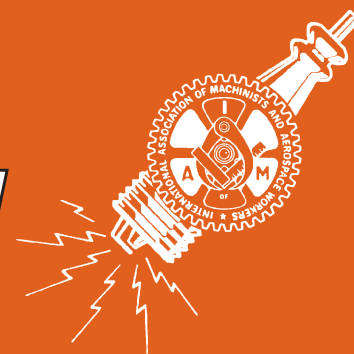


The IAM District 190 Sparkplug



VOL. 14 NO. 1



February/March 2012

Serving the Active and Retired Members of IAM District Lodge 190

IAM's investment in arbitration training reaps benefits



We all know it pays to belong to a union, but for hundreds of members of District 190, having a contract really made a difference in 2011. Last year, business representatives filed for arbitration against 10 different employers who failed to honor the terms of their respective collective bargaining agreements with the Machinists union. All but one was won or settled favorably for the members involved.

"2011 was a very telling year for the success of the arbitration review process that DBR Benoit instituted several years ago," reports Assistant Directing Business Rep Mark Hollibush. "The union won or successfully settled every case that was approved by the District Arbitration Review Committee." Those wins resulted in:

- almost a dozen terminated members reinstated to their jobs and made whole;
- increased wage rates awarded for work being performed by our members;
- medical co-pays substantially decreased;
- back pay awards exceeding \$5000 per member in many separate instances.

"The success of these arbitrations are due to the extensive training, skills and commitment that the business representatives of District 190

give to each grievance...from beginning to end," says Hollibush.

The union has developed a process by which every grievance is thoroughly investigated. If the grievance is found to have merit, the business representative immediately starts down the path of resolving the matter. Ultimately, some unresolved grievances lead the union to file for arbitration. At this stage of the grievance procedure, the business representative's skills and training really become evident. He presents the grievance to the District 190 Arbitration Review Committee, composed of the Area Directors. The committee will ardently vet the grievance, looking to ensure that the evidence is clear and complete and that the case is solid. Once the committee approves the arbitration request, the business representative prepares to present the case before an arbitrator.

"District 190 has invested a lot of time and resources to make sure our business representatives have the best grievance and arbitration training available in the industry," says DBR Jim Benoit. "Not only have our business reps taken on cases that we previously had to pay attorneys to handle, they've racked up a solid track record on behalf of our members. Our members are in very capable hands."

2011/2012 Arbitration Victories

1 Stevens Creek Honda: (Local 1101) The union successfully negotiated a 30-day paid severance package for a terminated employee.

2 Antioch Auto Center v. Local 1173: The union filed a jurisdictional grievance at the newly opened Hyundai dealership. The employer refused to recognize the union even though union members were working at the dealership. The employer eventually settled and recognized the mechanics. Unfortunately, the employer double-crossed us and refused to recognize the parts department and Local 1173 had to refile for arbitration on that issue. The parts department arbitration is scheduled for March 2.

3 Sunnyvale VW: (Local 1101) The union successfully negotiated a \$5000 severance package for a terminated employee.

4 Safeway: (Local 1546) The employee was reinstated to his job and awarded 30 days of back pay after a wrongful termination.

5 PMH (Pacific Material Handling) v. Local 2182: The employer made a unilateral change to the employees' medical plan and started charging them a significantly higher amount for their monthly medical co-pays. The union successfully negotiated the monthly co-pay amount and got the employer to pay 75% of the monthly medical costs.

6 Northrop v. Local 93: The employer made a unilateral change to the pay period when it went from paying the employees weekly to paying them on a bi-weekly basis. The union successfully settled this case when it got the employer to give the employees a 20¢ wage increase in return for dropping the grievance.

7 VSE Corp. v. Local 93: A half dozen employees were terminated for refusing to take an employer-mandated drug test that was unlawful under the terms of the contract. The union won this case and got all employees reinstated and made whole...except for one employee who agreed to take the drug test but was found to have adulterated the test results.

8 Waste Management (Local 1546): The union negotiated a return to work agreement for an employee who was wrongfully terminated for alleged theft of company property. The employee was reinstated with all of his seniority.

9 Silgan Riverbank v. Local 1528: The employer made a unilateral change to the "coater" job classification. The union negotiated new work duties for this classification and, in return, the coater classification employees got a 51¢ wage increase.

Inside this issue

Union People	Page 2
Back to Shop Class	Page 3
Around the Locals.....	Pages 4 & 5
In the News	Pages 6-7
Benefits News	Page 7
Calendar of Meetings.....	Page 8



UNION PEOPLE

Greyhound honors union member



Ramon Rosas at Greyhound's Oakland yard

Ramon Rosas, a member of Local 1414 who has worked at Greyhound in Oakland for nearly four years as a service worker and bus cleaner, was treated to a trip to Burbank for Greyhound's annual employee banquet and award ceremony. Ramos was recognized for his "outstanding contribution to Greyhound and exceptional safety record." The award was presented by the company's President/CEO, Chief Operating Officer and Vice-President. Ramos was proud to be recognized, along with 30 others in the maintenance department in Greyhound's District 5. The company also recognized many drivers at the event.

The key to a strong union is ORGANIZING— and you can help keep District 190 strong!

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

About you:

Name: _____

Where you work: _____

Your phone number: _____

Please call the following to tell them more about IAM representation:

Name: _____

Company: _____

Home or Cell Phone Number: _____

Best time to be reached: _____

Please return this form to: District 190, 7717 Oakport Street, Oakland, CA 94621. (Use this form, or just include the info on your own paper.)



IN MEMORIAM

George Lange Local 1414 activist and leader

Shop Steward and Foreman George Lange passed away unexpectedly on January 16, 2012. George had worked for MV Transportation since 1998 and with Sam-Trans before that. Having attended most shop steward meetings, George used his skills at the bargaining table to improve working conditions for his co-workers and get fair contracts.

George also helped Business Reps Dave Taylor and Pedro Mendez in organizing several shops. "George never wanted anyone to make a big deal about what he did for the union or the members," says Taylor. "From all of us at Local 1414 and the Machinists Union, we just want to say thank you, George, for all your help. R.I.P. brother and best wishes to your family."



George Lange

Calling all photographers

The 2012 IAM Photography Contest is open to all IAM members in good standing. Entries should catch IAM members at work in unposed photos. Winning entries will win a cash prize and will appear in the 2013 IAM Calendar. Two dollars from each calendar sale is donated to Guide Dogs of America.

Photos may be in film or digital format. However, digital photos must be shot with at least a three-megapixel camera and must be set at the "fine" setting. There is no fee for participating in the contest.

The deadline for entries is May 11, 2012. Winners will be announced in the fall of 2012.

Members may download the complete contest entry package by going to www.goiam.org/photocontest, or request one by mail from:

IAM Photography Contest, Communications Department
9000 Machinists Place, Upper Marlboro, MD 20772-2687

Deadline to apply for 2012 scholarship

The deadline for applying for the 2012 scholarship program is February 24, 2012. Go to the goiam website:

www.goiam.org/index.php/headquarters/departments/scholarship). You may also call the Scholarship Department at 301-967-4708 and request an application packet be mailed.

Applications are available for the following categories:

- IAM child of a member applying for college,
- IAM child of a member applying for vocational/technical School,
- IAM member applying for college

Local 1546 Members and Spouses PRE-RETIREMENT SEMINAR

Are you thinking about retiring in the next few years?



If so, this seminar will answer all your questions about pension and retiree medical coverage.

We'll also review the retiree health plan.

Saturday, April 28, 2012 • 9:00 a.m.

Local 1546, 10260 MacArur Blvd., Oakland

Spouses welcome

Includes continental breakfast

Space is limited • First come—first served

Note: If you would like our pension advisors to print out your current data, you must contact the office by April 10. If you feel you have an unusual or complicated question, please get it to your Business Rep ahead of time so our advisors have time to research the answer.

Please RSVP to Tanya at 510-638-6705 by April 24



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Retired and active members: Please write in if something in *The Sparkplug* makes you happy or mad or inspires you to action. All letters from members will be used, space permitting. They may be edited for length or grammar, but not for con-

tent. 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

The IAM District 190

Sparkplug



Debra Chaplan,
Managing Editor

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.



PASSING ON SKILLS

New vocational program at George Washington High School gives kids hands-on automotive experience

Local 1414 works to re-start shop classes across San Francisco

Back in the day, high school boys all took a shop class, while the girls took home economics. It was in shop class that many IAM members first took apart and reassembled cars and overcame their fears of the welding torch. But those days are long gone.

In the early 1990s, a combination of belt-tightening and shortsightedness—the mistaken notion that all kids should and would go to college—led one high school after another to disassemble and close their shop classes. Some sold off their equipment; others put it in deep storage.

About five years ago, Local 1414 Business Rep Art Gonzalez started a crusade to re-open shop classes in San Francisco. And in January, his dream became a reality. George Washington High School pulled its shop equipment out of mothballs, and, as of the beginning of the year, the first auto shop class in at least eight years is up and running.

“We had been meeting and strategizing for years,” says Gonzalez. “When the San Francisco school district got a new Assistant Superintendent who understood the value of shop classes, he pushed the project forward.”

Teacher Andre Higginbotham says that he met with the District and got the go-ahead to start the class in December. “I thought we’d be starting in September, but they gave us a month.”

Higginbotham says that the long-shuttered classroom was filled from floor to ceiling with shop equipment—not only from the auto, metal and wood shops at this high school, but also from numerous other high schools. And the room was piled high with desks, chairs, and storage boxes as well. “You couldn’t move in here.”

Gonzalez mustered the forces of Local 1414’s Executive Board and other volunteers to come in on weekends and clean the space out. Fortunately, what they unearthed was a trove of great equipment—lifts and machinery—most of it in good working order.

“This school was built in 1932,” says Higginbotham, who says his love of history led him to teach Social Studies. “And this shop has some real history. During World War II, it was used as a training station for people who went out to build liberty ships. We found a cutaway from the 1940s, which is great to show how everything functions. It’s a real collector’s item.”

The class was started so quickly, there wasn’t much time to publicize it. But word-of-mouth attracted 18 students from across the city to the after-school class. Currently, the class runs two hours/day, two days per week. “We hope to expand that, and offer auto shop both during school hours and after school. We need to expand the curriculum to make it really useful. Of course there are financial issues involved, but we know that with more publicity, we could easily fill several classes,” Higginbotham says.

Rich Del Rosa team-teaches the class with Higginbotham. Rich is a 32-year IAM Local 1414 member who has worked all that time at Ryder Truck in San Francisco. Where Higginbotham is a teacher who almost became a mechanic, Del Rosa is long-time highly-skilled mechanic. “This shop is still a work in progress. Back in my day, by the

time I finished high school, I was well-prepared to get a job.”

Each class starts with a warm-up, where the kids identify tools and review what they learned the class before. “Right now, we’re working on motors.

We’ve just been doing the bottom half—we go over how each part functions, then the kids disassemble it and learn what it is. Then we’ll start working on the top half. The challenge will be to put everything back together,” says Higginbotham.

“The kids are so motivated,” he adds. “This class is already going a lot better than we ever anticipated.”

“It’s interesting and I like cars,” says Veronica, one of the two girls in the class. “My family does cars, so I’ve been around them my whole life. The hands-on work is the best.”

Tony says that this class is a good change from book work. “We don’t get to work with our hands in other classes,” he says. “I definitely prefer it to book work.”

Sergio agrees. “I have a feeling for working on cars. This class makes me want to learn more about how and why everything works.”

“At four hours a week, we can just teach the basics,” says Del Rosa. “I’d love for it to grow into something—more classroom hours per semester and more classes. We need to get back to teaching kids solid skills.”

“We have a lot of support from the administration and we’ve gotten help with fundraising,” says Higginbotham. “And the union has been great—both getting us Rich to co-teach and making this classroom workable. It’s been a great partnership.”

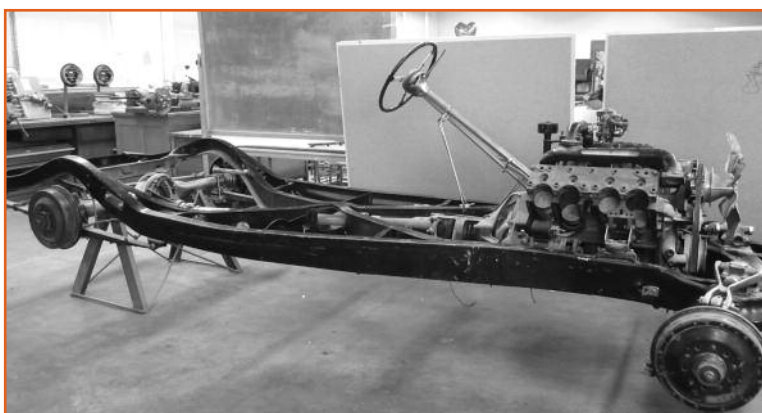
“We see this class as just the first step,” says Gonzalez. “We worked with the IAM apprenticeship folks to identify a good textbook and we’re working on the curriculum. IAM Vice President Gary Allen has agreed to purchase the new books for the class.”

Gonzalez has also been working with Golden Gate Transit and the City and County of San Francisco to start apprenticeship programs. “Our goal is to bring the kids who take this class right into the apprenticeship programs when they graduate. This is a great way to teach kids about the trades and about unions.”

Gonzalez is also working with Mark Alvarado, the principal of Downtown High School, to establish a shop class in machining.

“This is really exciting. Principals are realizing that if kids have an interest in the trades, they’re more likely to do their math and science as a support for that trade. It makes the kids more excited to be in school and it’s better for the school to have a graduate than a dropout,” Gonzalez adds.

Finally, Gonzalez wanted to recognize a few other people who worked hard to get the class off the ground: Stephanie Allen, a Stationery Engineers retiree and Ramiro Raygosa, who works in Career Technical Education for the San Francisco Unified School District. “We couldn’t have done it without them,” he says.



Shop class at George Washington High School

From top: A working classroom; the 1940s cutaway used to show how everything functions together; Local 1414’s Rich Del Rosa (L) and teacher Andre Higginbotham (R); kids removing the crank shaft from their motors; Higginbotham explains the working of the crank shaft; Del Rosa looks on as kids remove the bearings.



Local 93 - San Jose

Big arbitration win

When VSE Corp. decided to drug test, they should have contacted the union to make sure that the process jived with the collective bargaining agreement. But they didn't. Instead, one day in May, they corralled all of the employees into one area, closed the gates, and forced everyone to take a drug test. One employee refused and five others were immediately fired when their tests came back positive.

The arbitrator found that the company violated its negotiated policy around drug testing. As a result, in December, he ruled that five of the six fired members should get their jobs back. "And they got a six-figure settlement, making them whole for their wages and 401K contributions," says Business Rep Richard Breckenridge, who handled the arbitration. The sixth employee was found to have doctored his drug test, so he was not rehired.

Granite Rock talks

Eighteen IAM members have been working for 15 months without a contract at Granite Rock's Aromas quarry—the largest quarry in the Western U.S. "It's an unusual agreement—one contract covers four unions, each with

their own benefits," explains Area Director Don Crosatto, who's taken over the negotiations upon to the retirement of longtime Business Rep Sam Saiu. "We had proposed modest wage increases, with no other contract changes. The company didn't bite," Crosatto says. Instead, the company decided to implement their last, best and final offer, which, interestingly, includes big wage increases. However, it severely cuts retiree health benefits and eliminates the 'working dues,' important to the construction unions. "Critical for all of us, the company is also insisting on becoming an 'open shop' as a way to punish the Teamsters for a past strike," says Crosatto. The four unions are set to meet to plan their strategy. Stay tuned.

Local 653 - Fresno

Open contracts

Business Rep Tom Rotella reports that the contracts at JM Lift Truck, Hedrick's Collision and Sara Lee/Bimbo, all in Fresno, are currently open for negotiations.

Tool inventory reminder

If you got new tools from Santa, be sure to update your tool inventory. In January, a fire at a non-union Ford dealership in Fresno destroyed

the service bay and work area. This included all the techs' own tools. The employer had not received updated tool inventories from most of the techs and was therefore not insured for the full value of what was lost. As a result, some techs are without tools and don't know what tools they're missing. Don't let this happen to you. Get your tool inventory updated and in the hands of your employer. Also, keep a copy at home or give it to your union office. It's hard to work if you have no tools.

Fresno retirees restart

In January, many retired members of IAM Local 653 gathered to give a fresh start to our dormant San Joaquin Valley Retirees Club. A new crop of retirees are interested in becoming active club members. Local 653 is the survivor of District Lodge 87 which once encompassed Local 653 (machine and manufacturing), Local 1309 (automotive and trucking), Local 2733 (Vendo) and Local 139 (which served the Bakersfield area). Retirees from all these locals are welcome and encouraged to attend our next meeting which will be held on February 15 at 3:00 pm in the local's Fresno meeting hall. This is an excellent opportunity to renew old acquaintances and make new friends. We are firm believers in the old saying that you may retire from your job, but you never retire from your union. If you have any questions, please call Frank Santos at 264-2815.

Local 1173—Concord

First contract at Ryder Truck

The two technicians at Rohnert Park Ryder Truck contacted the union out of frustration. "They said that their employer kept making promises that they never delivered on and then begged the employees to be patient," says Area Director Mark Hollibush. "After more than a year of hearing empty promises, the techs finally realized they had to organize or risk being left behind the Bay Area stan-

dards." In July of 2011, the two techs voted to join Local 1173. The union and the employer met for negotiations for the next six months and came up with a three-year agreement that the two new union members enthusiastically ratified in January. The contract includes a \$1,000 signing bonus for each tech, yearly wage increases, a guaranteed 40-hour work week, solid seniority language, a \$1.75 per/hr shift differential premium, union security and many other benefits. "Throughout these tough negotiations, the employer constantly downplayed the employees' skill levels and worth. He also maintained that the average income in Rohnert Park was about \$40,000 a year and the techs should be happy making the same wages as someone flipping burgers, mowing lawns or selling TV's at Wal-Mart," says Hollibush. "The union is proud of these technicians," he adds. "They saw through the employer's veiled threats and incessant degrading of their skills. This ultimately forced the employer to bargain a fair agreement or risk losing their skilled work force to a competitor."

Local 1528-Modesto

Win at Silgan Riverbank

Local 1528 was scheduled to go to arbitration at the end of January to deal with a grievance over how the employer unilaterally changed the job description for coaters. "With the help of the affected employees," says Area Director Mark Martin, "we reached a fair settlement which included an increase in pay and an acceptable change in job duties." Martin says that the local also settled a grievance that provided holiday pay for New Year's for 60 members.

Local 1546-Oakland

Un-terminated

When Todd Crane, one of Local 1546's stewards at Waste Management agreed to help a co-worker bring some jack stands out to his

Local 653 - Fresno

Swearing in new officers



Local 653's new officers were sworn in at the Local's December meeting. (From left:) Secretary-Treasurer George Robles; Trustees Albert Smith and Anastacio Rodriguez III; President Jeremy Celaya; Vice-President Brandon Sandoval; Recording Secretary Ronnie Roberts II; Trustee Hector Gonzalez and retired Auditor Wayne Horn. (Not pictured: District Delegate Frank Santos and Auditor Harley Walker.) The new officers would like to thank the former lodge officers for their service and look forward to moving the lodge forward. President Celaya would like to see some new faces at the next Local 653 meeting! All members are welcome.

SHOP TALK: Do you see any improvements in the economy and do you think...



TONY BRUNO
A&B Die Casting — Richmond
Local 1584—44 years

"For us, the economy has been good. We were slow in 2009 and had to lay off a third of the workforce. Since we started bringing people back in 2010, we've been steady, although there's another slowdown now. Everybody says that 2012 will be good. Automotive is good; electronics is slow."



FELIPE ESPINOSA
A&B Die Casting — Richmond
Local 1584—2 years

"It seems like it's getting a little better, although we don't have overtime yet."



MICHAEL CARLTON
Cargill, Inc.—Newark
Local 1584—17 years

"The economy is worse because of corporate greed and profits. I don't think any politician can do anything."



GERARDO BARRIDA
A&B Die Casting — Richmond
Local 1584—1 year

"I think it's going down. Moneywise, it's just not any better. I don't think the candidates can do much, but you never know."



JOSE G.
A&B Die Casting — Richmond
Local 1584—1 year

"Everything's the same, but I hope it'll get better."

THE LOCALS

truck, he didn't realize that he was cooperating in the theft of company material. The company contended that Crane knew the other employee was making the items on company time and they had videotape of him carrying them out to the truck. As a result, he was fired for "aiding and abetting."

"We acknowledged that the jack stands were home-made, but not that they were necessarily made at the company on company time," says Area Director Don Crosatto. "They could have been manufactured with company permission. Crane, who had spent the day out at a class, had no way of knowing that."

The union grieved the termination and, ultimately, the company agreed to revoke the termination and return him to work. The case did not need to go into full-blown arbitration.

Using our political power

Some members say, "unions should stick to the business of bargaining contracts and fighting for their members' rights, and stay out of politics." Here's an example of why unions need to be politically involved.

Local 1546 represents mechanics at American Medical Response, the ambulance provider in Alameda County. AMR has contracts with several Northern California counties.

For the last several contract cycles, negotiations have been really difficult. "They nickel and dimed us," says Area Director Don Crosatto.

Last summer, former assemblyman and lobbyist Johan Klehs brought Paramedics Plus, a Texas-based ambulance company, to meet the county supervisors and unions in Alameda County. Clearly, their goal was to get the contract and one of their selling points was that they'd improve labor relations if they succeeded. "We had some meetings and checked them out," says Crosatto. "They seemed legitimate in wanting to work with us, while AMR was indifferent or negative."

When Alameda County's contract came up, Local 1546 testified, along



Local 1584—Oakland

Honoring long-time members

On December 6, 2011, Local 1584 held its annual Veteran Awards Luncheon at Francesco's Restaurant in Oakland. Pictured above are those members who received their awards for union membership of 15, 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65 and 70 years. At right is Local Lodge 1584 President Allen F. Turner with 70 year award member Edward J. Stevens.



with the Alameda Labor Council and the Fire Fighters Union, that our members would be better served having an agreement with Paramedics Plus. "I won't say that labor peace was the deciding issue, because AMR had a lot of complaints about their service record," says Crosatto. "But having good labor relations was an important factor for the supervisors."

Ultimately, Paramedics Plus won the contract, kept our members and took over the current agreement as of November 1. The union negotiated a new five-year agreement starting on February 1 that includes a \$1.10/hour wage increase each year—a bigger increase than they ever got with AMR. The contract also includes a \$50 tool allowance and the AI health and welfare plan, which was more cost-effective than the company's plan and included a better dental plan.

"This clearly shows that power of our political involvement," says Crosatto. The four members at Paramedics Plus unanimously ratified the contract in February.

Contract at Mercedes Benz

At presstime, Crosatto reports that Local 1546 has a tentative agreement

with Mercedes Benz of Oakland that he hopes the members will ratify.

"We're making the best of a bad situation," Crosatto says. "People are unhappy about the company health plan, which is particularly bad for those on the family plan. In lieu of making pension contributions, the employer will put \$100 into a 401K. The members will get 50¢/hour wage increases each year of the contract, and the company will now cover life and disability insurance."

Still working on Coca Cola

The contract at Coca Cola, in San Leandro, has been expired for more than two years. "The employer agreed to our health plan, which should save our guys money," says Crosatto. "But at last minute, they pulled the retro pay off the table. That was a chunk of change. When we crunched the numbers, they were offering less money than their prior offer." The members rejected the agreement and the union hopes to get back to table soon.

Local 2005-Livingston

Get ready at Foster Farms

2012 is the year we open the Foster Farms contract for renewal. "We have started to put together our team and our issues," says Business Rep Tom Rotella, who will lead the negotiations along with DBR Jim Beno, and Business Rep Pedro Mendez. By March, the team will put out a survey to learn the members' top priorities.

"This is a large group with people working 24/6 and sometimes 7," says Rotella. "It's hard to get everyone together at one time, so we are gearing up ten months early."

The collective bargaining agreement covers 2,400 employees. "We've got our work cut out for us. We're getting ready for long days and long weeks."

Local 2182-Sacramento

Taking on Roseville

In December, District 190 reps came out in force to blitz the nine AutoNation stores at the Roseville Auto Mall. "With 14 of us out there, we were able to talk to lots of techs at each of the dealerships," says Area Director Mark Martin. "Organizing campaigns are in various stages and hopefully we'll have more news to report soon."

Will anything change with the 2012 elections?



OMEZ
g — Richmond
4—1 year

me. It's not worse,
etter."



ALLEN F. TURNER
Morton Salt—Newark
Local 1584—26 years

"The economy is about the same. People are still losing their jobs. Lots of my friends are getting laid off. As for the politicians, there's lots of talk, but no action. I don't trust the Republicans."



EUGENIO TIRADO
A&B Die Casting — Richmond
Local 1584—5 months

"Right now, it's bad. I don't see nothing good right now. I have a big commute, but that's okay. Basically, it's good to have a job and get out of the rain."



DAVE HANSEN
A&B Die Casting — Richmond
Local 1584—27 years

"I think it's getting better. We weathered the storm when things got slow. Then we picked up and our other vendors say it's getting better too. I don't think the Republicans have much going on and Obama's hands are tied."



MIKE COLLINS
Parker Hannifin—Richmond
Local 1584—17 years

"The economy is about the same. I don't expect to see any improvement for a long time."



IN THE NEWS

Don't let the Senate gut the US Postal Service

by John Beaumont
National Assn. of Letter Carriers

On January 17, 1962, President John F Kennedy signed Executive Order 10988 granting federal employees the right to collective bargaining. This action led many states and localities to follow suit, allowing their own workers to organize and triggering a huge wave of unionization in the public sector that saw firefighters, teachers, janitors, social workers and many others to form unions in the 1960s and '70s.

Now, all of this is under attack. The nation's postal unions, whose employees combine to be the largest federal union in the nation, are being attacked through proposed legislation in the U.S. Senate.

SB.1789, the so-called 21st Century Postal Service Act, is moving forward for a floor vote in the Senate. This bill, reported out of the Senate Committee on Homeland Security by Senator Lieberman, would do the following:

- Cut mail delivery from six days a week to five by 2014 if the Postal Service is not turning a profit, without giving the Postal Service flexibility to achieve that profit.
- Phase out door-to-door delivery for consumers in favor of curbside and centralized delivery.
- Remove injured postal workers from the federal workers' comp rolls and force them into retirement without implementing a compensation formula.
- In a direct attack on collective bargaining, include a provision that would direct arbitrators to take into special consideration the financial condition of the Postal Service before rendering a decision.

If Congress succeeds in this attack against the postal unions, it will shift its focus to the rest of the unionized federal workforce, including our newly certified brothers and sisters employed by TSA.



We need your help to stop this attack. Please call Sen. Dianne Feinstein at 202-224-3841 and Sen. Barbara Boxer at 202-224-3553 and ask them both to oppose SB.1789; the legislation is deeply flawed and needs significant changes before the Senate should consider passage of this bill.

Changes to the bill should include provisions from SB.1853, which actually take the necessary steps by addressing the issues laid out above to strengthen the Postal Service while maintaining the excellent level of service Americans have come to expect, preserving middle-class jobs and creating new opportunities for the Postal Service moving forward.

President Obama appoints three to NLRB

By making three recess appointments to the National Labor Relations Board in January, giving the Board a quorum, President Obama made an end run around the Republicans, who refused to approve any of his nominees. Without a quorum, the Board could make no rulings.

The president used his power to name Sharon Block, Terence Flynn and Richard Griffin to the board. Block and Griffin are Democrats; Flynn is a Republican.

"The American people deserve to have qualified public servants fight-

ing for them every day—whether it is to enforce new consumer protections or uphold the rights of working Americans," Obama said in a statement. "We can't wait to act to strengthen the economy and restore security for our middle class and those trying to get in it, and that's why I am proud to appoint these fine individuals to get to work for the American people."

The move was strongly supported by unions, who congratulated the president for muscling past Republicans bent on blocking his agenda.

California is still #7; union wages still higher than non-union

With a new year, the numbers crunchers get crunching and they've determined that the rate of unionization in the U.S. remained essentially unchanged during the year 2011. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the total rate of union membership is 11.8 percent among employed wage and salary workers, with 6.9 percent of private sector employees in unions.

With 2.4 million union members, California ranks seventh in the nation in terms of union density, although its percentage dipped from 17.5 percent in 2010 to 17.1 percent last year. This is primarily due to cuts in the public sector.

The data also show that among full-time wage and salary workers, the median weekly earnings of union members were \$938, compared to \$729 for nonunion workers. Union women earned median weekly earnings of \$879, an amount 34.6 percent higher than their nonunion counterparts, who earned just \$653.

"Prior reporting shows that union members have greater access to health care, retirement and leave benefits," says Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis. "These numbers make it clear that union jobs are critical to a strong economy. And a strong economy depends on a strong and growing middle class."

SMART Support

The IAM is on record as supporting the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit Project, a train and bike path serving the two counties.

At full build-out, SMART will run a 70-mile stretch of track from Cloverdale to Larkspur Landing. Although initially planned to be fully completed by 2014, the economic downturn, increased costs, and the difficulty of obtaining permits have led to a revised plan to open a 37-mile initial operating segment between downtown Santa Rosa and downtown San Rafael by 2016, with additional segments to be opened as funding becomes available.

The project is largely funded by a 0.25% sales tax, passed by voters in 2008 (Measure Q), with additional federal and state funding. An effort to place a measure on the ballot repealing the tax was unsuccessful.

"This is a project for the future that will bring jobs now," says Area Director Tom Brandon. "We need to restore the railroad and create a bicycle-pedestrian pathway in the corridor to cope with congestion, keep businesses viable and protect the environment for the long run. I'm proud to attend the groundbreaking ceremony and look forward to this important project getting done."

SHOP TALK: How's the economy working for you these days?



MANUEL DEL REAL
A&B Die Casting — Richmond
Local 1584—6 months

"I think it's getting a little better at a very slow rate. Certainly, it's not worse than what it was. The candidates say they'll do a lot but it's impossible for one person to fix the economy."



VINCENT SMITH
Parker Hannifin—Richmond
Local 1584—19 years

"The economy is about the same. Democrats and Republicans won't get together to fix anything. The costs of gas and food are up, but wages aren't going up nearly as fast. You take two steps forward and five steps back."



MIGUEL SANCHEZ
A&B Die Casting — Richmond
Local 1584—1 year

"It's a little bit better—there are a few more jobs. But so far, I haven't seen a difference in my life. The candidates are all the same. Lots of promises but they can't do anything."



JOSE PEREZ
A&B Die Casting — Richmond
Local 1584—1 year

"It's okay. Sometimes we're very busy, or just the same. I'm hopeful. I was working in a hotel before coming here and it's much better here—better benefits and pay."



BENEFITS UPDATE

What starts up always goes down... and vice versa

At Local 1546’s February membership meeting, members were first treated to a crab feed and then they got to feast on statistics about the state of the pension plan. Guest speaker John O’Donnell, from Smith Barney, discussed the current status of the Automotive Industries pension plan.

Here are some of the highlights of O’Donnell’s talk (provided by Area Director Don Crosatto):

• The stock market had a disastrous third quarter in 2011. While the investment consultant and the pension plan trustees believe they’re pursuing the right strategy of diversification, we can’t outrun the economy. The fourth quarter was much better, but the year ended flat.

• Bonds represent 1/3 of our portfolio. While those investments have done pretty well, because

interest rates are so low, they can only go down in the future. At this point, we think they’re safe.

• In 2010—the IAM Pension Plan was in the top 7% of all Taft-Hartley Pension plans nationwide. But in 2011, we finished the year only 0.4% up.

• On a positive note, the plan is already up 5% in January.

• It’s important **not** to zigzag your course. Don’t switch strategy if you have a bad quarter and don’t chase the new best thing. O’Donnell presented a great chart ranking 10 types of investments from 1-10 each year. When in color, it looks like a patchwork quilt as investments change positions. The chart shows how the investment type that’s on top this year will inevitably be on the bottom in 4-5 years. And similarly, the class on the bottom will start to rise.

New Retiree Debit Card

If you are a retiree who retired under the CMTA/IAM Joint Retiree Health & Welfare Plan and your employer contributed a portion of the cost of coverage, effective January 1, 2012 you will receive a debit card that can be used for

IRS-approved medical transactions such as copayments, prescription drugs or payments to their doctors, to name a few.

These eligible retirees used to receive a lower subsidized premium. However, that has changed. The trustees of the plan felt that the sub-

sidy amount should be passed on directly to the

retirees who could better determine how to spend it.

You should have received a Health Benefits card that looks like the one here. Six months of the subsidy have been



“pre-loaded” onto the card and on July 1, 2012, a second load will be added for the remainder of the year. The table below details the amounts of the 2012 loads that have and will be placed on the cards at the six month intervals.

If retirees have any questions, please call the Fund Office at 1-800-317-7596.

Single	\$31/month	\$186 on card
2-Party	\$55/month	\$330 on card
Family	\$82/month	\$492 on card

TO THE MEMBERSHIP OF ALL LOCAL LODGES

Official Notice for the Nomination and Election of Delegates to the 38th Grand Lodge Convention

This will serve as official notice that all Local Lodges will conduct a Special Order of Business at their Regular Monthly Local Lodge (L.L.) meeting in the month of April for the purpose of accepting Nomination of Delegates and alternate delegates to represent their Local Lodge at the 38th Grand Lodge Convention. Nominations shall be conducted pursuant to Article II, Section 3 of the IAM Constitution.

This will also serve as official notice that all Local Lodges will conduct a Special Order of Business at their Regular Monthly Local Lodge meeting in the month of May for the purpose of electing Delegates and Alternate Delegates to represent their Local Lodge at the 38th Grand Lodge Convention.

Elections shall be conducted pursuant to Article II, Section 3 of the IAM Constitution. In accordance with Article II, Section 4 of the IAM Constitution. Delegates to the convention of the Grand Lodge must be

members in good standing of the local lodge from which they hold credentials for at least one (1) year prior to their nomination, except in the case of a local lodge

chartered less than one year prior to the convention, or a member working at the trade transferred to a local lodge with the approval of the International President or Executive Council; or, in the case of a district lodge having multiple local lodges within a single employer, in which case membership in such district lodge shall apply. Article II also provides that every delegate to the convention of the Grand Lodge shall be free from delinquencies of any nature to the Grand Lodge or to any district or local lodge, and at the time of

nomination and for six months prior thereto working at the trade. The qualification “working at the trade” shall not apply to salaried officers, whose time is fully oc-

cupied by the Association, the AFL-CIO, or the CLC, nor shall it apply to members who experienced a layoff during the six-month period prior to the nominations, or in any case where a member has been unable to obtain employment at the trade because of a strike, lockout, discrimination or temporary physical disability, or to members holding a Life Membership Card, who are retired on pension and paying full dues, whether or nor they hold a retirement card or an exemption card.

Absentee Ballots

In accordance with Article II, Section 3 of the IAM Constitution, members who reside in outlying districts more than 25 miles from the designated balloting place, members who are either confined because of verified illness or on leave qualifying under U.S. and Canadian family leave laws, or on vacation, or on official IAM business approved by the L.L. or D.L. or G.L., or on an employer travel assignment, or reserve military leave, as the case may be, shall be furnished absentee ballots. Any member entitled to receive an absentee ballot shall make written request therefore to the Recording Secretary (R.S.) of the L.L. by delivering in person or mailing such request not later than 10 days before the election. Within 48 hours after receipt of any such request, the R.S. shall mail the ballot if the records of the L.L. indicate that the applicant is eligible to vote in the election.

2012 GRAND LODGE CONVENTION

International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers

SHOP TALK: How’s the economy working for you these days?



ISMAEL PANIAGUE
A&B Die Casting – Richmond
Local 1584—1-1/2 years

“I think it’s going down ittle by little. House prices are coming down.”



RAFAEL GONZALEZ
A&B Die Casting – Richmond
Local 1584—16 months

“We were making more money in the 1980s then we’re making now. Work has been slow. The candidates promise too much and never come through.”



CARLOS MARQUEZ
A&B Die Casting – Richmond
Local 1584—4 years

“The economy is a little slow. I haven’t seen any changes. It’s certainly not getting better.”



MAURICIO COSS
A&B Die Casting – Richmond
Local 1584—13 years

“It’s not easy to say. I was thinking it would be picking up, but I don’t see any change. A lot of restaurants have closed. I like it here—we’re still working 40 hours a week. I hope that it’ll be better soon.”

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

Contact us at 510-836-2484

**The California Conference of Machinists
Spring Meeting**
March 20-21, 2012
Citizen's Hotel
926 J Street, Sacramento

E Board: Tues., 3/20, 5:00 pm
General Session: Weds. 3/21, 9:00 am-5:00 pm

Your Local Lodge must send you as a delegate to this conference.
For more info contact Tom Brandon at (707) 795-0086 or tjb1596@sbcglobal.net.

MOVING? Or need to report a member recently deceased...

Send the mailing label on this newspaper to your local union office. Please note: If you send your notice to the Pension Fund or the Health and Welfare Trust, that won't change your address as the union has it. Be sure to contact your local union!

See Calendar below for your local union's address.

Get your IAM news on the web!

Visit the District 190 website at:
www.iamdistrict190.org

Go to the International IAM website:
www.goiam.org

UNION MEETINGS		
District Lodge 190 7717 Oakport Street Oakland, CA 94621 510-632-3661	<i>Meetings are the fourth Tuesday of each month</i> February 28 • March 27 • April 24 Executive Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m. General Delegates' Meeting: 7:00 p.m.	Local I484 1261 Avalon Blvd. Wilmington, CA 90744 310-835-6688
Local 93 2102 Almaden Rd., #105 San Jose, CA 95125 408-723-4900 <i>Note: Office hours are 8 a.m.—4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The office remains open during lunch.</i>	<i>Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month</i> February 14 • March 13 • April 10 Grievance Committee: 3:30 p.m. Executive Board Meeting: 4:30 p.m. Membership Meeting: 5:00 p.m.	Local I528 713 16th Street Modesto, CA 95354 209-529-9210
Local 653 544 West Olive Fresno, CA 93728 559-264-2815	<i>Meetings are the third Wednesday of the month</i> February 15 • March 21 • April 18 Executive Board Meeting: 5:00 p.m. Membership Meeting: 5:30 p.m. Retiree Club Meeting: 3:00 p.m.	<i>Meetings are the first Wednesday of the month</i> February 1 • March 7 • April 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: February 15 • March 21 • April 18 Narcotics Anonymous: 5:30-6:30 p.m. every Tuesday
Local 80I 7717 Oakport Street, Oakland, CA 94621 800-655-2182	<i>Meetings are the third Thursday of the month</i> February 16 • March 15 • April 19 Membership Meeting: 4:00 p.m. <i>Meetings are held at the Carpenters' Hall, in Reno.</i>	Local I546 10260 MacArthur Blvd., Oakland, CA 94605 510-638-6705
Local II0I 2102 Almaden Rd., #105 San Jose, CA 95125 408-723-4900 <i>Note: Office hours are now 8 a.m.—4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The office remains open during lunch.</i>	<i>Meetings are the second Thursday of the month</i> February 9 • March 8 • April 12 Executive Board Meeting: 5:30 p.m. General Membership Meeting: 6:30 p.m.	Local I584 8130 Baldwin Street Oakland, CA 94621 510-635-2064
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 February 9 • March 8 • April 12 Membership/Shop Stewards' Meeting: 6:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month February 16 • March 15 • April 19	Local I596 4210 Petaluma Blvd. No. Petaluma, CA 94952 707-795-0086
Local I4I4 150 South Boulevard San Mateo, CA 94402 650-341-2689	Shop Stewards' Meeting: 5:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month February 16 • March 15 • April 19 Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the second Thursday of the month February 9 • March 8 • April 12 General Membership Meeting: 6:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month February 16 • March 15 • April 19 Retirees' Club: 11:00 a.m. on the first Wednesday of March, June, Sept., Dec. All are welcome! March 7 • June 6 • September 5 • December 5	Local 2005 416 Main Street Livingston, CA 95334 209-394-7822 <i>* Please check the bulletin board for meeting updates & changes</i>
		<i>Meetings are held the third Sunday of each month</i> at the Veterans Memorial Hall: 1605 7th Street, Livingston, CA 95334. February 19 • March 18 • April 15 Executive Board Meetings: 10 a.m. at Union Hall General Membership Meetings: Spanish: 1:00 p.m. English: 2:00 p.m.
		Local 2182 967 Venture Court, Sacramento, CA 95825 800-458-9200
		<i>Meetings are the second Tuesday of the month</i> February 14 • March 13 • April 10 Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m. General Membership Meeting: 7:00 p.m. Retirees' VISTA CLUB: 11:00 a.m. on the third Wednesday of each month: February 15 • March 21 • April 18