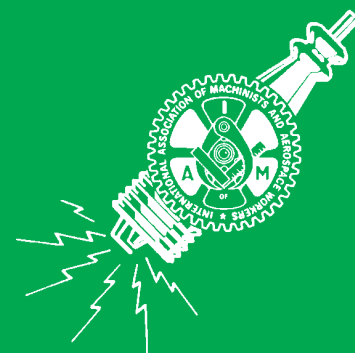


# The IAM District 190 Sparkplug



VOL. 10 NO. 1

December 2007/January 2008

Serving the Active and Retired Members of IAM District Lodge 190

*Workers at Waste Management work out settlement after months of slow talks*

## The strike that didn't happen

"We should have been able to settle our contract with Waste Management (W/M) well before they decided to lock out the Teamsters," said negotiating committee member Loren Lookabill. "But instead, the company decided to pay big bucks to attorneys to stall the process. They made it harder than it needed to be on our negotiating team and on our members."

Ultimately, the contract process that started in April was completed on November 17, when the 82-member unit at W/M ratified their new five-year agreement. But it took 27 negotiating sessions, the month-long Teamsters lock-out and intervention from the office of Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums to bring the long process to conclusion.

"I'm happy with what we got but disappointed that it took so long," said negotiating committee member Steve Dearborn. "They knew that wages were the big issue for us from the start, but they still tried to low-ball us. They finally backed down due to political pressure and fear of another labor dispute."

Lookabill and Dearborn both work at the 98th Avenue facility and were part of the eight-member negotiating committee, which included members from Davis Street and Livermore. The Local 1546 members at W/M repair garbage trucks and other equipment in five facilities across Alameda County.

### The Lock-out Question

The negotiations for the Machinists contract were moving slowly after their April start, but came to a screeching halt as the company prepared to lock-out the Teamsters. "The company brought in the anti-union law firm, Littler Mendelson, to deal with the Teamsters, and kept them on to deal with us," said Lookabill.

"We were negotiating with people who know nothing about our trade," explained Danny Martinez, who works at Davis Street "The lawyers were strictly labor law. I suggested that they should come out to the shop, put on coveralls, open a truck hood and let some maggots fall on them. Then they'd understand what our work is like."

W/M brought in scabs to fill Teamster slots during the month-long lock-



(L to R) Waste Management stewards Steve Dearborn and Loren Lookabill from 98th Avenue and Art Gasper and Danny Martinez from Davis Street are pleased that the long negotiating process finally resulted in a good contract.

out in July. The company claimed they didn't lock-out the Machinists, even though on the first day of the lock-out, they made the swing-shift guys sit in a lunch room until the end of their shift, and the graveyard shift was told to go home because there was no work. Every facility handled the lock-out differently; some sent the guys home, others didn't. At Livermore, they told the guys to take sick days.

In the end, all the Machinists were out for the month of July, and unemployment was denied.

### Slogging through the issues

Key issues for the IAM members were money—getting the wage rates up to meet area standards—and benefits—calculating the co-pays fairly. Also, the company wanted to add a master mechanic classification that would have resulted in breaking up the seniority list, which the union did not support.

"The company said they weren't going to nickel and dime us, but that's what they were doing. We were looking to meet area standards in wages, and in fact ended up with a \$2.51 wage increase in year one, but the company started at a dollar and went up only three cents each session," said Martinez.

"This was a tedious process for all of us," said

Art Gasper, the day steward at Davis Street. "Some days there just wasn't any information flowing. I'd get deluged by members wanting to know what was going on and I had nothing to tell them. Our second to last meeting took 8 hours and nothing happened. It was hard to explain."

"Our members were starting to doubt us because it went on for so long," said Martinez. "You'd come out of it and they'd say 'that's it? That's all you got?'"

The members unanimously passed two separate strike votes, on October 28 and November 4. Everyone was angry and frustrated and ready to go out on strike. The Teamsters were prepared to walk out in solidarity and the company would not have had scabs lined up to do their work.

A week and a half later, everything changed. By a vote of 55-3 the members approved a contract they're happy with. What happened? "The company came up with a better package," said Lookabill.

Over the course of our five-year agreement, members will get \$7.51 more in wages, \$125/month more in pension contributions and \$75/month more toward the Michael J. Day Retirement Fund. Also, a new, more fair formula was established for health and welfare co-pays

The negotiating committee members all agree that the turnaround would not have happened without the intervention of Dan Lindheim from Ron Dellums office. "He let the company know our frustration. He also acted as a mediator, and was instrumental in keeping the talks moving. Having two garbage strikes in one year was not in Dellums' interest," explained Dearborn.

The committee also wanted to thank Don Crosatto and Pat Woodward and the crew. "This was quite stressful and testy, and they put in a lot of hours. There were a few times we got really pissed off. Don kept saying 'calm down, it's part of the game.'" explained Martinez.

*continued on page 3*

*To all the active, retired and future members of the IAM*

节日快乐!  
Happy Holidays!  
¡Felices Fiestas!  
ਓਵਾ ਸਦਿਲ ਦਿ ਮੁਬਰਕਿਕ  
Feriados Felizes!  
Bonnes Fêtes!

*From the officers and staff of  
District Lodge 190*

## UNION PEOPLE

### Howell goes while the going's good

"It's been a hard, wild, and crazy ride, and I'd like to think that the lives of the people I've represented have been improved by my work over the years," said Assistant Directing Business Representative (DBR) Herman Howell as he reflects on his upcoming retirement after 39 years in the IAM.

Howell joined the union when he got a job as a can line inspector at National Can in San Leandro in 1968. He was elected Shop Steward to represent the 750 members the following year, and not long after, was elected to serve as Business Rep for District 115. In 1991, he became DBR of that district, which was a manufacturing district initially composed of nine local unions.

However, as the manufacturing sector in the U.S. shrank, the district lost members, and in 1995, Howell worked with then District 190 DBR Mike Day to merge his district into District 190 to achieve greater strength in numbers. At that point, he became Administrative Assistant for

District 190 and in 2006, his title was officially changed to Assistant DBR.

"One of my proudest moments was taking on National Can when they wanted a \$4 cut in pay. Our local union won against that corporate giant. Unfortunately, the

factory ultimately lost 400 jobs and was down to 100 workers. My work turned to negotiating severance pay for the few who were left in 2005."

Howell said that one of the biggest challenges unions face is employers who pretend the workforce is one big happy family and "then go out and screw their workers."

When asked if it's harder to work as a union rep now than it was years ago, Howell reflected that "it's always been a struggle. In the 80s, we were fighting bonuses in lieu of wage



*Herman Howell looks forward to life after the union—with a great union pension.*

increases. Then, in the 90s, we were faced with the first health and welfare caps—and that was a time when medical costs were still low. Basically it's been a constant fight."

But Howell is firm in the belief that it has absolutely been worth it. "The value of the union is to have a voice with management. I believe I was able to use that voice to help working people improve their standard of living."

Howell said he has no plans for his retirement. "I just want to experience what it feels like when every day is a Saturday and they don't allow me to come to work because they pay me to stay home."

In order to prepare Chris Rasmussen to take over representing the shops, Herman has been introducing

him to the powers that be and to the shop stewards.

"Herman has been one of the most grounded people on my staff," says DBR Jim Beno. "As my Assistant DBR, he was never shy with his opinions. While we often did not come to the same conclusions, it was good to have a thoughtful dissenting opinion, and I always knew that his beliefs came from the heart, and out of the members' best interests. I've always appreciated working with Herman and wish him the best in his retirement."

Area Director Tom Brandon describes Herman as "the only guy you can call and be guaranteed you'll get chewed out by the end of the conversation!" But, Brandon is quick to add that, "he's fun to work with and he always helps you out when you have questions or concerns."

Howell said that he owes a lot to the union. "I got to see and do things I never would have. It's amazing how fast the time has gone. I won't miss the game; I'll miss the clubhouse and the people."

### Apprenticeship program celebrates 60 years and class of 2007



On October 14, the Automotive Apprenticeship program celebrated 60 years of promoting apprenticeship in the Bay Area and recognized the 2007 class for completing their work to become journeymen. The graduating class, from Alameda, Contra Costa, San Francisco, Marin, San Mateo, Northern Santa Clara and Sonoma

Counties, was joined by the apprenticeship program's labor and management partners and instructors from several community colleges aboard a Commodore Cruiseship for lunch and a beautiful, wind-swept afternoon on the San Francisco Bay.

### Local 1546 honors shop stewards from Waste Management

Local 1546 was proud to recognize the shop stewards from Waste Management who received the 2007 Shop Steward of the Year award at their annual dinner at the Pleasanton Hotel on November 17.

"First they had the lockout and then the protracted negotiations. The members were understandably testy, and these guys really helped them hold it together," said Area Director Don Crosatto. "This was a



*Area Director Don Crosatto (second from left) is pleased to present the Shop Steward of the Year award to Waste Management stewards Robert Cole, Robert Taylor and Todd Craine.*

tough year, but they kept the membership united. They deserve all the honors."

### Local 1528's 50/50 raffle winner nets \$1,200



In its drive to raise money to send delegates to the 2008 Grand Lodge Convention in Orlando, Local 1528 sold tickets for a 50/50 raffle—not only to their own members, but to all the Locals in District Lodge 190. In all, they raised \$2,400. The lucky winner of half that pot is Carlos Rodriguez who works at Applied Aerospace in Stockton. Many thanks to all the Locals that purchased tickets.

The IAM District 190  
**Sparkplug**

Debra Chaplan,  
Managing Editor



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# UNION PEOPLE



## A few union holiday scenes...

### Celebrating Thanksgiving on the waterfront



The employees of ITS at the Port of Long Beach brought in turkey, ham and a variety of home-made treats for Thanksgiving lunch.

### IAM decorates tree in San Jose park



Local 1101 Vice President Scott Smith (L) and Business Rep Richard Breckinridge with the IAM-decorated tree at Cesar Chavez Park. They decorated the tree on November 24 and it will be up through January 2.

## W/M contract settled without a strike

Continued from page 1

Now that the dust has settled, the committee is double-checking the contract for accuracy. And the union has had to file a grievance. Every facility except 98th Avenue paid the wages of Committee members who participated in negotiations.

### Lessons learned

“The process works, but it’s a shame that they wanted to stall and play hard ball before getting serious, because nobody wants to strike” said Lookabill.

“It didn’t have to be like this,” said Dearborn. “Clearly, the lawyers just wanted to take their time to get more billable hours. Fortunately, the mayor’s office helped us get what we wanted without having to strike. This shows what our political dollars buy when we support a candidate. The city had a vested interest in getting the garbage picked up.”

“It’s a big relief,” said Gasper. “It was a long process and everybody’s glad it’s finally over.”

All we want for Christmas is Universal Health Care...



...because the system we have now costs an arm and a leg!



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear *Sparkplug*,

I don't usually write to the editor but the latest issue of the *Sparkplug* upset me so much I had to write.

Brother Allen's letter is so typical of the misinformed drivel heard from Bush bashers.

Our government promised me free medical when I was discharged from the Marine Corps in 1963. I applied for it but never received it until Bush took office.

Unemployment is the lowest it's been in years so more union brothers are working. Is that bad?

The stock market reached new highs so my 401K is worth more. Is that bad?

Taxes were lowered so union brothers have more money to spend on their families. Is that bad?

I will never understand where some people are coming from.

Stanley Norgord  
Local 1596, Retired  
Rogue River, Oregon

Dear *Sparkplug*,

It doesn't seem like three years have passed since I retired but I look at the calendar and it doesn't lie. For

the first few months of my retirement I found it difficult to get out of the routine and then I became involved with my projects and hobbies and I became focused on other matters besides negotiations and enforcement of agreements.

I must admit that my years as a Union Representative were the most rewarding years in my life. As a union representative, I attempted to improve the wages, hours of work, and working conditions for the membership and I found that challenge appealing to my emotions. I felt honored to be a champion for the highly-skilled membership.

Now that I am retired, I attempt to communicate with our legislators on a monthly basis and give them my opinions on the various issues that affect us all, such as health care, education, homeland security, veteran's benefits, and building industry

**Did something in the Sparkplug make you mad or inspire you to action? Write us a letter and let us know. (Letters will be used, space permitting, and they may be edited for length or grammar, but not for content.) Send your letters to dchaplan@mindspring.com Be sure to tell us which local you're from and where you work.**

in our nation.

I am very disturbed that our current government has turned its back on our injured veterans within the past few years.

Now I begin to think that if we receive another tax break, our veterans will not have any benefits at all and our children will not have the benefit of health care or education unless they have millions of dollars per year backing from their parents.

Fact: If our children cannot receive health care, they may not live or if they do, they will have challenges for the rest of their lives that would place them at an economic disadvantage. If our children cannot get an education, they will not have some of the tools necessary to bid for skilled and good paying jobs.

What are we, you and I, going to do about restoring our environment to the state it was in at the end of the year 2000? Some things like the

species that could not survive the unfettered industry of the Bush Administration are irreparable. We must again place controls upon businesses that affect the environment so that the next generation and generations thereafter will have a habitable planet. At this point in time we cannot evacuate Earth and live on Mars.

Communicating with our legislators is a small part of my retired life as I am enjoying amateur radio and competition shooting. I reload my own ammunition and make modifications and repairs to the firearms I use to compete with other safe shooting enthusiasts. I spend some weekend days using my ham radio to monitor folks who hike and ride bicycles on the Ridge Trail and help with the Pumpkin Festival.

Life is good and retired life is better. Thanks to the leadership of District Lodge 190 for giving me an opportunity to serve our membership and thanks to our membership for their continued support of me and for their trust.

Charles R. Netherby  
Local 1414, Retired  
San Mateo, CA



Local 653

Monthlong Fresno strike is settled

The four-week strike at Commercial Manufacturing was finally settled in November. “The good news is that the guys stood strong on the picket line and they were able to get a final agreement that came within 1/2 percent of their original demands,” said Business Rep Tom Rotella. “The bad news is that the company laid off six of our striking members, and, at this point, only one has been returned to work.”

Raisin’ wages in raisin capital

Close to 50 IAM members, as well as members of the IBEW and the Stationery Engineers, settled and ratified a new three-year agreement at Sun-Maid Growers in Kingsburg on December 1.

The IAM led the joint negotiations for the three unions, and they all got essentially the same deal: \$4 over three years in wages, \$.25/hour added to the pension fund, maintenance of costs on the health and welfare and additional language on sick leave.

“They had a healthy proposal and stuck together. That’s why they got what they got,” Rotella said.

Contracts opening in 2008

Starting in 2008, the union will open contact talks with Peerless Pump, J.M. Equipment and Toyota Material Handling. As the year progresses, Rotella will have an additional seven contracts to negotiate. “It’ll be another busy year,” Rotella said.

Local 1101

Several contracts go down

At Penske Truck, about 70 members from Locals 1101, 1414 and 1546 unanimously turned down the company’s proposal. “The contract doesn’t give a specific dollar amount for the pension contribution,” said Business Rep Richard Breckinridge. “Instead it has the pension issue go to arbitration. Because they didn’t know what the pension was going to be, the members said no to the whole thing.”

And over at Pearson Oldsmobile in Sunnyvale, the 19wq Local 1101 members rejected the contract which included a pay freeze, dropping the pension contribution by 25%, and changing the medical plan. “So far, we have not been back to the table. We’ve taken the first strike vote and applied for strike sanctions. This doesn’t look promising,” Breckinridge explained.

Local 1414

Members and their families frolic in the park at 2nd a



About 300 Local 1414 members and their families attended the union’s 2nd Annual picnic on October 6th at San Bruno Park. Together they enjoyed a tasty BBQ and potluck event.

Bobby the Clown entertained children and their parents with face painting, dancing, singing, games, prizes and creating balloon hats and animals. A giant jumper also kept the children and a few parents occupied!

Some folks relaxed in the sun listening to the music and chatting with other members.

Battle at Stevens Creek

An NLRB trial is on with Stevens Creek Chrysler-Jeep-Dodge. “We’ve brought 45 different charges and they’re facing two separate complaints. They fired two people, intimidated several others by threatening to fire them or cut their wages, and forced three guys to take union withdrawal cards if they wanted a job there,” said Breckinridge.

This was a union shop that got sold. When the new owners took over, they hired back only two union members, but they hired several folks who were former union members. Together, they launched an organizing drive.

Breckenridge said the trial is looking favorable. “All of the witnesses forcefully testified against the company and the company didn’t prove its case against the union.”

The union will also be going to court for the 10J injunction to force the company to start bargaining.

Local 1414

Local 1414’s Annual Holiday Party  
Thursday, December 20

immediately following our  
general membership meeting  
*A catered dinner will be provided.  
We look forward to seeing you.*

Staying unified in hard times

2007 has not been a good year for most of the industries we represent, and progress in negotiations is slow, reports Business Rep Don Barbe. There are more grievances than usual to keep us very busy.

The trend is seek shorter term contracts, in the hopes that we will look for better days and larger improvements in two or three years. In these difficult times, it is even more important to be unified and to stay involved with your union.

We also urge you to patronize Union businesses. Call the San Mateo County Central Labor Council (650-572-8848) for referrals.

Local 1546

Proof of lies

The trial against PCMC and PMMC has been hot and heavy. These were the companies that previously and currently manage, respectively, the Maersk Terminals at the Oakland, Long Beach and Tacoma ports. The change in management resulted in forcing all of the IAM members to join the ILWU and lose significant benefits.

The union has fought against both companies’ shenanigans and won every step of the way, from the NLRB locally and in Washington, and from the Division of Advice. “With the trial, we’ve learned lots of good stuff,” said Area Director Don Crosatto. “We’ve got Maersk’s notes that prove that PMMC, as an independent company, did nothing to keep the work. It’s not news to us, but they denied it all along. Now we have the proof that they’re liars.”

Another bad offer from Motor Car  
Dealers

First, the East Bay Motor Car Dealers unilaterally implemented numerous contract changes while bargaining was still on-going. The union took the case to the Labor Board and won the trial.

SHOP TALK: With the presidential primaries coming so early, are you ready?



Jeff Harton  
ITS—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

“I’m undecided. I try to follow the debates, but time is hard. The issues I care about are immigration, securing the border, and working here makes me concerned about terrorism, work security, the economy and bringing the troops home.”



Mark Brownsworth  
ITS—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

“It’s been so messed up with Bush being President. We need a more union-friendly president in office, one who understands the worker and what they need in terms of health insurance and the rising cost of living. I’m undecided but leaning to Hillary.”



Bill Thomas  
ITS—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

“So far, I don’t like what I see. I have no 100% favorite, and that concerns me. The issues I’m watching are: unions, health insurance, lowering gas prices, ending the war and getting our boys back home.”



Bruce King  
ITS—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

“They need to deal more on the issues instead of pointing fingers and trying to destroy the popularity of the other candidate. My issues are the economy and the environment and ending the war. I’m looking at Barack and Hillary and Edwards.”



Antonio Lopez  
ITS—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

“We need to talk not fight and use the full potential of this country to make changes so everyone can enjoy the world. I like Hillary—times under Clinton were good. But I still need to look carefully because my vote counts.”



Rudy P.  
ITS—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

“My main issue is to make sure everyone has health insurance. So far, Hillary. The Reps have screwed things up badly, I’m not paying attention to them.”

THE LOCALS



Annual union picnic

and friends.  
Special thanks to the hard working Picnic Committee who made this picnic a success, the cooks and Vice President Rich Bernal. “If more people show up next year, we may need to get a bigger park,” said Bernal.  
“It is good just seeing friends that you have not seen all year. We hope to see even more next year,” added Business Rep David Taylor. If you’d like photos from the picnic, please contact David Taylor at 650-341-2689.

Then, in November, the dealers offered a settlement proposal that proposed even deeper cutbacks than what they had illegally implemented.  
“Our members voted down the offer 65 to 0, so the contract remains right where it was. We’re just waiting for the ruling on the dealers’ appeal of our Labor Board decision,” Crosatto said.

Arbitrator settles vacation questions

About 30 Teamsters and Machinists who work at Dublin Ford/AutoNation will collect vacation checks or credit after an arbitrator helped settle the long-standing dispute.  
The company said that people could not carry over vacations from year to year, although this policy was administered unevenly.  
The union’s accountant, Lindquist, did a complete audit and found some people with positive vacation time owed and others with negative vacation time. The company agreed to the audit report and offered to settle by giving everybody five hours credit. Craig Andrews, the former business rep, brought the case forward to arbitration.  
The case was finally settled in November. The agreement is to make whole anybody who is owed 1-10 days of vacation; to cap the back vacation pay at 10 days, and to write appropriate checks for those no longer working at Dublin Ford.  
“We caucused and decided it was a good settlement,” said Business Rep Robby Pintos, who took over the case after Andrews retired.  
Into the future, the policy is that vacation will be accrued and paid out at the end of the year so there is no roll-over.

Local 1584

Final settlement for Rexam retirees

When Rexam closed its San Leandro and Modesto can plants two years ago, the contract stipulated that retirees have medical coverage for life. But the company illegally discontinued all coverage nationwide. The union fought back and the case was settled by court-ordered mediation, effective November 1.  
“The retiree medical plan, as we know it, will be gone for those people over the age of 65,” explained Assistant DBR Herman Howell. “In its place, the company will give retirees a check for \$95/month with a 3% medical cost-of-living escalator, so they may buy a medicare supplemental plan.”  
Employees under 65 were given the option staying in the company’s current plan or taking a tax-free cash stipend of \$566/month, with a cost of living escalator, to purchase their own plan. (However, if they use the money to supplement their pensions, they’ll pay taxes on it as earned income.)  
Howell advises the IAM retirees from the Modesto and San Leandro locations to explore the possibility of getting into the Automotive Industries Retiree Plan. For more information call: 800-635-3105.

Getting fully covered, again

After the last contract was settled at Niles Machine in Livermore, the company unilaterally, and without the union’s knowledge, changed the co-pays on the health and welfare plans to reduce the premium increases. The union filed a grievance.  
The day before going to arbitration, the union and company settled the grievance. “The company agreed to self-insure the difference between what the plan would have covered and any loss of benefits that should have been in place, for the remainder of the contract,” explained Howell.

Local 1596

Welcome new members

Area Director Tom Brandon is pleased to welcome Advanced CAD Graphics, an owner-operator shop, and the North Bay Labor Council’s Executive Director to the Local 1596.  
**Congrats, Matt**  
Local 1596 congratulates Matt McKinnon for being named Political Director of the International IAM. “Matt headed up the Cal Conference of Machinists for years and he knows California,” said Brandon. “He knows it all starts out here, so he better not forget us!”

Quick contract update

The 18 members at Henry Curtis Ford ratified a 3-year agreement on November 13. Nine members at AMAC Plastics will be voting on their contract on December 15. Both shops are in Petaluma.

Local 2182

More troubles at Hubacher

After Local 2182 members at Hubacher Cadillac in Sacramento went through some rough contract negotiations over the summer, the company announced they were shedding their Land Rover franchise and bringing on Buick/GMC/Saab franchises. “We negotiated a severance package for our members at Land Rover, and were optimistic that the dealership would grow and add new union jobs with the new franchises,” explained Area Director Mark Martin.  
But to the union’s surprise, the company withdrew union recognition at the new franchises. “And then they hired many more people than they needed,” Martin said. “The employer clearly had a scheme to withdraw union recognition when they hired an excess number of employees. They implemented pure flat rate but there’s clearly not enough work to go around. We’ve got charges against them and support for the union remains strong.”

Great mechanics need jobs

When Crystal Cream & Butter in Sacramento was sold to Foster Farms, 12 members lost their jobs, effective October 31. “We negotiated a severance package that effectively doubled the severance pay agreement in the contract,” Martin said. “Now, we’re attempting to find work for these highly qualified employees.”

Clutch & Brake Exchange comes back

Clutch and Brake Exchange in Stockton burned to the ground a few years back, and both the community and their competition rallied to their aid. The owner was able to keep all employees working.  
Now the company is fully back in business and the members are voting to ratify a three-year contract.”We ended up with a favorable settlement,” said Business Rep Skip Hatch. “It’s nice to see that things are moving onward and upward with an agreement that matches.”

New contract at Greyhound

Members from Local 2182, 1101, 801 and 1414 have just ratified a three-year contract with Greyhound. “We were able maintain our AI health and welfare plan, with the the employer picking up the cost of year one increases, and we got \$.75/hour wage increases in years two and three,” said Hatch.

Have you decided? On what issues will you base your decision?



Rudy  
Long Beach  
Local 484

s to make  
as health  
r, I like  
ublicans  
ings up so  
ying any  
debates.”



Larry Ortiz  
ITS—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

“I watched a few debates but the candidates just fight with each other. I’m looking out for who’s pro-union and will deal with benefits like health insurance and pension. Also, as an ex-marine I think they should bring everyone home from Iraq. I’m still undecided.”



Florencio Aviles  
ITS—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

“I want to see what issues the candidates are focusing on, because everything’s important to me. I’m concerned about the war and wonder if we are doing the right thing—I want to hear what the candidates say about it.”



Darren Reader  
ITS—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

“I don’t like how it’s going, so far. I have nothing against Hillary, but I don’t think a lady should be in office. If anybody half-way decent came along, they’d be voted in. My main issue is abortion—I’m pro-life. I don’t think anybody can help the economy.”



Jon Wiegel  
ITS—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

“My issue is that we should stop giving all our money away to illegals and to other countries. I’ll pay more attention when it gets closer. Now they’re all just arguing and trying to kill Hillary.”



Scott Lewis  
ITS—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

“I’m paying attention but it’s still early. I’m pro-life and they’re not talking about that. Instead they’re launching missiles at each other. They started the debates too soon and run the risk of burnout factor.”



# HANDY ECONOMIC FACTS



### The wealthy and everybody else

Here are some facts about the impact of income disparity between the wealthy and everyone else:

- ▶ In 2007, out of about 110 households in the U.S., there are:
  - ▷ 671 billionaires, compared to 339 billionaires in the rest of the world;
  - ▷ 7,500,000 households with net value of \$1 million to \$10 million;
  - ▷ 2,000,000 households with net value of \$10 million to \$100 million;
  - ▷ 5,000 households with net value of \$100 million and up.
- ▶ Between 1973 and 2005, income for the wealthiest 0.1% rose by 353%—averaging \$1.3 million a year. Meanwhile, although wage workers' productivity grew by 18% between 2000 and 2006, most people's inflation-adjusted weekly wages rose only 1% during that time.
- ▶ The wealthiest 1% of Americans earned 21.2% of all income in 2005, up sharply from 19% in 2004. The bottom 50% earned 12.8% of all income.
- ▶ By 2004, real after-tax income of the poorest one-fifth of Americans rose by 9%, that of the richest one-fifth by 69% and that of the top 1% by 176%.
- ▶ Middle-income taxpayers are paying more taxes while high-income households have seen a sharp drop in their tax bills.



- ▶ The percentage of children, people and families who are poor was higher in 2006 than before 2001. In 2006, 9.8% of families were poor in the United States, compared with 8.7% of families in 2000. Among America's children, 17.4% were poor in 2006, versus 16.2% of children in 2000. In all, 12.3% of all people were poor in 2006, compared with 11.3% in 2000.

### The shrinking middle class

America's middle class has been teetering on the economic edge for some time. Now, a project by the nonpartisan think-tank called Demos and Brandeis University quantifies the extent to which the nation's middle class is, as the report's title puts it, hanging *By a Thread*. Here are some facts:

- ▶ Only 31% of families who would be considered middle-class by income are financially secure.
- ▶ One in four middle-class families match the profile for being at high risk of slipping out of the middle class altogether.
- ▶ More than half of middle-class families have no net financial assets whatsoever.
- ▶ Middle-class families have median debt of \$3,500 and at least half of them have no assets.
- ▶ 21% of middle-class families have less than \$100 per week (\$5,000 per year) remaining after meeting essential living expenses. These families are living from paycheck to paycheck with very little margin of security.

### Jobs and benefits

- ▶ Job growth over the past business cycle has been slower than in any other recent business cycle: Payrolls were only 4.3% higher in September 2007 than in March 2001, compared with the other three recent cycles, which posted growth rates of at least 10%.
- ▶ Under Bush, the number of those without health insurance rose from 38.4 million (13.7% of the population) in 2000 to 47 million (15.8% of the population) in 2006.
- ▶ Health care premiums have increased 78% since 2001, the year Bush took office.
- ▶ Since 2001, 1.8 million jobs have been lost in the U.S. due to the growing trade deficit with China.
- ▶ Since January 2001, 3.1 million manufacturing jobs have been lost, a decline of 18.3%. In September 2007, U.S. manufacturing jobs totaled only 13.9 million—the last time the number of manufacturing jobs in the United States fell below 14 million was in June 1950.
- ▶ Nationwide, the number of home foreclosures will reach 3 million by the end of 2007, nearly five times the rate of 2004.
- ▶ Forecasts show by the end of Bush's term in 2009, 700,000 fewer people will own homes than when he came to office.



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

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



**ASSOCIATED  
THIRD PARTY  
ADMINISTRATORS**

ATPA is the administrator for the Automotive Industries Health & Welfare and Pension Trust Funds.

**Contact us at 510-836-2484**

## SHOP TALK: Are you decided about the Presidential Primaries?



Ron Huckabey  
ITS—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

"The debates are a joke—everyone says a lot but they don't say anything. It's ridiculous to get 30-second answers to questions about how you'll run the world. My issues are family values and honesty."



Gene Wachi  
SSA—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

"I'll wait until the last minute to get the full impact of what each candidate has to offer because they each have good and bad points. My issues are those that pertain to the working class: health care, working conditions, employment and the economy."



Hugo Perez  
SSA—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

"I'm not paying much attention yet, but it is important. My issues are keeping strong unions and the economy. Costs are going up. It's not so hard on us here because we make good money. But it's hard on our parents and sisters."



Michael James  
SSA—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

"Yes, I've been keeping tabs on the debates and find them somewhat useful. Labor is my #1 issue. Next is Second Amendment rights: which is a hot button issue that nobody's talking about. I've narrowed it down to two candidates, but am not decided."



Doug DeRosia  
SSA—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

"I am absolutely not paying attention. I'll turn to my union for advice on where to stand. Health care is really bad at this point and I'll want to know who most supports the unions."



2008 ELECTIONS



California's presidential primary moved up to February 5, 2008

Unless you live in Iowa or New Hampshire where you've been bombarded with candidates and commercials for months, you're a rare political activist if you're actually paying attention to the debates. And yet, because California, with its 55 electoral votes, wanted a say in the primary process, our February 5 primary election is just around the corner. Are you ready to place your vote?

You'll likely make your decision based on numerous issues—from how you think the

candidate will handle the economy and foreign policy, to "social issues," to personality and trust. We can't address all of those issues here; we don't even have room to list all the candidates. But we have pulled out some issues important to unions and union members.

If you're interested in checking which candidate matches your concerns most closely, take the "test" at: [www.selectsmart.com/president/2008.html](http://www.selectsmart.com/president/2008.html)

Key Labor Issues	Supports Employee Free Choice Act	Opposes privatizing social security	Supports increasing minimum wage	Opposes unrestricted free trade	US Chamber of Commerce rating	AFL-CIO rating
Democrats						
Hillary Clinton	+	+	+	+/-	35%	ni
John Edwards	+	+	+	+	15%	100%
Dennis Kucinich	+	+	+	+	30%	93%
Barack Obama	+	+	+	+/-	39%	92%
Bill Richardson	+	+	+	-	ni	ni
Republicans						
Rudy Giuliani	-	-	-	-	ni	ni
Mike Huckabee	ni	ni	+	+	ni	ni
John McCain	-	-	+/-	-	72%	14%
Mitt Romney	-	-	-	-	ni	ni
Fred Thompson	-	-	-	-	ni	ni

Guide to the symbols used above:

- + the candidate supports labor's position on the issue
- the candidate opposes labor's position
- +/- indicates a mixed record
- ni either there's no information or the candidate has not taken a stand or voted on the issue.

Propositions on the February 5 ballot

Prop 91

Transportation Funding



The goal of Proposition 91 is to prevent the state from spending gas tax revenue on non-transportation related endeavors. While Proposition 91 was being qualified, the Governor and legislators put Proposition 1A on the November 2006 ballot to accomplish the same thing that Prop 91 set out to do. Labor supported Proposition 1A it voters passed it last year, therefore Proposition 91 is no longer necessary.

Prop 92

Community Colleges: Funding. Governance. Fees.



This initiative would give every Californian the chance to go to college by lowering fees from \$26 per unit to \$15 per unit. It also limits the rise in future fees, ensures stable funding for California community colleges, and guarantees that the community college system stays independent from state politics.

Prop 93

Limits on Legislators' Terms in Office.



Proposition 93 would shorten the total limit on legislative terms from 14 to 12 years, but would permit legislators to serve their entire term in either legislative house, allowing current legislators to serve beyond existing term limits. While we have significant disagreements with the way term limits impact the legislature, this initiative is self-serving for the current leadership and doesn't solve those problems.

Props 94-97

Overturn Amendments to Indian Gaming Compacts



Under tribal law, casino workers on Indian reservations have no enforceable right to organize into a union unless it is expressly specified in the gaming compacts. These four gaming compacts do not include provisions to protect the rights of these workers, which is why Labor will continue to oppose these compacts as referenda. There is no more important issue to workers than the right to organize and collectively bargain for fair wages and improved working conditions.

SHOP TALK: What issues will help you make your decision?



Byran Deering  
SSA—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

"Based on the way things are going, I'm not satisfied with the candidates in the offing. I care about the economy; I worry about my children and the future of the country—what'll be there for my kids? "



Charles Geraghty  
SSA—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

"If we had more information on when the debates were on, more people might watch. My issues are around money and the war. Why are we attending to other people when we can't deal with our own: homeless, children, problems in schools. I haven't made up my mind yet."



John Luntz  
SSA—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

"The debates are boring—all they do is yell and scream at each other. I don't like any of the candidates. My issues are to keep goods and trade in this country, and get people here illegally out of here. We ought to take care of ourselves first before taking care of others."



Rudy Morales  
SSA—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

"Candidates say one thing and do another when in office. I'm looking for what they say about health care, how they'll deal with the economy and if they'll be more gentle to the blue collar worker. I'll look to my union to tell me who to vote for."



Fernando Perez  
SSA—Port of Long Beach  
Local 1484

"John Edwards impressed me. He came by a strike here, that's important for us as union members. I also like Hillary—she'd be okay. My concerns are health care, gasoline prices, cost of college tuition and the economy."



BENEFITS NEWS



Highlights of the 2008 Rates and Board Actions Affecting the LA Machinist Benefit Trust

The Trustees of the Los Angeles Machinist Benefit Trust (LAMBT) are pleased to advise members of the following changes for the coming year. “The costs for all health and welfare plans continue to increase, but through aggressive negotiations, we kept those increases to a minimum,” said Local 1484 Business Rep and LAMBT chair Kevin Kucera. Here’s what members can expect:

- Overall increases to rates were held to single digit increases for all employers and employees.
- Numerous vendors were held to a 0% increase including: United Concordia dental, Spectera vision, VSP vision, and Express Scripts prescription drug plan.
- The PacifiCare-required increase was lowered to almost half of its original request from 16.3% to 9.4%.
- Kaiser only increased its rate by less than half of a percent.
- The Union Labor Life Insurance Company (ULLICO) was selected to provide the life, AD&D, disability and stop-loss coverage at a significant savings to participants.
- The overall administrative load added to rates was lowered by Trustees to only 5.1%.
- The 2008 employer contribution for retiree benefits has been raised by \$3 per active per month, from \$53 to \$56, but this will reduce automatically in 2009 to \$53.
- Retirees were split into four classes to mitigate

the rising cost of retiree medical coverage:

1. Existing Class I retirees will be allowed to remain in the plans that they have elected as long as they are offered by the Trust.
2. New retirees on or after January 1, 2008 will be split into two groups.

**Class 1A** (Waterfront retirees): Will maintain the choice of the high or low retiree medical plans.

**Class 1E** (All other Class 1 retirees): Will only be offered the low retiree medical plan.

The Trust is also pursuing other options for retiree medical plans to mitigate increased health care costs and maintain benefits and are looking for additional lower cost plans to offer to retirees younger than 65.

UNION MEETINGS	
<b>District Lodge I90</b> 7717 Oakport Street Oakland, CA 94621 510-632-3661	<b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Fourth Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</i> December 18 • January 22 • February 26 <b>General Delegates’ Meeting</b> <i>Fourth Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.</i> December 18 • January 22 • February 26 (Note date changes due to holidays)
<b>Local 653</b> 544 West Olive, Fresno, CA 93728 559-264-2815	<b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Third Wednesday of the Month at 5:00 p.m.</i> December 19 • January 16 • February 20 <b>Membership Meeting</b> <i>Third Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.</i> December 19 • January 16 • February 20
<b>Local 80I</b> 7717 Oakport Street, Oakland, CA 94621 800-655-2182	<b>Membership Meeting</b> <i>Third Thursday of the month at 4:00 p.m.</i> December 20 • January 24 • February 21 <i>Meetings are held at the Carpenters’ Hall, in Reno.</i>
<b>Local 110I</b> 3777 Stevens Creek Blvd., Suite 320 Santa Clara, CA 95051 408-551-2280	<b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Second Thursday of each month at 5:30 p.m.</i> December 13 • January 10 • February 14 <b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>Second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</i> December 13 • January 10 • February 14 <i>Check at union office for meeting room.</i>  <b>Note change in office hours:</b> Mon-Thurs: 7:30a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Friday: 7:30a.m.-4:00 p.m.
<b>Local 1173</b> 1900 Bates Ave., # H Concord, CA 94520 925-687-6421	<b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</i> December 13 • January 10 • February 14 <b>Membership/Shop Stewards’ Meeting</b> <i>Third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</i> December 20 • January 17 • February 21
<b>Local 1414</b> 150 South Blvd. San Mateo, CA 94402 650-341-2689	<b>Shop Stewards’ Meeting</b> <i>First Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> December 6 • January 3 • February 7 <b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Second Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> December 13 • January 10 • February 14 <b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>Third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</i> December 20 • January 24 • February 21 <b>Retirees’ Club</b> <i>First Wednesday of June, Sept., Dec., March at 11:00 a.m. All are welcome!</i> December 5, March 5, June 4, September 3
<b>Local 1484</b> 1261 Avalon Blvd. Wilmington, CA 90744 310-835-6688	<b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Third Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> December 20 • January 24 • February 21 <b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>First Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> December 4 • January 8 • February 5 <b>Retirees’ Club</b> <i>Third Wednesday of each month at 1:00 p.m.</i> December 19 • January 16 • February 20
<b>Local 1528</b> 713 16th Street Modesto, CA 95354 209-529-9210	<b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>First Wednesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> December 5 • January 2 • February 6 <b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>First Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.</i> December 5 • January 2 • February 6 <b>Women’s Committee Meeting</b> <i>Please contact local 1528 for times and dates of monthly Women’s committee meetings</i> <b>Retiree’s Club</b> <i>Third Wednesday of each month at 10:00 a.m.</i> December 19 • January 16 • February 20 <b>Narcotics Anonymous: Every Tuesday, 5:30-6:30 p.m.</b>
<b>Local 1546</b> 10260 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, CA 94605 510-638-6705	<b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>First Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.</i> December 4 • January 8 • February 5 <b>Shop Stewards’ Meeting</b> <i>First Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.</i> December 4 • January 8 • February 5 <b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Thursday preceding membership meeting at 6:30 p.m.</i> November 29 • December 27 • January 31 <b>Retiree Club Pot Luck Luncheon</b> <i>First Wednesday of each month at 12 noon</i> December 5 • January 2 • February 6 <b>Alcoholics Anonymous: Every Saturday, 9 a.m.</b>
<b>Local 1584</b> 8130 Baldwin Street Oakland, CA 94621 510-635-2064	<b>Membership Meeting</b> <i>Third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m.</i> December 20 • January 17 • February 21 <b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Third Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> December 20 • January 17 • February 21 <b>Retirees’ Club</b> <i>First Tuesday of each month at 12:30 p.m.</i> December 4 • January 8 • February 5
<b>Local 1596</b> 4210 Petaluma Blvd. No. Petaluma, CA 94952 707-795-0085	<b>Membership Meeting</b> <i>Third Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.</i> December 18 • January 15 • February 19 <b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Third Tuesday of each month at 6:30 p.m.</i> December 18 • January 15 • February 19
<b>Local 2005</b> 416 Main Street Livingston, CA 95334 209-394-7822	<i>Meetings of the general membership are held at the Livingston Portuguese Hall, usually on the Second or Third Sunday of the month.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• English &amp; Punjabi—at 1:00 p.m.</li><li>• Spanish &amp; Portuguese—at 2:30 p.m.</li></ul> Check with the Local office to find out the meeting schedule.
<b>Local 2182</b> 967 Venture Court, Sacramento, CA 95825 800-458-9200	<b>Executive Board Meeting</b> <i>Second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.</i> December 11 • January 8 • February 12 <b>General Membership Meeting</b> <i>Second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.</i> December 11 • January 8 • February 12 <b>Retirees’ Club - VISTA CLUB</b> <i>Third Wednesday of each month at 11:00 a.m.</i> December 19 • January 16 • February 20