

# DESERT EDGE

## UFCW LOCAL 1167

a VOICE for working America

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

February 2013

## Members and staff show union pride in Desert Hot Springs



See page 5 for photos and story.

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### PRESIDENT'S REPORT

## President's speech offers vision, hope

In his second inaugural speech on Jan. 21, President Barack Obama expressed his determination to take charge of the country's agenda for the next four years.

It was refreshing to hear his words of shared responsibility for the common good.

"We, the people, still believe that every citizen deserves a basic measure of security and dignity," the President said to a crowd of tens of thousands of Americans at the Capitol in Washington, D.C.

For too long, America's conversation has been dominated by those who believe that, in order to achieve stability and growth, we need to give more and more to the "makers" and "job creators" — those richest Americans who, supposedly, are the source of all that is productive and good in our society. Everyone else is a "taker" — someone who mooches off the wealth that is created by the "makers."

### The real 'job creators'

President Obama's reelection provides convincing evidence that most Americans are no longer swayed by this rhetoric. They understand that the real "job creators" are the people who work for a living and pay their bills and taxes. In other words, the middle class.

"We believe that America's prosperity must rest upon the broad shoulders of a rising middle class," the President said.

"The commitments we make to each other through Medicare and Medicaid and Social Security, these things do not sap our initiative, they strengthen us," he said. "They do not make us a nation of takers; they free us to take the risks that make this country great.

"We know that America thrives when every person can find independence and pride in their work; when the wages of honest labor liberate families from the brink of hardship."

I was particularly moved when the President spoke of those Americans at the bottom rungs of the economic ladder:

"We are true to our creed when a little girl born into the bleakest poverty knows that she has the same chance to succeed as anybody else, because she is an American; she is free, and she is equal, not



By Bill Lathrop

Please see page 8



**President's Day is Feb. 18.  
Union offices will be open.**

**Union offices will be closed  
March 29 in observance of  
Good Friday.**

## 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, 2013, 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!***

# Report vacations to the Benefits Department

**F**ood members are urged to fill out Loss of Eligibility (vacation waiver) forms to maintain health coverage. This does not apply to pharmacists and drug members.

The Collective Bargaining Agreement includes a "skip month" eligibility system. For example, September hours earn coverage for November, October for December, and so on.

## Minimum hours every month

In order to maintain health coverage, Food and Meat Division members must work a certain minimum number of hours every month.

Food Clerks, General Merchandise Clerks and Meat Clerks must work a minimum of 92 hours and Meat Cutters must work 76 hours. Plan B Warehouse Clerks, General Clerks, Service Clerks and Meat Clerks must work a minimum of 76 hours. Clerk's Helpers and Utility Clerks need to work 64 hours.

Paid vacation hours count toward the monthly minimum number of

hours, but generally they need to be adjusted manually. This is because most stores report vacation hours when they are paid on the member's anniversary date and not when they are taken. For this reason, members may get a notice that they are short on hours in a month in which they took a paid vacation.

Many Food members have been accustomed to taking vacation time off in the free months.

As there are no longer any free months, many members taking vacations may get short-hour notices.

As in the contract, Vons pays vacations when taken. Therefore, the vacation waiver may not be required, but it will depend on each individual.

Whenever members are short on hours, a Loss of Eligibility notice, with a place to list vacation hours, will be sent to them from the trust fund in Cypress.

However, since these notices often go out right before the time eligibility would lapse, this frequently results in a temporary loss of eligibility while the health trust

fund processes the information and clears eligibility.

Because hours are reported just prior to coverage lapsing, if a Loss of Eligibility form reporting a vacation is on record, you will most likely still receive a Loss of Eligibility notice, but you can call the Insurance Department and someone generally can have your coverage reinstated within the day. If there is no form on file, then there will be a lag due to mailing and processing times.

## We're here to help

If you have taken a paid vacation and think you may be short on hours as a result, call the Insurance Department at (909) 877-1110 and request a Loss of Eligibility (vacation waiver) form.

Complete the form and mail it back to the Benefits Department after you have returned from your vacation. This will maintain your insurance coverage with minimal loss of eligibility. The form is also available on the union's website, under the "Insurance Department" tab. Visit us at [www.ufcw1167.org](http://www.ufcw1167.org).

## Nomination meetings for convention delegates

**T**he official call for the August 2013 UFCW Convention has been received.

Local 1167, by virtue of membership, is entitled to send 22 delegates. However, the Executive Board has recommended that the Local only send 12 delegates in an effort to reduce costs.

**Eligibility requirements for delegates:** A delegate must be an active member of Local 1167 who has been an active member of the UFCW International Union, or who had been a member of another organization merged with or chartered by the UFCW International Union or merged into a local union of the United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, for a continuous aggregate since December 2011.

In accordance with the Constitution and Bylaws of the UFCW, the nomination meetings for delegates from UFCW Local 1167 are scheduled as follows:

### DELEGATE NOMINATION MEETINGS

**FEBRUARY 2013**

**All meetings held at 7 p.m.**

#### BLOOMINGTON

Mon, Feb. 18, 2013  
Local 1167 Auditorium

#### VICTORVILLE

Tues, Feb. 19, 2013  
Hilton Garden Inn  
12603 Mariposa Rd  
Victorville, CA 92395  
Mojave Room

#### PALM DESERT

Wed, Feb. 20, 2013  
Palm Desert Embassy Suites  
74700 us Highway 111,  
Palm Desert, CA 92260  
Salon I

#### BLYTHE

Thurs, Feb. 21, 2013  
Comfort Inn & Suites  
545 E Hobson Way,  
Blythe, CA 92225

#### NEEDLES

Thurs, Feb. 21, 2013  
Rodeway Inn & Suites  
1195 3rd St. Hill  
Needles, CA 92363

#### EL CENTRO

Thurs, Feb. 21, 2013  
Eagle's Lodge  
661 State St  
El Centro, CA 92243



### DESERT EDGE

**Bill Lathrop**  
Editor

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

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

**Bleiweiss Communications Incorporated**  
Publisher







## MAP CAN HELP

# Know the danger signs of alcohol abuse

**A**lcohol is a drug. It is the one drug that is generally acceptable today as part of our way of life.

Because it is widely available and drinking is a legal social custom, the potential for abuse and dependence is high.

You should suspect you may have a drinking problem when you:

- Begin to use alcohol compulsively;
- Continue to use it despite adverse consequences (such as the repeated concerns of loved ones, the loss of a job, credit problems, etc.);
- Lose control and experience an increase or decrease in tolerance for alcohol.

More than 10 million Americans are problem drinkers. Anyone can be an alcoholic. More and more regular people are diagnosed with the serious condition of alcohol dependence every day.

Pregnant women should be particularly concerned. The U.S. Surgeon General advises pregnant women not to consume any alcohol whatsoever. That's because the alcohol passes through the placenta and into the fetus. If the mother gets drunk, so does the developing child.

Drinking among teenagers and young adults presents a serious mental health risk to that age group as well as posing a grave physical risk. A recent study by the National Highway Transportation Administration found that alcohol related crashes are the number one cause of death in the 15-25 age group.

Denial is a major symptom of alcoholism. Others, who are close to those affected, are often the first to notice behavior changes and suspect something is wrong.

If alcohol is interfering with your life, there are things you can do to get help.

The MAP (Membership Assistance Program) is available to members at no cost. Representatives are available to members 24-hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year to offer confidential help to any member in need.

## MAP Membership Assistance Program

If you have problems with:

- Alcohol
- Drugs
- Children & Adolescents
- Family
- Emotional Issues
- Gambling
- Marriage
- Financial/Legal

Eligible active or retired Food and Meat participants can call the toll-free MAP

number at the Health Management

Center at any time,

DAY OR NIGHT, 24 HOURS A DAY,

SEVEN DAYS A WEEK.

**Food Division, call  
(800) 461-9179**

**Drug Division, call  
(866) 268-2510**

(All calls are confidential)

## UNION REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

# Properly record temperature and sweep logs

**O**ne of your primary responsibilities as an employee and a union member is to know your company's policies and procedures.

If you are not certain that you understand these policies and procedures, review them with management or contact your union representative to ensure that you do.

For example, when filling out temperature logs in side departments, make sure you properly check temperatures and record them on your department's temperature log.

It is important to take the time to properly fill out the temperature logs. Do not sign off without properly checking the product or case. Failure to do this properly will get you into "hot water" and you will be reprimanded.

Sweep logs are another important issue. Make sure you pick up that dust mop and sweep your department or store, whichever you're assigned, and then record it.

### Follow instructions

I've seen many members lose their jobs because they failed to follow instructions properly.

Sometimes, we are running short on time or don't have enough help in our departments. We feel like there isn't enough time in our day to do it all. But performing your tasks conscientiously only takes few minutes and will help secure your job.

If a supervisor tells you to do something that would cause a reasonable person to fear for his or her health or safety, you should notify your union representative immediately. Your union rep will help you manage the situation properly.

If you have doubts, write down the details of the incident and hand those notes to your union rep.

In most cases, if a procedure is done timely and properly you will not have any problems with management.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to notify your union rep.



**Gabriel Suarez**

## It PAYS to be UNION!

	<u>JANUARY 2013</u>	<u>YEAR TO DATE</u>
Back pay and benefits restored to members	\$285,175.95	\$285,175.95
Members reinstated	13	13
Grievances settled	40	40

# Members at Work

## Rite Aid 5679

### Desert Hot Springs



### Next Quarterly Membership Meeting:

**Wednesday,  
March 27, 2013**

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

## IN MEMORIAM

**Christopher Buchanan**, a meat cutter formerly employed by Ralphs, died Jan. 7, 2013 at the age of 33. He had been a continuous member since December 2010.

**Donald Germond**, a retired food clerk formerly employed by Stater Bros. Markets, died Dec. 25, 2012, at the age of 78. He had been a continuous member since September 1965.

**Margaret Griefnow**, a retired food clerk formerly employed by Food Giant and Stater Bros. Markets, died Dec. 9, 2012, at the age of 86. She had been a continuous member since January 1964.

**Reyes Valenzuela**, an affiliated member formerly employed by Karl's Shoes and Thrifty Drug, died Jan. 5, 2013 at the age of 98. He had been a continuous member since March 1972.

*Our condolences go to the families of these deceased members.*





## Members and staff show off UFCW colors at Desert Hot Springs holiday parade

**M**embers, activists, union staff and neighbors lined Palm Drive on Saturday Jan. 12 to participate in Desert Hot Springs' first holiday parade in four years.

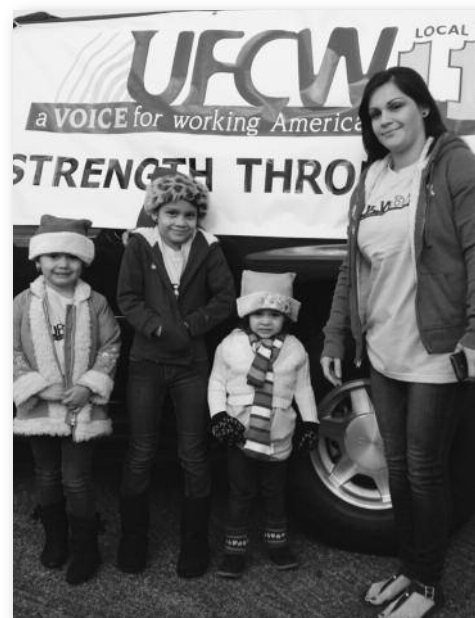
Congressman-elect Raul Ruiz (D-Palm Desert) and Assemblyman V. Manuel Perez (D-Coachella) made appearances at the event.

"It was great," said a member from Local 1167.

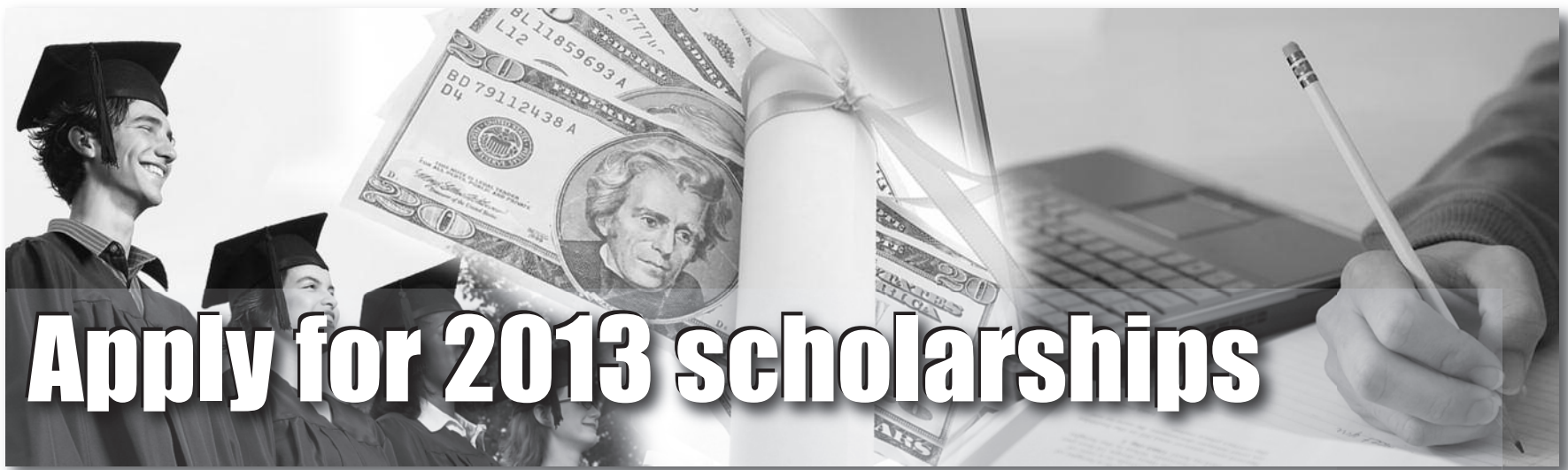
"I was proud to represent my community and my union in the parade."

Members wore gold and maroon UFCW Local 1167 T-shirts and carried a union banner along the parade route.

Also participating were military representatives, the Desert Hot Springs High School Public Safety Academy program, school bands and the fire department.







# Apply for 2013 scholarships

## Last chance to Apply for the UFCW and Food Employers Benefit Fund Scholarship!



**T**he 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 2012 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, 2013.**

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 or visit [www.scufcwfund.com](http://www.scufcwfund.com) for details.

**UFCW International scholarship update:** 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 will begin accepting applications in January and will continue accepting applications through the first quarter of 2013.

Visit [www.ufcw.org/scholarship](http://www.ufcw.org/scholarship) or contact [scholarship@ufcw.org](mailto:scholarship@ufcw.org) with questions.

## 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. 18  
&  
March 8**

**Electronic Filing Services**  
Call today and inquire about our preferential rates.

**(626) 795-3815**

Call day or evening, including weekends.  
This is not a walk-in service.  
An appointment is required.

## Tips for finding free tax help or a paid tax preparer

**I**f you need help preparing your tax return, choose help wisely. As a taxpayer, you are legally responsible for everything reported on your tax return, whether you prepare it yourself or have someone else prepare it for you.

### When selecting an individual or company to prepare your taxes, be sure to:

- Check the person or company's qualifications. (Beginning in 2014, only four types of preparers will be authorized to prepare individual returns for compensation: Enrolled Agents, Registered Tax Return Preparers, Certified Public Accountants and Attorneys. Inquire about your preparer's professional status.)
- Check the preparer's history.
- Ask about their service fees.
- Make sure they are accessible after the April due date in case you have a question about your return

### The preparer you choose should:

- Ask you to provide all receipts and records needed to prepare your return.
- Not ask you to direct any part of your refund to an account that is not in your or your spouse's name.
- Never ask you to sign a blank return.
- Allow you to review the completed



return, including all schedules and attachments, and explain it all to you before you sign it

- Sign the return, include the preparer's tax identification number and provide you a copy

### Planning for tax time

- Being organized and planning ahead can save time, money and headaches at tax time. Start gathering your records and exploring your options now. You'll have more time when you're not up against a deadline or anxious for your refund.
- Each household's financial circumstances is different, so it's important to fully consider your specific situation and goals before making large financial decisions. And remember, even some legitimate returns may require review and take longer, so don't count on getting your refund by

a certain date to pay for something important. If you can't afford a paid preparer, there are several options for free tax preparation.

- E-file with Free File is an option available to most taxpayers with income less than \$57,000. It's available only at [IRS.gov](http://IRS.gov), where a number of tax software companies make their products available for free.
- The Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program offers free tax preparation for low-to moderate-income taxpayers. To find a VITA site near you, visit [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov) and type the word VITA in the search engine and click on "Free tax return preparation for you by volunteers."
- Tax Counseling for the Elderly offers priority assistance to people who are 60 years of age and older. To find a TCE site, visit the AARP locator web page.
- Active-duty military members and their families can receive free tax preparation assistance at VITA sites within their installations. The volunteers are trained and equipped to address military specific tax issues.

Free tax preparation assistance is closer than you think and now finding out where to go for help is just a matter of a few easy steps.

# UFCW Local 1167's Scholarship Awards Competition now available for applicants!

**U**FCW Local 1167 is proud to announce the launch of its scholarship program for certain members only, for the academic school year 2013-2014.

Scholarships will be awarded to winners chosen from among qualified contract applicants.

**Food contract members, Stater Bros. Meat Distribution Center members and Vons Meat Service Center members are not eligible for this program** because they may participate in the million-dollar Scholarship Award and Tuition Assistance Programs offered by the Southern California United Food and Commercial Workers Unions and Food Employers Ancillary Benefit Fund (Benefit Fund Scholarships).

Food members who were hired prior to March 1, 2004 (or had 12 months of employment if hired after March 1, 2004, as of October 2008), are qualified to apply for the Trust Fund's Scholarship Award and Tuition Assistance Program and **are not eligible for the scholarship program listed here.**

## Rules and Eligibility Requirements

1. Applicants must establish basic eligibility by applying for a scholarship award and completing the **"Request to participate in UFCW Local 1167 College (university or junior college) Scholarship Awards Competition"** application published in this newspaper at the right of this announcement or online (see below). **The application must be returned to UFCW Local 1167 no later than Friday, May 10, 2013.**

2. Those eligible to compete are current active members of the local not eligible to compete in the above described Benefit Fund Scholarship Program, their spouses and their dependent children. Dependent grandchildren of dues-paying retirees are eligible. Sisters, brothers and non-dependent grandchildren are not eligible.

3. Applicants must be at least seniors in high school.

4. Applicants are not eligible if they previously received UFCW Local 1167 Scholarship Award monies.

5. To be eligible, the member must be in continuous good standing for at least one year through June 30, 2013. The member whose eligibility is used cannot be suspended, take a withdrawal or transfer to another local. Failure to comply with these eligibility rules disqualifies the applicant.

6. Winners are selected by the Scholarship Committee based on:

- Academic record
- Leadership record
- Community service and volunteer activities
- Character and personality
- Personal achievement

7. Awards will be made to undergraduate or graduate applicants at the sole discretion of the local's Scholarship Committee.

8. Finalists selected by the Scholarship Committee must provide proof of academic record and submit completed forms (blank forms to be provided by the union) listing leadership activities, community service and volunteer activities and personal achievements, substantiated by two teachers and two personal recommendations.

9. Finalists may be required to appear for a personal interview.

10. Awards are contingent upon the student being accepted by, registered at and attending an accredited academic institution of higher learning. **Trade schools are not included.**

11. Winners must be full-time students taking at least 12 undergraduate or nine graduate units or part-time working students taking six undergraduate or four graduate units.

12. Decisions of the Scholarship Committee are final.

**REFER ANY QUESTIONS  
TO SHAELYN AT  
(800) 698-8329  
(909) 877-5000**

## Request to Participate in UFCW Local 1167's Limited Scholarship Awards Competition

I understand that in order to be eligible for a scholarship award:

- I am not eligible for a scholarship offered by the Southern California United Food and Commercial Workers Union and Food Employers Ancillary Benefit Fund.
- Membership on which my eligibility is based must remain in continuous good standing through June 30, 2013. This means the member cannot be suspended, take a withdrawal or transfer to another local prior to June 30, 2013.
- I must be at least a senior in high school.
- I am not eligible to apply if I previously received scholarship award money from UFCW Local 1167.
- If my address, telephone number or place of work changes, it is my responsibility to inform the local union so that I can receive information in a timely manner.
- If the member is involuntarily laid off or transferred out of UFCW Local 1167, I will become ineligible and will notify the local union.
- Finalists will be notified by mail. If I am notified that I qualify as a finalist, I will submit required information and will appear for an interview if invited to do so.
- All decisions of the Scholarship Committee are final.

My cumulative Grade Point Average in High School is/was \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Finalists to confirm with transcripts)

My cumulative Grade Point Average in College is/was \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Finalists to confirm with transcripts)

My cumulative Grade Point Average in Graduate School is \_\_\_\_\_.  
(Finalists to confirm with transcripts)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Applicant in acceptance of the above)

**(Please Print)**

Applicant name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Full address \_\_\_\_\_

I am a member of UFCW Local 1167 (circle one) **yes** **no**

Eligibility (office use only) \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant's Social Security number \_\_\_\_\_

Employed by (only if member) \_\_\_\_\_

Full store address \_\_\_\_\_

Union Representative \_\_\_\_\_

I am related to a member of UFCW Local 1167 (circle one) **yes** **no**

Eligibility (office use only) \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to member \_\_\_\_\_

Member's name \_\_\_\_\_

Member's Social Security number \_\_\_\_\_

Member employed by \_\_\_\_\_

Full store address \_\_\_\_\_

Union Representative \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Highest academic level completed by June 2013  
(Must be at least a senior in High School to apply)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Year graduated from High School or month and year will graduate

\_\_\_\_\_  
I applied for a UFCW Local 1167 Scholarship in (year applied).  
(Not eligible if monies received in past.)

**Complete and mail promptly to  
UFCW Union Local 1167**

**P.O. Box 1167, Bloomington, CA 92316**

**Attention: Shaelyn**

**Return by Friday, May 10, 2013**

**The 2013 UFCW  
International Scholarship  
is available online!  
Go to [www.ufcw.org/scholarship](http://www.ufcw.org/scholarship)  
for details and apply!**



## STEWARD FEATURE

# Gonzalez knows the value of better pay, health benefits, a pension and job protections

**F**or years before she became an official shop steward at Rite Aid 5679 in Desert Hot Springs last year, Tina Gonzalez felt that she was already the voice of the union at her store.

"I stuck with my first job and I've worked there for 18 years," Gonzalez said. "People have always come to me with questions about the union."

Gonzalez was asked by UFCW 1167 Union Representative Gabe Suarez to become a shop steward in 2012.

She recently attended her first stewards conference.

"I mostly update the fliers in the break room and answer questions about benefits for my coworkers," she said.

"I'm glad to be part of a union," she continued. "I feel safe because there's someone backing me up. Corporations have become so shady that it's good to have someone watching out for you."

"And the benefits are first-rate."

**'I'm glad to be part of a union... I feel safe because there's someone backing me up. Corporations have become so shady that it's good to have someone watching out for you.'**

Gonzalez has seen what happens when workers no longer have a union to help them.

"My manager is a good guy," she said. "He came from the union, but when he got promoted to management, now he doesn't have any-



**Tina Gonzalez**

one looking out for him.

"I tell new hires that they might not think the union helps them, but they'll eventually understand the value of better pay, health benefits, a pension and job protections that come with being in a union."

"If we lose unions in America, it's not going to be good for us," she continued. "We need to hang in there and back our union, no matter how hard it may be for us, personally."

"If you hear talk about a strike, don't be afraid. Just keep moving forward, because in the end we will prevail."

Gonzalez has been married to her husband, Jeremiah for eight years. They have four children — Manuel, Vanessa, Jeremiah Jr. and Jessica.

Jeremiah Sr. enjoys working on cars, specifically his lowrider mini-truck, during his time off.

Gonzalez said she enjoys taking driving trips with her family, "mostly to the San Diego area."

## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

# President's speech offers vision, hope

(Continued from front page)

just in the eyes of God but also in our own.

"We do not believe that in this country freedom is reserved for the lucky, or happiness for the few," he continued.

"We recognize that no matter how responsibly we live our lives, any one of us at any time may face a job loss, or a sudden illness, or a home swept away in a terrible storm."

Now that he has been reelected, President Obama's task is to translate these inspiring words into concrete action. This will be a tough challenge when the House of Representatives is still controlled by those who believe strongly in the old "makers" and "takers" rhetoric.

The president's triumphs in the recent struggles with the House leadership over the "fiscal cliff" and "debt ceiling" may be short-lived, but they offer hope that the days of crisis may be behind us, and we can start moving forward, at last.

# Alarming trend of children making soda bottle bombs

**I**t might seem like a harmless childhood prank, but an Internet-fueled fad of building "soda bottle bombs" is generating concern among parents, health officials and law enforcement personnel.

Children are manufacturing the bombs by placing household products such as Drano, cleaners, tin foil and water inside plastic soda bottles.

The ingredients form a chemical reaction that has enough force to remove fingers and hands as well as produce second- and third-degree chemical burns.

A slight disturbance can produce an explosion within seconds.

Editor's note: If you see a filled, capped bottle on your property or in the street and suspect it might be a bomb, ensure that no one else comes near it, then call your local law enforcement and describe the situation.

Do not attempt to diffuse the bomb on your own. It could result in serious injury.