VOL. IS NO. 5 December 2013/January 2014

Serving the Active and Retired Members of IAM District Lodge 190

District 190 on board to build for Growth, Prosperity & Strength

# IAM launches GPS organizing campaign

The numbers are stark and seemingly getting worse every day. If unions are going to be able to continue to represent their current members and push for decent benefits and working conditions in the future, they must organize to gain new members. With less than 7% of private sector workers organized in unions, the power of labor is diminishing.

We all know why this is happening. NAFTA, now celebrating its 20th anniversary, caused the loss of more than 700,000 manufacturing jobs in the U.S.—a large number of these being good union positions. Members on the automotive side of District 190 know that the recession and the near collapse of the auto industry in 2008 led to the closure of hundreds of auto dealerships—including many union shops. The inability to pass labor law reform means that the journey for those who want union representation is uphill all the way.

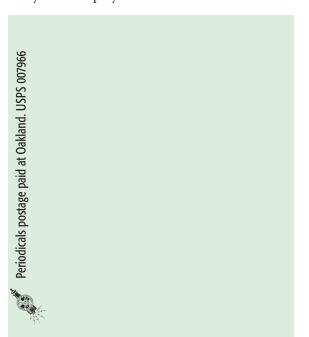
What does this mean for current union members? It means that with less union "density," the good wages and benefits we enjoy are threatened. And if we're not bringing more members into the union, who will be there behind us to pay into our defined-benefit pensions?

#### IAM launches aggressive program

Refusing to be cowed by the challenges facing unions across the nation, the IAM has launched an aggressive organizing program called GPS — Growth, Prosperity and Strength. The program was unveiled to about 50 members and staff of District 190's Bay Area Locals who gathered at Local 1584's Oakland hall on November 16. (A similar meeting was held on November 2 at Local 1528 for the Modesto, Fresno and Sacramento Locals.

After reviewing the statistics, Area Director Don Crosatto reminded the group of the benefits of union membership, such as, union members:

- Earn wages, on average, 27% higher than non-union workers.
- Are 54% more likely to have pensions provided by their employer.





At GPS training seminar held on November 16 at Local 1584's union hall, Area Director Don Crosatto leads members and staff in an exercise explaining the difficulties in contract negotiations caused by the lack of union density.

- Are 56% more likely to have employer-provided health insurance benefits.
- Have greater access to apprenticeships and training opportunities.

"It's all about union density," he told the group.
"If you look at any given industry, the more people we represent, the stronger the contract."

Crosatto explained that "when District 190 puts the effort into organizing, we generally do well. However, the District staff is stretched thin and we need to involve the membership in a real and active way." '

Crosatto challenged those in attendance to make a commitment to do two activities a month to promote the union. Activities might include

handbilling at a non-union facility or staffing a booth at a car show. The goal is to let the nonunionized public know that by forming a union, workers provide themselves with the opportunity to secure a voice in their workplace and ensure justice on the job.

"Organizing isn't easy, but it's necessary for our future. There are plenty of tasks that our members can do fairly easily. And it's not too late to get involved; we'll be having on-going training sessions and activities in the new year."

All members are encouraged to join the GPS campaign. For more information, contact your business representative or your local union.





## 70 year member!

Congratulations to Kathlyn Silva for earning her 70-year pin at Local 1584's retiree luncheon in December.

When Kathlyn was hired at Marchant Calculating Machine on May 6, 1943, she was only 23 years

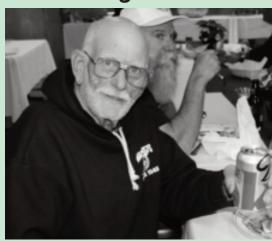


old. The company closed 20 years later, but she has enjoyed being an IAM member ever since. She was thrilled to get her 70-year pin and now plans to join the Retiree Club.

Explaining that taking this job had been a scary move for her, Kathlyn recalls how it took her from the small town of Modesto to the big city of Oakland. And she had never seen tools before. But, she was encouraged to take the leap because of the war effort and because she would earn 70 cents/hour.

Kathlyn says that the main reason she joined the union was because they went out for ice cream after the meetings. She went to many meetings and enjoyed her share of ice cream!

# **Cans for Dogs**



For the past 10 years, **Bud Beal** has been collecting cans from Local 1546, Local 1584, and District 190 after membership meetings and events. He turns them in for cash and donates the proceeds to Guide Dogs of America. He hasn't calculated a grand total, but he's on track to make a \$700 donation for 2013. Way to go, Bud!



# Get your IAM news on the web!

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

The International IAM website is at: **www.goiam.org** 

Local 1546 members: www.IAM1546.com Local 1101 is on Facebook: facebook.com (search for IAM Local 1101)

# UNION PEOPLE

# **Bettencourt named 1546 Shop Steward of the Year**

Congratulations to Larry Bettencourt for being named Shop Steward of the Year by Local 1546 at their annual shop stewards dinner, held on December 3, at the hall. union (Many thanks to Rep Business and Chef Extraordinaire Robbie up a delicious Don Crosatto (r). dinner!)



Pintos and his Local 1546 Shop Steward of the Year Larry Bettencourt (c) proudly displays crew for cooking his plaque. He is flanked by Business Rep Steve Older (l) and Area Director up a delicious Don Crosatto (r).

In accepting the award, Larry wanted to thank everybody in the Local for coming to the support of the members who work at the Ford Store, who have been trying to get a contract for more than a year.

Larry, a 32-year IAM member, has worked at the Ford Store for five years. He says it's often a tough job to keep the members unified, motivated and strong. "But," he adds, "our guys are tight, and I'm a firm believer that we'll get this done, no matter how the employer tries to browbeat us."

This summer, the group decided to step up their level of activity with the goal of forcing the employer to bargain in good faith. A one-day strike in September led to weekend

picketing and finally a two-week strike in October. Larry was game, even though this was his first strike action.

Larry says that it takes a lot of grit to tell off the owner and his lawyer, "but when you have to do it, you just do," he explains. "Our goal is to get the best for the employees and the company—ultimately, we've got to be in it together."

## **2014 IAM Scholarship Competition**

The IAM makes available financial scholarships to help members or children of members attain a Bachelor's degree or a two-year vocational/technical certification.

Amounts of the Awards: Awards to members are \$2,000 per academic year. Awards to children of members are \$1,000 per academic year. These awards are granted for a specific period from one to four years to enable the member to earn a Bachelor's degree or a two-year vocational/ technical certification.

Eligibility for Competition: Applicants must be an IAM member (or the child of an IAM member) having two years of continuous good-standing membership up to and including the closing date of the competition plus meet additional requirements as specified in the scholarship pamphlet.

**How to Apply:** There are three different ap-

plication packets: one for members, one for children of members, and one for vocational/ technical school. Application packets for the 2014 competition should be available at your Local Union or the District 190 office, or are online at:

www.goiam.org

>> Headquarters >> Departments >> Scholarship. Or, write to:

IAM Scholarship Program 9000 Machinists Place, #117 Upper Marlboro, MD 20772

Use a coupon from the IAM Journal (summer or fall issues) if possible.

The deadline to submit the completed application is Feb. 25, 2014.

# Official notice for Local 1528 members

#### **Notice of proposed by-laws changes**

A first reading of proposed changes in Local Lodge 1528's by-laws will take place at the February 5 general membership meeting at 7:00 p.m.

A second reading of the proposed changes will take place at the March 5 general membership meeting at 7:00 p.m., at which time the By-laws Committee recommendations will be reported and a secret ballot vote will be conducted on the proposed changes.

The meeting place will be at IAM Local 1528, 713 16th Street, Modesto, CA 95354.

A copy of the proposed changes will be available to each member at the meeting.



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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.

Debra Chaplan, Managing Editor





# UNION PEOPLE

# **Local 1584 honors its long-time members**



Local 1584's Retiree Club held its annual Veterans Awards Luncheon at Scotts Restaurant in Jack London Square on December 3, 2013. Pins were distributed to members with 20 to 70 years in the union.

Back Row – from left: Thomas Swanger (20), David Hansen (30), Rigoberto Ibarra (40), Richard Maxfield Sr. (50), Raymond Knudson (40), Alexander Martinez (45), Roy Aguilar, not shown (45) Middle Row: Tony Bruno (45), James Reeder (20), Don Wu (25), John Bettencourt (50), Lino Rosas (50), James Robinson (50), Jack Mc Daniels (60)

Seated: Melinda Cook (20), Diana Nunez (20), Linda Kettering (20), Boris Talgarow (40), Kathlyn Silva (70), Lula Pattison (45), Julie Tuohey (20), Herman Howell (45).

# **BUY UNION**

# Union-made .... just in time for the holidays!

This holiday season, the average American will spend more than \$700 on holiday gifts. If just \$64 of that was spent on American-made products, it would create 200,000 American jobs.

Your hard-earned dollars are a powerful tool in this economy; by purchasing union-made/American-made products, you can help to build a stronger American working class.

Here are a few Americanmade, union-made gift products: **Candy**: See's Candy • Cadbury • Ghiradelli Chocolates

Wine & Champagne: Cook's • CK Mondavi Wines • Charles Krug • Columbia Crest • Manischewitz • Taylor California Cellars • Zonin

Clothing: Pendleton Wool products
 Hugo Boss • Jones New York • Oshkosh B'Gosh • Polartec

**Games**: Scrabble • Candyland • Monopoly • Barrel of Monkeys • Mousetrap

For many more great tips about union products and services, go to Labor 411 at **Labor411.org**. This great resource tracks and promotes a wide range of union-made consumer products.

## **In Memoriam**

Virginia Souza, widow of former District 190 Directing Business Rep Frank Souza, died on November 11 at the age of 86. A union member herself, Virginia was a staunch supporter of Guide Dogs of America.

"Virginia was Frank's partner in every sense of the word," says Area Director Don Crosatto. "She was the woman behind the man—joining him on picket lines, helping him cook the linguica he was so famous for, and being there to offer support in everything he did."

Virginia is survived by her daughter, Kathy Donahue, who carries on the family's union tradition as an active member of the California Nurses Association.

**Tony Martin**, Local 1546's former communicator and son of retired Local 1305 Area Director JB Martin, died suddenly in November at the age of 56.

**Roy Childress,** a 30-year Local 1546 Trustee, died in November at the age of 92.

# LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sparkplug:

I really enjoy reading the Sparkplug; its articles are very interesting and informative. I especially like the Around the Locals section.

My concern today is that we read a lot about Recognition Pins given for years of service. Well, other than my pension and life-time member-in-good-standing card, which believe me, I really appreciate, I don't have any pins showing my 31 years of service to my Local Lodge 1546. I had a few years that I was in management but still working in the industry in local Service Departments. I was told that because of my break in service, I was not eligible for any service pins.

I was a dues paying member for 31 years and that should count for something. I believe recognition should be given to all members in good standing with or without breaks in service. This letter also is written for the many members in the same position as I am. I firmly believe that a member is a member whether he/she has a break in service or not. This is something that has been bothering me for years. Thank you for letting me have my say.

Joe Cordero Retired, Local Lodge 1546

# Response by Local 1546 Area Director Don Crosatto:

We agree with Joe and have proposed amendments to the IAM constitution before on this issue. Unfortunately, these amendments have been defeated.

IAM policy is that the years of service have to be continuous—no breaks for any reason, other than unemployment or military service. Actually, if Joe took a retirement card, he would still be accumulating years of service towards his pins, as time under a retirement card counts.

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 content. Letters may be submitted as follows:

e-mail: dchaplan@mindspring.com

fax: 510-288-1346 mail: IAM District 190 7717 Oakport Drive Oakland, CA 94621

# AFL-CIO Flash Fact

A \$10.10 minimum wage would increase the nation's GDP by nearly \$33 billion and generate 140,000 new jobs over the course of three years.



# AROUND T

# **Local 1414 - San Mateo**

#### **Preparing for talks with SF and MTA**

Members of IAM Local 1414 recently went to Maryland for the Preparation for Bargaining class at the William W. Winpisinger Center. They want to be fully prepared for tough negotiations with the City of San Francisco and San Francisco Municipal Transit Agency.

The 350 members of IAM Local 1414 maintain and repair cable cars, street cars, buses, fire engines, trucks, backhoes, dumpers, loaders and cars. They also maintain the sewer plant, port equipment and the world-renowned Hetch Hetchy water system.

The negotiating team met at the WWW Center to train, plan and build negotiating strategies for the upcoming talks. The week-long class gave the committee a jump start by providing training in proposal analysis, labor law and collective bargaining tactics.

The week concluded with a negotiations simulation. The committee members took turns filling in as lead negotiator for the committee. IAM Education Representative Rhonda Rodgers served as lead negotiator for the company, putting



From left: IAM Local 1414 members Levi Williams, Vernon Keller, Gary Hall, Danny Humrich, Usbaldo Gonzalez, Business Represen tative/Organizer Arthur Gonzalez, Local 1414 Vice President Rich Bernal, and Rob Bergesen.

the committee through their paces by proposing takeaways that struck a nerve with the committee members.

Participants said the simulation felt real and they are now more prepared than ever. "After spending years on the city negotiating team, this is the best prepared I have ever felt," said committee member Bruce Keller.

"We now have a better foundation," said committee member Gary Hall. "We were rookies in the last negotiation. Now we are a closer group, more together."

#### ing 650 employees under one roof, these negotiations take a lot of working together," Rotella adds.

# **Local 1414 - San Mateo**

#### More talks needed

The techs voted down Magnussen Toyota's last, best and final offer. "The offer doesn't change current working conditions or pay much," says Business Rep Steve Older. "The owner wants a one-year contract, but we want at least a three-year contract to give the shop some stability."

# **Local 1528 - Modesto**

#### **Issue brewing at Silgan**

Sometimes, when you fix one issue, it causes a ripple effect leading to other problems. That seems to be what happened at Silgan Riverbank after the Local won a grievance regarding vacation and holiday pay.

"Because of the grievance," reports Area Director Mark Martin, "the employer blocked out the final six weeks of the year for vacation selection. This was a unilateral change to the contract."

The Local filed a grievance and will likely file an unfair labor practice charge as well.

### **Local 1546-Oakland**

#### **Contracts near and far**

Svenhard's: Two separate but related contracts with Svenhard's for the three members at the truck repair shop and seven who do plant maintenance have been ratified. "It's a pretty nice contract," says Business Rep Pat Woodward.

The three-year agreement includes wage increases of 50 cents/hour each year, and an increase in the health and welfare cap that's high enough that the members should not have to pay any out-of-pocket increases.

Pleasanton Truck & Equipment: Instead of using a formula tied to the Consumer Price Index, as they had in the past, the new contract provides a hard wage increase of \$1.25/hour for

#### **Local 1101**

#### The power of unity

At Coast Counties Truck and **Equipment** in San Jose, the workers finally unified, leading to their best contract settlement in eight years.

"Our members at Coast Counties have been divided for years," says Business Rep Richard Breckinridge. "It's been older members versus younger members and they were also divided by departments. These divisions resulted in lower wage packages in the previous two contracts."

Back in 2003, the group was unified, and they were able to negotiate 3.8% wage increases each year plus health and welfare increases. Their unity started to break down in 2006, and the company took advantage; in this contract, they only received a 1.75% increase and it was applied to health and welfare. By 2009, the company imposed a two-year wage freeze and a 3.5% cut in the third year.

By coming back together for the 2012-2013 contract negotiations and, importantly, by launching a 25minute work stoppage—the techs got

restoration of the 3.5% wage cut and will also get a 4% wage increase for a total gain of 7.5% in year one. The Parts Department members also received a 4% wage increase in year one. In years two and three, they'll all see a 3.5% wage increase each year plus they'll receive 15¢/hour in health and welfare contributions.

"Never underestimate your power as a group of workers!" Breckinridge adds. "This happened when the workers stopped work for 25 minutes, but really, it's because the company knew the guys were unified."

## **Local 653-Fresno**

#### **Good & Welfare does good**

The Good and Welfare Committee's holiday event was a great success. President Jeremy Celaya wants to thank all who helped.

He offered a special thanks to the event's Gold sponsors: Bright Now! Dental, Hedrick's Chevrolet & Collision Center, Sun-Maid Growers, United Local Credit Union, and United Steel Workers. The Silver sponsors were: IAM District Lodge 190 and

Fresno Truck Center. The Bronze sponsors were American Income Life, GVP Gary Allen, and Devon Devine Claremont Partners. Celaya also gives a big thank you to the members of Food Service CSEA Local 143 for serving dinner at the event.

Proceeds from the event will be split among Guide Dogs of America, Marjorie Mason Center, and ALS.

#### **Contract Settled**

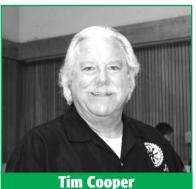
The 21 members at Commercial Manufacturing in Fresno ratified a new three-year agreement with increases in wages and pension.

#### **Negotiations**

At press time, Sun-Maid Growers of California and Local 653 are in negotiations. "We have met for six full days," says Business Rep Tom Rotella. "The language is close, but the economics are not even in the same state."

Rotella is leading the negotiations for Local 653, IBEW Local 100 and IUOE Local 39. The three unions have coordinated their negotiations for the last ten contracts. Teamsters work on the packing floor but negotiate separately. "With four unions represent-

# SHOP TALK: Why is union organizing important?



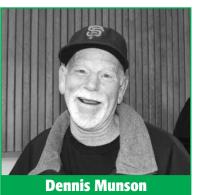
**Apprenticeship Coordinator Local 1101** 

"For the future of the union and "Because we don't want to die. the survival of the locals. For better wages, working conditions and a right to be able to say something at the work site."



**Donald Wootton MGM Brakes Local 1596** 

We want to better the lives of working people. Republicans and Democrats are about the haves and have nots, and labor isn't in there. The American people deserve a good life."



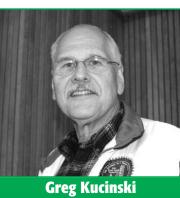
Van Bebber's Steel Co. **Local 1596** 

"The big thing is benefits and health coverage. Without a union, you just don't have the benefits."



**Andrea Gorman** Retired **Local 1584** 

"The worst of unions is better than no union at all. Our unions in every community. They set are so important. We need to keep them alive for the workers."



Retired **Local 1173** 

"Unions set the wage standard area standards. Having more members benefits not only the unions, it benefits the community as a whole."

# HE LOCALS

each of the five years of the agreement, explains Woodward. In addition, the company will cap the out-of-pocket health and welfare cost at \$500 for the life of the contract. They will also increase the 401(K) contribution by \$8.50/hour for the first year, and add \$5/hour in each of the subsequent years and they will increase the retiree medical contribution. The wage increase here keeps parity with the rest of the garbage industry, which is what they service.

**Livermore Ford:** Crosatto reports that the negotiations for a first contract at Livermore Ford are currently going nowhere fast. "Techs are frustrated and are quitting. The company is offering \$5 raises just to keep people there."

Truck Contracts: At press time, Crosatto reports that the members at Coast Counties Truck, Golden Gate Freightliner, and East Bay Ford Truck have all rejected their contracts. The main issues revolve around tying wage increases to training. "We're going back to the table with all three employers and are hopeful that we'll get good settlements all around," Crosatto adds.

#### **Local 1584 - Concord**

#### **Henkel talks moving**

Bargaining for a first contract between Local 1584 and **Henkel**, a Bay Point company that manufactures adhesives for aerospace, started in October. "We've got a great committee," says Business Rep Rick Rodgers. "They're well-educated and well-respected."

Rodgers expects bargaining to continue in December.

#### **Local 1596-Petaluma**

#### **Contract update**

The members at LP McNear Brick & Block in San Rafael have a new fiveyear deal. They'll get a cost-of-living increase each year, and a 40¢/hour contribution increase to the National Pension Plan for a total of \$4.55/hour. Area Director Tom Brandon reports that he hopes to have a new three-year contract with **Vincent Whitney** in Sausalito soon.

Brandon has held his first proposal meeting with the members who work at **MGM Brakes** in Cloverdale. Negotiations will start soon.

Over at **North Bay Nissan**, the union and employer settled a grievance that was destined for arbitration. "The issue was part-timers," says Brandon. "The contract allows for one and they had two. In the end, they agreed to pay back dues for one of them, and to make him full time."

#### **Congrats to new officers**

Local 1596's new officers were nominated in December with no opposition, and will serve from 2014-2017. They are:

President: Frank Crabtree
Vice President: Donnie Wootton
Financial Secretary: Dave Alfsen
Recording Secretary: Albert Farrens
Trustees: Dennis Munson, Keith
Marchando, Gordon Cameron
Conductor Sentinel: John Grainger

# **Local 2005-Livingston**

Congratulations one and all!

#### **Crisis management**

In October, an outbreak of salmo-

nella that sickened more than 360 people in 20 states was traced back to Foster Farms.

"We truly regret any illness associated with our products," Company President Ron Foster, who is the grandson of the company's founders, said at a press conference. "Our brand was built on trust and I think we violated ... our consumers' trust. And it's now our responsibility to earn it back and we plan on doing that by having a gold standard chicken on the market."

Business Rep Tom Rotella says that the company is working to increase sanitation processes, adjust production schedules, and meet the demands of the USDA. "We are doing on indepth review and investigation and will publish a complete report in the next *Sparkplug*," Rotella says.

On the day-to-day level, Rotella and fellow Business Rep Pedro Mendez are handling on-going complaints and grievances as they arise; these are mostly around overtime, job bidding and scheduling vacations. Rotella says that the issue of "donning and doffing" work clothes is under control.

Foster Farms has job openings. If you're interested in learning more, call 800-255-7227 or 800-338-8051.

# **Local 2182-Sacramento**

#### **Talks open in Paradise**

It's time to negotiate a second contract for the 24 nurses who work at the **Pine View Care Center** in Paradise.

"I met with the nurses," says Area Director Mark Martin. "Their key issues are staffing levels, shift selection and health benefits." Talks should begin soon.

# City of Sacramento named #1 Government Green Fleet

The **City of Sacramento** was named the No. 1 Government Green Fleet at the Green Fleet Conference in Phoenix on Oct. 2. Keith Leech, fleet manager for the City, accepted the award at the conference.

During his acceptance speech, Leech noted that City is now using renewable compressed natural gas. "We now fuel our trucks with renewable fuels made from restaurant waste—hence the term farm to fork to fuel," Leech said. "We're pretty proud of that."

"What Leech could have added is that the fleet is well-maintained by a group of mechanics from IAM Local 2182," says Business Rep Skip Hatch. "Our members played an important role in this achievement,"

## **Local 1546 - Oakland**

#### Strike at Ford Store results in progress at bargaining table

The techs, service writers, and parts department people at **The Ford Store** in San Leandro have been working without a contract for more than a year and a half. The company had proposed 48 takeaways, and the talks were going nowhere. "We had a one day strike in September to see if we could drum up some movement," says Business Rep Steve Older.



With the talks continuing to inch along, the members planned for a one-week strike at the end of October. The company announced a "grand re-opening" for after the strike, but when the managers all decided to fly to LA for the USC game, the members decided to stay out a second week. After that, the members went back to work under federal mediation and a 30-day cooling off period.

The members then picketed on weekends for a month.

Older reports that the company is moving up, slowly. "We probably can't get away from flat rate, but we're talking about a 90% wage guarantee. It's a militant group and the strike definitely had an effect. We're finally seeing movement."



Niello Infiniti Local 1173

"To increase union density. If we have more automotive shops organized, we'll have more leverage at the bargaining table."



Antioch Toyota Local 1173

"The more we organize, the more equal is the playing field we're on with other dealers. We'll get more money. Organizing keeps the union alive."



Mark Robinson
Retired (Winter Chevrolet)
Local 1173

"To get new shops involved and make the union stronger."



Retired
Local 1546

"Organizing is our effort to lift ALL boats. It helps the working class become the middle class. Unions are the firewall against the 1%."



**William Jimenez Espinoza** Northrop Grumman Local 93

"If we don't organize, workers in this country will be like laborers overseas—working like a dog. We'll be taken advantage of. With more people in unions, companies cannot abuse workers."



# IN THE NEWS

# **Supreme Court case could restrict union organizing**

by Laura Clawson via Wikimedia Commons

Union organizing campaigns run up against the fact that labor law enforcement, wealth, and power in the workplace are all stacked against workers, and if bosses fight a union with everything at their disposal, it is damn hard for workers to win. That environment could get a lot worse, though, with the Supreme Court hearing a case that has challenged the legality of a key organizing tool.

In the case, UNITE-HERE Local 355 vs. Mulhall, an employee of Mardi Gras Gaming in Florida sued Unite Here, asserting that its neutrality agreement with the company was illegal. The United States Court of Appeal for the Eleventh Circuit had ruled in his favor, finding that the agreement was a "thing of value" that federal labor law bars employers from giving to any union or union official.

As Labor Notes' Jenny Brown explains: "Neutrality agreements create rules for union and employer behavior during organizing drives. Often an employer signs such an agreement only after years of targeted union pressure. The employer promises not to try to sway workers' opinions, allowing them some breathing room, since labor law is mostly on management's side."

The "thing of value" clause is designed to keep employers from bribing unions with money, jobs, loans, or other inducements," said Massachusetts labor lawyer Robert Schwartz.

"No employer would think to bribe a union by making it easier for the union to organize," noted UNITE-HERE in a press release.

The Supreme Court hearing a case that could seriously limit union organizing efforts is a terrifying prospect. However, there were some promising moments during questioning:



Justice Elena Kagan said that the argument from Mulhall's lawyer, William L. Messenger, could mean that employers would never be able to do simple things like invite union representatives on their property to talk to their employees without running afoul of the law.

"So this is to say that the National Labor Relations Act prohibits employers from providing access to their premises, from granting a union a list of employees, or from declaring itself neutral as to a union election?" Kagan said.

Messenger agreed, prompting a reaction from Justice Anthony Kennedy. "Do you acknowledge that your answer to Justice Kagan is contrary to years of settled practices and understandings?" Kennedy asked.

This is not a pro-worker Court, and it's going to be a nervous wait for the decision.

# Career politician teams up with Enron billionaire to gut Californians' retirement

by Steve Smith California Labor Federation

It's official. San Jose Mayor Chuck Reed, a career politician with backing from a Texas billionaire and former Enron trader, has filed a ballot measure to strip away retirement security from current teachers, firefighters, sanitation workers and other public servants.

According to the *Sacramento Bee*, "The Pension Reform Act of 2014" would alter California's constitution to allow state and local government employers to cut pensions for current workers.

Essentially, this means politicians would have the power to unilaterally slash the retirement of current workers, breaking a promise made to those workers when they were hired. Many of those public workers affected don't receive Social Security. They have a modest pension that averages around \$26,000 per year. They're not responsible for the financial mess created by the Wall St. collapse, yet politicians like Reed are all too quick to scapegoat them -and out-of-state billionaires like former Enron executive John Arnold are all too happy to exploit them for profit.

This initiative isn't about giving cities "flexibility," as Reed and his cronies contend. It's about blaming the teachers, who inspire and motivate our children, for a mess that politicians and Wall Street hedge fund managers created. Reed's flawed initiative won't bring fiscal stability to troubled cities, but it would drive a lot of talented, dedicated people away from serving our communities. And

it unfairly breaks a promise to current workers who often have no other source of retirement.

Reed's ploy, though, is likely to wither when held up to the light of public scrutiny. Californians don't like out-of-state special interests like Arnold setting policy for us, nor do we appreciate career politicians with their own agendas pushing flawed proposals.

This attack on workers must be beaten back. We simply can't allow opportunists like Reed and billionaires like Arnold to gut the retirement of California workers. Stay tuned for more developments and ways to get involved.

# Ohio Walmart holds food drive for its own employees

By Alison Kilkenny The Nation

Activists have long criticized Walmart for failing to pay its employees living wages, and instead relying on the state to step in and pay for the healthcare and food of workers. In Canton, Ohio, another Walmart recently demonstrated this kind of corporate welfare by holding a food drive—for its own employees.

"Please donate food items so associates in need can enjoy Thanksgiving dinner," reads a sign accompanied by several plastic bins.

Understandably, the food drive has sparked outrage in the area.

"That Walmart would have the audacity to ask low-wage workers to donate food to other low-wage workers—to me, it is a moral outrage," Norma Mills, a customer at the store, told the *Plain Dealer*.

A company spokesman defended the drive, telling the *Plain Dealer* it is evidence that employees care about each other. And it's a good thing they care about their fellow workers because Walmart certainly doesn't care about its employees.

Wal-Mart didn't respond to requests for comment.

# SHOP TALK: Why is union organizing important?



**Dennis Stringari** Northrop Grumman Local 93

"To quote Ben Franklin, 'We either hang together or we hang separately."



Sherri Richardson Northrop Grumman Local 93

"I see unrepresented employees losing in pay and benefits. We need to get everybody what they deserve."



Retired Local 1546

"For the survival of this union—we have to organize or we'll go out of business."



**Daniel Banuelos**George Marton Company
Local 1584

"We need to improve everyone else's working conditions, pay and retirement to secure our own. And we need to fix injustices where they happen. Organizing improves everything in the end."



Patrick Aung George Martin Company Local 1584

"To make our union stronger and to give us a voice. If we don't organize, management has all the power. Having more people in unions helps families improve their benefits and wages."



# EMPLOYER PROFILE





# Simplex Filler-a happy place to manufacture filling machines

When you walk in the Napa offices of Simplex Filler, you're greeted by dogs. Is it a doggie day-care center? No, it's a long-time family-run manufacturing business, where the company president's poodle and vice-president's two corgis get along well with the machinist's pug. And all the people seem to get along well, too.

Simplex Filler has been in business making piston filling machines for more than 40 years, and as far as anyone knows, the company has been a union shop the entire time.

The crew of four full-time machinists and one part-timer—members (or soon to be members) of Local 1414—makes 50-60 little machines and 15-20 big machines each year. The little machines are semi-automatic, and the big machines, with up to 10 filler heads, are fully automatic.

"These industrial filling machines fill bottles and containers

with anything liquid. from cosmetics to food to chemicals... Anything that will flow into a container," explains machinist and shop steward Dennis Thiebes, who has been with the company for 14 years.

"Many customers start with the single head machine and then come back for more. We range from tabletop models to stand alone conveyor belt models. Every machine is customized — that's our whole business—providing different sizes depending on the customers' needs."

Thiebes says he's been a mechanic his whole life. "I was glad when this company moved up to Napa from Hayward back in 2000."

Nick McAlister has been with Simplex Filler for one year. "I love this better than anything I've ever done," he says. "It's the first job I've had where I'm not looking at the clock all day."

Theron Jones, a 20-year machin-

ist found his way to Simplex Filler and his first union job about eight months ago. "It's a real familyfriendly good company to work for," he says.

Company President Sasha Kaether explains that her grand-mother founded the company and it's now in its third generation of the Murray family.

Like everywhere, business was slow in the 2008-09 recession. "We tightened our belts and weathered the storm during the recession," Kaether says. "In last few years, we've really grown as a company."

Now, the company boasts sales in every state and across the world. "You'll find our machines in Central and Latin America, Russia, Dubai, New Zealand and many other countries," Kaether adds, pointing to a world map filled with push pins.

When asked what it's like running a union company, Kaether is quick to respond. "Above all, we're a



family. We work well together."

After describing the turkey barbecue that the group had recently enjoyed for Thanksgiving, Kaether added, "We have found a happy place. We take care of each other."

Top Left: Machinists Dennis Thiebes, Nick McAlister, and Theron Jones stand behind a machine that's nearly ready for delivery Top right: A single filling machine—the company's top seller.

Above: A sample of products that use Simplex filling machines.

Bottom left: A large conveyor belt machine



#### **New health benefit for Local 1546 members**

Working with machinery and automobiles are two career choices that can be hard on the ears. Local 1546 members now have access to a discount benefit for audiologists and hearing devices.

The EPIC program provides members with access to a national network of audioogists and ENT physicians, and offers 30-60% discounts off of name brand hearing aids and technology.

Watch your mailbox for more information or contact EPIC Hearing Healthcare at 866-956-5400 for a referral to a participating provider in your area. or go on-line to: • Epichearing.com

# SHOP TALK: Why is union organizing important?



Abraham Rubio George Martin Company Local 1584

"If you don't organize, you don't move forward. Organizing makes us come together stronger so we can accomplish our goals."



Craig Ashford
Recording Secretary
Local 1414

"Without organizing, we won't have a union. We'll just disappear if we can't bring in new members."



**Tom Fitzsimmons**Retired / Communicator
Local 1173

"Not only to promote the union, but to let members know about their benefits. The better organized we can be, the stronger our organization is."



**Donald Adonis**City/County San Francisco
Local 1414

"To educate the people who are not in the union about what they should be getting from their employer, rather than just making their employer rich."



Werner Feldhaus Penske Truck Leasing Local 1546

"The bottom line: I want to be able to retire comfortably. If we don't have new members, that won't happen. But really it's about equal rights for workers."

# **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.



ATPA is the administrator for the Automotive Industries Health & Welfare and Pension Trust Funds. Contact us at 510-836-2484

## **Labor Heritage Festival celebrates labor culture**

Labor Heritage Festival

**January 17-19** 

IAM Local 1781 Union Hall

*1511 Rollins Rd., Burlingame* 

Martin Luther King weekend at IAM Local 1781 in Burlingame.

For almost three decades, the festival

has been inspiring union and community activists to use the creative arts—music, drama, visual arts, spoken word and writing—to support and enhance their efforts. The festival highlights the links between the Labor Movement and the Civil Rights Movement by creating and using art and music to help build solidarity and inspire people to stay committed to making social change.

Weekend activities include work-

The 28th annual Western Workers shops, musical performances, art Labor Heritage Festival will be held on displays, films and theater pieces.

> The festivities begin on Friday night with an arts exchange highlighted by a song and

poetry swap. A tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. will take place on Sunday afternoon, featuring folksinger Jimmy Collier. A benefit concert Sunday night will raise funds for workers in need.

A complete schedule and information about registration, accommodations and transportation can be found online at:

www.westernworkersfestival.org

For more info, call: 831-426-4940.

# UNION MEETINGS



# District Lodge 190

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

Meetings are the fourth Tuesday of each month December 18\* • January 28 • February 25

Executive Board Meeting: 6:30 p.m. General Delegates' Meeting: 7:00 p.m.

\*Note: December meeting date changed due to holidays.

#### Local 1484

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

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

December 19 • January 16 • February 20 General Membership Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month

December 3 • January 7 • February 4 Retirees' Club: 1:00 p.m. on the third Wednesday of the month: December 18 • January 15 • February 19

# Local 93

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

Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month

December 10 • January 14 • February 11 Grievance Committee: 3:30 p.m. Executive Board Meeting: 4:30 p.m. Membership Meeting: 5:00 p.m.

*Note:* Office hours are 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Mon-Fri and is open during lunchtime.

#### Local 653

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

Meetings are the third Wednesday of the month December 18 • January 15 • February 19 Executive Board Meeting: 5:00 p.m. Membership Meeting: 5:30 p.m.

Due to holiday and vacation scheduling, the office will be closed from 12/19/2012-1/1/2013. Staff will remotely check voice messages.

#### Local 801

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

Meetings are the third Thursday of the month

December 19 • January 16 • February 20 Membership Meeting: 4:00 p.m.

Meetings are held at the Carpenters' Hall, in Reno.

# **Local 1528**

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

Meetings are the first Wednesday of the month

January mtg. cancelled • February 5 • March 5 Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m. General Membership Meeting: 7:00 p.m. Women's Committee Meeting: Please contact local 1528 for times and dates of monthly meetings Retiree's Club: 10:00 a.m. on the third Wednesday of *the month:* 

December 18 • January 15 • February 19 Narcotics Anonymous: 5:30-6:30 p.m. every Tuesday

#### Local 1546

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

Meetings are the first Tuesday of the month December 3 • January 7 • February 4

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

January 2 • January 30 • February 27

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

December 4 • January 8 • February 5 Alcoholics Anonymous: 9 a.m. every Saturday

#### Local IIOI

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

Meetings are the second Thursday of the month

December 12 • January 9 • February 13 Executive Board Meeting: 5:30 p.m. General Membership Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

*Note:* Office hours are now 8 a.m.—4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday. The office remains open during lunch.

#### **Local 1584**

\*Note: January meeting

date changed due to

holidays.

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

\*Note: January Retirees Club date changed.

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

December 19 • January 16 • February 20 Membership Meeting: 7:00 p.m. Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m.

Retirees' Club: 12:30 p.m. on the first Tuesday of the month.

December 3 • January 7 • February 4

Membership Meeting: 6:30 p.m.

# Local II73

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

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

December 12 • January 9 • February 13 Membership/Shop Stewards' Meeting: 6:30 p.m. on the third Thursday of the month

December 19 • January 16 • February 20

#### **Local 1596**

4210 Petaluma Blvd. No. Petaluma, CA 94952 707-795-0086

Meetings are the third Tuesday of the month December 17 • January 21 • February 18 Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m.

# Local 1414

150 South Boulevard San Mateo, CA 94402 650-341-2689

Shop Stewards' Meeting: 5:30 p.m. on the third Thurs-

day of the month December 19 • January 16 • February 20 Executive Board Meeting: 6:00 p.m. on the second

*Thursday of the month* December 12 • January 9 • February 13

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

December 19 • January 16 • February 20 Retirees' Club: 11:00 a.m. on the first Wednesday of

March, June, Sept., Dec. All are welcome! December 4 • March 6 • June 5 • September 3

**Local 2005** 416 Main Street Livingston, CA 95334

209-394-7822

#### Meetings are held the third Sunday of each month at the Veterans Memorial Hall: 1605 7th Street, Livingston, CA 95334.

December 15 • January 19 • February 16 Executive Board Meetings: 11 a.m. at Union Hall General Membership Meetings: 1:00 p.m. (all lan-

### **Local 2182**

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

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

December 10 • January 14 • February 11 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:* 

December 18 • January 15 • February 19