

DESERT EDGE

UFCW LOCAL 1167

a VOICE for working America

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

July 2011



Workers and clergy march to stores, deliver letter seeking a fair contract

More than 500 grocery workers and clergy marched between two supermarkets in Los Angeles on June 14 to deliver letters requesting a fair and equitable contract for their employees.

The activists filled sidewalks and generated honks of support from passing drivers as they proceeded from a Vons store in Hollywood to an Albertsons store in the Los Feliz district.

In letters addressed to executives of Albertsons, Ralphs and Vons, leaders of (Please see page 4)

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Negotiations: We have friends where it counts

I'm writing this during a break in our negotiations with Albertsons, Ralphs and Vons for a new Master Food Agreement.

This isn't a time for sugarcoating. These negotiations are not going well.

As I reported last month, the three chains have made demands that would devastate our health care benefits. Over the course of a three-year contract, they would push 80 percent of future medical cost increases onto their employees.

Collectively, these changes would cost our members approximately \$450 million in premiums, co-payments and reduced access to care.

Yes, we have reached a tentative agreement on pensions, but that agreement hinges on other provisions in the next contract that relate to wages, work rules and health care. Those issues are far from being settled.

This may seem doom and gloom, but we constantly remind our negotiating committee that we have but one goal in mind: the best possible contract for our members. The support and strength of the membership keeps us going. We're fighting the good fight for you.

Hundreds of UFCW members in Southern California have expressed their support and strength at events like the June 14 march and rally in Los Angeles. Members of Local 1167 have participated at "tabling" actions in front of stores throughout our jurisdiction. Inside the stores, our members have worn their blue-and-gold buttons with pride and spoken with customers about the importance of good wages and affordable health care.

And the strength of the UFCW extends beyond our membership,

(Please see page 6)



By Bill Lathrop

The next Quarterly Membership Meeting Wednesday, September 21, 2011

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

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: JULY DUES ARE NOW DUE AND PAYABLE. IF YOUR DUES ARE NOT PAID ON OR BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1, 2011, 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!**

MAP

Membership Assistance Program

Eligible active or retired Food and Meat participants can call the toll-free MAP number at the Health Management Center at any time,
24 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK.
Food Division, call (800) 461-9179
Drug Division, call (866) 268-2510
(All calls are confidential.)



JUST RETIRED

Several members joined the ranks of our retirees in the first half of the year. In February, **Gerald Pehl** and **Francisco Ruiz** retired. Gerald worked for Stater Bros. for 38 years and Francisco worked for Vons and Safeway for 35 years.

In March, **Joni Sweaney** retired after working for Stater Bros. for 31 years.

In May, **Pamela McCulloch**, **Socorro Solorio**, **James Stubbs** and **Steve Williamson** retired. Pamela worked for Vons, Lucky and Safeway for 32 years. Socorro worked for Ralphs for 22 years and James worked in the industry for 32 years at Stater Bros., Food Fair,

Gerards, Vons and Market Basket. Steve worked for Vons for 34 years.

In June **Jose Alvarado**, **Jose Carrillo**, **Lynette Davis**, **David Emery**, **Cheri Graves**, **Tonie Hielscher** and **Marcia Morris** retired. Jose Alvarado worked for 32 years with Stater Bros.; Jose Carrillo worked for Albertsons for five years and Lynette worked for Stater Bros. for 16 years. David worked in the industry for 35 years with Vons and Safeway; Cheri worked for Albertsons, Alpha Beta, Lucky and Super Value for 35 years; Tonie worked for Ralphs and Hughes for a total of 38 years, and Marcia worked for Ralphs for 34 years.

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

JUST MARRIED

Daniela Aguilar and **Edgar Peralta**, both of Rite Aid, were married on Feb. 5 in Indio. The happy couple honeymooned in Las Vegas. ... **Rachelle Averett**, Rite Aid, became the bride of **Armando Anzaldúa** on March 19 in Las Vegas. The newlyweds honeymooned in Lake Havasu. ... **Oscar Santoyo**, Vons, took **Jasine Cervantes** to be his bride on March 22. The wedding

was in San Bernardino. ... **Louis Betancourt**, Stater Bros., exchanged vows with **Christina Esquivel** on May 13 at the Castaways. The newlyweds honeymooned in San Diego.

Congratulations to all of our newlyweds!

JUST BORN

Regyna Rojas, Stater Bros., is pleased to announce the birth of **Christopher Armstrong** on March 9. Christopher weighed 7 lbs. 2 oz. at the time. ... **Tiffany Thayer**, Stater Bros., welcomed **Taylyn Savannah Carter** on March 25. Taylyn weighed 7 lbs. 8 oz. ... **Rene Ramos**, Stater Bros., has a new son. **Armando "Ricardo"** was born on April 6. ...

Scott Mejia, Vons, is pleased to announce the birth of **Ryan Jason Patrick** on April 8. Ryan weighed 6 lbs. 5 oz. ... **Jessica Richens**, Stater Bros., has a new daughter. **Savannah Rose Richens-Domenack** was born two weeks early on April 16, weighing 5 lbs. 9 oz. ... **Bridgette Maurer**, Stater Bros., and her husband, **Scott**, proudly announce the arrival of **Joshua** on April 25. Joshua weighed 9 lbs. 1 oz. and his happy mom writes: "With Joshua, our family is complete." ...

Janet Mitchell, Ralphs, gave birth to **Jazmyn Valencia** on May 1. Jazmyn weighed 9 lbs. 4 oz. ... **Maria Gonzalez**, Stater Bros. welcomed **Jayden Isaiah Shimizu** on May 3. Jayden weighed 8 lbs. 9 oz. ...

Liliana Haussmann, Stater Bros. is thrilled with the arrival of **Leilani Alexis** on May 8. Leilani weighed 7 lbs. 1 oz. and her proud mom says: "She is our dream come true." ...

Violeta Gascon, Vons, and **Rudolfo Cervantes** have a new daughter. **Katie Elizabeth** was born on May 23 weighing 7 lbs. 3 oz. "She's our bundle of joy," her happy parents tell us. ... **John Colegio**, Stater Bros., is a proud new dad with the arrival of **James Francisco** on May 24. James weighed 6 lbs. 6.5 oz. "God bless!" John writes.

Congratulations to all of our new moms and dads!

NEGOTIATIONS UPDATES

*Receive special
messages
and alerts
from Local 1167*

Text 'VOTE'
to
37398
or call the
Hotline at
(866) 662-0686

It PAYS to be UNION!

	JUNE 2011	2011 TOTAL
Back pay and benefits restored to members	\$2,818.95	\$80,447.56
Members reinstated	15	118
Grievances settled	67	438
Unemployment benefits restored to members	\$8,740	\$18,771



DESERT EDGE

Bill Lathrop
Editor

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855 West San Bernardino Ave.
Bloomington, California
(Open Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.- 4 p.m.)
(Closed Sat., Sun. and holidays)
P.O. Box 1167
Bloomington, CA 92316

Telephone Hours: 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m.

Business Telephone:
(909) 877-5000

Toll-Free Telephone:
(800) 698-UFCW

Food and Meat Division Insurance:
(909) 877-1110

Drug & General Sales Division
Insurance:
(909) 877-2331

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Publisher



LAST 7 DAYS OF JULY**Be aware of your availability status**

If you have been in the industry for more than a few years, you probably don't remember whether your status with your employer is "available" or "self-restricted."

According to the Master Food Agreement's Article 4A, an employee may change his or her availability twice a year, during the last seven days of January and July.

Many members mistakenly think if they list themselves as "restricted" then their employer must accommodate any restrictions they have. This is not true. Being on the "self-restricted" list only means that you are unavailable to work 40 hours over five days in any given week.

A member can be on the "available" list and still request days off.

We always encourage our members to place themselves on the "available" list. The two lists are kept separate. In the event a company does layoffs, the first list it will use is the "self-restricted" list.

July is right around the corner. Check with your employer and, if necessary, change your status!

If you have questions, contact your Union Representative or the representative on duty at (909) 877-5000.

UFCW, Smithfield team up with 'Today' to feed hungry Americans

The UFCW has joined with Smithfield Foods Company to donate millions of servings of protein across America.

In June, the union and the union-affiliated food-processing giant partnered with Al Roker and "The Today Show" for a week-long, cross-country tour in which meals were donated to food banks and charities.

On each stop, Roker, the UFCW and Smithfield gave a charity a truck filled with goods and supplies.

To learn more about the Feeding the Hungry Tour and see photos from the tour, visit www.ufcw.org/take_action/feeding_the_hungry/ or "like" the "UFCW Feeding The Hungry" page on Facebook.

IN MEMORIAM

Ethel Boschock, an affiliated member formerly employed by Vons, died on June 11, 2011, at the age of 74. She had been a member since December 1989.

Hope Fulkerson, a retired food clerk formerly employed by Stater Bros. Markets and Sage's, died on May 25, 2011, at the age of 91. She had been a member since August 1951.

Myra Kennedy, a retired food clerk formerly employed by Albertsons, died on June 15, 2011, at the age of 87. She had been a continuous member since October 1953.

Samuel Minnis, a retired food clerk formerly employed by Thriftmart, Alpha Beta and Albertsons, died on May 23, 2011, at the age of 81. He had been a continuous member since June 1957.

John Soltysik, a retired food clerk formerly employed by Gemco and Vons, died on May 6, 2011, at the age of 80. He had been a continuous member since March 1954.

Russell Zimmerman, a general merchandise clerk formerly employed by Stater Bros. Markets, died on June 4, 2011, at the age of 53. He had been a member since July 2006.

We express our condolences to the families of these deceased members.

UNION REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT**Your UNION is YOU!**

Who is the union? The answer is the same today as it was when I started working in the grocery industry 35 years ago: The union is you!

Your union is also your bagger, your checker, your meat cutter, your produce clerk, your stocker, your pharmacist and everyone else who has the privilege of membership in UFCW Local 1167.

As your Union Representative, I represent you.

So, the next time you're asked "Who is the union?" you can answer with pride: "My union is me!"

Here's another question for you: How strong is your union?

The answer is: Your union is as strong as you are!

This year, our union's strength is being tested by difficult negotiations, but when we work together and combine our strengths, we can move mountains.

You demonstrated your strength in May when you voted, in overwhelming numbers, to authorize a strike should that become necessary to negotiate a fair and equitable contract.

Nobody wants a fight, but we are not about to back away either. Our future depends on it. Remember, if it's worth having, it's worth standing up and fighting for!

It's up to us to fight to keep what others fought for us to have.

In 2003 and 2004, we stood united and strong for 141 days. If you are a veteran of that epic struggle, you have proven your fortitude and willingness to stand with your union brothers and sisters. Now, it's time for the newer members to stand with the veterans in fighting for what we all deserve.

When I was a young boy, I accompanied my father to union meetings. At one meeting, a man stood up and said the union was weak. My father and others stood up and challenged him.

My father asked, "Do you think I'm weak?" The man said no.

My father continued: "When you say my union is weak, you're saying that you and I are both weak."

That event made a big impact on me. It showed me who and what the union was — and is.

Your union is you!



By Bill Collard

**UNION OFFICE CLOSED
MONDAY, JULY 4
IN HONOR OF
INDEPENDENCE DAY**



Workers and clergy march

(Continued from front page)

Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice, Los Angeles, wrote:

“Our religious principles require us to urge you, the business leaders in our community, to come to a fair and equitable settlement with the workers as represented by their union.

“We are aware that these workers have already voted overwhelmingly in favor of a strike, but we ask that you avoid this strike from being necessary by engaging in honest and just negotiations. As the religious community, we stand in solidarity with workers and will respect the choices they make.”

Rabbi Jonathan Klein, executive director of the group, was joined by dozens of religious leaders in signing the letter.

The corporations that own Albertsons, Ralphs and Vons have proposed in current negotiations a plan that dramatically shifts health care costs to their employees. Simply maintaining current levels of health care would cost employees as much as \$10,000 or more per year, which is about 50 percent of a typical full-time worker’s take home pay.

“I am out here today along with my fellow co-workers fighting for my





for a fair grocery contract

health care for me and my daughter,” said Cynthia Brambilia, an employee at the Vons store and a four-year UFCW member. “I want my manager to know that we are standing together and we are not giving up until we get a fair contract.”

The religious leaders and employees said they were also concerned about a recent effort by Vons to move its employees onto public assistance for health care. A recent communication from the company instructed employees on how to apply for public assistance to cover their health care costs — costs once assumed by the company, which made more than \$1 billion in profits last year.

“Two Vons employees shop in my store, and they told me how embarrassed they were when they received the letter from Vons about how to apply for public assistance,” said Janis Morris, a 38-year employee of Ralphs.

“Why should the taxpayers pick up the cost of all of these employees’ medical care when these companies are making big profits?”

Security personnel turned the procession away from the Albertsons store. The clergy members asked a guard to deliver the letter to management.



PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Friends where it counts

(Continued from front page)

too. Why? Because our members interact daily with members of other unions whose support is crucial for the success of these negotiations.

Think about it. Who shops in your store? The CEOs? Most likely they have someone doing the shopping for them.

No, the people you greet and assist each day are firefighters, truck drivers, school teachers, janitors, law enforcement personnel, machinists, ironworkers, laborers, farm workers, nurses and office workers. They're all standing with us!

The employers are acting tough in negotiations, but we have support where it counts.

Stay strong and stand united!



Friends in the community

Albertsons customers pledge their support for UFCW grocery workers





Members at work

Albertsons 6530



STEWARD FEATURE

A job becomes a career for Ruben Jimenez

Steward Ruben Jimenez looks back on his 36 years in the grocery industry with a strong sense of gratitude for his union.

"I'm blessed by God to have this career and be able to live the American dream, thanks to working under a union contract," he said.

He began his career at a non-union market, A-1 Foods in Downtown Los Angeles.

"I worked there in high school," he recalled. "I was a stocker, a cashier, a meat cutter... I had many jobs because they'd put me in whatever position they felt like putting me. I think I eventually worked in all of the departments."

One day, when he was sharpening a knife, it popped out of its holder and sliced his forearm, severing two tendons. He had to take four and a half months off work to recover.

"I came back to work and the company told me it didn't need me any more," Jimenez said. "I was replaced at the whim of management.

"That's how it works in a non-union market. If they want to let you go, you're gone! There is no protection without a union."

He worked for Safeway while attending East Los Angeles College studying to become a probation officer.

"That's what I really wanted to do," he said. "But by then I had a wife and a child, and school wasn't in my schedule anymore.

"We did well with what we had," Jimenez continued.

"Thanks to the wages and security of my union job, I was able to buy a car, a car for my wife and a house."

Eventually, his career took him to Lucky and Alpha Beta. After a brief stint in management, he settled in as a receiving clerk at Albertsons 6530 in Victorville.

"I never once thought I'd be here as long as I have been," he said.

"So many workers in this industry say they're going to do something else, but the money and benefits are good and they stay. A job becomes a career.



Ruben Jimenez

"Many young kids think they won't be here long," he said. "Then, in a blink of an eye, five years have passed and they're still here."

Jimenez comes from a strong union family. His brothers are Teamsters and union electricians and his father was a union worker in the food services industries.

Mindful of his family's tradition of union activism, he has been a union steward since the 1980s and also served as a Special Project Union Representative (SPUR) in a

campaign to protect market share in Los Angeles.

Jimenez now qualifies to retire under the contract's Golden 85 provision, but he wants to stick around for the ratification of the next contract.

"I have to be here for my fellow members through these difficult negotiations," he said.

"I was once the young one who stood up for the older members of this union and now I'm of the older generation," said Jimenez, who is 56 years old.

"It's up to the younger members to take care of their union for the future. They are our future. The rights, security and working conditions are there for them to protect and fight for, because they are worth fighting for!"

Jimenez has one adult child, Diana, and a grandson, Church, who is 12. In his spare time he manages his own properties and attends union activities.

"The union is all of us," he said, "young and old, working and retired. United we stand, divided we fall!"



Members from Albertsons, Ralphs, Vons, Stater Bros. and Rite Aid gather in the High Desert for a proud display of solidarity.