VOL. II NO. I December 2008/January 2009

Serving the Active and Retired Members of IAM District Lodge 190

Real possibility of health reform and increased union organizing rights

2008 election is a victory for America's workers and unions

By all accounts, the election last month was historic. Americans decisively voted against war, corporate greed, transferring wealth to the wealthy, environmental devastation and the antiunion policies that we've lived with for eight years. We voted for Barack Obama and going in a different direction. Rejecting racism and fear, we voted for the most worker-friendly President since Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

And, along the way, Americans voted in a significantly more labor-friendly House and Senate, which means that the hope inspired by Obama may be translated into reality by the Congress.

Here in California, with the election of one additional worker-friendly State Senator, the Democrats will have a 26 to 14 majority, just one vote short of the two-thirds necessary to pass a state budget.

Impact on unions and the economy

History shows that unions are the critical factor in building a strong middle class in this nation. However, since Ronald Reagan busted the air traffic controllers union in 1981 and the Bush administration did all it could to limit the right to unionize,



the number of workers in unions has declined as has the standard of living for most Americans.

For that reason, unions have worked to build support for the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA). This bill will finally give workers who want to join unions a fair chance to do so. The EFCA sets up "card check," which means that when a majority of workers sign union cards, they'll be unionized. The bill also mandates that employers negotiate a first contract fairly or go to arbitration. The Bush administration and big business oppose the EFCA, but Barack Obama co-sponsored the bill and has promised to sign it when the new Congress sends it his way. This bill is a top priority for labor.

In addition, unions and their members expect and deserve a seat at the table when issues of jobs and the economy are being debated. The AFL-CIO has assembled a list of candidates for top jobs in the administration—not only in the Department of Labor, but also in Health and Human Services, Commerce, Homeland Security, and other agencies that affect union members.

As the stock market has fallen, so too have the investments of many union pension funds. However, while the Bush Administration was eager to bail out Wall Street, they have no interest in the multi-employ-

er plans which provide retirement benefits for most union members. Fortunately, even before the election, the Obama transition team contacted union leaders to get ideas about how best to support these hard-won union pension plans.

Keeping the heat on

As Barack Obama said upon winning the election, "For even as we celebrate tonight, we know the challenges that tomorrow will bring are the greatest of our lifetime—two wars, a planet in peril, the worst financial crisis in a century.... And above all, I will ask you to join in the work of remaking this nation the only way it's been done in America for two-hundred and twenty-one years—block by block, brick by brick, calloused hand by calloused hand."

Obama laid down the challenge, and the IAM, along with the rest of the nation's unions, plan to meet that challenge. "American workers sent a strong mandate for an agenda that includes secure pensions, good jobs, universal health care, equal pay on the job and the right to organize," District Lodge 190 Directing Business Rep Jim Beno said. "We will continue to follow-up to ensure that mandate is implemented."





UNION PEOPLE

Christmas in the Park



Trying to establish a new tradition, IAM Local 1101 has decorated a tree for the second year in a row at Cesar Chavez Park in downtown San Jose. "All kinds of schools, scouting groups, area businesses and community organizations have trees, and we just want to show that our union is also an important part of the community," said Business Rep Richard Breckenridge. A group of volunteers helped decorate the tree. Seen here is Local 1101 Secretary—Treasurer Scott Smith (left) and Breckenridge (right).

District Lodge 190's Joyce Day receives Gift of Sight award

For the first time in 28 years, the Guide Dogs of America (GDA) annual Gift of Sight award was given to a woman—and that special woman was our own Joyce Day. The award was presented on November 22 at the 28th Annual William Winpisinger Charity Banquet.

Joyce has coordinated the District's annual charity golf tournament for the past 24 years. Proceeds from these events have enabled the District to donate about \$1.25 million to support GDA.

"Our tournament has a reputation of being one of the best in the nation, and Joyce works hard every year to make sure that it's successful," says District DBR Jim Beno. "She truly deserves this honor."

GDA, located in Sylmar, provides guide dogs and instruction in their use, free of charge, to blind and visually impaired men and women from the U.S. and Canada so that they may continue to pursue their goals with increased mobility and independence. The charity was founded in 1948 by a retired IAM member.

Recent fires across Southern California forced GDA to evacauate its facility and place



97 dogs in foster homes. Within two days, more than enough families volunteered their homes for the dogs. Fortunately, the facility was not harmed and that dogs are all back with GDA.

Also honored that evening was IAM Secretary-Treasurer Warren Mart and the Boeing Company.

Tis the season to help a fellow member

Juan Lopez has worked at UPS in Bakersfield for nearly two years, and as a member of Local 653, has good health insurance. But when his five-year old daughter Paulina got kidney cancer, he and his wife Erika found that caring for her, even with insurance, was very costly. When taking her for treatments in Los Angeles, gas, hotels, and food added up quickly.

Unfortunately, the chemo has stopped working and Paulina is now

in hospice care. But she's still in good spirits, and her family would love to take her to Sea World, the Monterey Bay Aquarium, and give her other "experiences."

If you would like to help the Lopez family honor some of Paulina's wishes, please mail your check to: IAM Local 653, 544 West Olive, Fresno, CA 93728. Make check payable to Local Lodge 653, and write "Juan Lopez—Member Assistance" on the memo line.

In Memoriam John "Jack" Irving

A true trade unionist, John "Jack" Irving was a working man who, for nearly 30 years, spent his days at the waterfront and his off-time helping manage IAM Local 1484 as Secretary-Treasurer. He died of cancer on December 7 at the age of 66.

"He was an extraordinary man," says Local 1484 Business Rep Kevin Kucera. "He was involved in every aspect of the union, from lobbying in the state capital and Washington, D.C., to representing the union at conferences and conventions, walking the picket line, and keeping the local together financially as Secretary-Treasurer. He was a real champion of the working class."

After working as a mechanic in the Marine Corps for four years, Jack came back to the waterfront in Long Beach and worked at SSA for the past 26 years. He was integral to negotiating the contracts at SSA and was a key advisor on contract negotiations with ITS and MTC, as well.



Jack Irving

waterfront knew Jack," says fellow union member, co-worker and best friend George Bioletto. "He was a very sincere person who carried out his duties with great consideration for his union brothers. Even

"Everyone on the

management had to respect him because he always did his homework."

Jack was instrumental in having Local 1484 become part of District 190. "He believed that our waterfront locals across the state would be stronger if they worked together more closely," says DBR Jim Beno.

Jack leaves behind his wife of 38 years, Mary, five children and a cadre of friends at the waterfront.

"Jack enjoyed his work and he enjoyed representing the union. He was a good machinist and a great friend," Bioletto added. "His legacy will stay with us. Many of the jobs and protections our members have here on the waterfront are due to Jack's hard work."

Local 1584 honors veteran members



On December 3, Local Lodge 1584 held its annual Retiree's Veteran Awards luncheon at Francesco's Restaurant in Oakland. Members received pins for being in the union for 15,20,25,35,40,45,and 50 years. Congratulations to all!



The Sparkplug (USPS 007966) is published bi-monthly by District Lodge 190, International Association of Machinists, Oakland, Calif., a non-profit organization. Periodicals postage paid at Oakland. Subscriptions are \$3 per year.

The Sparkplug is the official publication of District Lodge 190 and its affiliated

local lodges and notification of any meeting or election in this paper shall constitute official notice per Article B, Section 4 of the IAMAW Constitution and Articles V and VII of District Lodge 190 By-Laws.

Postmaster: Send address corrections to: The Sparkplug, 7717 Oakport Street, Oakland, CA 94621.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We didn't get any letters this issue, but if you would like to write in, we'd love to hear from you.

If something in *The Sparkplug* makes you happy or mad or inspires you to action, write us a letter. All letters will be used, space permitting. They may be

edited for length or grammar, but not for content.

Letters may be submitted as follows:

e-mail: dchaplan@mindspring.com **fax:** 510-288-1346

mail: IAM District 190, 7717 Oakport Drive, Oakland, CA 94621.



YOUR DUES MONEY

Union membership brings good 'return on investment'

As a result of action taken at the Grand Lodge convention and by the District Lodge delegates, the dues increases this year will be higher than normal. **Don't panic!** For most members the increase will amount to about five or six cents per hour. That's the equivalent of the cost of a cup of coffer a week at Starbucks or a couple of Big Mac meals a month.

These increases are necessary to cover the cost your union incurs in providing the high level of representation that our members demand and deserve.

The pie chart we include shows the major expense categories that District Lodge 190 incurs in its operations. As you can see, most of our expenses are salary-related—the wages, benefits, pensions and taxes for business representatives and organizers at our 13 local unions and the clerical support staff in our main office.

Legal expenses are also highlighted. Sometimes we have to go to court to protect our members' rights when employers get intransigent. When that happens, we bring in the best labor attorneys in the country to fight for our members' rights. But that doesn't come cheap—and the costs for attorneys are only going up. The union recently spent \$38,000 on two cases—in the end, one worker got a \$5,000 settlement and the other got two months of back pay and left the job.

As the economy shrinks, the District is getting leaner as well. As Business Representatives retire, we are generally not replacing them in the effort to cut by attrition rather than layoff. However, as negotiations get tougher in a slow economy, the burden on our representatives is even greater.

And there are certain fixed costs that go into running the union whether we have five members or 5,000. Even if we lose members, we can't cut the PG&E bill.

Finally, the biggest part of the dues increase is the increase voted by the delegates at the International Convention. Due to a compromise pro-

Union wage advantage for Latinos

posal, the increase to members this year will be \$4.91/month rather than the \$50 increase originally suggested.

We thought this an appropriate time to remind our members just what their dues pay for and the small cost of dues relative to the overall level of benefits and guarantees that IAM members have in their union contracts.

Excellent Contracts

Your union has negotiated the best contracts in the industries we represent. Just a few of the important benefits that are protected and guaranteed by your union contract are your wages and benefits, including medical, dental, prescription drug and vision coverage, life insurance, holidays, vacations and pension plans.

Here is a specific example of why being union pays off in the long run: We recently organized the Lexus dealership in San Jose. The employees were earning \$24/hour in wages and about \$3 in benefits.

This is a high-end dealership that charged the clients high-end rates. On the average, the union contracts that we have in the Bay Area—from economy to high-end shops—pay the equivalent of \$36.25 per hour, including benefits.

Do the simple math. Using the above example, with a union contract our members make about 34% more than they could earn in the non-union sector. That's a great return on your investment (dues). From that perspective, IAM membership dues are an investment that definitely pays dividends.

The District Lodge 190 expense pie chart



A — Local Lodge Net Proceeds: 25%

District Lodge 190 collects the dues from all of the members and sends the Locals 25% of all that was received. This money is used for wages and benefits for clerical staff, officers and committee members; lost time for members who sit on negotiating committees or grievances, building expenses like rent, mortgage and utilities, meeting expenses, legal expenses, conferences and conventions, affiliations with Labor Councils, and state and national AFL-CIO.

B — Grand Lodge Per Capita: 19%

The international union is a half-million member organization with 1,000 offices from coast to coast, including the headquarters building and Winpisinger Training Center, both in Maryland. The Grand Lodge conducts legal research, legislative advocacy, communications and organizing. This share of every dues dollar covers the strike fund, the organizing fund, cost of operating and maintaining the IAM headquarters building; wages and benefits for staff in all the departments, and membership in the AFL-CIO and other labor organizations.

C — Administrative Costs: 4%

Covers upkeep and repair of our building, taxes, telephone and other utilities, production and mailing of *The Sparkplug*, and more.

D — Health and Welfare Benefits and Pension: 6%

Covers the health and welfare costs and pension contributions for District employees.

E – Legal Costs: 2%

Covers the costs for arbitrations, lawsuits against employers, legal expenses related to organizing and other legal fees.

F — Employee Wages & Expenses: 44%

Covers the salaries for all of the District officers, organizing staff and Business Reps who negotiate your contracts, handle grievances and arbitrations, represent the union on Joint Apprenticeship Committees and at Central Labor Councils and the State Federation of Labor, and serve the membership. It also covers travel and hotel expenses when they're away from town to represent the membership, and training to stay up with the trends.

The union's got your back

With the downturn in the economy, most employers are balancing their budgets on the backs of their workers. Non-union employers are cutting wages, reducing hours of work, passing along the costs for health benefits, terminating employees at-will and laying off employees indiscriminately.

Having a union contract protects you from these types of actions. When an employer crosses the line and violates the contract, you have your union and the grievance procedure in the contract to protect you. Workers in non-union shops have no protections and no one to fight for their rights. Their only choice is to quit and look for another job. In this economy, that's a dead-end option.

Unfortunately, we're seeing many of our union employers closing their doors due to slow business or lack of credit. While we are not in a position to keep companies in business, we can and do work to ensure that our members receive all of the benefits, severance packages and vacation pay owed them, and that layoffs, when necessary, are made fairly.

Especially in these times, your dues money is one of the best investments you can make. It doesn't cost to belong to the union—it actually pays.

28%

The Union Advantage—By the Numbers

However you count it, union workers earn higher wages and get more benefits than workers who don't have a voice on the job with a union. Here's some data:

	who don't have a voice on the job with a	don't have a voice on the job with a union. Here's some data:		
	Union workers' median weekly earnings (MWE) Nonunion workers' MWE Union wage advantage	\$863 \$663 30%	Union workers covered by employer-provided health insurance 78% Nonunion workers covered by employer-provided health	
	Union women's MWE Nonunion women's MWE	\$790 \$592	insurance 49% Union health insurance advantage 59%	
	Union wage advantage for women African American union workers' MWE African American nonunion workers' MWE	\$732 \$533	Union workers without health insurance coverage 2.5% Nonunion workers without health insurance coverage 15% Nonunion workers are five times more likely to lack health insurance coverage.	
	Union wage advantage for African Americans Latino union workers' MWE Latino nonunion workers' MWE	37% \$736 \$487	insurance coverage Sources: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Union M Labor Statistics. National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in Pri	

51%

Union workers covered by defined-benefit pensions 67%
Nonunion workers covered by defined-benefit pensions 15%
Union pension advantage 347%
Union workers with short-term disability benefits 60%
Nonunion workers with short-term disability benefits 35%
Union short-term disability benefits advantage 71%
Union workers' average days of paid vacation 15
Nonunion workers' average days of paid vacation 11.75
days

Union paid vacation advantage

Sources: U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, Union Members in 2007, Jan. 25, 2008; U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, National Compensation Survey: Employee Benefits in Private Industry in the United States, March 2007, August 2007; Economic Policy Institute; Employee Benefits Research Institute, May 2005.



Local 653

Welcome new officers

Nominations for officers, auditors and district delegates were held at the November local lodge meeting. Since there was one person nominated for each of the positions, by motion of the local lodge, the following have been deemed elected.

President: Harland Walker; Vice-President: Dan Deubner: Recording Secretary: Ronald Roberts, II; Secretary/Treasurer: George Robles; Conductor/Sentinel: Larry Hawks; Trustees: Bob Henry, Hector Gonzales and Albert Smith; Auditors: Ron Glapenske, Brandon Sandoval and Wayne Horn; District Delegates: Ron Glapenske, Ron Roberts II, Dan Deubner, and Harold Guyette (alternate); Communicator: Larry Hawks; and Educator: Thomas Rotella, Jr.

Congratulations to all of the new officers who will guide the union through 2011.

Reminder to all mechanics: Don't forget to update your tool list with your employer. This is important for purposes of insurance coverage.

The year is coming to an end and the holidays are upon us. Due to holiday and vacation scheduling, the office will be open on a limited basis. Please call and leave a message on our machine. We will be monitoring the machine even while out of the office. Someone will return your call.

Tom, Debbie and the Officers of Local Lodge 653 would like to wish you and your family a happy holiday and look forward to seeing you in 2009.

Local 801

Workers organize in Reno

The mechanics at Dyncorp who work on the C-12 aircraft at the Harry Reid Army base in Reno voted unanimously to be represented by the machinists. "I'm meeting with the company in Salt Lake City for three days and I'm confident we'll reach an agreement that our new members will be proud of," says Area Director Mark Martin.

Overtime issue in Fallon

LB&B is at it again. Martin says that the Local has filed charges with the NLRB over an information request the company will not comply with. "We're trying to define what a workday is. This will have a profound impact on how they determine daily overtime," he explained. "It's stupid the company would even fight us on this one. Even today's NLRB will likely uphold this."

Local 1173 & 1546

Deal at SP Automotive

Business Reps Rick Rodgers and Pat Woodard worked together to negotiate a contract for members of both Locals 1173 and 1546 who work at SP Automotive Supply. The auto parts supply dealer has locations in Benicia, Martinez, San Leandro, Oakland, San Pablo and Brentwood. The members ratified the pact with a vote of 12-1.

"We went to a one-year contract because the owner is really concerned about the economy and whether he'll be competitive a year from now," said Rodgers. The overall economic package is worth about 45¢/hour and members won't have to pay any health and welfare increases.

Local 1173

Co-pay dispute settled

A dispute with the Antioch Auto Center, described in the last issue of *The* Sparkplug got resolved before having to go into arbitration. "The company wasn't following the formula for health and welfare increases that we had agreed to in the contract," Rodgers explained.

"In the end, our members got a settlement agreement that reduced their co-pay by \$31 a month and we came up with a formula, again, for calculating the increase and a date for when increases would occur."

Local 1546

New contract at Rich Foods

Business Rep Robbie Pintos reports

that the 98 members at Rich Foods in South San Francisco have a new threeyear contract. "This was definitely not all that the members hoped for, but it's bet-

ter than what they've gotten in the past."

The members will be getting wage increases of 45¢, 35¢, and 40¢ per hour each year, eight fixed holidays and 401K employer contributions, and they'll keep the company benefits they already had.

"Rich Foods took over for Rolling Pin Donuts three years ago, so we don't have a long relationship with this company," Pintos added. "Our plan is to take good care of the unit and hopefully things will improve. Then, we look forward to going back to the table for a beter contract next time."

AROUND

Agreement with Fabco

Local 1546 was able to get a decer contract with Fabco even as the compa ny's parent company, Accuride, is i the process of having its stock deliste from the New York Stock Exchange Area Director Don Crosatto explain that this division, located in Livermore has been more profitable than the corr pany's other divisions, making it easie to negotiate improvements than the might have expected in these difficu economic times.

Local 1414

Strike enters fourth mo

What do you do when your boss won't let you talk with your co-workers, when she won't buy the equipment you need to do your job efficiently, and most importantly, when she doesn't offer a raise after three years and has refused to negotiate a fair contract for two years?

After dealing with all that and more, the 19 technicians, service writers, and parts people who are members of IAM Local 1414 and Teamsters Local 665 and work at Grace Honda finally agreed that it was time to strike. They have been picketing the San Mateo dealership since September 12.

"We wanted a fair contract," says Chi Huynh, who's been a technician at Grace Honda for nearly nine years. "We weren't getting any respect. The company's proposed confoot rat to grace Grace Honda on Octo tract was all take-aways. We finally had no ership treats its workers. choice but to walk out."

Since the workers went on strike, owner Homa Yamin has only met with the union twice. "They're just doing the minimum required to drag it out



Technician Chi Huynh says the workers just want respect and a fair contract.

because they're not proposing anything that will bring us back. She has refused to go to mediation," Huynh explained to The Sparkplug at the October 26 rally co-sponsored by the Machinists, Teamsters Local 665 and the San Mateo Labor Council.

Workers said that Yamin has spent money on security guards and setting up cam-



Members of Local 1414, Teamsters Lo

eras, but doesn't want t this and pay them a fair money rather than spend her," said Service Writer

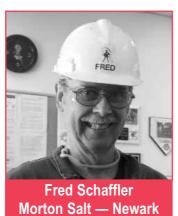
"The shop is run ine "One shop rule prohibits another. For us, that m upsales. She demands e with one hand behind or sense from a business st

"When my son had four days. I made sure they still wrote me up. my emergencies," said technician at Grace Hor "We're not supposed to just makes work impos

SHOP TALK: What does Barack Obama need to accomplish in his first 100

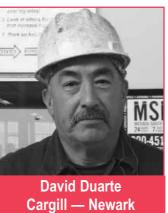


"Set the date to get the guys out of Iraq-and make it solid."



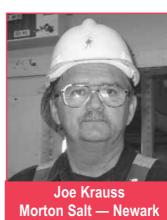
"Provide leadership. He has the "I will get it down" attitude, so he should be able to set an agenda and put Congress to the task. We can't let the auto industry fail-too many people would lose their jobs and contracts."

Local 1584



Local 1584

"Fix the economy. Announce a plan to get people back to work."



Local 1584

"Everybody is worried about the economy. We're losing workers left and right. He needs to focus on the economy and implement training programs so we can retain our jobs."



Cargill — Newark **Local 1584**

"Now that we're in a recession, he needs to see where the big money is going. Everyone has their hands out. Get money to the people so we can make things, buy things and go back to work."



"Straighten c my—get it g stock marke industry. Ove force workin

1E LOCALS

"Our 45 members will get a \$2.10 age increase the first year to make up or some previous concessions they ok, and will get \$.40 and \$.45 the next ears," Crosatto says. "The company emanded that we go to their medical an but we preserved the AI dental, fe, and disability plans. One advantage the company medical plan is that pays go down substantially. Most nployees will gain between \$1,000 nd \$3000/year in co-pay savings."

The members turned down the comany's first offer, but after making ome changes, they ratified the threeear contract on November 7.

Safeway contract to be voted

As The Sparkplug goes to press, the 22 members who work at Safeway in Tracy will be voting on their contract proposal. The agreement includes wage increases of 70¢/hour in year one, and 45¢/hour in both years two and three, along with high enough caps on the health and welfare that members should probably not have a co-pay. It also includes premium pay for reefer mechanics who work the 2nd and 3rd shift, additional money in the Mike Day retiree medical account, and extra money in the tool allowance.

Local 2005

New pact at Foster Farms

"The company understood that we were ready to strike," says Area Director Mark Hollibush about the talks at Foster Farms in Livingston.

"They were preparing for that to happen and had already brought in chain link fences and lights. That's why, after 10 negotiating sessions, our last round at the bargaining table was a 17-hour session. And that's why we got a very good deal at the last minute."

Hollibush says that just before the Foster Farms contract was set to expire on November 1, the members got a new four-year agreement that they felt good about ratifying. In fact, the vote was 614 to 8 to accept the new agreement.

Initially, Foster Farms didn't propose many take-aways. However, when the union presented the 35 improvements that the members wanted, the company responded with numerous take-aways. "In the end, we were able to maintain all of the working conditions that our members currently enjoy," Hollibush said. "We wouldn't, and we didn't accept any take-aways. That was a key talking point, and we succeeded."

The new contract runs through October 31, 2012 and provides a wage increase each year, keeps future health and welfare increases to a bare minimum, gives employees an annual bonus that they can use to cover that year's medical increase, and maintains the dues check-off. "I'm told that this is the best deal they've gotten in more than 15 years," Hollibush adds.

Once the company added a ratification bonus of up to \$1,000 per employee to sweeten the deal, the bargaining committee unanimously recommended the contract to the membership for ratification.

"The membership is pleased with the outcome of the negotiations and is planning a celebration on December 14 to thank the 17 rank-and-file bargaining committee members who made sure the voices of all the employees were heard

at the bargaining table," says Hollibush, who adds that this event will also serve to begin an internal organizing drive.

"We need to remind employees that you can't get a contract without participation of members. Therefore it's important to keep our membership numbers up and to keep their involvement strong."

Hollibush says that the union was able to negotiate a pretty good contract with only half of the employees participating. "Imagine what we could have done with 100% of the employees participating. Many employees said 'show me the money.' Now that we have, it's time for everybody get involved."

Serving with Hollibush, who was chief spokesman on the negotiating team, were Business Reps Ralph Meraz, Jesse Juarez, Al Lopez, and Ruben Zesati from District 190, and 17 rank-and-file members from Local 2005.

Local 2182

No 'use it or lose it' policy

The Local is fighting the City of Sacramento over its 'use it or lose it' vacation policy. In addition, the city has some odd ideas about disciplining members over their use of sick leave. "We'll let you know as this develops further," says Business Rep Skip

Keeping Walsh Station going

A 50-year old company built on a Pony Express stop, Walsh Station in Sacramento is having a tough time. Even so, the owner, Ron Kunasaki, is doing what he can to keep work flowing through the shop. Ron bought an abandoned car from a nearby towing company and is having the guys work on it to stay busy.

Local 2182 just signed a one-year contract extension. "The company picked up the cost of health care. Hopefully the economy will improve and we can do something with wages next year," says Hatch.

at Grace(less) Honda



and several area unions brought the 14to let the community know how that deal-

"She's willing to lose let us make money for uel Solaro.

ntly, Solaro continued. ers from talking to one that we can't promote icy but makes us work cs. It just doesn't make oint."

ndicitis, I was out for shift was covered, but told that I should plan in Bella, who's been a or more than 13 years. to each other, but that Bella added. "We're

all human and try to help each other, but we scatter like cockroaches when she shows

State Senator Leland Yee addressed the rally. "This company is operating in the heartland of labor and still they mistreat their workers," Yee said. "We're not going to allow anybody to deny us freedom and workers' rights." Yee promised to speak to the employer and to her anti-union lawyers from the Littler Mendelson law firm to try to get the talks moving.

Unfortunately, as this paper goes to press, the strike is entering its fourth month. Business Rep Don Barbe reports that the union met with the company once in November but made no significant progress toward reaching a settlement. The

nd the money to settle Labor Council is organizing another rally, and the workers remain determined to maintain the strike action until they can get a decent contract.

The strikers wanted to give special thanks to the Labor Council and all of the area unions, especially Teamsters Local 856, 665 and 986 for their support and donations.



(LtoR) Strikers Jose Barrera, Manuel Solaro and Augustin Bella know each other well even though they're not supposed to talk to each other.

rys as President?



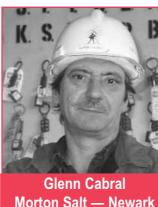
leton Newark 84

econogain. Fix the automotive et the work-



Cargill — Newark **Local 1584**

"Get the unions their rights back. Help the working class-we need it!"



Morton Salt — Newark **Local 1584**

"Straighten out the economy stop the bleeding. All we're doing is giving out money, but that hasn't fixed anything. He should start working on it now, because there's no quick answers."



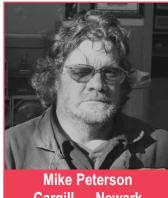
Cargill — Newark **Local 1584**

"Change what Bush has been doing-especially around the economy and Iraq. Get everybody out of there."



Morton Salt — Newark Local 1584

"Hopefully Congress will pass the EFCA and he can sign it. He needs to kick some corporate a-- and hold the CEOs accountable. And he needs to make Congress do something."



Cargill — Newark **Local 1584**

"I think they're all cheats and liars. Obama's just another man, to me. Will anything change? I'll bet his pocketbook gets fatter."



THE STATE OF THE AUTO INDUSTRY



Economy forces more car dealerships to close

More than half of District Lodge 190's members work for auto dealerships as mechanics, service writers, parts people and in the body shops. As the auto industry goes, so goes our District.

Increasingly over the past few years, and especially since September, dealerships across Northern California have been closing their doors, putting many of our members out of work.

The financial crisis that has stung homeowners and depressed credit markets has shown no mercy for car dealerships. The California New Car Dealers Association, which represents most of the state's dealerships, estimated that close to 100 out of about 1,300 dealerships have called it quits this year. Nationally, estimates are that about 600 dealerships might close or consolidate.

The latest casualties among unionized dealerships include: Colma Buick Pontiac GMC, Good Chevrolet in Alameda, Los Gatos Chevrolet, Central Chevrolet in Fremont, and Ellis Brooks Chevrolet, which was a San Francisco institution for 50 years. Numerous nonunion dealers have also closed.

The bigger picture

The domestic car industry has endured a pummeling in recent months. September sales reports showed. Chrysler with a 33 percent drop in sales since September 2007, while Ford saw a 34.6 percent slide. General Motors held up better with a 16 percent decline.

And the foreign car dealers aren't doing much better. Toyota sales are down lower than GM and sales on Honda Civics, formerly that company's biggest seller, have dropped 67% since May. The reason Toyota and Honda aren't in bankruptcy may be that they were in better financial shape than the domestic auto industry when the economy started to nosedive.

Even the auto financing units, like GMAC and Ford Motor Credit, which used to be cash cows for the auto industry, are now facing bankruptcy.

For car dealers, the last few months have been a 'perfect storm.' The sagging economy and rising jobless rate means fewer people are in the market for automobiles. The housing slump has left little home equity to pay for new car purchases. The credit crisis has made it difficult even for customers with good credit to get decent rates on car loans, to say nothing of consumers whose credit has tanked due to home foreclosures.

And with the gas price spike earlier this year, the market shifted dramatically away from larger trucks and sport utility vehicles to smaller, less lucrative models. As a result, many car dealers reported a 50-60 percent drop-off in sales in the past two years.

For the surviving dealers, the mentality is to hunker down and hope to make some money off service and parts in lieu of big sales. The better-positioned stores with some money on hand should be able to weather the downturn. Many are hoping for a turnaround by next year, though some are pointing to 2010 before healthy sales return.

Bailout in question

The future of GM, Ford and Chrysler, of the thousands of businesses that supply the auto industry, and down the line, for our members who work at dealerships, may be decided this month.

Official notice —Local 1596

A first reading of a proposed change in Local Lodge 1596's By-laws will take place at the January 20, 2009 meeting. A second reading of the proposed change will take place at the February 17, 2009 meeting, at which time the By-laws Committee recommendations will be

reported and a secret ballot vote will be conducted on the proposed change.

A copy of the proposed change will be available to each member at the meeting. The meeting place will be at Local Lodge 1596, 4210 Petaluma Blvd. No., Petaluma, CA 94952.



Moving?

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.

"One in 10 American jobs is linked to the domestic auto industry, and it is a key pillar in an American manufacturing sector critical to our national security and economic competitiveness for decades to come," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) during the debate on a \$14 billion emergency bridge loan for the nation's 'big three' automakers.

As *The Sparkplug* goes to press, however, the U.S. House had approved the loan but the Republicans refused to bring the bill to a vote in the Senate. Many of the opposing senators have foreign non-union automakers in their states. They were demanding additional concessions from the unions—particularly giving up retiree benefits—in return for their support of the bridge loan.

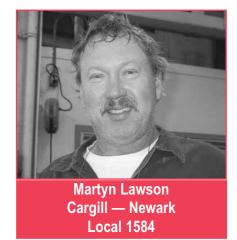
The potential loan is back in the hands of the White House. The Treasury Department could choose whether or not to make the loan out of the \$700 billion bank bailout bill.

GM and Chrysler have immediate fears of bankruptcy if they cannot get a bridge loan. Worse, while most companies use bankruptcy as a time to reorganize, the automakers believe it would lead them in a vicious downward cycle; they'd have an even harder time getting credit and who would invest in a new car from a bankrupt company?

The proposed legislation, which had bipartisan support in the House, included tough conditions, such as limits on executive compensation, a prohibition on dividends, an equity stake to protect taxpayers, and ongoing federal oversight. The bill also required automakers to develop restructuring plans for long-term viability, which would involve shared sacrifice from all stakeholders, including management, directors, bondholders, shareholders, suppliers, dealers, UAW members and other company employees.

-San Francisco Chronicle, Automotive News, AFL-CIO Now blog

SHOP TALK: What must Obama do in his first 100 days?



"Spark the economy. Come out with a plan for jobs."



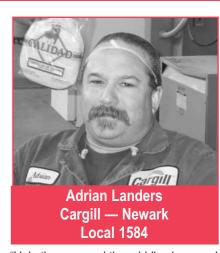
Cargill — Newark Local 1584

"Make the economy better. Keep the gas prices down."



Ed Nowak
Morton Salt — Newark
Local 1584

"I'm not looking for miracles and he really can't do much in just 100 days. It's a slow process, and it's much bigger than the president can do on his own. He'll need time to make any real change."



"Help the poor and the middle class, and help out the schools. These are the most in need—and would be the best way to jump-start the economy."



IN THE NEWS



Worker occupation wins back pay, benefits

On Friday December 5th, the workers of Republic Windows and Doors, 240 members of UE Local 1110, occupied their factory, which was due to close at 10:00 a.m. The workers were fighting for pay for their lost vacation days and for the 75 days notice that they are guaranteed under Illinois law. This is the first time in many years workers have taken the bold, militant strategy of occupying their workplace to demand justice.

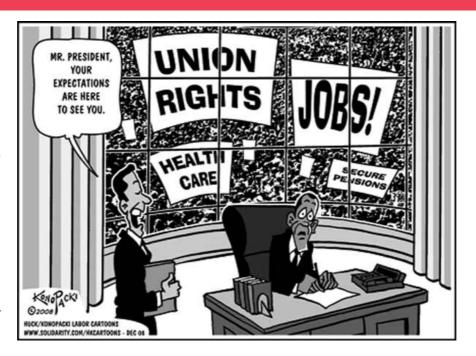
Only weeks after taking \$25 Billion in bailout money, Bank of America turned its back on the hundreds of workers making energy efficient doors and windows in Chicago by refusing to continue credit to Republic Windows and Doors. To make matters even worse, Bank of America had instructed Republic to refuse to pay workers compensation they were legally entitled to, either earned vacation pay or the severance pay legally required under the WARN Act, in lieu of proper notice of plant closing.

After 6 days of occupying the plant and gaining global attention, the workers voted to accept a settlement of \$1.75 million. It will provide them with the eight weeks of pay they are owed; two months of continued health coverage, and pay for all accrued and unused vacation.

JPMorgan Chase will provide \$400,000 of the settlement, with the balance coming from Bank of America. Although the money will be provided as a loan to Republic Windows and Doors, it will go directly into a third-party fund whose sole purpose is to pay the workers what is owed them. In addition, the UE has started the "Window of Opportunity Fund" dedicated to re-opening the plant.

As the Local 1110 leaders characterized the settlement, "We fought to make them pay what they owe us, and we won."

-Jobs with Justice



Labor Dept. accused of straying from enforcement

"The next administration may have many lofty policy goals, but none will be more important or more daunting than restoring the fundamental competence and integrity of government agencies," says Scott Lilly, a Senior Fellow at the Center for American Progress, a Washington, D.C. think tank.

In a report entitled "Double Standard at the Labor Department," Lilly reviewed the work of the Office of Labor-Management Standards (OLMS) and concluded that enforcement of business reporting has been so lax no one has any idea how much anti-union consulting is taking place, which employers are engaging in it, how much is being spent, or what it is being spent on.

While the report focuses on the OLMS, Lilly says that other agencies are equally antagonistic to labor. A recent Government Accountability Office (GAO) report found that the Wage-Hour division flagrantly failed to meet its responsibility to enforce laws intended to prevent worker exploitation. And at the Employment and Training Administration, an agency with a \$10 billion budget, the report says that "multimillion dollar 'sole source grants'

were handed out like popcorn to constituent-friendly politicians and allied organizations."

"My view is that this is a deeply troubled department," Lilly told the *Washington Post*. "I think you've got people embedded there who are philosophically hostile to the mission of the agency."

According to the *Washington Post* (Michael Fletcher, December 1, 2008), the GAO issued a report in July alleging that the Labor Department did an inadequate job of investigating complaints by low-wage workers about how their employers were stiffing them for overtime, or failing to pay the minimum wage.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), which oversees most workplace safety, has seen its budget shrink each year Bush has been in office when inflation is taken into account, according to an analysis by the watchdog group OMB Watch. And while the overall budget fell by 5 percent, the enforcement budget is down 8 percent for Bush's tenure. That decline continued a trend that saw the rate of OSHA workplace inspections reduced by nearly two-thirds between 1980 and 2005.

Perhaps the only area where the department became a more rigorous

enforcer was in the oversight of labor unions, critics say. New rules required more rigorous financial reports from about 20,000 union locals.

During the campaign, Barack Obama promised to be supportive of organized labor and to step up enforcement of workplace safety regulations. He also said he would work to expand the reach of the Family and Medical Leave Act, which allows workers to take time off to care for relatives. He also has voiced support for the rights of workers to strike without having to worry about being permanently replaced.

"The Bush administration had abdicated its responsibility to protect workers," said Thea Lee, policy director of the AFL-CIO. "We have high hopes that we will see a dramatic change of direction under the Obama administration."

Bush rule makes it harder to regulate toxic substances

In November, the Bush administration launched a last-minute assault on the public with a slew of end-of-term, no congressional-approval-needed regulations that could roll back or weaken rules on job safety, family leave, airline safety and pollution.

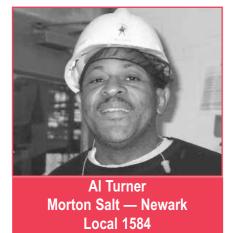
Over the Thanksgiving holiday weekend, *The New York Times* reported that a top item on Bush's move-out checklist is the "secret rule" that could lead to increased exposure of workers to dangerous chemicals and toxins by changing the way worker exposure is measured.

The Labor Department is racing to complete the new rule, strenuously opposed by President-elect Barack Obama, but strongly supported by business groups.

"The administration is rushing to lock in place requirements that would make it more difficult for the next administration to protect workers," AFL-CIO Safety and Health Director Peg Seminario told the *Times*.

-Mike Hall, AFL-CIO Now Blog

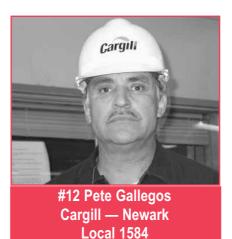
SHOP TALK: What must Obama do in his first 100 days?



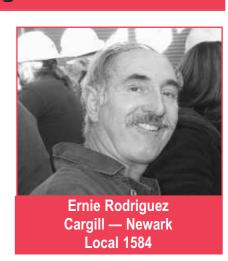
"Stop all the outsourcing. Keep jobs in this country."



"Start bringing the troops home."



"Start working on the economy and health care. And, the sooner we get out of Iraq, the more money we can spend over here."



"Get the economy back again—that will be good for everybody."

Official notice — Local 2182

A first reading of a proposed change in Local Lodge 2182's by-laws will take place at the January 13, 2009 meeting. A second reading of the proposed change will take place at the February 10, 2009 meeting, at which time the By-laws Committee recommendations will be reported and a secret ballot vote will be conducted on the proposed change.

A proposal has been submitted to change the following section of the by-laws:

ARTICLE IX: DUES – Section 2

Current language: The monthly dues of this Lodge for members who voluntarily pay monthly dues or members of this Lodge who are employed by a public agency shall be a monthly rate of dues based upon the dues payable by a member whose wages are Eleven Dollars and Seventy-Five Cents (\$11.75) per hour.

Change language to: The monthly dues of this Lodge for members who voluntarily pay monthly dues or members of this Lodge who are employed by a public agency shall be a monthly rate of dues based upon the dues payable by a member whose wages are sixty percent (60%) of this Lodge's weighted average hourly wage which shall be calculated annually.

A copy of the proposed change will be available to each member at the meeting. The meeting place will be at Machinists & Mechanics Lodge No. 2182, 967 Venture Court, Sacramento, California on January 13, 2009 and February 10, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. Please make every attempt to attend this very important meeting.

Official notice — Local 1528

Nominations and election of Local 1528 delegates to the **California Conference of Machinists**

At our regular meeting on Wednesday January 7, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. nominations will be taken for the following; Delegates for the California Conference of Machinists.

Election of delegates will be held at the first regular meeting in February 4, 2009. Polls will be open from 7:30 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

The following election regulations will be observed:

Absentee Ballots: Members who reside in outlying district more than 25 miles from the balloting place, members who are ill and confined under orders of a physician, and members temporarily absent from the city, may be furnished absentee ballots. Any member entitled to receive an absentee ballot shall make written request to the Recording Secretary of Local Lodge 1528 by delivering or mailing such request not later than ten (10) days before the election.

Qualification to become a candidate for election: In accordance with Local Lodge By-laws Article H Section 1 (b), to be eligible a member shall attend at least six (6) of the regular local lodge meetings held during a twelve (12) month period ending the date of close of nominations.

Qualifications to vote: Only members in good standing and free from delinquency of any nature to the Local Lodge shall be allowed to vote.

UNION MEETINGS



Lodge 190

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

District

Meetings are the fourth Tuesday of each month Weds. December 17* • January 27 • February 24

Executive Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m. General Delegates' Meeting: 7:30 p.m.

* Note: Meeting was moved ahead due to the holidays.

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

December 18 • January 22 • February 19

General Membership Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month

December 2 • January 6 • February 3

Retirees' Club: 1:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month: December 17 • January 21 • February 18

Local 93

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

Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month

December 9 • January 13 • February 10 Grievance Committee: 4:00 p.m. **Executive Board Meeting:** 5:00 p.m. **Membership Meeting:** 5:30 p.m.

Note: The office will be closed starting on December 22 and will reopen on January 5.

Local 653

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

Meetings are the third Wednesday of the month

December 17 • January 21 • February 18 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

December 3 • January 7 • February 4 **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:

December 17 • January 21 • February 18 Narcotics Anonymous: 5:30-6:30 p.m. every Tuesday

Local 801

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

Meetings are the third Thursday of the month

December 18 • January 22 • February 19

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

Local 1546

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

Meetings are the first Tuesday of the month

December 2 • January 6 • February 3 **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 December 30 • January 29 • February 26

Retiree Club Pot Luck Luncheon: 12 noon on the first Wednesday of each month

December 3 • January 7 • February 4 **Alcoholics Anonymous**: 9 a.m. every Saturday

Local IIOI

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

Meetings are the second Thursday of the month

December 11 • January 8 • February 12 **Executive Board Meeting:** 5:30 p.m. **General Membership Meeting:** 6:30 p.m.

Note: The office will be closed starting on December 22 and will reopen on January 5.

Local I584

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

Meetings are the third Thursday of the month

December 18 • January 22 • February 19 **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: December 2 • January 6 • February 3

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

December 11 • January 8 • February 12 Membership/Shop Stewards' Meeting: 6:30 p.m. on the the third Thursday of the month

December 18 • January 15 • February 19

.ocal 1596

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

Meetings are the third Tuesday of the month

December 16 • January 20 • February 17 **Executive Board Meeting**: 6:30 p.m. Membership Meeting: 7:00 p.m.

Local 1414

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

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

December 4 • January 8 • February 12

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

December 18 • January 22 • February 19

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

December 18 • January 22 • February 19

Retirees' Club: 11:00 a.m. on the first Wednesday of June, Sept., Dec., March. All are welcome! December 3 • March 4 • June 3 • September 2

Local 2005

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

.ocal 2182

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

Meetings are the second Tuesday of the month December 9 • January 13 • February 10

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

December 17 • January 21 • February 18