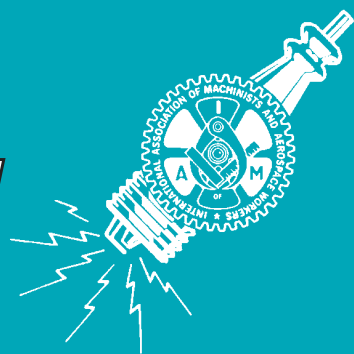


The IAM District 190 Sparkplug

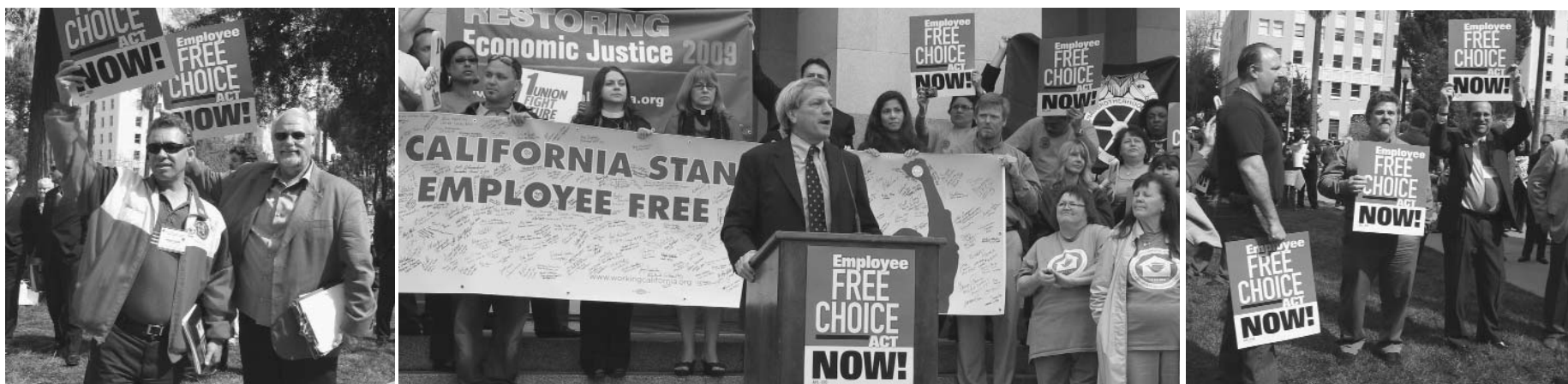


VOL. II NO. 2



April/May 2009

Serving the Active and Retired Members of IAM District Lodge 190



(Center) State Senator Mark DeSaulnier addresses the noontime rally at the State Capitol on March 17. (L&R) District 190 staff are all out for Employee Free Choice.

“This legislation puts power back into the hands of the people who are truly the backbone of this economy.”

Employee Free Choice Act introduced in Congress

Labor’s top priority, the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), was formally introduced in Congress on March 10. This bill would make it easier for workers to form unions and reduce management’s ability to intimidate and dissuade workers from unionization.

“Today is one of those defining moments in history,” said Senator Tom Harkin (D-IA) as he introduced the bill. “This legislation puts power back into the hands of the people who are truly the backbone of this economy.” His counterpart in the House, Rep. George Miller (D-CA), was equally enthusiastic. “If we want a fair and sustainable recovery from this economic crisis, we must give workers the ability to stand up for themselves and once again share in the prosperity they help to create,” Miller said.

The importance of the legislation is simple and clear. Polls show that 60 million U.S. workers would join a

union if they could because union workers on average make 30% more in wages than non-union workers and are more likely to have health insurance.

Both President Obama and Labor Secretary Hilda Solis strongly back the bill. While the bill has majority support in both houses of Congress, it currently does not have the 60-vote supermajority needed to pass it in the Senate.

Lining up Feinstein

One of the votes that bill supporters had been counting on was that of Dianne Feinstein. The California senator had sponsored the bill in 2007, but has since declared that she won’t support it as currently written. California unions have launched a massive letter-writing campaign to regain her support.

In his own letter to Senator Feinstein, Directing Business Representative Jim Beno provides a detailed list of the employers who fired work-

ers because they supported the union (*see below*). In most of these cases, the firings did just what the employer wanted—scared the rest of the workers away from the union.

“These are your constituents who, through no fault of their own, lost their livelihoods for merely exercising their protected rights under current law to form their own union,” Beno told Feinstein.

Power struggle

Called “a power struggle among labor unions and businesses,” the bill has fueled an enormous opposition campaign led by big business. The Chamber of Commerce, WalMart, Bank of America, Home Depot, and other anti-union allies, have pledged \$200 million to defeat the bill. The centerpiece of their campaign is to say that a secret ballot election is the only true form of democracy.

What they don’t say is that the EFCA does not eliminate secret ballot elections at all; rather it takes the choice out of the hands of management and lets workers choose between “card check” and holding an election. Under card check, the union would become the certified bargaining agent when a majority of employees sign cards indicating their desire to be represented by the union.

The current election process allows employers the time to identify union supporters and to take retaliatory actions against them. Even though it is currently illegal for employers to fire

or terminate employees for union activity, bosses know that in most cases they will lose little or nothing by violating the law, and will have effectively gained everything by killing the union organizing campaign.

While anti-union forces argue that gathering workers’ signatures on union cards alone is not sufficiently democratic, it is ironic that under current law, employers may *de-recognize* a union by merely showing a petition signed by a majority of its employees. This is card check in reverse and is legal under the present law.

The Employee Free Choice Act also includes a binding arbitration provision for first contracts. The IAM has years of experience to show this provision is needed. “Many times, we have won bargaining rights for employees just to see the employer utilize stall tactics, surface bargaining and intimidation to thwart any chance of obtaining a first contract,” Beno explained.

An alternative to the Employee Free Choice Act recently introduced by Costco, Starbucks and Whole Foods, proposes that 70% of workers, not 50%, sign organizing cards before they could start a union. So far, it appears that neither side of the EFCA debate likes this compromise.

Several Senators have dialed back their support for the Employee Free Choice Act, but Senator Harkin is confident that he’ll have amassed the necessary 60 votes in the Senate when it does come up for vote.

IAM organizing campaigns that resulted in union supporters getting fired

Employer	City	Employees fired
Maita Toyota	Sacramento	15
U-Haul	Fremont	15
Elk Grove Chrysler	Elk Grove	4
Big Valley Ford	Stockton	2
Concord Hyundai	Concord	2
Fairfield Ford	Fairfield	2
Geweke Ford	Lodi	2
Holder Ford	Lakeport	2
Silgan Containers	Antioch	2
Stevens Creek Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge	San Jose	2
Fremont BMW	Fremont	1
Geweke Ford	Yuba City	1
Green Valley Ford	Fairfield	1
Magnussen Toyota	Auburn	1
Serramonte Bodyshop	San Francisco	1
Stockton Dodge	Stockton	1
Sunnyvale Chrysler, Jeep, Dodge	Sunnyvale	1
Team Chevrolet	Vallejo	1
Ted Porter’s Beemer Shop	San Jose	1
Tracy Chevrolet	Tracy	1
Walnut Creek Ford	Walnut Creek	1

Have you written a letter to Senator Dianne Feinstein? It’s not too late.

We hear the Senator doesn’t listen to mass e-mails, but will pay attention to letters from her constituents. It doesn’t have to be long or detailed—just tell her that **NOW** is exactly the right time to support good union jobs and the EFCA.

The Honorable Dianne Feinstein, United States Senate
One Post Street, Suite 2450, San Francisco, CA 94104



UNION PEOPLE

Local 1546 honors first woman as steward of the year



On March 21, Local 1546 held its annual Steward's Appreciation dinner at a unique location—the Local's Oakland union hall. But it was hard to recognize the joint, as it was festooned with balloons and set formally for a few hundred diners. And the food was delightfully and deliciously prepared by Business Rep Robby Pintos, with a little help from his family and fellow Business Reps.

"This is our one opportunity to say thanks to our stewards," said Area Director Don Crosatto. "It's not an easy job in the best of times and this is far from the best of times. But you make our jobs as business reps much easier and we thank you."

The annual steward's award is named for Al James, a long-time steward at US Lines in the 1970s and 80s. This year, Crosatto presented the award to San Leandro Nissan steward Christine Huddleston. "Christine richly deserves this award because she has to work in a hostile work environment with management who want to blow the union out. She has even had to testify in court about her boss." Crosatto noted that she was the first woman to receive the annual award.

Christine said she became a union member when she was 16 years old. She started as a Teamster, and became an IAM member when she became a Parts Associate at San Leandro Nissan eight years ago. "The guys knew I was boisterous, so they voted me shop steward. Sometimes it feels like I have a target on my back, but I'm glad to be in the union, and glad to have a contract settled," Christine said. Upon receiving the award, she announced, "I'm going to hang this up at my desk on Monday morning just to let the boss know what a good job I'm doing!"

Congratulations on 25 good years!



Members Florello Jayme and Michael Mamone, who both work at Stevens Creek BMW, received their 25-year membership pins at Local 1101's March membership meeting. (L to R: Jayme, Mamone, and Local 1101 President Al Anderson.)

Beno brings IAM members' interest to the green economy

Today's economy does not just need to be rebuilt, it needs to be rebuilt "green"—to tackle the dual threats of global warming and dependence on foreign oil. With the passage of AB32, California's landmark initiative to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 1990 levels by 2020, industries across the state need to find ways to change how they conduct business. Moving into the green economy will have a direct impact on the lives and work of District 190 members, in both the automotive and manufacturing sectors.

For that reason, Directing Business Rep Jim Beno has started participating in several green initiatives and committees.

First, in January, he was named Chair of the Green Jobs Labor Roundtable, an AB32 Working Group of the California Labor Federation's Executive Committee. This committee was established to explore the emerging technologies of the new green economy and the impact and challenges these present to the California workforce.

Then, in March, he was named by the Air Resources Board to serve on the Economic and Technology Advancement Advisory Committee (ETAAC). The Committee was formed as directed by the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006 to "advise the California Air Resources Board (ARB) on activities that will facilitate investment in and implementation of technological research and development opportunities including, but not limited to, identifying new technologies, research, demonstration projects, funding opportunities, developing state, national, and international partner-

ships and technology transfer opportunities, and identifying and assessing research and advanced technology investment and incentive opportunities that will assist in the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions."

"With the changeover to the green economy, a lot of new manufacturing will be coming into California," explained Beno. "We want to be at the forefront to be sure our members have the skills they need to stay employed in the new industries. We want to know where these new industries are being located, so that we can direct our active and unemployed members to these jobs and offer apprenticeship training as needed, and organize new people coming into the field."

Beno explained that the ARB is reviewing a wide range of possible technological changes in the automotive and trucking industries to achieve energy efficiency and curb greenhouse gases. The ARB is imposing new stricter rules on emissions and retrofitting of diesel trucks, and looking at new hybrid and other technologies.

"For example, they're studying cool paints. They study the reflective value of the paint that goes onto cars to make them run cooler and more efficiently by reflecting. At this point, the paint industry isn't even prepared to introduce these products, but watch for it in the near future. The ARB is looking at everything."

The ETAAC committee has members from academia, the environmental community and industry. Beno is the only labor representative on the committee.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

We'll be glad to print "Letters" when we get them, but none were received this edition. 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:

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The IAM District 190 *Sparkplug*



Debra Chaplan,
Managing Editor



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Postmaster: Send address corrections to: The Sparkplug, 7717 Oakport Street,



HEALTH & SAFETY



Responding to death of IAM member, labor introduces new law to protect workers from heat stress

July 8 was one of the hottest days of 2008 and for Frank Pacheco, who was Local 1546-represented truck mechanic at the Safeway warehouse in Tracy, it was his last.

“Frank started feeling bad during the day,” says Local 1546 Business Rep Steve Older. “He asked to go home and got permission. But his car was across a big parking lot and by the time he reached it, he had become incoherent and collapsed. A nearby truck driver saw him and called for help. He was immediately taken to the hospital, but he died five days later and the immediate cause was heat exposure.”

OSHA did an investigation and cited Safeway for not having a good injury and illness protection plan, which would have included training about heat issues. If Frank’s co-workers had known what to look for, they might have caught it earlier.

Frank Pacheco died that day but his death led to the development of legislation to ensure that other workers don’t have the same fate.

Protecting workers from indoor heat exposure

An effective approach to heat-related illness is vital to protect the lives of California workers. The key to preventing heat-related illness is to train employers and workers on how to identify heat-related hazards and to implement proper controls and work practices. Unfortunately, in many cases, neither the workers nor their employers have the awareness of the symptoms that would alert them to report heat illness cases before it is too late.

Sandre Swanson (D-Oakland) introduced AB 838, the Indoor Heat Illness Regulation, which will require the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) to create a regulation by July 1, 2011, that will protect workers at indoor places of employment from heat illness.

Heat stress poses a serious health threat to workers in hot indoor environments, such as industrial laundries, warehouses, and foundries. Exposure to extreme temperatures routinely leads to heat-related illnesses that can progress to heat stroke and be fatal if not treated.

Throughout California, thousands of workers toil in workplaces that expose them to tremendously hot conditions during the workday, espe-

cially during the summer months. Workers in the food processing industry labor in close proximity to continuously running equipment that cooks and dries products all day. Many of these plants are in areas of the state that reach extreme temperatures, have no air conditioning, and require workers to constantly put forth high levels of exertion.

More than 20,000 Californians work in industrial laundries. Indoor temperatures in this industry often exceed 100°. Combined with a moisture intense environment leading to high humidity, the heat index in such workplaces can easily be 120-130°. This is a danger zone where heat exhaustion and heat cramps leading to heat stroke can easily occur.

Other examples of workers in industries with hot indoor environments include: auto service technicians, warehouse workers, steelworkers, pastry bakers, iron, steel and nonferrous foundry workers, brick firing and ceramics operations, glass products manufacturing plants, rubber products manufacturing plants, electrical utilities, restaurant kitchens, smelters, and steam tunnels.

Workers must be educated on the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness. The work process must also be adapted on very hot days or during heat waves. Workers and employers must be educated that those workers just starting out in a hot workplace need a period of acclimatization so that their bodies can adequately cool themselves. All workers must be provided with more frequent and longer rest breaks, and water and electrolyte-replacing liquids.

No time to wait

Following the brutal 2005 heat wave that caused the death of several farmworkers, Cal/OSHA developed an outdoor heat illness regulation. At that time, however, Cal/OSHA decided that a regulation for indoor workers could wait.

Unfortunately, Pacheco and a warehouse worker in Lancaster, could not wait. Had an indoor heat regulation been in place, these two workers would have been trained along with their co-workers on how to recognize, prevent, and treat the symptoms of heat illness and they might be alive today.

Even one preventable death on the job is too many. The time to create a heat standard to protect indoor workers will alert medical providers and employers to the dangers of heat in the workplace and save lives.

Facts about heat stress

You don’t have to work in the desert to suffer from too much heat on the job. Even in a moderate climate, many work activities are hot and uncomfortable. But discomfort isn’t the only problem.

If you don’t take proper precautions, heat can give you a rash, make you pass out, or even kill you. Sometimes you reach your limit, and you just have to know that it’s time to stop.

Early symptoms

- Feeling tired and less mentally alert. This increases the danger of accidents.
- Sweating. The body produces sweat so the evaporation will cool you off. Sweating isn’t as effective if the air is very humid, because not as much sweat evaporates.
- Heat rash—this happens when your sweat glands swell and get plugged up.
- Sunburn—this happens if you’re in direct sunlight too long without sunscreen. Sunburn can be painful and may lead to skin cancer.

What heat stress does to your body

- The first symptom is usually **heat cramps**. If you don’t replace the fluids and salts (called electrolytes) that you lose by sweating, you may get muscle pain or muscle spasms.
 - **Heat exhaustion** can follow. Your whole body (especially your circulatory system) is extremely stressed.
 - **Heat stroke** is the most serious stage of heat stress. Your body temperature shoots up. 50% of people with heat stroke die. Symptoms are:
 - Dizziness and confusion
 - Red, hot, dry skin
 - Nausea and vomiting
 - Very little sweating
 - Rapid pulse
 - Convulsions
 - Fainting
 - High body temperature (around 105° F)
- Anyone with heat stroke must be taken to a doctor or hospital immediately.*

Best treatment for the different stages of heat stress

- Heat cramps:** Stop work, drink fluids, and rest in a cool area. Drinking electrolyte solutions may also help.
- Heat exhaustion:** Give first aid by moving the person to a cool place to rest. Remove as much clothing as possible. Give the person water. Drinking electrolyte solutions may also help. Don’t allow the person to get chilled, and treat for shock if necessary. Get medical help.

Precautions to take on the worksite to prevent heat stress

- Every company should:**
- Provide training so that workers understand the symptoms of heat stress.
 - Assign strenuous work during cooler parts of the day.
 - Rotate workers in strenuous, hot jobs so no one is exposed too long.
 - Shield or enclose sources of heat (like furnaces) to minimize radiant heat.
 - Provide water-cooled garments or ice-pocket vests where necessary.
 - Keep first aid supplies and equipment available.
- Workers should:**
- Drink a lot of cool water (or an electrolyte solution) even if you don’t feel thirsty. Drink at least a quart an hour, depending on conditions.
 - Take frequent breaks in an air-conditioned or shaded area.
 - Wear appropriate clothing when in the sun.
- from Labor Occupational Health Program,
UC Berkeley

Local 93**New classifications will lead to new members**

Local 93 members who work for VSC Corporation just agreed to a letter of understanding that adds seven employee classifications. "This actually enables the Local to expand its membership to people who work in different areas of the company," said Business Rep Richard Breckenridge. "Right now, we represent almost 100 members. The company thinks that they may grow to 115-125."

With the service contract at Fort Hunter Liggett, VSC oversees the work of the civilian employees. "Our members work on military vehicles and handle supply and all kinds of stuff. Mostly, they do military games, so our guys repair the tents, trucks, and equipment," Breckenridge explained.

The new categories include gunsmith, HVAC technician, electronic tech, welder, working team lead, mechanics helper and ground support equipment worker.

Local 93 & 1101**Cementing a good deal**

Locals 93 and 1101 recently completed negotiations and ratified a multi-craft agreement with Lehigh Southwest Cement in Cupertino. Local 93 represents the plant and quarry maintenance crew and Local 1101 represents the mobile equipment mechanics.

The new seven-year contract provides for continuously escalating wage and pension increases over the life of the contract, including freezing health and welfare premium contributions at the 2008 rate through 2010, followed by a reduction in the percentage of the employee monthly premium share. Other unions covered by this Agreement include, IBEW, IBT, OE, LIUNA & CLG Division of the Boilermakers. Local 93 Business Rep Sam Saiu chaired the union committee, on behalf of the Santa Clara San Benito Building & Construction Trades Council and the International and Local Unions.

Local 801**A new deal at the Galley**

Local 801 is currently in negotiations with Saperstein Services, who runs the Galley at the Naval Air Station in Fallon, Nevada. "This is a challenge, because the previous contractor, Moore's Cafeteria Services, signed an extremely cheap contract, and Saperstein has to live under it," Martin explained. "We're reasonably close to reaching an agreement."

Local 1101**First contract ratified**

Forty-seven new members of Local 1101 who work at Stevens Creek Lexus ratified their first agreement in February. "Our biggest achievement with this contract was to take care of 95% of the complaints that members had, which led them to want a union in the first place," said Business Rep Richard Breckenridge. "The wages weren't as high as we wanted them but at \$27-28, they're pretty good. Mostly, the members now have a lot of important protections—the contract is a really big security blanket so that these techs don't get any more cuts."

Frozen Miracle

Seven members of Locals 1546, 1173 and 1101, and Painters Local 1176 members who work at Miracle Auto Painting in several locations have a new contract. "They agreed to a freeze across the board on everything," explained Breckenridge, who chaired the negotiations for the three locals. "This industry is hard hit, and at least they didn't have to take any cuts."

Local 1414**First contract at Penske Tanforan**

On March 25, the employees at Penske Tanforan voted 6-0 for a first agreement. District 190 has been working on this shop for about five months. The company recognized the union when all of the employees signed union cards.

Area Director Tom Brandon and

Business Rep Dave Taylor worked to get the employees to sign union cards. Area Director for Local 1101 Jim Schwantz took over negotiations as he has worked with the company in the past. This shop has four new members and three transfers from other Penske shops due to lay-offs.

The contract takes effect March 1, 2009 through September 30, 2012. The contract gives the workers at this facility \$28.74 an hour wage rate, comparable to the wages of other Penske shops. It also puts them in the IAM National Pension Plan at \$1.15 an hour the first year going up to \$1.50 in 2011.

Brandon says that getting this contract was truly a team effort by District 190 and the rank and file members from the new shop, as well as the members who transferred from Local Lodges 1101 and 1546.

Strike at Grace Honda shines light on need for labor law reform

After more than six months on the line in all types of weather, the strike at

Grace Honda in San Bruno continue. The members, their families and many volunteer supporters are still fighting—not only for their jobs and contract but even more, to ensure that other shops are not impacted by this company's repressive proposals. Local 1414 members are on the picket line to win a enforceable contract that guarantees decent wages, benefits and working conditions.

With the new administration in Washington comes an opportunity to pass legislation and begin the process of repairing the broken labor law system. The Employee Free Choice Act will create an environment that protects workers from employer retaliation and includes arbitration to ensure the parties bargain in good faith and ultimately achieve a fair contract. The Grace Honda situation is an example of how broken the system is and how much the EFCA is needed.

Stop by the picket line – walk with these men and maybe bring them coffee or something to eat. Or, send the local contribution for the Grace Honda strike.

Local 1173

In an unusual act of dealership-wide charity, the mechanics, service manager and owner of Fitzpatrick Chevrolet in Concord completely refurbished a Chevy Trailblazer so that it could safely transport a 14-year old Martinez girl for her cancer treatments at UC San Francisco.

When dealership owner Denny Fitzpatrick was asked to look over the Fulton family's vehicle to see what it would take to fix it, he didn't hesitate. However, when word came back that it needed a new engine and that the cost for parts and labor would be about \$6,000, Fitzpatrick decided to look for options.

He asked Service Manager Tom Mimiaga to scout out a used engine in good condition, and to ask if any of the mechanics might come in at night or on weekends to donate their time to the cause. "Armed with the original newspaper article about the young lady, I

Mechanics us

Service techs who volunteered time to work on Bailey, Mark Ellyson, Jeff Grah, Karl Rhinebold

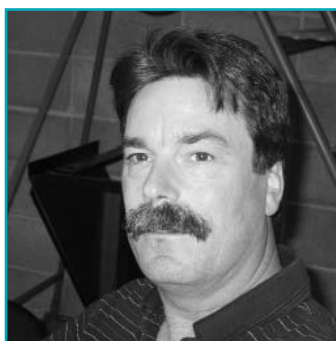
explained to our techs what we wanted to do," says Mimiaga. "We got overwhelming support from the guys. Probably more than we needed."

According to the flat rate book, the engine replacement was a 15-20 hour job. "In the course of a week, the guy

SHOP TALK: With all the bad news in the world, tell us some good news...

Mike Thacker
UPS
Local 1546

"We're still working—haven't been laid off yet."



John McGlinchy
Berkeley Honda
Local 1546

"I'm an optimist and I think we're going to come out of this soon. It forces us to think about the important stuff—like family."



Nat Courtney
Executive Board
Local 1546

"Our new administration is going to renew life into our union and into American labor."



Frank Alvarez
Autowest Honda-Fremont
Local 1546

"Hopefully, history will repeat itself as far as the economy goes. Hopefully, we're at the bottom now and it'll start to come up. With the new administration, we have some hope."



Scott Alair
Infiniti of Pleasanton
Local 1546

"I have my job still. I'm optimistic that we've hit bottom and will turn the corner. And '09 will end better than '08 did."



Christine
San Le
Lo

"I still have my job. The industry is still here. Hopefully, it

THE LOCALS



rs. “It’s all our fight,” says Business Rep Don Barbe.

As *The Sparkplug* goes to press, two rallies are being planned. The first will be on Friday, April 10 from noon to 3:30 sponsored by UFCW Local 101 and the Teamsters. The second rally, sponsored by Painters & Glaziers District Council 6, will be on Saturday, April 11, from 9 a.m. to noon. Come on by!

Local 1528
More time to close facility

Even though the Army Ammunition Plant in Modesto was slated to close, the members of NI Industries who work there ratified a two-month extension of their agreement, which had been set to expire on January 31, so that they could continue working under contract until the facility closed on March 31. The facility had been put on the national base closures list three years ago.

The vote was 26-0 in favor of the extended agreement. “Our members had continued to do what was needed to close down the facility and the com-

pany and union agreed to several extensions,” says Local 1528 Business Rep Gilbert Gonzalez. “For the last few months, we got the members a wage increase of \$0.50 an hour for all classifications and a \$0.05 increase in pension contributions. Most important, we got a severance package put into the agreement.”

Gonzalez says that the employer wanted the union and its employees to sign a “release of claims” form in order to get severance. “After a lot of discussion and the help of our legal counsel, Caren Senser, we were able to get this done. My thanks to my committee, Nick Moreno and John Blowers, and to the whole shop for their patience and help in completing these negotiations.”

Local 1596
Bayshore International

On March 20, the 17 members of Local 1596 who work at Bayshore International in Rohnert Park ratified a new one-year contract.

their skills to help cancer patient



car include: (from Left) Tom Clymens, John Beard and, front, Roberto Morales.

spent some lunch breaks, time after work, and then four guys and I came in on a Saturday, working together like a pit crew on it. We were done by noon,” Mimiaga says.

But when they took the car on a road test, they found a few more problems.

Not only were the front brakes worn but the transmission was shot. To help the family get their vehicle back quicker, Mimiaga was quick to credit “our world-class GM tech, Karl Rhinebeck. He took a day off work and re-built the transmission.” The car was delivered back to the Fulton family fully detailed, with a new gas cap and a full tank of gas.

“There are a lot of things in life you can’t control, but when there are occasions when you can do something to help, it’s therapeutic for everybody,” Fitzpatrick told the *Contra Costa Times*.

Fitzpatrick Chevrolet has been in Concord for 61 years. In April, the company was pleased to celebrate shop foreman John Bailey’s 40th anniversary of work there as a union mechanic. (Bailey is pictured, second from the left.)

Freezing Stero

When times are tight, taking a freeze may be the best option—to hold out for better times. The members at Stero Co. in Petaluma just made that choice. “The company wants to negotiate a new contract, so we’re moving ahead with our first proposal meeting,” said Area Director Tom Brandon.

Local 2182
AMR contract talks slow but sure

First, there was a decertification vote at four American Medical Response locations, which the IAM won handily. Then, there was an organizing drive at three more locations, where the members also voted for IAM representation. Now, the union is in negotiations for two separate contracts, which are going slowly but steadily.

“The original group covers Sacramento, Concord/San Leandro, and San Mateo and the new groups that we recently organized are Stockton, Modesto and San Jose,” explained Business Rep Skip Hatch. “The employer is using the old and slow method of bargaining, proposing items they know we won’t give in on. Nevertheless, we anticipate that we’ll have both contracts completed in the near future.”

Rollbacks requested

The management at Hubacher Cadillac has approached Local 2182 to request concessions to our current contract. “They want wages rolled back to 2007 levels for many of the employees,” said Hatch. “We’ll have more to report in a future issue.”

Looking for options in tough times

Several members of Local 2182 have been laid off at Toyota Material Handling in the past few months, and the company is asking to freeze wages for a minimum of six months.

“We’re taking a look at all options at this point to determine what might be necessary,” Area Director Mark Martin

said. “We’re hoping that the business climate improves enough to make these type of decisions unnecessary.

More freezes?

The City of Sacramento has approached Local 2182 asking for a wage freeze for the next two years with modest increases in following years. “We have meetings in the near future and will have more to report in the next issue of *The Sparkplug*,” said Martin.

Good news at Earthgrains/Sara Lee

Coordinated bargaining for locals 801, 1101, 1414, 1546 and 2182 and Earthgrains/Sara Lee reached a positive settlement in March. “We have a four-year contract with the company for all the locals that includes reasonable wage increases and health and welfare protection for the term of this contract. It’s definitely good news during this tough time,” Martin added.

Multiple Locals
Pushing for UPS

For the first time in many years, times are tough at UPS; their national negotiators claim that fewer packages are being shipped as a result of the bad economy. However, negotiations are moving ahead.

“We should have the local negotiations completed on April 13 when we meet with the company,” said Directing Business Rep Jim Beno. “Then we go to Ft. Lauderdale, FL for the national negotiations, which are being held April 20-23. This is where we’ll negotiate the economic issues.”

When it comes to package shipping, UPS is the only union carrier. FedEx has been actively involved in fighting the Employee Free Choice Act because they don’t want their employees to join a union. “Remember to use UPS for your package shipping needs. You’ll support IAM members, Teamsters, and a solid union company,” Beno added.



Edleston Nissan Local 1546

the dealer- and our its own. ets better.”



Ted Tsuda Lexus of Pleasanton Local 1546

“I still have a job and we haven’t gone through too many layoffs. Business has been steady, gas prices have been level, and the new President has a lot of optimism.”



Steve Newton Transbay Container Local 1546

“Our terminal has taken on new shipping lines and ships keep coming in. We’re in a period of expansion and things will turn around. It won’t happen overnight, but we didn’t get into this situation overnight.”



Randy Gooch Ford Store of San Leandro Local 1546

“Being employed and being able to support the family is very positive nowadays. I think we’re moving in the right direction.”



Gene O’Connor Ford Store of San Leandro Local 1546

“We’re busy enough that nobody’s worried about layoffs, so far. Staying employed is a good thing. Hopefully, the administration will turn things around. I think and hope we’re headed in the right direction.”



Bob Ecklund Fabco Automotive Local 1546

“With the new administration, there’s hope for the future. While things are tough now, I’m hopeful the president is putting us on the right track, and it should pay off in a few years.”

IN THE NEWS

30,000 jobs lost each day in March

The bloodletting of U.S. jobs continues at an unprecedented pace. In March, the number of jobless workers worsened by 663,000, to 13.2 million, and the unemployment rate rose to 8.5 percent. That's about 30,000 jobs lost for each work day.

In its monthly jobs report, the Labor Department sums up the latest data, which paint a dire picture of the labor market: since the recession began in December 2007, 5.1 million jobs have been lost, with almost two-thirds (3.3 million) of the decrease occurring in the last five months.

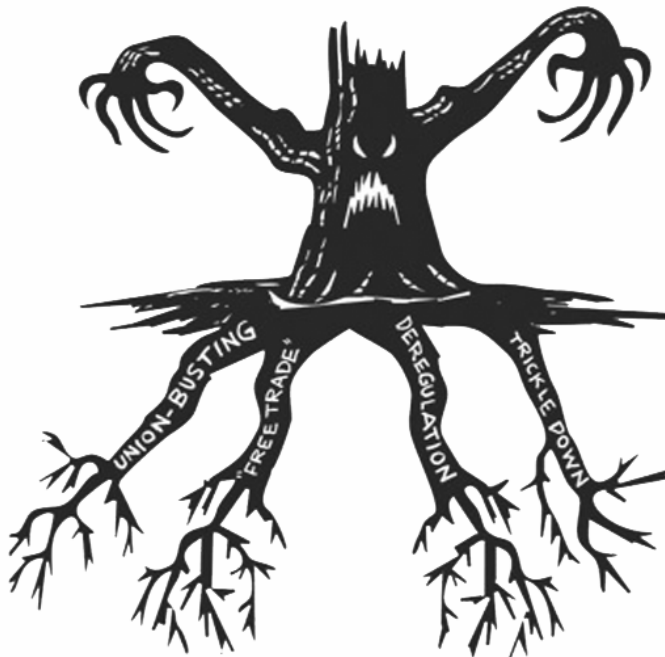
If those who are underemployed or who want a job but have given up looking are counted, the U.S. unemployment rate stands at a horrifying 15.6 percent—nearly 25 million Americans.

Worse, those who are jobless can't find new employment. In March 2009, 24.2 percent of the jobless were out of work for more than six months, surpassing the previous recession peak of 19.8 percent in November 1982, says the National Employment Law Project (NELP). There are nearly four jobless workers for every job opening and long-term joblessness is likely to grow further in the months ahead. The long-term unemployed may approach or exceed 30 percent of all jobless workers by 2010.

"Unfortunately, all the trends indicate that the worst is yet to come," says Sylvia Allegretto, an economist at the Institute for Research on Labor and Employment. Long-term unemployment usually peaks after the official end of the recession, but with levels already this high, it is likely that long-term joblessness will hit an all-time record in the months ahead.

As AFL-CIO President John Sweeney says, "It is unacceptable that America's workers are suffering through the worst job loss in a generation while many politicians are

The Roots of our Current Economic Crisis



still standing in the way of reform. Fixing our unemployment problem is as important to ending the recession as addressing the banking system."

Tula Connell, AFL-CIO Now

GAO: Dept. of Labor failed to protect workers

Federal agents posing as workers have completed an undercover investigation of the Department of Labor (DOL) that has resulted in claims that the department frequently mishandles serious worker complaints, placing many workers at risk. The outcome of the investigation is detailed in a new report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO) that found DOL mishandled nine out of the 10 cases included in the undercover operation.

The report, which was released on March 25, found that the agency's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) not only failed to properly investigate wage and hour complaints, but also ignored a complaint that underage children were working at a California meatpacking plant during school hours, a violation of a number of labor laws.

The GAO filed 10 common complaints with WHD district offices across the country. The undercover tests revealed "sluggish response times, a poor complaint intake process and failed conciliation attempts, among other problems," said GAO in its report. "In one case, a WHD investigator lied about investigative work performed and did not investigate GAO's fictitious complaint."

Upon learning of the findings of the investigation, Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis commented, "I take the issues raised by the GAO investigation regarding past enforcement very seriously."

"This investigation clearly shows that the DOL has left thousands of actual victims of wage theft who sought federal government assistance with nowhere to turn," the report said. "Unfortunately, far too often the result is unscrupulous employers taking advantage of our country's low-wage workers."

Solis said that as Secretary of Labor, she is committed "to ensuring that every worker is paid at least the minimum wage, that those who work overtime are properly compen-

sated, that child labor laws are strictly enforced and that every worker is provided a safe and healthful environment."

According to Solis, the DOL's Wage and Hour Division already has begun the process of adding 150 new investigators to its field offices to refocus the agency on these enforcement responsibilities. In addition, under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the agency will hire 100 investigators to ensure that contractors on stimulus projects are in compliance with applicable laws.

Sandy Smith, EHS Today

Former Pilots president nominated to head Federal Aviation Administration

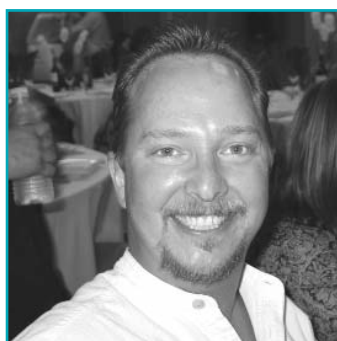
Capt. Randy Babbitt, who spent 25 years in the cockpit beginning with Eastern Airlines and served two terms as president of the Air Line Pilots Assn. (ALPA), was nominated last week by President Obama to take over the controls of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA).

The White House announcement of his appointment said Babbitt is a nationally recognized leader in the fields of aviation safety, policy, and labor relations with almost 40 years of experience in the industry.

"The FAA is at a critical moment in its history. Budget and management problems have prevented the agency from expanding and modernizing the system. Safety reforms are long overdue. And the agency's broken collective bargaining system needs to be reformed," Edward Wytkind, president of the AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department said. "Randy Babbitt will provide the leadership the FAA needs to work through these challenges, better protect workers, and serve the flying public."

Mike Hall, AFL-CIO Now

SHOP TALK: Here's more good news!



Robert Taylor
Waste Management
Local 1546

"We're steady. We're employed. I think Obama will legalize gambling and marijuana."



Robert Cole
Waste Management
Local 1546

"We're looking at three more years of a solid contract."



Steven Dearborn
Waste Management
Local 1546

"I'm looking for a puppy to brighten my life because I don't see much else out there."



Keith Hamilton
Pacific Motor Trucking
Local 1546

"Change is around the corner and change is good."



Dan Kaiser
Golden Gate Truck Center
Local 1546

"My custom embroidery business is booming!"



GUEST EDITORIALS



Passage of unemployment insurance extension a big victory for labor

by Art Pulaski
Executive Secretary-Treasurer,
California Labor Federation

Responding to months of advocacy from the California Labor Federation and our affiliated unions, Governor Schwarzenegger has just signed two pieces of legislation that will bring desperately needed help to more than 400,000 California families.

The legislation – ABx3 23 and ABx3 29 – will take two important steps to bring relief to the state’s unemployed. The first will allow long term laid-off workers to collect up to an additional 20 weeks of benefits through the end of the year. These benefits, included as part of the federal stimulus package, will start flowing immediately to workers who run out of the current benefit extensions, giving workers up to 79 weeks of help. This provision will put money straight into work-

ers’ pockets, helping both families and the larger economy.

The second step, which allows the state to draw down an additional \$839 million in federal aid, will help more than 30,000 workers a year qualify for benefits by adopting an alternative base period for calculating unemployment eligibility. This change – which the Federation has sought for more than a decade – will allow workers to use their most recent earnings to qualify for benefits. Because of the time needed to transition the state’s computer system to implement this change, it won’t take effect immediately.

These big legislative victories only happened because of the strong support of our unions and members across California. Many thanks for all of your help over the past several months and for the work we’ll all be undertaking to get this aid out to workers in the coming weeks.

Make California’s budget process effective and responsible

By Senator Loni Hancock

This year’s state budget set the record for being the latest, and probably the worst, budget in California’s history. The delay was longer than in previous years, but not unusual: fourteen of the last eighteen budgets have been late. They have also run deficits, borrowed money that will have to be repaid, and made cuts that affect every family.

These budgets are due in large part to a 1933 constitutional amendment that requires a 2/3 vote of each house of the legislature to approve a budget. California is one of only three states in the US. with this undemocratic requirement—the other two are Rhode Island and Arkansas.

There are three reasons why the 2/3 voting requirement is a very bad idea:

1) **The Principle:** Democracy is based on the principle of “one person, one vote.” No city, county or school district in California requires a 2/3 majority to pass its budget—not one. President Obama’s budget would not have passed if Congress required a 2/3 vote. It is simply not fair to require two ‘yes’ votes for every ‘no’ vote to get something done.

2) **The Results:** They have been terrible for California—budgets are delayed and education, public transit, infrastructure and health care have been drastically cut.

3) **The “Take-Aways”:** In recent years, the minority has made demands that have nothing to do with balancing the budget as the price of the few votes needed to make that 2/3. This year these “take-aways” included labor protections that unions have worked for decades to achieve and billions of dollars in business tax cuts—

money that could have been used to educate our kids, fix our streets and support our elderly.

Also, this year, “take-aways” included amendments to the California Constitution that were put on the ballot without legislative hearings or public deliberations in the dead of night. This is not the way to run a government!

It doesn’t have to be this way. That’s why I have introduced a state constitutional amendment to change the 2/3 requirement to a simple majority.

Californians deserve an on-time budget and a budget that meets the needs of their families. In a democracy, the majority determines how we pool our money to buy together what we can’t afford to buy separately. That is, after all, what taxes are for because most individual families cannot afford to buy their own schools, libraries, roads, buses, train systems, police and fire protection.

I believe that this year’s record-setting late budget, severe cuts and rancorous negotiations have made us realize that it is time to enact real budget reform. We simply cannot continue this downward spiral of draconian cuts and “take-aways.” The change begins with restoring a majority vote to pass the state budget.

I hope you will join me in supporting SCA-5, a constitutional amendment to remove the 2/3 voting requirement. It’s time to end gridlock, restore democracy and insure that California once again has a thriving economy and serves as a model for the nation and the world. Let’s put California back on that track moving in the right direction.

Senator Loni Hancock represents the 9th District and serves as Chair of the Elections, Reapportionment and Constitutional Amendments Committee.

2009 Hawgs for Dogs Events Calendar



Saturday & Sunday April 18 & 19, 2009	3rd Annual Arlen Ness Bike Show (Hawgs for Dogs Booth) San Mateo County Event Center 2495 Delaware Street, San Mateo
Saturday May 23, 2009	Pasta Pig Out (Spaghetti Feed) The Florence, 37349 Niles Boulevard, Fremont Details to be announced
Saturday August 8, 2009	Chili Cook-Off The Florence, 37349 Niles Boulevard, Fremont Details to be announced
Saturday October 17, 2009	16th Annual West Coast Hawgs for Dogs Motorcycle Poker Run Details to be announced

Proceeds from these events benefit Guide Dogs of America

SHOP TALK: Here’s more good news!



Don Chin
Hertz
Local 1546

“I’m thankful I’m employed and paying my union dues. I hope and pray that the new president can get things turned around and everybody who wants a job has one.”



George Henry
General Grinding
Local 1546

“My daughter was accepted to at least three different colleges. They reassessed the taxes on my house for less. I’m still married to my first wife and I’m still working.”



Jason Dean
Pacific Motor Trucking
Local 1546

“The good news is that I still have a job and I’m still married and I have two beautiful children.”



Werner Feldhaus
Penske Truck Leasing
Local 1546

“I just went to the doctor and I’m cleared—my cancer is gone. That’s great news!”



Dave Ingalls
Penske—Hayward
Local 1546

“I’m healthy, still working and high on the seniority list. I’m thankful for my seven-month old grandson.”

Important notice of Bylaw revisions
for members of Local 1546

First reading:

Second reading and Vote:

Place:

Time:

April 7, 2009

May 5, 2009

Union Hall: 10260 MacArthur Blvd.,
Oakland, CA 94605

No later than 9:00 p.m.

Bylaws revisions affecting the following provisions of the Local Lodge 1546 Bylaws will be acted upon:

Article II	Section 6	Duties of the Secretary-Treasurer
Article III	Section 1 (1st para)	Include Election Day
Article III	Section 3 (2nd para)	Shop Stewards Meeting
Article VI	Section 2 (2nd para)	Low Wage Dues Structure
Article VI	Section 2 (3rd para)	Include Labor Organizations

Fraternally,

W.J. Schechter, Recording Secretary

East Bay Automotive Machinists, Local Lodge 1546

ATPA

ASSOCIATED
THIRD
PARTY
ADMINISTRATORS

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

Contact us at 510-836-2484

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.

UNION MEETINGS

District
Lodge I90

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

Meetings are the fourth Tuesday of each month
April 28 • May 26 • June 23
Executive Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m.
General Delegates' Meeting: 7:30 p.m.

Local 1484

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

Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the third
Thursday of the month
April 16 • May 21 • June 18
General Membership Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the
first Tuesday of the month
April 7 • May 5 • June 2
Retirees' Club: 1:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of
the month: April 15 • May 20 • June 17

Local 93

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

Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month
April 14 • May 12 • June 9
Grievance Committee: 4:00 p.m.
Executive Board Meeting: 5:00 p.m.
Membership Meeting: 5:30 p.m.

Local 1528

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

Meetings are the first Wednesday of the month
April 1 • May 6 • June 3
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:
April 15 • May 20 • June 17
Narcotics Anonymous: 5:30-6:30 p.m. every Tuesday

Local 653

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

Meetings are the third Wednesday of the month
April 15 • May 20 • June 17
Executive Board Meeting: 5:00 p.m.
Membership Meeting: 5:30 p.m.

Local 1546

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

Meetings are the first Tuesday of the month
April 7 • May 5 • June 2
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
April 30 • May 28 • July 2
Retiree Club Pot Luck Luncheon: 12 noon on the
first Wednesday of each month
April 1 • May 6 • June 3
Alcoholics Anonymous: 9 a.m. every Saturday

Local 80I

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

Meetings are the third Thursday of the month
April 16 • May 21 • June 18
Membership Meeting: 4:00 p.m.
Meetings are held at the Carpenters' Hall, in Reno.

Local 1584

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

Meetings are the third Thursday of the month
April 16 • May 21 • June 18
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: April 2 • May 5 • June 2

Local 110I

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

Meetings are the second Thursday of the month
April 9 • May 14 • June 11
Executive Board Meeting: 5:30 p.m.
General Membership Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

Local 1596

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

Meetings are the third Tuesday of the month
April 21 • May 19 • June 16
Executive Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m.
Membership Meeting: 7:00 p.m.

Local 1173

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

Executive Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m. on the second
Thursday of the month
April 9 • May 14 • June 11
Membership/Shop Stewards' Meeting: 6:30 p.m. on
the third Thursday of the month
April 16 • May 21 • June 18

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.

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
April 2 • May 7 • June 4
Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the second
Thursday of the month
April 9 • May 14 • June 11
General Membership Meeting: 6:30 p.m. on the
third Thursday of the month
April 16 • May 21 • June 18
Retirees' Club: 11:00 a.m. on the first Wednesday of
March, June, Sept., Dec. All are welcome!
June 3 • September 2 • December 2

Local 2182

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

Meetings are the second Tuesday of the month
April 14 • May 12 • June 9
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
April 15 • May 20 • June 17