

DESERT EDGE

UFCW LOCAL 1167

a VOICE for working America

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

May 2012



In an impressive show of solidarity, stewards from all over UFCW Local 1167's jurisdiction convened in San Bernardino on April 26 to learn about their contracts, prepare for November's elections and get ready for the next round of food negotiations in 2014.

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Stewards know why elections are crucial

Our Stewards Conference on April 26 was our best yet — and that's saying something.

We always look forward to assembling our elite corps of on-site union activists to brief them about developments in the labor front. At these gatherings, we also help our stewards sharpen their skills as the union's "eyes and ears" at the workplace.

The stewards were still revved-up from last year's epic fight to preserve affordable health care for our members in the grocery industry. I could feel the energy as these volunteers prepared for the challenges of the year ahead.



By Bill Lathrop

Our program included a performance by Ian Ruskin of his powerful one-man play, *From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks: The Life and Times of Harry Bridges*. Ruskin portrayed Harry Bridges, the labor leader who led the International Longshore and Warehouse Union as it became a force for economic and social justice in Southern California and the entire West Coast.

We also showed a clip from "The Last Word with Lawrence O'Donnell," a news and commentary show on MSNBC.

O'Donnell is an interesting fellow. Before he got his current job, he was a producer and writer for NBC's "The West Wing." He's an actor, too, having portrayed an attorney in HBO's "Big Love." And before that, he was an aide to U.S. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan and staff director for the Senate Finance Committee.

In this video, O'Donnell points out that choosing the right candidate for president of the United States is important for many reasons, but none of them is more important than the chief executive's power to appoint people to important offices.

The president selects the justices of the Supreme Court, for example. He or she also decides who sits on the National Labor Relations Board and other panels that strongly affect labor unions and the rights of working people.

Here's another important task for the president: appointing the next director of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

PBGC isn't as familiar as some of the government's other well-

Please see page 3

UFCW launches Active Ballot Club drawing

UFCW members have an opportunity to win prizes as they help move the country in the right direction.

The Active Ballot Club (ABC), the union's political action committee, helps elect pro-worker candidates, regardless of their party affiliation. It also helps alert the public when anti-union propositions — like the "Corporate Deception" initiative that will appear on the November ballot — pose a threat to the interests of working people.

When they sign up for automatic voluntary donations to the ABC, UFCW members are automatically entered in a drawing to win one of 24 American Express gift cards valued at \$500 each.

Of course, if members wish to donate more than



\$1 a week, that is also encouraged, but it won't increase their chances of winning a prize.

The contest, open now until Nov. 6, benefits the only PAC that exclusively supports the interests of all UFCW members.

Last year, nearly 10,000 UFCW members at 23 local unions across the country participated in the drawing, which raised funds for the successful effort to repeal an anti-union law in Ohio.

The ABC also helped mobilize efforts to stop a proposed "right to work" law in Missouri and assisted in the drive to recall Gov. Scott Walker's and other anti-worker politicians in Ohio.

The "Corporate Deception" initiative on November's ballots is designed to outlaw voluntary donations by union members to PACs like the ABC. At the same time, corporations would be free to contribute to shadowy front groups that can circumvent the restrictions imposed by the proposition.

"Stand up and let corporations know that they can't silence the voice of union workers in this country," UFCW Local 1167 President Bill Lathrop said.

For more information about the ABC and how it fights for working families, visit www.UFCWAction.org.

Next Quarterly Membership Meeting: June 27

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

IN MEMORIAM

Dewey Beaver, a retired meat cutter formerly employed by Buy Fair, Fazio, and Vons, died March 5, 2012 at the age of 71. He had been a member since March 1964.

Fred Brown, a retired meat cutter formerly employed by Boarmans Market, Crawfords, Ralphs and Vons, died on April 6 at the age of 92. He had been a continuous member since May 1948.

Eleanor Curtis, a retired food clerk formerly employed by Lucky and Sages, died March 12 at the age of 90. She had been a continuous member since October 1970.

Robert Grellck, an affiliated member employed by Albertson's, died April 20 at the age of 57. He had been a continuous member since July 1986.

Goco Jekov, an affiliated member employed by Ralphs, died on March 22 at the age of 62. He had been a member since November 2007.

Harold McKenzie, a retired general merchandise clerk formerly employed by Alpha Beta & Safeway, died on March 11 at the age of 84. He had been a continuous member since September 1960.

Evelyn Meissinger, a retired meat wrapper formerly employed by Fazio's and Vons, died on March 24 at the age of 99. She had been a member since July 1951.

Jack Parris Jr., a retired food clerk formerly employed by Ralphs, died on March 27 at the age of 64. He had been a continuous member since July 1974.

Angelo Romeo, a retired food clerk formerly employed by Food Giant and Smith's Food King, died on Feb. 14 at the age of 88. He had been a member since September 1960.

Christopher Stanart, a meat cutter employed by Stater Bros. Markets, died on April 1 at the age of 28. He had been a member since December 2003.

Elizabeth Swick, a retired general merchandise clerk formerly employed by Stater Bros. Markets, died on Feb. 4 at the age of 57. She had been a member since October 1989.

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: **MAY DUES ARE NOW DUE AND PAYABLE. IF YOUR DUES ARE NOT PAID ON OR BEFORE JULY 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 check-off 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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Union offices will be closed on Memorial Day, May 28

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Stewards know why elections are crucial

Continued from front page

known acronyms, such as FBI and IRS, but it's extremely important nonetheless.

The PBGC steps into the picture when pension plans fail or are abandoned by employers. It maintains a fund that pays out to participants a portion of the benefits they were promised.

Most pension funds rely on investments to build their assets on behalf of present and future retirees. But the stock market can be fickle and volatile, so a healthy pension fund requires a careful investment strategy and adequate contributions by the employer.

Unfortunately, some employers occasionally renege on their commitments to sustain their workers' pension funds. This is what happened earlier this year, when bankrupt American Airlines announced it would terminate its pension plan for more than 100,000 workers.

American Airlines said at the time it couldn't afford its contributions to the pension fund. But now that the company is profitable again, it certainly can afford to pay those benefits.

President Barack Obama appointed Joshua Gotbaum, the current director of the PBGC, who knows this, and he isn't letting the company off the hook. He put liens on American's assets, demanding that they be used to pay those workers the pension benefits they were promised.

Later this year, we could have a

Choosing the right candidate for president of the United States is important for many reasons, but none of them is more important than the chief executive's power to appoint people to important offices.

new president who would be given the task of appointing Gotbaum's replacement. What sort of person might Mitt Romney appoint should America's voters send him to the White House?

As a consultant and eventual CEO at Bain & Company, Romney made millions telling companies how to cut their labor costs. Freezing pensions, cutting pensions, eliminating jobs — nothing was off the table when Bain & Company advised its clients.

It's unlikely that a man with that kind of background would appoint a watchdog like Gotbaum who would hold corporations accountable for their commitments to their workers.

It's never too early in the election cycle to start thinking about issues like this one.

Just ask your steward!

UNION REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

Cell phones can be hazardous to your job

Some Courtesy Clerks seem to think that as long as they're outside of the store collecting carts, it's OK to send a text or "like" something on Facebook.

I can almost hear them thinking: "Hey, I'm out here in the parking lot where nobody can see me. I'll just take a moment to check my messages..."

Bad idea! There are eyes everywhere. Your supervisors will know what you've done — perhaps from a security camera, a co-worker or even a customer.

This behavior could get you in trouble or even worse. It could get you injured or killed!

Think about it: You're in a parking lot with one hand on the carts and the other hand holding your phone. Your eyes are on your phone while you're texting. That's a recipe for disaster. You could hit someone with the carts or even get hit by a car that you didn't see.

The same thing goes for those in the back room or by the bales who think they can sneak away and send out a quick text without anyone noticing. But they DO get noticed and they DO get in trouble! And they can get hurt in accidents, too.

Company policy clearly states that cell phone use is not permitted by employees who are "on the clock." Yet, too many of our members still do it.

It's a habit. For some, it's an addiction. Let's recognize that fact. Your best move is to turn your cell phone off at work and leave it in your locker, where it's beyond the reach of temptation.

You can use your cell phone when you're on break, at lunch or before or after work. Any use of a cell phone at work must be approved by management in advance.

It's OK to "like" this message. It could save your job.



By Jose Correa



Pharmacists urge colleagues to play greater roles in union activities

Secretary-Treasurer Rick Bruer and Organizing Director Joe Duffle joined pharmacists from throughout Southern California and leaders from six other UFCW locals on March 6 for an advisory committee meeting designed to grow the Professional Division.

The conference at UFCW Local 324 headquarters gave committee members an opportunity to voice their opinions on steps to be taken to inspire more pharmacists to become active and engaged.

UFCW Local 135 Secretary-Treasurer and California Board of Pharmacy member Rosalyn Hackworth chaired the meeting, at which active member pharmacists tackled difficult issues and discussed spread-

ing the word about the benefits of belonging to the union.

Committee members also discussed how communications among division members and union leadership could be improved to foster a more active membership. Alterations to the look and function of the Professional Division website were among some of the recent actions taken to achieve this.

"It was a positive exchange of ideas from a diverse group of pharmacists," UFCW Local 324 Secretary-Treasurer Andrea Zinder said.

"Ultimately, protecting our members' futures is directly related to the strength and solidarity of an active membership."



Making a difference

Hundreds of UFCW Local 1167 stewards gather to enhance skills and build solidarity

UFCW Local 1167's Stewards Conference on April 26 featured calls to elect pro-worker candidates and start preparing for the next round of retail food negotiations in 2014.

President Bill Lathrop thanked more than 300 stewards at the Hilton San Bernardino for helping keep the union strong during last year's tense supermarket negotiations.

"After nine and a half months of food negotiations and two and a half months fighting for fair warehouse contracts, we are finally able to thank you for all your fine work in the stores," President Lathrop said.

Following a brief presentation of the union's history and its recent victories on behalf of its members, Secretary-Treasurer Rick Bruer introduced Director Pete Waasdorp, who listed the most common reasons for employee termination.

Waasdorp asked the stewards to inform union members that continued employment with their company is within their control if they remember to act appropriately in the workplace.

"The biggest reason people get terminated is for problems with attendance," Waasdorp said. "Being on time is something that is mostly within our control."

He urged the stewards to remind

younger members that they can be terminated for falsifying time cards.

"Don't say you're at work when you aren't," Waasdorp said. "Security cameras are watching you, and they don't lie."

Waasdorp also showed video "evidence" of a member using Facebook to tell his friends he was partying on a day he called in sick. He was "friends" with his supervisor, who used the evidence to get the member fired.

The video was a spoof of *Ferris Bueller's Day Off* and featured "talking" babies playing the parts of the employee and the supervisor.

Waasdorp's moral for the stewards: Never "friend" your supervisors, because anything you say or do "off the clock" may be used against you.

Next, he described what is appropriate to say in the workplace and what can be construed as sexual harassment.

"It doesn't matter what you meant when you said something that might be offensive," Waasdorp said. "It matters how the offended person interpreted it."

He acknowledged that it can be difficult to know when the line has been crossed, especially among members who have known each other for a while.

He told the stewards to ask themselves such questions as: "Would I say this if it was something I would want said to my wife or my daughter?" and "Would I do this if a security camera was watching me?"

"If you ask yourselves these simple questions, you'll improve your chances of maintaining your job," he said.

Getting involved in politics

President Lathrop returned to the podium to urge the stewards to get involved in political action.

"Now, I know a lot of us here don't follow politics or like it," he said. "But if we're not active in politics, things will get worse."

Lathrop explained why it is important to reelect President Barack Obama for a second term. He acknowledged that some stewards and members might not like him as a president, but he's a better alternative for working people than his challenger, Mitt Romney.

"Corporations outspend ordinary citizens 18 to one in political campaigns," he said. "If Romney is elected, who knows how much more power corporations will have on politics?"

After Lathrop's speech, Secretary-Treasurer Bruer introduced a video that addressed the need to send management the "right message" while preparing for retail food negotiations in 2014.

The video was especially relevant to Rite Aid workers, whose contract expires this summer. In it, UFCW Local 1167 Union Representatives played the parts of a supervisor and a group of employees and their steward.

"You work hard, so you deserve the money and benefits you earn," Bruer said. "But the only way to get a fair contract is through solidarity in the stores."

Bruer said it was important for members to sign up for the union's text alerts and join its Facebook page.

"It is now possible for UFCW Local 1167 to deliver its message to members the instant updates become available," he said. "It is important that each member signs up to receive electronic alerts to stay up to date with the union."

Corporations vs. working people

UFCW International Vice President and Regional Director Shaun Barclay said it is important for stewards to start sending management the "right message" now.

Addressing the presidential election, Barclay said the two sides are expected to spend a billion dollars on campaign advertising.

"Can you imagine Super PACs

with unlimited money?" Barclay asked the stewards. "The five members of the Walton family, the heirs of the Walmart fortune combined, make more than the bottom 30 percent of Americans. They will have more influence on these elections than you or I will."

He also described how the "Corporate Deception" initiative on November's ballot has the potential to destroy unions in California.

The proposition would make it almost impossible for unions to collect even voluntary contributions from their members for use in political campaigns.

"Even when members agree to donate \$1 a week from their paychecks, this legislation wouldn't let them do that," Barclay said.

"Who are corporations to say how you spend your money? They want to silence you even more."

Ian Ruskin's one-man play

A highlight of the conference 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 Harry Bridges, the legendary leader of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union.

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

"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

'It doesn't matter what you meant when you said something that might be offensive. It matters how the offended person interpreted it.'

— Pete Waasdorp

with a reading from the preamble of 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 today's Labor Movement.

Chiang: 'Stand up'

California Controller John Chiang



President Bill Lathrop



Secretary-Treasurer Rick Bruer



California Controller John Chiang

‘We need to empower people during these difficult times, we’ve got to stand up and fight for what we believe in.’

— **John Chiang**

applauded UFCW members for protecting their access to affordable health care, but he warned that more activism will be needed to preserve the middle class in the state.

“We need to empower people during these difficult times,” he said. “We’ve got to stand up and fight for what we believe in.”

Chiang recalled how, when the foreclosure crisis hit its peak in January 2007, he had the responsibility of keeping the world’s ninth largest economy from collapsing.

In defiance of then-Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, Chiang issued IOUs to taxpayers who expected to receive refunds from the Franchise Tax Board. He also used his power as controller to audit a major health care provider that was making 88 percent profits off of taxpayers.

“Through that audit, we were able to renegotiate a contract and save taxpayers \$350 million,” he said.

Chiang also championed a program in which taxpayers can visit www.claimit.ca.gov to claim money that the government owes them.

“There are 3.5 million people on the list,” Chiang said. “The state shouldn’t keep your money.”

Duties of a steward and shopping union

Union Representative Alan Kontra

spelled out the duties of a steward. These include, among others, maintaining the union bulletin board, notifying the Union Representatives of possible grievances or arbitrations, attending union meetings and activities, and getting as many rank-and-file members as possible to attend those meetings.

“You are the leaders in the stores and should set a good example,” he said. “Attend meetings, promote union activities and be proud to be shop stewards, because the membership looks up to you.”

The final speech of the conference was delivered by Director of Organizing Joe Duffie on the importance of union market share.

“Union market share is down dramatically because of the rapid influx of non-union stores opening in our jurisdiction,” he said. “Target, Fresh & Easy, WinCo and independent markets are sprouting up like weeds.”

“It starts with us,” Duffie continued. “We have to be strong, and one of the ways to do that is to tell your friends and family to shop only at union stores.”

He said the union has to be alert for developments within its jurisdiction.

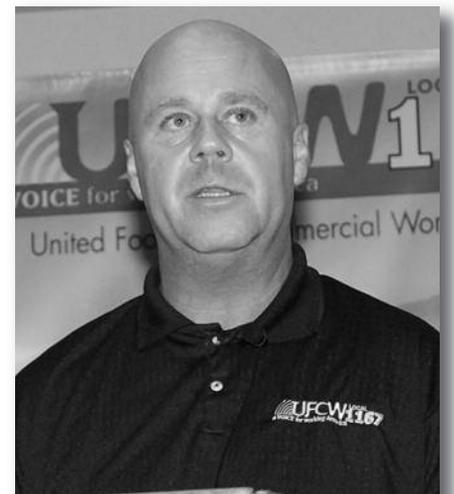
“Walmart won’t be saying it is ‘Walmart’ when it fills out building permits,” Duffie said. “It’ll be a generic building company. So that’s one reason why it takes a lot of time and hours of tremendous effort to keep our community free from non-union stores as possible.”

The conference ended with Bruer asking all in attendance to complete cards pledging to help Rite Aid workers in their fight to secure a good contract.

“We need your help,” he said. “Be proud of your union affiliation and show everyone that we back each other up.”



Director of Organizing Joe Duffie



Director Pete Waasdorp



UFCW International Vice President and Regional Director Shaun Barclay



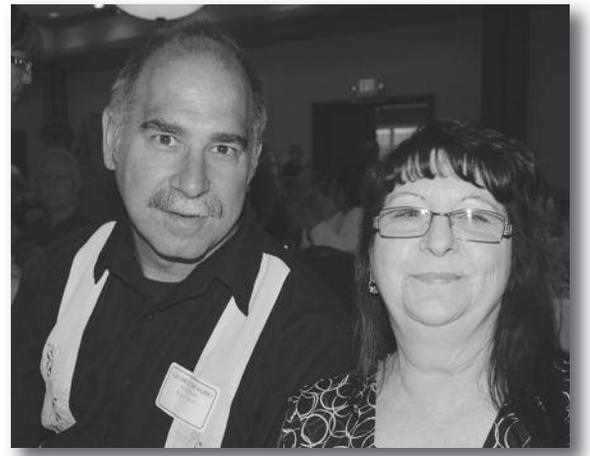
Union Representative Alan Kontra



Actor Ian Ruskin



Retired UFCW Local 1167 President Bill Sauriol



Scenes from the 2012 Stewards Conference



UFCW Local 1167 endorses worker-friendly candidates in the June 5 primary

Congress

- Pete Aguilar (District 31)
- Grace Napolitano (District 32)
- Henry Waxman (District 33)
- Xavier Becerra (District 34)
- Raul Ruiz (District 36)
- Karen Bass (District 37)
- Linda Sanchez (District 38)
- Jay Chen (District 39)
- Lucille Roybal-Allard (District 40)
- Mark Takano (District 41)
- Juan Vargas (District 51)
- Scott Peters (District 52)
- Susan Davis (District 53)

Assembly

- John Coffey (District 33)
- Mari Goodman (District 34)
- Das Williams (District 37)
- Richard Alarcon (District 39)
- Russ Warner (District 40)
- Chris Holden (District 41)
- Mark Anthony Orozco (District 42)
- Mike Gatto (District 43)
- Bob Blumenfield (District 45)
- Joe Baca, Jr. (District 47)
- Ed Chau (District 49)
- Betsy Butler (District 50)
- Norma Torres (District 52)
- John Perez (District 53)
- V. Manuel Perez (District 56)
- Reggie Jones-Sawyer (District 59)
- Stan Skipworth (District 60)
- Jose Medina (District 61)
- Steven Bradford (District 62)

- Anthony Rendon (District 63)
- Isadore Hall (District 64)
- Sharon Quirk-Silva (District 65)
- Al Muratsuchi (District 66)
- Julio Perez (District 69)
- Greg Lasarkis (District 77)
- Toni Atkins (District 78)
- Shirley Weber and Sid Vooakarra (Dual ticket for District 79)
- Ben Hueso (District 80)

State Senate

- Bill Monning (District 17)
- Jason Hodge (District 19)
- Star Moffatt (District 21)
- Carol Liu (District 25)
- Greg Diamond (District 29)
- Steve Clute (District 31)
- Ricardo Lara (District 33)
- Marty Block (District 39)

Other offices

- Bob Buster (Riverside County Supervisor 1st District)
- Rick Roelle (San Bernardino County Supervisor 1st District)
- Greg Pettis (City Council of Cathedral City)
- Paul Marchand (City Council of Cathedral City)
- Mark Carnevale (Mayor of Cathedral City)
- Matthew Slowik (Fontana City Council)
- Lydia Salazar-Wibert (Fontana City Council)
- Andy Melendrez (Mayor Riverside)
- John Futch (San Bernardino Community College Board of Trustees)



Charles Jakobetz is new union vice president

At the Executive Board meeting on April 24, UFCW Local 1167 President Bill Lathrop administered the oath of office to the union's new vice president, Charles Jakobetz, a meat cutter at Albertsons 6796 in Corona.

San Diego Fresh & Easy loses appeal on union-busting charges

Fresh & Easy Neighborhood Markets, Inc., was denied a review by the U.S. Court of Appeals after being found guilty of violating the rights of employees in San Diego in 2008.

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruled that Fresh & Easy tried to prevent workers from discussing labor unions and intimidated an employee who spoke to her coworkers about joining one.

Following an investigation, the NLRB found Fresh & Easy guilty on three counts of violating federal labor laws.

According to the first count, management restricted talk of unions or labor conditions among employees in

the store. The second count stated that management threatened the employee with dismissal and informed her that she would not be eligible for unemployment if she quit. A third count said the employee was forced to comply with a disciplinary improvement plan and was forbidden from speaking about her discipline with other employees in the store.

"I am proud to say that the UFCW was instrumental in the NLRB investigation that brought Fresh & Easy to justice," UFCW Local 1167 President Bill Lathrop said.

"Tesco might be able to bend the law in its international markets unnoticed, but not here in our country."

Good news for members



Karl O'Schwarz

Karl O'Schwarz, a food clerk at Stater Bros. 79 in Arlington, proudly displays his certificate and pin commemorating his 35 years of service.



Elidia Munoz

Elidia Munoz, a service deli manager at Vons 2158 in Riverside, was awarded six months of back pay totaling \$700 for working in a higher classification.

It PAYS to be UNION!

	APRIL 2012	2012 TOTAL
Back pay and benefits restored to members	\$2,789.68	\$14,937.86
Members reinstated	35	98
Grievances settled	71	241

STEWARD FEATURE

Activism knows no borders

Steward helped elect Guatemala's president

Not many people can say truthfully that they helped elect a president of a Latin American country, but Miguel Godinez, a meat cutter at Stater Bros. 179 in Fontana, can.

Godinez was a communications director for Otto Pérez Molina's presidential campaign in Guatemala last year. He performed a crucial role in mobilizing Guatemalan nationals living in the United States to vote for the candidate.

"My whole family is proud that Molina is the new president and we hope he continues to be successful," he said.

Godinez met Molina 23 years ago when the latter was a general of the country's military. The two kept in touch throughout the years and when Molina formed the Partido Patriota (Patriot Party) in 2007, Godinez wanted to help his friend in any capacity he could.

Origins

Godinez was born in San Marcos, Guatemala, a small town



Miguel Godinez

that borders Mexico to the north. Seeking security and a better life, he moved to California during the 1980s, when several Central American countries were engulfed in civil wars.

He had a knack for graphic design, so Godinez attended



Miguel Godinez with Guatemalan President Otto Pérez Molina and First Lady Rosa María Leal de Pérez

Cypress College and Citrus College until he earned an associate in arts degree.

He put that education to use when he created fliers, leaflets and

other promotional materials for Molina's campaign. But his activism didn't end there.

"I took 51 doctors from Loma Linda to Guatemala to do medical screenings for poor people," Godinez recalled. "I also helped to educate children and their parents by providing them with school books and materials."

Today, he devotes much of his time to his church. He leads teenagers during bible study and teaches them how to improve their lives.

Godinez became a steward 18 years ago because "I love my union," he said.

"Working in a union is what I wanted to do as soon as I came to the United States," he said

Godinez offers the following advice for other members of UFCW Local 1167:

"I urge all of my fellow union members to get involved in politics. Also, everyone should want to become a steward, because it is important to be as involved as possible in the union."

More scenes from the 2012 Stewards Conference



Above: Stewards are recognized for raising political awareness by registering union members to vote in the union's Voter Registration Drive. **Right:** A union member visits the National Bone Marrow Program's "Be The Match" table. UFCW Western States Council Executive Assistant Dana Palmer hands him information on how to become a bone marrow donor. Be The Match is a program designed to educate people on the advantages of bone marrow donation.



Next issue: Annual charity golf tournament coverage