## 100 year-old mom and 80-year old son celebrate 124 years as union members

In July, Local 1584 was pleased to present Dorothy Linafelter and Wilshire Linafelter with beautiful clocks to recognize the 62 years of IAM membership they each have.

Born on July 4, 1908, Dorothy recently turned 100. Wilshire's 80th birthday was on July 2.

After World War II was over, both mother and son found themselves looking for a job. Wilshire joined Local 1584 on May 9, 1946 and went to work for Granberg Corp. in Emeryville.

Dorothy, who worked at the shipyards during the war as a "Rosie the Riveter," had gotten a job at a radio shop that suddenly closed its doors and moved to Los Angeles. Wilshire suggested that she go down to the union hall and sign up for work. So not long

after he joined the union, she followed in his footsteps and quickly got a job at Brodie Meter in Berkeley.

Wilshire worked at the same company for 54 years, first as a production worker and later as a machinist and foreman. "The company changed names over the years...from Granberg to American Meter to Buffalo Meter, then to Precision Tool, then Singer Sewing Machine and finally, Challenge Manufacturing Co. I went through them all."



Dorothy and Wilshire Linafelter show off their new union clocks.

When he started, Wilshire says he was probably the youngest. "Then I was the youngest with the most seniority. Then all of a sudden, I was the oldest. I retired the last day of June of 2000 at age

Dorothy was with Brodie Meter until the company was sold and the new owners moved it to Atlanta. The lead engineer and some of the salesmen decided to open a repair shop that they called AA Exchange Counters. They hired Dorothy to repair the counters for the meters.

"They sent me back to Georgia to learn about the newer counters the company was making," Dorothy says. "I came back with stacks of old parts and the knowhow to repair all the old meters and the newer ones." She worked until December, 1989, when she was 81 years old. "When we couldn't get the parts any more, we all quit the business," she says.

"The doctor was glad when I finally quit, but he told me not to sit down...so I kept gardening and walking," Dorothy

Wilshire says he's always been a good strict union person. "I always talk for it, even when some talk against it. My sister-in-law was complaining about the unions one time and I told her I wouldn't have had the life I had without the unions."

Dorothy agrees. "The union is a good thing. Working people like us should have a living wage." Dorothy has been collecting her union pension since she was 67 years old. "It took me a while to realize I could file for it."

Dorothy and Wilshire both live in El Cerrito, are in good health and have active lives.

"Some story!" says Local 1584's Secretary Marge Kolb, who's known the Linafelters for years. "Talk about growing old with your children."

## **Local 1528 Women's Committee makes** important donation



Local 1528 put out the call for blood donors in their community, but to paraphrase the old saying, "many were called, but few volunteered." So, on July 27, Women's Committee members Cassey Gonzales, Cathy Litel and Diane Stewart went to the Delta Blood Bank in Modesto to donate blood. This was followed by a luncheon. "It's a great feeling when you give back to your community," says Litel.

There is such a need for blood donors in all our communities. We would like to encourage other locals to donate blood and become a partner with their blood bank.

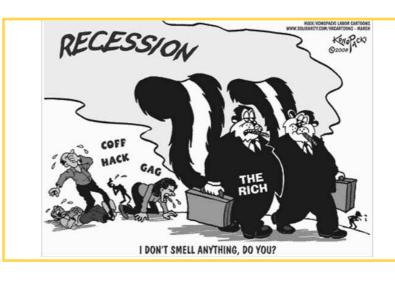
For more information call (888)94-BLOOD or visit their web site deltabloodbank.org



(Or to report a member recently deceased...)

Send the mailing label on this newspaper to your Local Union office.

See Calendar on Page 8 for your local union's address.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We'll be glad to print "Letters" when we get them, but none were received this edition. Please feel free Sparkplug makes you happy or mad or inspires you to action.

mitting. They may be edited for length or grammar, but not for content.

Letters may be submitted as follows: to write in if something in The e-mail: dchaplan@mindspring.com **fax:** 510-288-1346

mail: IAM District 190, 7717 All letters will be used, space per-Oakport Drive, Oakland, CA 94621.



Debra Chaplan, Managing Editor



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## ORGANIZING WINS



## Stevens Creek Lexus techs say 'union yes!'

On July 11, the 51 techs at Stevens Creek Lexus in San Jose voted to have Local 1101 represent them.

"The techs wanted a union because some of them hadn't seen a wage increase in about six years and the company had reduced other benefits as well," says Area Director for Organizing Jesse Juarez.

The Penske-owned dealership launched a mild anti-union campaign trying to influence the techs to stay non-union. "They even fired the General Manager. But the guys felt that he was just taking the fall for the company's bad policies."

Juarez credits the 1101 organizing committee—Jim Schwantz and Richard Breckenridge as well as the strong team of activists who led what was a solid campaign. "Everything was debated and the employees made the right choice," Juarez adds. "I look forward to bargaining and getting these techs a good contract."

#### Fighting an unfair election

When 40 of 85 employees in the unit at Henkel Aerospace Corporation in Bay Point attended the first organizing meeting in September, 2007, Juarez knew he'd have a strong organizing committee and good support. When the company added 70 employees from other departments to the unit, the road got steeper. But when they launched an all-out anti-union campaign, the election turned unwinnable.

"We lost the election and immediately filed objections with the Labor Board and went to hearing," says Juarez. "We're waiting for a decision as to whether the NLRB will overturn the election, which should come any day now. We have a ton of great evidence, but NLRB decisions don't always hinge on that," he added.

### The key to a strong union is ORGANIZINGand you can help keep District 190 strong!

Do you know people who work in your industry but don't have a union? Often non-union workers have the same wages as union employees—but that's all they have. Talk to people in non-union shops about the benefits of having a contract, a grievance procedure, a pension and good union benefits. If they're interested, ask if one of our organizers can call them. (Remind them that the call will be completely confidential.) Here's a contact form for you to complete and send to District 190.

About you:
Name:
Where you work:
Your phone number:
Please call the following to tell them more about IAM representation:  Name:
Company:
Home or cell phone Number:
Best time to be reached:
Please return this form to: District 190, 7717 Oakport Street, Oakland,

CA 94621. (Feel free to copy this form, or just include the info on your

## Support UPS — a good union employer

own paper.)

- Do you work at a company that gets packages delivered?
- Did you know that UPS is the only unionized package handling operation in the country?
- → Did you know that DHL and Fed-Ex are non-union and do all they can to keep their employees from unionizing?

It may not be up to you to determine which delivery company your company ultimately decides to use, but if you work in the parts department or in a shipping department, perhaps you can suggest to your employer that they get an estimate from UPS to see how it compares with

their current delivery company. (Sometimes, when you've been dealing with one company for a long time, you don't realize the services that *may now be available.*)

IAM represents the mechanics at UPS facilities around the country. It's good to go with the unionized carrier to support our fellow members and to expand union operations.

See if UPS can make a better deal for your company. Contact District 190 at 510-632-3661 and the staff will have somebody at UPS get in touch with you.

## **Tension builds out on the waterfront**

For 40-plus years, the Longshore Workers (ILWU) and the IAM have had members working at the waterfront—relatively small numbers of IAM members repair vehicles and containers, and maintain the machinery at the docks, while thousands of ILWU members handle the cargo. In the lasat decade, the ILWU has made a concerted push to become "wall-to-wall" by taking the mechanics jurisdiction from the IAM without consulting the

This problem has again reared its ugly head during the ILWU's current contract talks with the Pacific Maritime Association. The IAM saw negotiating documents that indicated that among the ILWU's 10 key contract proposals was a proposal to take over all of the maintenance work. "We had heard rumors that the ILWU was going to make a major push to expand their jurisdiction over the maintenance work, but we had no proof until some of their documents came into our hands," says Area Director Don Crosatto.

Back in 1978, the ILWU got the right to represent mechanics, but that was only for new shipping lines.

In 1991, an arbitrator ruled that the shipping lines in existence in 1978 could continue to use the IAM. Additional arbitration rulings included a clause that when a new company buys an old company, they inherit the rights to use IAM instead of ILWU.

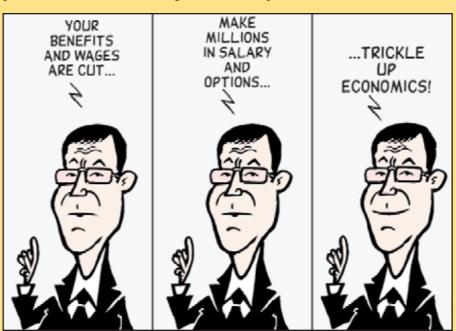
"Basically, the ILWU was demanding that the 1991 arbitration award be vacated," Crosatto explained. "This means that any time there's a company merger or boot and the ILWU would automatically take over the work."

Crosatto stressed that this is not just a matter of which union people pay their dues to. "As we saw with PMMC, [where the company changed names and therefore declared themselves a new entity so that they only contracted with the ILWU], The consequences could be quite severe. 25% of our most senior members, who just happened to be the strongest IAM supporters, lost purchase, our folks would get the their jobs. Those of our members

who kept their jobs but became ILWU members, lost seniority and accrued vacation, and had to start over with a new pension plan."

In fact, the 42-day trial over the fate of about 35 IAM members who worked for PMMC, is finally over. "The trial created 12,000 pages of transcripts and exhibits," says Crosatto. "Now each side has until October 1 to put together their legal briefs and we expect the judge to render a decision by early 2009. I feel strongly that we made the case proving that the 'new company' was really a front for the old one, and that our members should be reinstated and are owed big bucks for wages, vacations and pension contributions that they lost."

At presstime, the ILWU has negotiated their contract and the ILWU members are currently voting to ratify it. "We don't know what they finally agreed to, but if they do take steps to revoke our past understandings with the employer, we'll litigate it until the cows come home, as we have in the PMMC case. And if need be, we will take economic action against the employers if they take our members' jobs away."





## Local 653

#### **Contracts settled and pending**

Saturn of Fresno has settled on a one-year agreement. G&H Diesel has a new 3-year agreement, adding three dollars in wages, new money for health and welfare and 75¢ to IAM Pension. Fresno Truck Center has a new 3-year agreement with a new health and welfare plan, 100% paid uniforms, an ASE training bonus, and wage and pension increases. Rutter Armey Machine Shop has a new 5-year agreement with MOB on the AI health and welfare plan, with new monies for wages and the IAM pension.

Currently in negotiations are: Fresno Unified School District, Sara Lee Bakery, Elliott Mfg. Co., and Bailes Welding & Truck Repair.

#### **Local 1101**

# Decent contract at BMW shope after two-month strike

The 70 members at BMW of Mountain View, (formerly Alison BMW and Mini), went on strike on June 1 and picketed for more than eight weeks, until they had a decent contract to ratify on July 22.

"They really had no option but to go on strike," says Business Rep Richard Breckenridge. "Despite their record profits, all the company offered was takeaways—drastically-changed wage structures and deeply-cut insurance benefits, sick leave and holidays. Our members took on the big beast, made many big gains, and hardly lost a thing."

A marathon bargaining session that took place on July 19 led to the proposal members ratified. "The local had planned a rally at the dealership that day, and 150 members turned out. The company refused to cross the rally to negotiate, instead moving the session to Dublin Ford. Our negotiating team stayed at the rally for a while then headed to Dublin. The talks went from 1:40 that day until 7:30 the next morning, when an agreement was finally reached."

In the end, the guys got back 90% of what the company was trying to take away. "This is still one of the local's strongest contracts," Breckenridge adds.

The new three-year accord provides for Journeyman Technician wages of \$29-\$34.50 per hour with annual efficiency increases of \$.50 to \$1.00/hour. Foreman wages will rise to \$35-\$38/hour and Smog Technicians will also receive an additional \$1.50 per hour. The company left the \$503 pension contribution as is.

Negotiators also obtained solid guarantees and grievance language specific to the flat rate structure, a service advisors' pay plan, wage protection language and transition guarantees.

The kicker is that they got a bonus of \$375 upon ratification with another \$375 to come in six months.

"This was a hard-won agreement for these talented members," added Area Director Jim Schwantz, who led the negotiations. "Their solidarity against Auto Nation, which owns the dealership, was remarkable."

Breckenridge made a special call-out to the negotiating committee: Larry Rondeau, Tim Cooper, Earl Yamagami and Gary Jones. "Communication is always important during negotiations, but good communication is mandatory when there's a strike. These guys did a great job."

## **Local 1173**

#### Short deals for dealerships

With auto sales, particularly American brands, slowing to a crawl, many dealerships are closing or on the verge. Rather than negotiate disappointing three or four-year contracts, members are opting instead for one-year contracts, with the hope that the financial picture will improve so that they can get more in the coming year.

The 13 members at Lehmer's Pontiac Buick GMC in Concord recently ratified a one-year agreement. They will forgo a wage increase for this year but the employer has agreed to pay all increases to the Automotive Industries health and welfare plan for 2008 so that members have no additional out of pocket expenses. Additionally, the employer will start contributing \$25/month into the California Machinists 401(K) plan for each member and will turn their four floating holidays back into fixed holidays.

At Vacaville Pontiac-Buick-GMC, the seven members just ratified a one-year deal. The contract expired several months ago but reaching a new agreement was difficult due to increasing health and welfare costs. The union and employer agreed to bring in the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service to try and unstick the logjam over monthly copays. "I am extremely proud of the members who work at this dealership for the sacrifices they offered to the employer during negotiations in order to keep the shop's doors open," said Area Director Mark Hollibush. In the end, the medical co-pay increased from 10% to 25% of the monthly premium. "I'm sure neither side was happy with the end result of the negotiations, but both sides understood that without a compromise, there would be no future for either."

Members at Cornelius Ford in Vallejo ratified a contract in June that included some concessions, but then on August 1, after 63 years of being in business, the dealership just closed. "Our members understood how tough it is for Ford shops these days and tried hard to meet the company's needs," says Business

Rep Rick Rodgers. "Unfortunately, the factory pulle their line of credit and that was that."

AROUND

Meanwhile, the members who work at Valle Toyota unanimously ratified a new four-year contra on June 4. These members have a "ball of money type of contract, which covers wages and health at welfare. "This means that with only a 23¢ increase their health and welfare contributions, they were ab to get good wage increases, ranging from \$1.23/ho for journeymen, \$.85 for combination guys, and \$1.6 for lube techs, who rarely get that big a bump up."

The members at Diablo Lincoln-Mercury in Conco unanimously ratified their four-year contract in Jul They'll be getting a wage increase of 75¢/hour each ye and a \$25 reduction in their health and welfare co-pay

Rodgers was happy to report that the members Parker-Robb Body Shop in Walnut Creek just ratific a new three-year agreement. "Union body shops are rarity these days, so we're pleased to keep our rel tionship with Park-Robb." The members will get \$.50/hour wage increase each year and they keep tl AI health and welfare plan with co-pays.

## **Local 1414**

#### Contracts done and in the works

The members at Western Grinding, Ryder Truckental and Bayshore International Trucks in Sa Mateo ratified their new contracts in June and July.

Negotiations are currently in the works at Grad Honda (very difficult), BAE Systems Ship Reparation (coordinated bargaining with approximately dunions at the table), Rich Products (likely to latough), several rental car companies (always a challenge), and other smaller shops.

Peter Pan BMW has been sold to Penske Corpor tion. "We are following through with these talks at anticipate few immediate changes there," repor Business Rep Don Barbe.

### **Locals 1528, 653, 2182**

#### JM Equipment contract finally done

By a vote of 50-33, the members who work at JI Equipment's five locations voted on June 26-27 ratify a new 4-year agreement. The voting starter Thursday morning in Stockton, followed by We Sacramento, Fresno and ending with Modesto at Patterson on Friday afternoon.

The members had rejected two previous offe before finally accepting this one, which brought the a \$200 cash bonus upon ratification.

The mechanics will get yearly wage increases 3.5% and all other classifications will receive 2.5 wage increases for each year of the contract. The

## SHOP TALK: How is the current state of the economy impacting your life.



Israel Meza
BAE Systems-San Jose
Local 93

"It's impacting the way I drive. I don't just get in my car and take off for no reason. I have to use my gas wisely."



Theodore Almaraz
BAE Systems-San Jose
Local 93

"My rent was increased. So many people lost their houses and are renting now, so the landlords are upping the rents because they can get away with charging more."



Michael Zimmer BAE Systems-San Jose Local 93

"The only thing that it has affected is my driving. Last year, I put 36,000 miles on my car. Since the price of gas went up, I've only put on 2,000 miles. I'm carpooling now."



Steve Knabel BAE Systems-San Jose Local 93

"I commute from Watsonville so the price of gas is hitting me really hard. I'm a family man, so it's hitting me in my pocketbook."



BAE Systems-San Jose Local 93

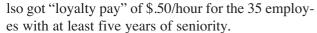
"It's not too bad. My two daughters are living with us, instead of living off on their own. They help supplement our income."



Jesus Lozano
BAE Systems-San Jose
Local 93

"I have problems with my wife because I don't bring home enough money. Gasoline is the worst—it costs \$100 to fill up. Everything is going up except for our wages."

## IE LOCALS



The big issue, as always, was health insurance. This employer has a four-tier system in place; epending on their tier, members could be paying as nuch as \$580/month for insurance. "Our members will have to make some difficult choices about their overage as they decide how to spend their money in nese tough economic times," says Business Rep and hief negotiator Gilbert Gonzalez. "I know that food, uel and other costs are just going up. Unfortunately, is getting harder and harder to make up the difference at the bargaining table."

Gonzalez thanks all the members and their families t the five JM Equipment locations for their patience nd for sticking together through difficult negotiatons. "Even though the contract expired, the employer would not sign an extension. But, we will never ush through the bargining process just to reach an greement; we'll do whatever it takes to bring back an greement that our members can live with. I also nank members Dave Rushing and Richard Russell nd Business Reps Tom Rotella Jr. and Skip Hatch for neir help and expertise during these talks."

## **Local 1546**

#### More dealerships close

First, Hayward Auto closed at the end of June after 0 years in business and 18 members are looking for ew positions. "I was sad to see so many long-time nembers losing their jobs there," says Area Director Don Crosatto.

Then, Dublin Ford closed. "We heard rumors that ney were closing, but for a long time, they refused to dmit it," says Crosatto. "But they were turning away york and sending people to their competitor's dealerhip. Most of our guys had left to find other positions. By the time they shut their doors in June, they only ad three mechanics and one parts person working."

Volvo of Pleasanton has just announced that ney're closing in September. "The shake-out contines," Crosatto adds. "This is not a good time to be in ne auto dealership business, especially if you're sellng American cars."

## **Local 1584**

#### More contracts settled

The 25 members at Morton Salt in Newark ratified neir new three-year contract in July. The agreement alls for wage increases of 2.9% each year and a health nd welfare cap of \$970, which should cover most, if ot all, of the costs. "We had a great negotiating com-

mittee in Fred Schaffler, Joe Krauss and Al Turner," says Business Rep Chris Rasmussen. "The guys were really happy with the contract. My only disappointment was that we couldn't get the raises up to 3%."

The Local's 85 members who work at Veriflo in Richmond ratified their new four-year contract in July. They'll get annual wage increases of 3%, and an additional \$70/month each year towards their health and welfare costs. "We also added 5¢/hour to the IAM National Pension each year, bringing them up to \$235/month by the end of the contract," Rasmussen added. "Many thanks to our negotiating team: Lou Elvira, Jason Borgert, Omar Clemons and Dick McClure."

After the threat to strike got Oakland-based Gary Steel's attention, the 30 members finally got a decent contract. The three-year deal includes 50¢/hour wage increases each year, and health and welfare increases of \$257/month the first year, and \$50 and \$54 the next two years respectively. "These folks were paying \$80/week for health and welfare, which was terrible," says Rasmussen. "They'll still have to pay in, but the employer is now paying far more of the cost." Rasmussen thanked the negotiation committee of Michael J. Facha, Larry Biggs and Jeffrey Rogers. "In the end, the boss really didn't want them to strike, so he even added another 10¢ in wages just to make sure they'd ratify the contract."

## **Local 1596**

#### Talks continue

Area Director Tom Brandon reports that negotiations have just opened with Petaluma Poultry and Bayshore International in Rohnert Park, and are continuing with Shamrock Materials in Petaluma and LP McNear Brick and Block in San Rafael.

## **Local 2005**

## Enthusiasm runs high at Foster Farms

The membership of Local 2005 got their first contract with Foster Farms nearly two years ago, and with its October 31 expiration date, the moment has arrived for them to begin negotiating a new agreement.

"The members understand that Foster Farms will not improve their contract unless they remain united," says Local 2005 Business Rep Ralph Meraz. "They learned first-hand how this company would prefer to treat its employees when they were between unions and Foster Farms took away long-time employees' wages and benefits. They lost double-time for work performed on Sundays and holidays, some premium and sick leave pay, and many other benefits that had a direct monetary impact on their lives."

In preparation for the upcoming negotiations, the

union has been busy training members to skillfully engage in collective bargaining. To date, more than 20 shop stewards have attended week-long classes at the Winpisinger Education and Technology Center in Maryland, where they learned leadership skills and collective bargaining techniques. Most of the newly-trained shop stewards will serve on the union negotiating committee when the talks begin in September.

District 190 is bringing its top guns to work on these negotiations. Serving as chief spokesman for the union negotiating team will be District 190 Assistant Directing Business Rep Mark Hollibush. The union team will also include DBR Jim Beno, Senior Area Director Don Crosatto, Area Director Jesse Juarez, and Business Reps Ralph Meraz and Al Lopez. Working alongside that crew will be Ruben Zesati, Tito Maldonado, Joga Chahal and additional negotiating committee members chosen by the members.

The negotiating team has already met with the members on several occasions and is distributing a written survey to collect proposals for the new contract.

"Enthusiasm is running very high right now" says Meraz. "The union has been enforcing the contract aggressively. We've achieved some impressive results, including back pay awards for members whose work was done by outside contractors, and getting a member reinstated with \$2,700 in back pay after he was unjustly terminated."

"The union must be doing something right," Meraz adds, "because, for the first time in history, the bosses have started to sit with the employees at lunch!"

## **Local 2182**

#### Joining union pays off

Back in May, the three parts guys at Toyota Material Handling in West Sacramento joined the rest of the techs there by organizing themselves as a unit of Local 2182. In July, they ratified their first contract.

"They got some significant improvements," says Area Director Mark Martin, "including guaranteed wage increases and lower health and welfare costs than they were previously paying. They're very happy with the changes that being union members brought."

#### Even with closure, its better to be union

When Great Valley Chrysler closed its doors at the end of June, 12 members lost their jobs. "It may not seem like much, but they got 30 days notice and full payout on their vacation," Martin explains.

However, when the same owner closed his nonunion shop, Elk Grove Ford, "the non-union employees got zero notice and zero paid vacation. While the union couldn't save our members' jobs, clearly those with a contract were treated better," Martin says.



BAE Systems-San Jose Local 93

"It's killing me. I used to have a jewelry business, but gold is going up so much. I just don't even feel good charging the markup. There's nothing positive about the economy."



Paul Sieg
BAE Systems-San Jose
Local 93

"It doesn't really affect me that much. I just have to cut some corners; that's about it."



Rich Zimmer
BAE Systems-San Jose
Local 93

"The economy's not bothering me a bit. In fact, I just bought a new gas-eating truck to help the economy."



Ray Ybarra
BAE Systems-San Jose
Local 93

"Before I got this job, I was fabricating chassis in sheet metal, but that whole industry went overseas. Now, I'm in a pretty good position that should be stable. "



Victor Valdez
BAE Systems-San Jose
Local 93

"Other than gas, the economy is fine. Work's crazy here. We're putting in a lot of hours. Gas is the only thing that's greatly impacted."



Harry Turner
BAE Systems-San Jose
Local 93

"I've been selling my Sharks and 49ers season tickets, because, with the price of gas, it's too expensive to go. And while I'm here 6 days a week, my wife spends money 7 days a week."



## IN THE NEWS



# Wal-Mart mobilizes against EFCA

How do you know you're doing something right for working people? When Wal-Mart starts "mobilizing" against you.

On August 2, the *Wall Street Journal* reported that Wal-Mart is organizing its store supervisors against Democrats and other candidates who support the Employee Free Choice Act.

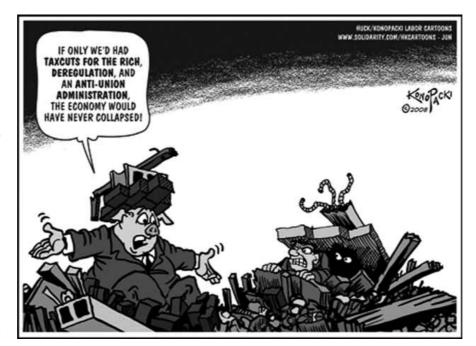
Wal-Mart Stores Inc. has held meetings with its store managers and department supervisors around the country to warn that if Democrats win power in November, they'll likely change federal law to make it easier for workers to unionize companies—including Wal-Mart.

Wal-Mart is carefully toeing the line of legality in what it can say to its employees. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, "The Wal-Mart human-resources managers who run the meetings don't specifically tell attendees how to vote in November's election, but make it clear that voting for Democratic presidential hopeful Sen. Barack Obama would be tantamount to inviting unions in, according to Wal-Mart employees who attended gatherings in Maryland, Missouri and other states."

"The meeting leader said, 'I am not telling you how to vote, but if the Democrats win, this bill will pass and you won't have a vote on whether you want a union," said a Wal-Mart customer-service supervisor from Missouri. "I am not a stupid person. They were telling me how to vote," she said. —by James Parks AFL-CIO Now Blog, July 31, 2008

# Income inequality threatens middle class

"Inequality between the top income earners and those in the middle class has been growing rapidly in the last three decades," said Rep. Lynn Woolsey (D-Calif.), chair of the House Subcommittee on Work-



force Protections, as she opened the hearing on "The Growing Income Gap in America," held in July.

Woolsey and several experts pointed out that income inequality in the United States is at the highest level since 1928 and the beginning of the Great Depression.

According to a Congressional Budget Office study, after adjusting for inflation, the average income for the bottom fifth of the population grew by only 6 percent from 1979 to 2005. Middle-class income grew 21 percent in the same period. But income rose 80 percent among the top fifth and more than tripled, rising 228 percent, among the top 1 percent during the same period.

The Bush administration tax cuts have "exacerbated" the gap, explained Robert Greenstein, executive director of the Center on Budg-

et and Policy Priorities. The percentage of income paid in federal taxes by the top fifth fell in 2005 to its lowest level on record.

Even as workers are not being paid what they are worth, CEOs are being paid far more than they contribute, says Nell Minow, editor and co-founder of The Corporate Library. As an example of the dangers of excessive CEO pay, she cited the recent failure of IndyMac bank. The executives of the bank were paid according to the volume of business they created, not the quality of business. As a result, she says, the bank made thousands of subprime loans that it should not have made, but the executives reaped millions.

# California pay cut 'just wrong'

Governor Arnold Schwarzeneg-

ger's order to cut the pay of 200,000 state workers to the federal minimum wage of \$6.65 an hour is "just wrong," state Controller John Chiang told a state Senate hearing in August. "The pay-cut executive order is based on faulty legal and factual premises....and it is just wrong....I will continue to refuse to slash the salaries of the dedicated civil servants who keep our state running."

Schwarzenegger's pay cut—along with his terminating the jobs of more than 10,000 part-time and temporary workers—is part of the battle between the legislature and the governor over enacting a state budget that would close a \$15.2 billion budget deficit. State employees are paid monthly, and the first check that will reflect minimum wage pay will be issued in September.

Schwarzenegger and his Republican allies want to make deep cuts to public service, including education, child care and public safety. Democrats want to close tax loopholes—including the tax-free yacht provision—and find new sources of revenue. The budget was due July 1, but a minority of Republicans have blocked several proposals.

Schwarzenegger claims the pay cut is needed to avert a cash crisis. Chiang reiterated what he's said since first hearing the pay-cut threat—the state has enough money to pay its bills and full wages until October. He told a Senate panel the pay cut "will do nothing meaningful to improve our cash situation and will do more harm than good."

"There will be a negative impact on the families that work for us, and that impact will further hurt our fragile economy...," Chiang continued. "The loss of their spending dollars will increase the loss in consumer confidence, and further deteriorate California's fragile economy."

By Mike Hall AFL-CIO Now blog, August 7, 2008

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# SHOP TALK: How is the economy impacting your life?



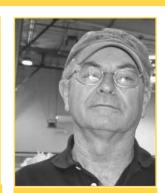
Johnny Chavez
BAE Systems-San Jose
Local 93

"We live close to work and have cars that are pretty good on gas, so even that's not too bad. Unfortunately, my son had a stroke, so we can't save as much as we used to."



Nick Lopez
BAE Systems-San Jose
Local 93

"Everything is too expensive. We need higher wages to live around here."



Art Aing
BAE Systems-San Jose
Local 93

"Prices on everything are going up—gas, food, everything. We need a pay raise or cost-of-living raise, and not just as a bonus!"



Adam Breed BAE Systems-San Jose Local 93

"I've had to downsize to a smaller vehicle with better fuel economy and I'm working longer hours."



Mujo Metanovic BAE Systems-San Jose Local 93

"For us, it's been very good. We're keeping busy working seven days a week."



Balentin Rosas BAE Systems-San Jose Local 93

"I'm a saver, so it's been okay. My wife spends all the money. I live really close to here, so one tank of gas lasts for a while."



## VITAL ISSUES



## Lies and distortions about the secret ballot union election and Employee Free Choice Act

#### By American Rights at Work

Business special interest groups have launched a \$160 million campaign to derail reform of the nation's broken labor law system by lying about the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA). Their only line of attack—that the bill somehow takes away so-called "secret ballot" elections for joining a union—is blatantly false.

The EFCA not only strengthens the current process for workers forming unions, but also provides a more fair and democratic method for men and women to join unions.

Here are the facts to refute the opposition's fiction about the EFCA.

Fiction: The "legislation would end the rights of employees to secret ballot elections." —Center for Union Facts
FACT: The EFCA does not abolish elections or "secret ballots." Under the proposed legislation, workers get to choose the union formation process—NLRB-run elections or majority sign-up. Under current law, the choice to recognize a union rests only with employers.

What the EFCA does prevent is an employer's manipulating the flawed system to influence the election outcome. When faced with organizing campaigns: 25 percent of employers illegally fire pro-union workers; 51 percent of employers illegally threaten to close down worksites if the union prevails; and, 34 percent of employers coerce workers into opposing the union with bribes and favoritism.

Fiction: NLRB elections are "the only way to guarantee worker protection from coercion and intimidation."

—Coalition for a Democratic Workplace

FACT: Workers are more susceptible to coercion in NLRB elections than majority sign-up. Workers in NLRB elections are twice as likely (46 percent vs. 23 percent) as those



in majority sign-up campaigns to report that management coerced them to oppose the union. Further, less than one in 20 workers (4.6 percent) who signed a card with a union organizer reported that the presence of the organizer made them feel pressured to sign the card.

Fiction: Majority sign-up is a "new approach" to forming unions.

—Center for Union Facts

FACT: Majority sign-up is a common way to form unions, and has been used since at least the 1950s. Even major corporations like AT&T allow their workers to join unions using majority sign-up. The

EFCA is necessary today because employers have become increasingly bold in violating employees' rights and the law under the current NLRB election process. When that process was developed, employers did not routinely engage in the massive legal and illegal violation of workers' rights that is commonplace today.

The Employee Free Choice Act (S. 1041) is critical workers' rights legislation that will: hold anti-union employers accountable; guarantee workers a free and fair chance to form a union; and force employers to stop dragging out contract negotiations.

For more information, go to www.americanrightsatwork.

To sign the petition, go to www.freechoiceact.org

## McCain's health care proposal will increase taxes and reduce benefits

Be aware — be very aware! John McCain's health care proposal is similar to President Bush's failed plan. Like Bush's, McCain's plan undermines existing employer-based health care and pushes workers into the private market to fight big insurance companies on their own. It will reduce benefits, increase costs and leave many with no health care at all.

Adds a new tax on working families. McCain wants to shift the burden from employers to workers. He will make health care premiums part of taxable income, essentially creating a new tax for working families. (That means that the \$8-12,000 worth of health insurance that your employer currently pays will suddenly be taxable income.)

**Increases costs to workers.** The modest tax credit McCain proposes to give people for health insurance would cover less than half the average health premium, leaving workers to pick up the difference. Also, by promoting high-deductible Health Savings Account (HSA) plans, which provide fewer benefits at higher costs, he will make the high costs of individual insurance even worse.

Leaves workers at the mercy of big insurance companies. McCain's efforts to "eliminate the bias" toward employer-based health care will encourage employers to stop offering health care, pushing workers into an unregulated private insurance market to fend for themselves. Big insurance companies will be free to weed out people with health care needs, charge excessive premiums and limit benefits.

**Makes health care harder to get.** Pushing workers into the private health care market and promoting HSAs will encourage insurance companies to attract only the healthiest people, driving costs up overall. Insurance companies can decide to refuse to cover people with preexisting conditions, such as cancer survivors. Retirees will have a particularly hard time getting health care.

(Sources available upon request.)

# SHOP TALK: How is the economy impacting your life?



Drew Struthers
BAE Systems-San Jose
Local 93

"My job is fine; with the war in Iraq, business is good. Gas prices and taxes affect me a lot, as well as inflation due to high gas prices. Also, getting on an airplane is hard these days."



Mark Kendall
BAE Systems-San Jose
Local 93

"I don't take as many trips and worry about where I spend my dollars—food, gas, medical, everything costs more. I gripe, but still have to pay more."



John Carlsen
BAE Systems-San Jose
Local 93

"Gas is a pain in the butt. It makes us have to cut back on what we can do as a family."



BAE Systems-San Jose Local 93

"I parked my truck and ride my motorcycle to work now. I haven't taken my boat out because it costs \$200 just to take it to the delta and launch it. I've done no camping, no waterskiing and no traveling."



BAE Systems-San Jose Local 93

"I took this job to save myself gas. My old job was great, but by coming here, I got a \$400 raise just in gas savings. And, fortunately, this is an exciting place to work."



Dan Lee BAE Systems-San Jose Local 93

"It's a lot better for me.
This is part of the
defense industry; our
industry profits on providing protection and offensive strikes. If I were in
real estate, then things
would be tough."



## UNION EVENTS





# **UNITY CAR SHOW**

August 23, 2008

Behind IAM Local 1414's Union Hall: 150 South Blvd., San Mateo

Showtime: 10am-4pm

Awards will be judged at 3pm

Sponsored by IAM Local 1414 in association with IBEW Local 617

Entry Fee \$20.00/Day of Show \$25.00 Cars, trucks and motorcycles welcome Participants show up between 8am and 9am day of event! Raffle & Prizes (1st, 2nd and 3rd place trophies for each category)

All interested parties (union members or not), are urged to attend DJ Dave Music playing 50s-80s rock & roll BBQ and Sodas available T-shirts available for \$15 each with advance order. (Sizes up to 3XL)

For more information and registration form, call 1-650-341-2689 and ask for David Taylor



## UNION MEETINGS



## **District** Lodge 190

7717 Oakport Street Oakland, CA 94621 510-632-3661

Meetings are the fourth Tuesday of each month August 26 • September 23 • October 21 **Executive Board Meeting:** 6:30 p.m. General Delegates' Meeting: 7:30 p.m.

## **Local 1484**

1261 Avalon Blvd. Wilmington, CA 90744 310-835-6688

**Executive Board Meeting:** 6:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month

August 21 • September 18 • October 16

General Membership Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month August 5 • September 2 • October 7

**Retirees' Club:** 1:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month: August 20 • September 17 • October 15

## Local 93

2102 Almaden Rd., #105 San Jose, CA 95125 408-723-4900

Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month August 12 • September 16 • October 14

**Grievance Committee**: 4:00 p.m. **Executive Board Meeting:** 5:00 p.m. **Membership Meeting:** 5:30 p.m.

## **Local 1528**

713 16th Street Modesto, CA 95354 209-529-9210

#### Meetings are the first Wednesday of the month

August 6 • September 3 • October 1 **Executive Board Meeting:** 6:00 p.m. **General Membership Meeting:** 7:00 p.m. Women's Committee Meeting: Please contact local 1528 for times and dates of monthly meetings Retiree's Club: 10:00 a.m. on the third Wednesday of the month: August 20 • September 17 • October 15

## Local 653

544 West Olive, Fresno, CA 93728 559-264-2815

Meetings are the third Wednesday of the month August 20 • September 17 • October 15

Executive Board Meeting: 5:00 p.m. **Membership Meeting:** 5:30 p.m.

## **Local 1546**

10260 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, CA 94605 510-638-6705

Narcotics Anonymous: 5:30-6:30 p.m. every Tuesday Meetings are the first Tuesday of the month

7717 Oakport Street, Oakland, CA 94621 800-655-2182

Meetings are the third Thursday of the month August 21 • September 18 • October 16

**Membership Meeting:** 4:00 p.m. Meetings are held at the Carpenters' Hall, in Reno.

August 5 • September 2 • October 7 **General Membership Meeting:** 7:00 p.m. **Member Education Meeting**: 5:30 p.m.

**Executive Board Meeting:** 6:30 p.m. on the Thursday preceding membership meeting August 28 • October 2 • October 30

Retiree Club Pot Luck Luncheon: 12 noon on the first Wednesday of each month August 6 • September 3 • October 1

**Alcoholics Anonymous**: 9 a.m. every Saturday

## Local IIOI

Before Aug. 22: 3777 Stevens Creek Blvd., Suite 320 Santa Clara, CA 95051 408-551-2280 After Sept. 1 2102 Almaden Rd., #105 San Jose, CA 95125 408-723-4900

Meetings are the second Thursday of the month

August 14 • September 11 • October 9 **Executive Board Meeting:** 5:30 p.m. **General Membership Meeting:** 6:30 p.m. Check at union office for meeting room. Starting in September, meetings will be at the Almaden Road

Note: the office will be closed the last week of August for the move

## **Local 1584**

8130 Baldwin Street Oakland, CA 94621 510-635-2064

#### Meetings are the third Thursday of the month

August 21 • September 18 • October 16 Membership Meeting: 7:00 p.m. **Executive Board Meeting:** 6:00 p.m.

Retirees' Club: 12:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month: August 5 • September 2 • October 7

## Local II73

1900 Bates Ave., # H Concord, CA 94520 925-687-6421

**Executive Board Meeting:** 6:30 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month

August 14 • September 11 • October 9

Membership/Shop Stewards' Meeting: 6:30 p.m. on the the third Thursday of the month

August 21 • September 18 • October 16

4210 Petaluma Blvd. No. Petaluma, CA 94952 707-795-0085

Meetings are the third Tuesday of the month August 19 • September 16 • October 21 **Executive Board Meeting**: 6:30 p.m. **Membership Meeting:** 7:00 p.m.

150 South Blvd. San Mateo, CA 94402 650-341-2689

Shop Stewards' Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the first

Thursday of the month August 7 • September 4 • October 2

Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month

August 14 • September 11 • October 9

General Membership Meeting: 6:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month

August 21 • September 18 • October 16

**Retirees' Club:** 11:00 a.m. on the first Wednesday of June, Sept., Dec., March. All are welcome! September 3 • December 3

416 Main Street Livingston, CA 95334 209-394-7822

Meetings of the general membership are held at the Livingston Portuguese Hall, usually on the Second or Third Sunday of the month.

August 17

- English & Punjabi—at 1:00 p.m.
- Spanish & Portuguese—at 2:30 p.m.

### **Local 2182**

967 Venture Court, Sacramento, CA 95825 800-458-9200

#### Meetings are the second Tuesday of the month

August 12 • September 9 • October 14 **Executive Board Meeting:** 6:00 p.m. **General Membership Meeting:** 7:00 p.m. Retirees' Club - VISTA CLUB: 11:00 a.m. on the third Wednesday of each month

August 20 • September 17 • October 15