

DESERT EDGE

UFCW LOCAL 1167

a VOICE for working America

Official Publication of Local 1167, United Food and Commercial Workers Union

February 2012

Food 4 Less members ratify new agreement



See page 4

Food Trust members need to fill out their HRQ!
See page 7 for details.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Support candidates who support working families

The presidential primaries have begun and the pundits say our current president will have a challenge on his hands.

It's still too early to say for sure, but as I write this column it appears to be increasingly likely that Mitt Romney will be the main candidate who goes up against President Obama in November.

Now, Mr. Romney has his good points and bad points, but anyone who supports working families has to be seriously concerned about the anti-worker actions that have been taken by Romney's party in the past year.



By Bill Lathrop

All over the country, politicians who share his views are trying to channel the voters' frustrations over the economy into a nonsensical attack against America's greatest defenders of the middle class — labor unions.

These politicians are taking a dangerous path when they try to eliminate workers' rights as a solution to the nation's economic woes. Voters need to say "enough is enough" and stop politicians from using ordinary Americans, who did nothing to create the current economic downturn, as their scapegoats.

Take House Speaker John Boehner, for example. He initially supported a bipartisan compromise that would extend a payroll tax cut and unemployment benefits for 1.8 million long-term unemployed workers. In late December, he succumbed to pressure from the right wing of his party and threatened to hold those tax cuts and unemployment benefits hostage. It took a loud uproar from the American people to get Congress to relent.

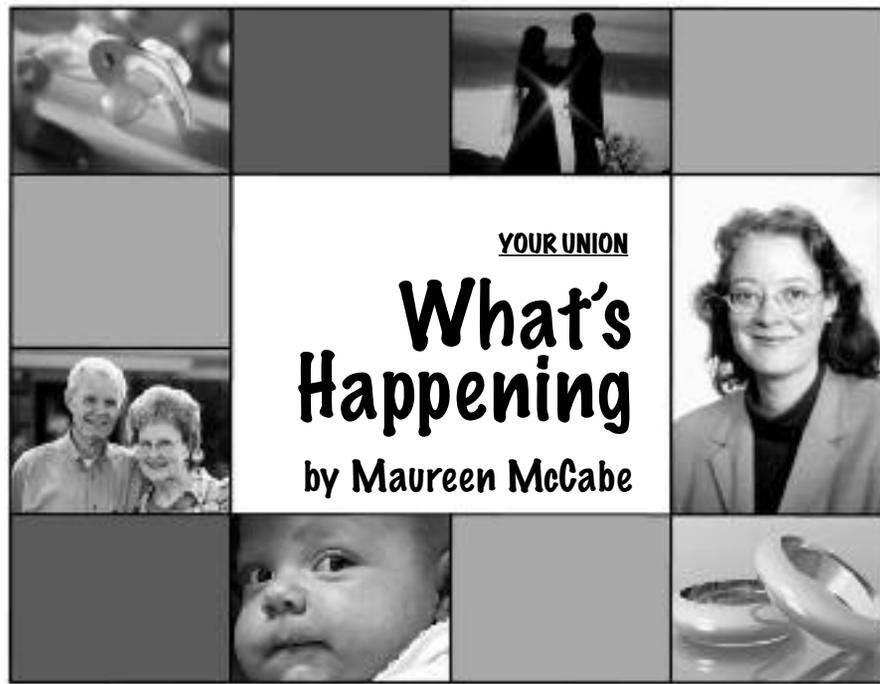
Your vote is a strong voice. You can use it to elect candidates who will fight for a fair tax code and access to affordable health care for everyone. You can help shift the balance of power toward those who will defend the middle class — the backbone of our economy — instead of attacking it.

For too long, our country has been focusing on the wrong approach toward solving our problems. Under the banners of "supply-side" and "trickle-down" economics, politicians have been telling us that the same policies that got us into this mess — fewer regulations for corporations and tax policies that favor the rich — will get us out of it.

(Please see page 7)

JUST RETIRED

The new year brought us several new retirees. First of all, though, we'd like to apologize to **Delma Holt**. Last month we said that she had retired in December, but Delma had actually cancelled her proposed retirement and decided to continue working. We're sorry for the confusion, Delma, and hope it didn't cause you any inconvenience. Joining the ranks of the retired in January 2012 were **Laurie Bigelow**, **Miguel Chairez**, **Carri Croll**, **Harold "David" Johnson**, **Jeffrey McKnight**, **Stanley Merchant**, **Richard Miyake**, **William Rennels**, **Donna Richmond**, **Vincent Roa** and **Miguel Trevino**. **Laurie Bigelow** worked for Stater Bros. for 21 years. **Miguel Chairez** worked for



Vons for 30 years.

Carri Croll worked for Ralphs for 28 years. **Harold "David" Johnson** worked for Stater Bros. for 31 years. **Jeffrey McKnight** worked

for Alpha Beta and Ralphs for 32 years. **Stanley Merchant** worked for Alpha Beta and Vons for a total of 35 years. **Richard Miyake** worked for Alpha Beta, Boys

Market and Ralphs for a total of 34 years. **William Rennels** worked for Safeway and Vons for 40 years. **Donna Richmond** worked for Albertsons for 26 years. **Vincent Roa** worked in the industry for 31 years with Albertsons, Stater Bros. and Vons. **Miguel Trevino** worked in the industry for 32 years with Pavilions, Stater Bros. and Vons.

Congratulations to all of our new retirees. We wish you many healthy, happy years ahead to enjoy your well-earned retirements!

JUST MARRIED

David Reitz, Stater Bros., took Rebecca to be his bride on Sept. 12, 2011. The ceremony took place in Lake Arrowhead. **Elsa Jacobs**, Stater Bros., married Anthony Simpson on Dec. 29, 2011. The wedding took place in San Bernardino. Congratulations to all of our newlyweds!

JUST BORN

Susan McNamarra, Vons, is a proud new grandmother since her grandson, Gage Alan Burns, arrived on Jan. 6. Gage weighed in at 8 lbs. 8 oz. His mom, **Valerie Burns**, also works for Vons. Congratulations to both Susan and Valerie!

Next Quarterly Membership Meeting: March 28

The meeting will start at 7 p.m. in the UFCW Local 1167 Auditorium, 855 W. San Bernardino Ave., Bloomington

It PAYS to be UNION!

	JANUARY 2012	2012 TOTAL
Back pay and benefits restored to members	\$10,405.68	\$10,405.68
Members reinstated	19	19
Grievances settled	52	52
Unemployment benefits restored to members	n/a	n/a

IN MEMORIAM

Ruthella Barry, a retired food clerk formerly employed by Lucky, Safeway and Sage's, died on Jan. 8 at the age of 88. She had been a member since September 1950.

Montague Fearnley, a retired food clerk formerly employed by Market Basket, died on Nov. 22, 2011 at the age of 95. He had been a continuous member since August 1966.

Barbara LaForge, an affiliated member formerly employed by Stater Bros. Markets, died on Jan. 4 at the age of 49. She had been a member since August 2008.

Marlin Lerud, a retired clerk's helper formerly employed by Albertsons, died on Aug. 31, 2011 at the age of 73. He had been a continuous member since November 1994.

George Longo, a retired meat cutter formerly employed by Albertsons, Boys Markets, White Front and Vons, died on Jan. 4 at the age of 81. He had been a member since August 1949.

Dominick Villani, Sr., a retired food clerk formerly employed by Alamo Market, Safeway and Vons, died on Dec. 21, 2011 at the age of 82. He had been a member since April 1962.

Dora Wilson, a retired drug clerk formerly employed by Sage's, died on Dec. 8, 2011 at the age of 97. She had been a member since November 1959.

Our condolences go to the families of these deceased members.

Your dues are now payable!

If you are one of the few members of the local who are not yet signed up for dues checkoff: FEBRUARY DUES ARE NOW DUE AND PAYABLE. IF YOUR DUES ARE NOT PAID ON OR BEFORE APRIL 1, 2012, YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY SUSPEND YOURSELF.

With dues checkoff, all future dues can be deducted automatically from your pay check. If you do not have an authorization form, call the local and one will be sent to you immediately.

Non-payment or payment of the incorrect amount will automatically suspend you — a costly and inconvenient mistake. Although not required, the local, as a courtesy, normally sends billing notices by first-class mail to those not on dues checkoff. It is the member's obligation to pay dues in a timely manner. Not receiving a notice is not an excuse for failure to pay dues on time.

Avoid suspension. Authorize dues checkoff today!



DESERT EDGE

Bill Lathrop
Editor

Official monthly publication of Local 1167, United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, San Bernardino, Riverside and Imperial Counties, California.

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Back pay settlement awarded

Asucena "Suzy" Quinones holds an \$8,000 back pay settlement check from Pactiv that she was owed from work grieved in 2010.



Last chance to apply!



Apply for the UFCW and Food Employers Benefit Fund Scholarship!

The Scholarship Award Program, jointly sponsored by the Employer and Union Trustees of the UFCW and Food Employers Benefit Fund, is one of the best offered to union members anywhere. The Scholarship Award Program can help you or your child earn a degree, certification or license and find new opportunities for prosperity and success.

Members are eligible to apply for an award if they have completed a year of service as of October 2011 and are still actively employed in the Southern California Retail Food Industry when the awards are determined. Dependent children are eligible to apply if they are unmarried and younger than 24 years of age, and if the member has had at least three years of service and has met other Fund qualifications, including employment in the industry when the awards are determined. **The deadline for Scholarship Award applications is Feb. 28, 2012.** Applications must be postmarked by this date. All members should have received an application in the mail. If you did not receive one, please call your union or the Trust Fund office at (714) 220-2297 or (562) 408-2715.

UNION REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

What you should know about personal holidays and pay stubs

I hope the new year is going well for all of you.

In this column I would like to focus on two subjects that are important for maintaining your peace of mind in the months ahead: personal holidays and checking your pay checks and stubs for accuracy.

Personal holidays

I'll begin with personal holidays at Food 4 Less stores. Our members who were hired prior to Oct. 4, 2004 have personal holidays that they should schedule and take this year. These holidays will not roll over to the following year. If this applies to you, make sure that you schedule your personal days or you will lose them!

A different situation applies to our members at Albertsons, Ralphs, Vons and Stater Bros. who were hired before March 2004 and at Lucky stores prior to April 7, 2004. These employees aren't always required to take personal holidays, and if they don't take them they will be paid for any unused days, usually at the beginning of the following year. However, they should confirm their company's policy before it's too late.

Finally, we have Rite Aid. After three years, all employees will receive their personal holidays. But they must schedule their holidays or they will lose them! Personal holidays will not be rolled over to the following year or paid out. Also, when you request a personal holiday, you need to let your manager know at least two weeks prior to your intended personal holidays.

If you have any questions about personal holidays, call your Union Rep.

Check for hours worked

The other issue I'd like to discuss has to do with our members who receive direct deposits and never review their pay stubs.

Be sure to review your pay stubs every week to ensure that you are paid for all of the hours you worked.

Just because you clocked in and worked a particular amount of hours in a week, it doesn't necessarily mean that you will be paid for those hours. Nothing is certain or perfect in our world, and there could be a technical glitch or other mistake that affects how you are paid.

In some cases, employees have had incorrect amounts of hours paid to them. You could be short in hours being paid to you. How will you know if you don't look at your pay stubs? The company is not going to notify you on a shortage. It might not even know about any shortage in hours on your pay check.

So please keep track of all of the hours you worked and check your pay stubs on every pay day. If there are any discrepancies that you can't easily correct, contact your Union Rep right away.

Be safe and take care!



By Gabriel Suarez

Food 4 Less members ratify new agreement

After months of heated negotiations and a strike authorization vote, Southern California Food 4 Less members in the seven UFCW Locals ratified a new collective bargaining agreement with the Kroger-owned grocery company. Vote meetings were held in Hemet, Victorville, Palm Desert, El Centro and at the union headquarters in Bloomington on Jan. 10 for members in UFCW Local 1167's jurisdiction.

Food 4 Less has 99 stores in Southern California that employ 6,500 people throughout the seven UFCW Locals. About 20 of

the locations are in San Bernardino, Riverside and Imperial counties.

The new contract features bonuses, wage increases, Trust Fund funding solutions, pension protection and similar health care provisions to those signed by members of Albertsons, Ralphs and Vons stores in September 2011.

"With the current state of the economy, and the widespread attacks on bargaining rights in America, our Food 4 Less members can rest assured that they are protected by a good union contract," President Bill Lathrop said.



Uniting for the workers

Food and Drug Council's annual convention highlights solidarity

Nearly 200 labor leaders and service providers from 11 states gathered in Las Vegas in December for the 2011 convention of the Food and Drug Council.

Many attendees described the convention as the “best ever” in the organization’s history.

The convention provided an opportunity for participants to share ideas and develop strategies to meet the challenges that confront America’s Labor Movement in 2012 and beyond.

FDC Director Ellen Anreder opened the convention by thanking the FDC’s affiliates for their continued support of the organization.

“In an era of concentrated corporate power, it makes sense for labor unions to harness their strengths and work together on the local, regional, national and even international levels to protect and improve the wages and benefits of their members,” she said.

Anreder noted the FDC’s expansion into 11 states and highlighted the coalition’s many achievements of the past year, from helping organize workers at Rite Aid’s distribution center in Lancaster, Calif., to participating in the first-ever National Food Day.

The power of coordinated action enables the FDC to increase its influence in the Labor Movement, she said.

“All of our successes in the past year — and in any year — are possible because of the active commitment of our affiliated members,” Anreder said. “We get from this organization what we all put into it.”

FDC President Paul Kenny pledged the FDC’s support to the three UFCW unions in Northern and Central California that are engaged in difficult talks with major supermarket chains in the region.

Kenny also described the successful conclusion of the FDC’s five-year campaign to help workers at Alta Dena’s plant in City of Industry, Calif., join a union.

“There’s no company we can’t organize if we all work together,” Kenny said.

“We are going to move forward and we are going to grow,” he continued.

“There are all kinds of workers out there looking for an organization like ours that allows us to share ideas, strategies and, when necessary, muscle.”

Expert guest speakers engaged the convention participants on a variety of topics.

‘All of our successes ... are possible because of the active commitment of our affiliated members... We get from this organization what we all put into it.’

Robert Grossman, president of Focus Creative Group, explained how to use social media for organizing campaigns and collective bargaining. He shared statistics on the rapidly expanding influence of services like Facebook and Twitter.

“Social media is changing everything,” he said. “It’s a powerful tool. You don’t have to wait to get information out anymore.”

These new options for outreach can



FDC President Paul A. Kenny



Local 1167 President Bill Lathrop

be used for everything from thanking elected officials to whistle-blowing to encouraging workers to organize, he said, but they are not silver bullets that can replace print communications or personal contact.

The most important thing to keep in mind when using social media, Grossman continued, is that “content is king.”

Monica Wofford, president of Contagious Companies, delivered lessons on leadership and communicating effectively to members and prospective members.

“You have to understand how to lead yourself before you can lead other people,” she said. “

A highlight of the convention was actor Ian Ruskin’s performance of a portion of his one-man show, *From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks*, chronicling the life and times of legendary ILWU leader Harry Bridges.

Ruskin brought the passion and humor of the labor leader to life with scenes from his early days as a sailor, his struggle with smear campaigns orchestrated by his enemies and the long fight for worker control of the docks in San Francisco.

“We knew what we wanted,” Ruskin’s Bridges proclaimed. “Rank-and-file democracy and some dignity. But the ship owners thought we wanted revolution. It’s amazing the amount of fear that a bunch of wharf rats could stir up.”

Ruskin concluded his performance with a reading from the preamble to the ILWU constitution, which calls for “peace across the world.” He also took

questions from the audience about the origins of his one-man show and his thoughts on the Labor Movement of today.

Mark Blum, executive director of America’s Agenda: Health Care for All, described preparations for establishing health care exchanges across the country. He gave a detailed presentation on the factors that are driving up health care costs and how to deal with those costs, such as better management of chronic diseases.

“We need to pay more attention to the health of young people,” he said, “so we can prevent what manifests into chronic diseases as adults. And we need patients to be more involved in their own care.”

A panel of health care experts joined Blum on stage. They talked about ways to avoid inappropriate or bad care and how to restructure plans so patients receive 100 percent of the care that has been recommended for them.

Investment strategist Ron Auer and benefits specialist Joe Sweeney discussed how working people can have a voice in the preservation of defined-benefit pension plans.

“We must work with Congress to pass legislation that makes sense,” Auer said, “legislation that supports defined-benefit pension plans and keeps them viable.”

Brigid Kelly, communications director for UFCW Local 75 in Ohio, delivered inspiring accounts of the struggle to restore the collective-bargaining rights of public workers in her state.

Kelly said the effort to repeal Senate Bill 5 involved months of leafletting at 3,000 workplaces, distributing 800,000 printed materials and knocking on a million doors.

“It was a coalition that put on the campaign, not just one union,” Kelly said, “and that was important for public perception. It couldn’t be seen as the issue of just a single union.”

The convention closed with field reports from FDC affiliates who spoke about, among other topics, the struggle for grocery contracts in Southern California in 2011 and the continuing negotiations with grocers in Northern California.



UFCW Local 1167 representatives at the Food and Drug Council convention



Local 1167 Secretary-Treasurer Rick Bruer



MEMBERS AT WORK

Ralphs 181, Palm Springs





Apply for 2012 scholarships

UFCW International scholarship: The union is about more than a paycheck and benefits. The UFCW is about workers coming together to build better lives. It's about creating opportunity. That's why each year the UFCW awards several scholarships to UFCW members or their dependents. The UFCW began accepting applications on **Jan. 16** and will continue accepting applications until **April 16**.

Visit www.ufcw.org/scholarship or contact scholarship@ufcw.org with questions.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Choose candidates wisely

(Continued from front page)

In recent months the "Occupy" movement has risen to provide a different perspective, pointing out that the "99 percent" — those of us who aren't rich and powerful — deserves its fair share of justice.

The wealthy 1 percent of Americans dismisses the Occupy protests as a movement of people who are merely envious that they aren't rich. Conservative pundits are still promoting the myth that rich people create jobs and are therefore entitled to pay fewer taxes.

A healthy economy

While it is true that some entrepreneurs create products that consumers never knew they "needed," those products don't create new jobs by themselves. Many people would love to have another computer or car, but if they are getting fired or laid off, they will not be able to purchase those products. That is why a strong middle class is essential for a healthy economic system.

Henry Ford realized this when, with the prompting of the automobile workers union, he raised wages so his employees could buy his cars.

This year, as candidates compete for voters with misinformation and scare tactics, please educate yourself as much as possible to find the right candidates to elect to office.

We need candidates who care more for our country's prosperity than they care for the well-heeled donors who fund their political campaigns. We need people who won't favor Wall Street over Main Street.

It's time for workers to take back the reins and steer America back onto the course of economic prosperity.



Maria Vallez, a bakery clerk at Albertsons 6519, recently received her 20-year certificate and pin. "I love my union," she said.

UFCW Local 1167 will be open during normal business hours on President's Day

Feb. 20

Food Trust PPO members: It's that time again to complete your HRQ

As participants in the UFCW and Food Employers Trust Fund start each new year, you "start again" in meeting your annual deductible for those of you enrolled in the PPO plan through the UFCW Food Trust Fund. (Your deductible is the amount you pay toward most health care services before your benefits kick in.)

If you are an active Food Contract employee with the Indemnity PPO Medical Plan coverage, the Benefit Fund

provides an annual contribution to your Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) to help pay the cost of your annual deductible. You can get an extra contribution if you complete your Health Risk Questionnaire (HRQ).

If you don't use all of your HRA funds in one calendar year, the unused balance rolls over for use in the next year, as long as you are still enrolled in the Indemnity PPO Medical Plan.

The HRQ is accessible online starting Feb. 1, 2012

www.2012hrq.com

**HRQ Assistance Line:
(888) 901-0477**



Life Balance
My Health



United Food & Commercial Workers Unions
and Food Employers Benefit Fund

STEWARD FEATURE

'The union is strong and something we all need'

Paul Miles' leadership kept morale up through last year's negotiations

Throughout the tense eight months of supermarket negotiations in 2011, Paul Miles, a produce manager at Ralphs 181 in Palm Springs, used his leadership and communication skills to maintain discipline and solidarity among his co-workers.

"My store's atmosphere was calm and cool," Miles said. "A lot of that was due to the constant flow of information between my union rep and me. It helped me relay important information to my co-workers."

Miles acknowledges that many of his co-workers tended to become nervous as the negotiations dragged on, month after month.

"We kept our chins up because

we were prepared and knew what needed to get done," he said.

In the end, Miles is pleased that the picket signs that were distributed by the union were never used. He is also grateful that he is able to maintain his health care and wage benefits.

As a steward, Miles' strong appreciation of the power of solidarity makes him an effective leader at his store.

"Without the union, all of the benefits I have earned over my 21-year career at Ralphs could be gone in an instant," he said.

"The union is strong and something we all need."

Miles' determination has its roots in his early career with Ralphs. Within three years of his



Paul Miles

hiring, he was promoted to assistant produce manager. During the Yucaipa merger of Ralphs, Food 4 Less and Alpha Beta in 1994, Miles temporarily stepped down, but he never lost his sights on becoming a produce manager again.

After the 2003-04 strike and lockouts, Miles was promoted to produce manager and hasn't looked back.

His driven attitude coincides with his love of cars. He owns a 1969 El Camino that he has taken care of for the past 17 years.

"My love for speed has unfortunately resulted in a few speeding tickets," Miles said. "But I wouldn't trade my car for anything in the world."

Tax Consulting & Preparation Services

Offering personalized tax preparation services for UFCW Local 1167 members, retirees and their families.

Services are provided at the UFCW Local 1167 office.

Feb. 8 & 20

Electronic Filing Services
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(626) 795-3815**

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This is not a walk-in service.
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Read your mail!

Contact the Trust Fund:

**(714) 220-2297
(562) 408-2715
(877) 284-2320**
www.scufcwffunds.com



45 years of service

Executive Board Member and Stater Bros. meat cutter David MacKewen received his pin for 45 years of service from his brother, Willie MacKewen, retired Union Representative. From left: Willie MacKewen, David MacKewen and President Bill Lathrop.