

DESERT EDGE

UFCW LOCAL 1167

a VOICE for working America

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

January 2012

Food 4 Less members to vote on agreement

See page 6



Major changes coming from the Trust Fund

See page 8



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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Looking ahead: My predictions for 2012

In December, we reviewed the big events and issues of the past year. Now it's time to look ahead to 2012.

What do we expect to see in the year ahead and how will it affect us — as Americans, as working people and as union members?

We don't have a crystal ball in the headquarters of UFCW Local 1167, but we follow the news and have an understanding of the American political calendar. We can also make educated guesses about the months ahead based on current trends in labor issues and society in general.



By Bill Lathrop

So here are our predictions. We can revisit them a year from now and see how we did!

Economy: It seems like forever since the Great Recession began in December 2007. As the professional economists measure things, the recession officially ended in the middle of 2009, but job growth is painfully slow. The unemployment rate currently stands at 9 percent and many Americans are still losing their homes. Most people seem to think we're still in a recession.

Here's my economic forecast for 2012: Continued slow improvement in the job market, led by the retail sector and light manufacturing. The pace should pick up in the fall, but probably not fast enough to improve the unemployment rate to our liking.

Politics: Last year was a bad one for President Obama, whose favorability ratings are currently below 50 percent. Historically, presidents who rate that poorly don't get reelected, especially when the economy is lagging.

I expect that the coming year will be better for the president as his popularity numbers improve along with the economy.

(Please see page 2)

Next Quarterly Membership Meeting: March 28, 2012

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



JUST RETIRED

First of all, belated congratulations to **Shirley Carpenter**, who retired in August. Shirley worked 38 years for Stater Bros., and five years with Alpha Beta. We're sorry we missed you, Shirley, and hope you have been enjoying your retirement.

The month of December brought us a record number of retirees. Joining the ranks of the retired were **Norita Aguas**, **Guadalupe Chavez**, **David Cheshier**, **Fernando Clouthier**, **Lise Fingerson**, **Cynthia Fury**,

Lucia Gaglio, **Jack Gray**, **Delma Holt**, **Debbie Kennedy**, **Roger Kirby**, **Kathy Landsaw**, **Diana Martinez**, **Donna Richmond**, **Linda Rosas**, **Karl Schwarz**, **Steve Silos**, **Rebecca Soriano**, **Ignacio Urena**, **Duane Varner**, and **Marilyn Williams**.

Norita Aguas worked for Stater Bros. for five years. **Guadalupe Chavez** worked for Ralphs for 28 years. **David Cheshier** worked for Ralphs for 33 years. **Fernando Clouthier** worked for Stater Bros. for 37 years. **Lise Fingerson** worked for Alpha Beta and Ralphs for 34 years. **Cynthia Fury** worked for Alpha Beta and Ralphs for 32 years. **Lucia Gaglio** worked for Albertsons for 18 years. **Jack Gray** worked for Albertsons for 37 years. **Delma Holt** worked for Albertsons and Lucky for 27 years. **Debbie Kennedy** worked for Alpha Beta and Ralphs for 36 years. **Roger Kirby** worked for Albertsons and Alpha Beta for 37 years. **Kathy Landsaw** worked for Stater Bros. for 29 years. **Diana Martinez** worked for Ralphs for 15 years. **Donna Richmond** worked for

Albertsons for 26 years.

Linda Rosas worked for Vons and Safeway for 25 years. **Karl Schwarz** worked for Stater Bros. for 34 years. **Steve Silos** worked for Vons for 40 years. **Rebecca Soriano** worked for Ralphs for 32 years. **Ignacio Urena** worked for Stater Bros. for 31 years. **Duane Varner** worked for Lucky and Albertsons for 37 years. **Marilyn Williams** worked for Vons for 26 years.

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

JUST MARRIED

Elizabeth Barrera, Rite-Aid, married Noel Saucedo, on June 23 in Indio. The happy couple honeymooned in Mexico ... **Alvaro Rosas**, Albertsons, married Danielle Ruiz on Dec. 10. The wedding was held in Palm Desert ... **Tanya Arroyo**, Stater Bros., said "I do" to Scott Reed on Aug. 11 in a ceremony held in Riverside.

Congratulations to all of our newlyweds!

JUST BORN

Amanda O'Hara, Stater Bros., has a new son. Rylee Ray was born on Nov. 9 and weighed 7 lbs. 5 oz. ... **Mayra DeAnda**, Rite-Aid, has a new daughter. Yazmine Yvette Hernandez was born on Nov. 21 and weighed 7 lbs. 14 oz. ... **Manuel Salgado**, Vons, and his wife, Alma, are pleased to announce the birth of their son, Alexander, on Nov. 22. Alexander weighed 7 lbs. 10 oz. ... **Brian Soto**, Stater Bros., is a proud new dad to Brian David Soto, Jr., who was born on Nov. 26 and weighed 8 lbs. 6 oz.

Congratulations to all of our new moms and dads!

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Looking ahead: My predictions for 2012

Continued from front page

Even now, the polls show he would win a head-to-head contest against either of his most likely challengers, Newt Gingrich and Mitt Romney. Mr. Obama is a superb campaigner and he has huge amounts of campaign cash at his disposal. Meanwhile, many candidates are turning off independent voters as they seek the support of the most extreme activists of their party.

Sports: I'm not the biggest sports fan on the planet, but it's hard to ignore the fact that the Angels became a formidable force in the American League when they added Albert Pujols, C.J. Wilson and LaTroy Hawkins to what was already a really good team. Could the 10-year reunion of their World Championship lead to their second in franchise history in 2012?

And in the National League, could long-time hometown heroes become the new owners of the Dodgers?

Labor: Last year started off terribly when several governors pushed through anti-union laws in states like Wisconsin, Ohio, Indiana and New Jersey. It ended on a more positive note when the people of Ohio voted overwhelmingly to repeal one of the worst of those laws, Senate Bill 5, which took away the collective bargaining rights of government workers.

At the 2011 convention of the Food and Drug Council in December, nearly 200 labor leaders from many parts of the country were inspired as Brigid Kelly, the communications director of UFCW Local 75 in Ohio, described how unions from the public and private sectors worked with a broad coalition of allies to defeat Senate Bill 5.

In 2012, I foresee a continuation of this trend. From coast to coast, labor unions and their allies are turning the tables against the pro-corporate forces that have conspired to silence the voices of working people.

Meanwhile, the activists of the "Occupy" movement are shifting America's political conversation toward the interests of the "99%" — those people who don't happen to be extremely rich and powerful.

I look forward to seeing a re-energized Labor Movement casting off its old differences and divisions and working in solidarity to rebuild the middle class and restore the American Dream.

UFCW Local 1167 wishes you a happy and prosperous 2012!

IN MEMORIAM

Edward Romani, a retired food clerk formerly employed by Market Basket and Ralphs, died Nov. 17, 2011, at the age of 86. He had been a member since April 1964.

Olirene Worthing, a retired general merchandise clerk formerly employed by Sages, Lucky and Stater Bros. Markets, died Dec. 2, 2011, at the age of 92. She had been a continuous member since August 1965.

Our condolences go to the families of these deceased members.



DESERT EDGE

Bill Lathrop
Editor

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Tense negotiations continue for Central and Northern California UFCW members

Three supermarket companies in Northern and Central California are proposing big takeaways and rollbacks in negotiations with UFCW unions in the region.

UFCW Locals 5, 8 and 648 have been negotiating with Raley's, Safeway and Save Mart since last summer. Their previous contract, signed in 2007, expired on Oct. 8, 2011. Approximately 45,000 grocery workers have been covered since then by a series of contract extensions.

Citing poor economic conditions and growing competition from non-union retailers, the supermarket com-

panies are seeking deep cuts in health care, wage premiums and workplace protections.

"We stand united with our brothers and sisters up north, UFCW Local 1167 President Bill Lathrop said. "We proved through our recent rounds of negotiations that solidarity is key to maintaining our members' access to affordable health care and good wages."

In Southern California, seven UFCW unions representing 62,000 workers reached an agreement with Albertsons, Ralphs and Vons in September 2011 following eight months of difficult negotiations.



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'S REPORT

Schedule your vacations early

As a new year begins, many of us are taking some time to look back on 2011 to reflect upon the lessons we have learned.

Some of our members may be feeling regret that they weren't able to schedule their vacations the way they wanted.

This is a preventable problem that you don't have to repeat in 2012!

The key is to start preparing now for your hard-earned vacation.



By Jerry Espinosa

It is important that you schedule your vacation before your employer has the opportunity to schedule one for you.

When the weather is cold and wet at the end of a busy holiday season, some of us might be tempted to drink our hot chocolate and postpone planning a holiday that won't happen for several months.

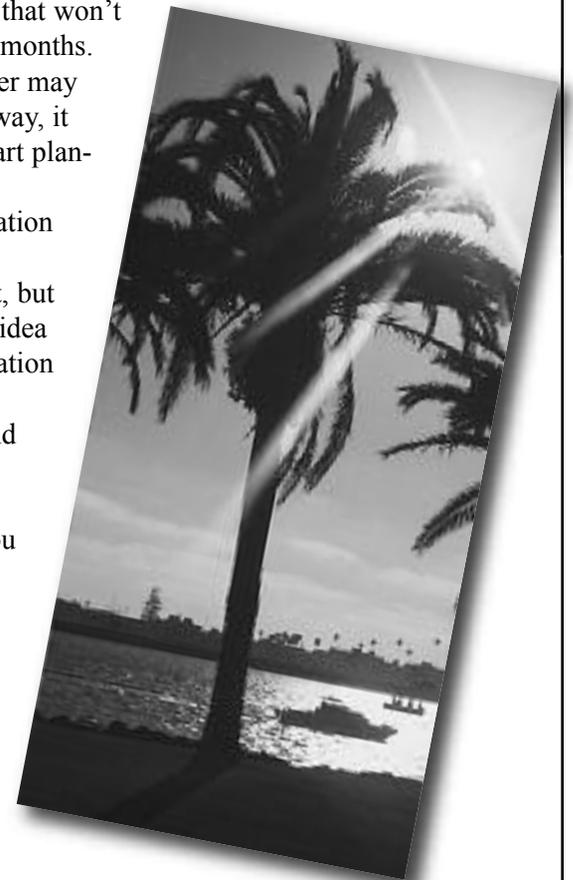
Although summer may be a few months away, it isn't too soon to start planning for it now.

Rules about vacation requests vary from contract to contract, but it's usually a good idea to submit your vacation requests to your employer by the end of January to help ensure that you get the time off that you request.

You can avoid scheduling conflicts and irate co-workers if you coordinate within your department to arrange vacation times that are convenient for everyone involved.

The best vacation slots are granted on a seniority basis, so you may not get your first choice even if you submit your request early. You should decide on alternative dates for your vacation and allow for some flexibility in your plans.

Your union-negotiated vacation allows you the opportunity to travel, spend time with family or simply relax. Using this benefit wisely is important to staying healthy and maintaining focus when you are back on the job.





MEMBERS AT WORK

Albertsons 6519, Redlands





Union members at Food 4 Less to vote on tentative agreement

Representatives of Food 4 Less and seven UFCW local unions in Southern California signed a tentative agreement on Dec. 30, setting the stage for a ratification vote by the chain's union workers on Jan. 10.

"Thanks to the resolute solidarity of our members, we have a settlement that we are recommending for ratification," UFCW Local 1167 President Bill Lathrop said in announcing the agreement.

President Lathrop said Food 4 Less workers will receive letters notifying them of the times and locations of the ratification votes.

At each location, the members will learn the details about the proposed agreement before they vote on making it a binding contract with the employer, Lathrop said.

The settlement followed a vote in December in which the members voted overwhelmingly to reject an earlier set of proposals from the employer.

In September, union members employed by Albertsons, Ralphs and Vons ratified an agreement that took eight months to negotiate. That settlement also followed votes to reject earlier proposals from the employers.

Affordable health care was the most difficult issue in both sets of negotiations, Lathrop said. Other issues included wage disparities between workers at Food 4 Less and employees at Ralphs. Both chains are owned by Cincinnati-based Kroger Inc.

"Food 4 Less has been a profit center for Kroger, that's a fact," Lathrop said. "Our members deserve their fair share of that success."

"We demonstrated in 2011 what the power of solidarity can achieve," he continued.

"Our members at Ralphs stuck together and ended up with a contract that shows them respect. We were determined to do the same with Food 4 Less, and we succeeded."



Food 4 Less members registered before voting to reject an earlier set of proposals from the employer in December. Union leaders recommended approval of an agreement that was reached at the end of the month.



NEGOTIATIONS UPDATES & MORE

Receive special messages and alerts from Local 1167

Text 'VOTE' to 37398

or call the Hotline at

(866) 662-0686



UFCW Local 1167 pays tribute to Civil Rights leader **Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.** for all he did for working people.

Jan. 16, 2012



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 will begin 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.

Union Plus scholarship: The Deadline to apply is **Jan. 31**. This year's application is entirely online. It allows students to complete their application over time and save their responses. The Scholarship Committee will determine recipients of scholarship awards by **May 31**. During the first two weeks of June, award recipients will be individually notified by mail and all applicants will be sent an email with notification that the award list is posted at **UnionPlus.org/Scholarships**.

The Union Plus Scholarship Program is offered through the Union Plus Education Foundation, which is sponsored by Union Privilege. Union membership entitles you to a family of Union Plus benefits including: college test preparation discounts, National Labor College Scholarships, AT&T wireless discounts, Budget truck rental discounts and much more.

Your union works for you!



Elizabeth Hernandez, a Pharmacy Technician at Rite Aid 5714 in Riverside, accepts a back pay check in the amount of \$1,182.11 from Director Pete Waasdorp. Hernandez was paid incorrectly for a year.

It PAYS to be UNION!

	<u>DECEMBER 2011</u>	<u>2011 TOTAL</u>
Back pay and benefits restored to members	\$2,582.38	\$102,017.74
Members reinstated	16	208
Grievances settled	61	786
Unemployment benefits restored to members	n/a	\$18,771.00



Details from the Food & Drug Council's December 2011 convention will appear in the next issue of *Desert Edge*.

STEWARD FEATURE

How curiosity led to Salvador Estrada becoming his store's first steward

Curiosity might have killed the cat, but it is also what inspired Salvador Estrada, a cashier at Food 4 Less 517 in Coachella, to become his stores' first steward.

With questions about his union rights and benefits going unanswered, and no one outside of his Union Representative with whom to talk, Estrada decided to step up to the plate and become a steward.

"My Union Rep, Jerry Espinoza, inspired me to become a steward three years ago," Estrada recalled.

Although he hasn't been a steward very long, Estrada's pursuit of knowledge is paying dividends as he assists his coworkers during the tense negotiations between Food 4

Less and the UFCW locals in Southern California.

"Management tried to persuade us to say 'no' to a strike vote," Estrada said. "But we are willing to fight for what is right."

On Dec. 9, Food 4 Less workers throughout the region voted overwhelmingly to reject management's latest contract proposals and to authorize a strike, should one become necessary to protect their hard-earned wages and benefits.

"I have a feeling these negotiations will drag on just like the ones our brothers and sisters had with Albertons, Ralphs and Vons," Estrada said. "Management is trying to scare us, but we won't let



Salvador Estrada

them succeed."

Estrada's determination to prevail also extends to his personal life. He and his wife, Maria, emigrated from Mexicali, Mexico, to the United States in 1983 to pursue the American Dream.

Estrada treasures the moments he gets to spend with his family.

His oldest son, Salvador Jr., has been working at Ralphs for eight years, making him more tenured than his father. His other son, Kevin, is studying at College of the Desert and hopes to become a math teacher. His daughter, Jocelyn, will graduate from high school in a couple years.

"Spending time with my family is my hobby," Estrada said.

Read your mail

There are many benefit changes going into effect during 2012. The changes are designed to:

- Continue to make affordable health care services available to plan participants and their covered dependents;
- Promote wellness through strong preventive care benefits and disease management programs;
- Reduce health care expenses for you and the Fund by encouraging the use of efficient and cost-effective providers and prescription drugs;
- Provide education, tools, and resources that help you make your enrollment and health care decisions.

It is vital that members **READ** everything coming from the Trust Fund in the mail. Visit www.scufcwffunds.com for more information about your health care benefits.

If you have questions, contact your Union Local or the Trust Fund Office at (714) 220-2297, (562) 408-2715, or (877) 284-2320, extension 420 for all three numbers.

Vital documents and forms will be arriving from the Trust Fund.

Read them!

Contact the Trust Fund:

**(714) 220-2297
(562) 408-2715
(877) 284-2320**

www.scufcwffunds.com

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: **JANUARY DUES ARE NOW DUE AND PAYABLE. IF YOUR DUES ARE NOT PAID ON OR BEFORE MAR. 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!**