

DESERT EDGE

UFCW LOCAL 1167

a VOICE for working America

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

March 2011



The time has come!

Grocery contract negotiations under way as deadline nears

UFCW Local 1167 Limited Scholarship open for applicants — see page 8.

The next Quarterly Membership Meeting
Wednesday, March 23, 2011

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

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Negotiations in progress: 'Keep calm and carry on'

Back in 1939, there was a poster produced by the British government to raise public morale while the German bombs fell. It was printed in simple white-on-red and said "Keep Calm and Carry On."

At the moment, this is exactly what we suggest you do as contract negotiations between the UFCW unions of Southern California and the major supermarket chains approach their second month.

As you should know, we are in negotiations with Albertsons, Ralphs and Vons (we're negotiating separately with Stater Bros). As I write this column, the contract will expire on March 6. If we haven't agreed on a new contract by then, the unions and the employers may decide to take one of several options.

One of those options might be to extend the terms of the old contract for a limited period to give us time to decide on a new agreement. Alternatively, we could decide to take a different path. Time will tell.

Contract language first

The negotiations are going slowly, but they are progressing. We are following our usual pattern by working out contract language first before moving into the big-league issues of wages, benefits and pensions.

While the companies are large corporations, nobody was left unscathed by the recent economic downturn. Profits are down because many shoppers are buying less. Meanwhile, low-price competition from non-union chains is causing additional damage to the employers' bottom line.

Complicating matters further is the fact that our pension and health benefit funds suffered big losses in the market collapse of 2008 and 2009. It will take years for these funds to recover, and in the meantime the companies will have to increase their contributions

(Please see page 8)



By Bill Lathrop

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 Union Local 1167
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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: MARCH DUES ARE NOW DUE AND PAYABLE. IF YOUR DUES ARE NOT PAID ON OR BEFORE MAY 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.)

Report vacations to Benefits Department

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

The 2004 Collective Bargaining Agreements eliminated free months for insurance coverage and replaced them with a "skip month" eligibility system. For example, September hours earn coverage for November, October for December, and so on.

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.

Don't get caught short

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 are getting notices for the first time, since they have been accustomed to taking vacation time off in the free months.

Complete the form and mail it back to the Benefits Department after you have returned from your vacation. The form is also available on the union's website, www.ufcw1167.org, under the Insurance Department tab.

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

As in the contract, Vons will begin paying 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 just 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 form (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, www.ufcw1167.org, under the Insurance Department tab.

Life Balance

Don't miss out on money... Fill out your Health Risk Questionnaire!

Be sure to complete your HRQ as soon as possible (the deadline is April 30, 2011).

You can access your HRQ online at www.2011HRQ.com. Use any computer with a connection to the Internet.

Computer kiosks are also available at your Union Local or the Benefit Fund Office.

If you don't want to complete your HRQ online this year, you can do so by:

- **Phone:** Call HMC toll-free at 888-901-0477
- **Paper:** Call HMC or pick one up at your Union Local or the Benefit Fund office

Remember, if you complete your HRQ by the deadline, you will receive an extra contribution to your Health Reimbursement Account (HRA). Don't miss out on this extra money, which you can use for covered medical expenses.

Questions? Contact Call HMC at 888-901-0477, or call the Benefit Fund at

714-220-2207, 562-408-2715 or 877-284-2320, extension 424 (for all three numbers).

Your HRQ answers are confidential. Only you and the Health Professionals at HMC and OptumHealth (two of the Benefit Fund's health care contractors) can see your answers and your report. Your Union Local and Employer do not have access to this information.

It PAYS to be UNION!

	FEBRUARY 2011	2011 TOTAL
Back pay and benefits restored to members	\$30,989.28	\$59,597.13
Members reinstated	18	49
Grievances settled	72	167
Unemployment benefits restored to members	\$10,031.00	\$10,031.00

Notice: Union offices will be closed April 22, 2011



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.

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



UFCW campaign launches 'new phase of our Walmart work'

The UFCW has launched a new campaign to support Walmart workers in their efforts to gain respect and address the many challenges they must confront while working for America's largest employer.

The "Making Change at Walmart" campaign represents "a new phase of our Walmart work," UFCW International President Joe Hansen said.

"The U.S. economy is fast becoming a service-sector economy, and Walmart is the largest service-sector employer. Our members, and all workers in the retail sector, are depending on us to ensure that retail jobs are stable, and that middle-class jobs come with affordable, quality health care, wages that pay the bills and retirement security."

Recognizing that it is also vital to keep holding Walmart publicly accountable for how its business model harms workers and communities, Walmart Watch (www.walmartwatch.org) has been reinvigorated as a UFCW brand.

Walmart Watch will continue to educate policymakers, media and communities about the impact of Walmart in America and across the globe.

For information on how to get involved with Making Change at Walmart, and to sign-up for campaign updates, visit www.ufcw.org/makingchange.

IN MEMORIAM

Norma Bracy, a sales clerk formerly employed by Market Basket and Van De Kamps, died on Feb. 10, 2011, at the age of 84. She had been a continuous member since January 1969.

Marie Kruse, a retired secretary formerly employed by Communication Workers of America Local 11573, died on Jan. 21, 2011, at the age of 85. She had been a member since February 1981.

Juanita Miller, a general merchandise clerk formerly employed by Ralphs, died on Feb. 10, 2011, at the age of 61. She had been a member since May 2004.

Martha Pena, a packaging employee employed by Windsor Foods, died on Feb. 3, 2011, at the age of 52. She had been a continuous member since December 2010.

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

UNION REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

Protect yourself!

Ask for union representation at investigatory interviews

No matter what they tell you, no matter how long you may have known them, your manager or supervisor is NOT your "buddy."

This is especially true during an investigatory interview. When your job is on the line you can be sure your "buddy" will make his decisions as a representative of the company. He will not risk his or her own job because of your friendship.

We've seen this happen before and we know it will happen again. When confronted with an investigatory interview, many members will say, "Oh, don't worry about it, the manager is my friend. He'll take care of me."

Believe me, your manager will not "take care of you" if he's got his own manager breathing down his neck. In today's environment, where every job seems to be hanging by a thread, the only reliable friend you have in these situations is your union.

Your Union Representative stands ready to help you use the rights and protections provided by your union contract. But it's up to you to use those resources and rely on the advice your Union Rep gives you.

Many union jobs are lost because some of our members do not understand their basic rights during investigatory interviews with company management or security.

In these interviews, supervisors or security personnel routinely try to induce members into confessions of mistakes or wrongdoing on the job. But knowing your rights may save your job!

What is an investigatory interview?

An investigatory interview occurs when:

1) Management questions an employee to obtain information; and

2) The employee has a reasonable belief that discipline or other adverse consequences may result from what he or she says.

Investigatory interviews may relate to such subjects as absenteeism, accidents, compliance with work rules, damage to company property, drinking, drugs, falsification of records, fighting, insubordination, tardiness, poor attitude, poor work performance, sabotage, slow-downs, theft, violation of safety rules and sexual harassment — just to name a few possibilities.

Your Weingarten Rights

According to the Supreme Court's Weingarten decision, when an investigatory interview occurs, an employee may request union representation before or during the interview.

After the request, the employer must choose from among three options:

1) Grant the request and delay questioning until a Union Representative arrives.

2) Deny the request and end the interview immediately.

3) Give the employee a choice of (a) having the interview without representation (do not waive your right to representation — it is usually a big mistake!) or (b) ending the interview.

If the employer denies the request for union representa-



By Maria Perez

Ask to have union representation. Don't feel guilty for doing so, it's your right!

tion and questions the employee, it commits an unfair labor practice and the employee may refuse to answer any further questions.

The union may file charges with the National Labor Relations Board if an employer disregards a request for union assistance.

You must ask for representation

If you do not invoke your Weingarten Rights during an investigatory interview, you give up your legal protections under the law and your union has no basis to challenge the investigatory interview with your employer.

Whenever you feel that your job is in jeopardy, stop the meeting and ask to have union representation. Don't feel guilty for doing so, it's your right!



Thank you, Pactiv member.



At Local 1167, our first priority is fighting for our members. We use all of the resources available to keep these workers on the job, healthy and safe.

That is why it's frustrating when, despite our best efforts, we can't protect some members from the effects of economic decisions that are beyond our control. Unfortunately, that is what is happening at the Pactiv packaging plant in the City of Industry.

Due to Pactiv's acquisition by New Zealand-based Reynolds Group Holdings, Ltd., the plant will close at the end of March.

For many years, the plants' workers have made the plastic containers and trays that shoppers find in the produce sections of their local supermarkets, along with many other plastic products. We see and benefit from the labor of the workers in this plant every day, whether we know it or not.

Sacrificing a legacy to save a buck.

We do not believe that closing the plant is a wise decision. For years there were 300-400 men and women at the plant who were the best at what they do.

Instead of doing right by these skilled workers, including some who have dedicated more than 50 years of their lives to helping the plant run smoothly and profitably, Reynolds Group is stripping out the machines at the City of Industry plant to reinstall at other locations.

We're not concerned about where these machines will go or how these changes will affect the bottom line for Pactiv or Reynolds Group, which is part of billionaire Graeme Hart's empire. We're concerned about the workers.



s, for your years of service

We're focusing on the union members who made Pactiv successful and how their absence will be a great loss to our union and our communities.

We fought to keep the plant open, to maintain the strong contract that these members have enjoyed and to protect these members and their families from being thrown into a period of stressful uncertainties. Our urgings fell on deaf ears.

In fact, the company would not agree to our fair proposals of severance pay but ultimately agreed to a severance package for the members. It's not a great severance package by any means, but, in this day and age, at least it's something.

Standing behind our union family

Some of these workers have worked their entire adult lives at the plant. Together, they exhibited the loyalty and diversity that defines our union and the entire UFCW.

We got together with the company to put them in touch with the unemployment office. We also worked with that agency to help them solidify their resumes and point them in the right direction for possible job openings.

Our members at the Pactiv plant have constituted a small fraction of the 19,000 total membership at Local 1167 membership, but they have exemplified the best qualities of union workers. We are thankful for their years of service with their union.

Unlike the leadership at Pactiv and its owners, our priorities haven't changed. Our goal is still to do our best by our members, and we will stand alongside the workers at the Pactiv plant, whatever the future holds.



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

The union local is proud to announce the launch of its scholarship program for certain members only, for the academic school year 2011-2012.

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 THE LOCAL 1167 COLLEGE (UNIVERSITY or JUNIOR COLLEGE) SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS COMPETITION" application published in this newspaper at the right of this announcement. **The application must be returned to Local 1167 no later than Friday, May 6, 2011.**

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 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, 2011. 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 Local 1167 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, 2011. This means the member cannot be suspended, take a withdrawal or transfer to another local prior to June 30, 2011.
- I must be at least a senior in high school.
- I am not eligible to apply if I previously received scholarship award money from 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 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 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 Local 1167 (circle one) **yes** **no**

Eligibility (office use only) _____

Relationship to member _____

Member's name _____

Member's Social Security number _____

Employed by (only if member) _____

Full store address _____

Union Representative _____

Highest academic level completed by June 2011
(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 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 6, 2011

**The 2011 UFCW
International Scholarship
is available NOW!**
**Go to www.ufcw.org/scholarship
for details and apply!**



Members at Work: Albertsons 6609



STEWARD FEATURE

Pat Lopez seeks to motivate and educate

Pat Lopez is always interested in motivating younger workers to become more active in the union.

Now that negotiations have begun for a new Master Food Agreement, her task has taken on a new sense of urgency.

“Younger workers need to show their solidarity,” said Lopez, who is a general merchandise manager and steward at Albertsons 6609 in Murrieta.

Lopez said the union is always ready to listen and respond to the needs of its members, regardless of their age and experience.

“We are fighting for all of our members,” she said. “Younger workers tell me they want to see an increase in their guaranteed hours. These negotiations represent an opportunity for them to let the union know what they want.”

Lopez believes the best way for

members to do that is to log on to the Local 1167 negotiation’s website, www.March2011.org, and tell the union what is most important to them.

She also encourages members to respond to emails and letters they receive from the union.

“The more response we get from our members, the better informed our leaders will be,” Lopez said. “And the more people we have who are involved, the stronger we will be at the bargaining table.”

Lopez became a steward at the inception of the program.

“I like to help people,” she said. “I’ve been in the industry for almost 30 years and I’ve learned that being in a union is the best job protection you can have.”

Lopez said she knows a nurse who was recently laid-off after 18 years.



Pat Lopez

“She had the most seniority,” Lopez said. “And she was also making the most money. That meant she was the first to go.”

“That cannot happen in a union

job because we are covered under a contract. Seniority matters.”

Lopez and her husband, Carlos, have four children and two grandchildren.

“When you have a family, you come to value our union-negotiated health benefits,” she said. “When my kids needed braces or when my son needed surgery for a misaligned jaw, it was all covered.”

Lopez said she is “too busy” to have any hobbies.

“Most of my free time is spent driving my youngest daughter, Lissette, to her high school swim meets and water polo matches,” she said.

Although she is an industry veteran, Lopez has no immediate plans to retire.

“But when I do, I’ll have a pension waiting for me,” Lopez said. “I thank the union for that and for all of our great benefits.”

Uproar over Wisconsin bill compared to Egyptian revolt

Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker’s bid to strip collective bargaining rights from state employees ignited a firestorm of protests by labor unions and their allies across the nation.

Protests also focused on proposed anti-union laws in several other states, including Indiana, Ohio, California, Tennessee, New Jersey, Michigan, Iowa and Alaska.

Pro-union demonstrations in Madison, Wisconsin’s capital, prompted several observers, including conservative U.S. Rep. Paul Ryan (R-Wis.), to compare the protests to the demonstrations that overthrew Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak earlier in February.

“It’s like Cairo’s moved to Madison these days,” Ryan said on MSNBC.

As if to underscore Ryan’s statement, someone in Egypt contacted a restaurant in Madison to order a pizza to be delivered to workers demonstrating outside the Capitol, the Politico website reported. Similar calls came from Korea, Finland, New Zealand, Denmark,

Australia, US, Canada, Germany, China, England, Netherlands, Turkey, Switzerland and Italy.

Meanwhile, the Republican leadership of Wisconsin’s legislature was stymied in its attempts to pass Gov.

Walker’s anti-union legislation, as all 14 Democratic members of the Senate left the state in order to deny the quorum necessary to vote on bills.

Democratic legislators in Indiana used a similar tactic, transporting

themselves to nearby Illinois to fend off a “right to work” bill that would hobble union solidarity in Indiana. Republican leaders subsequently dropped the proposal on the urging of Gov. Mitch Daniels.

PRESIDENT’S REPORT

Negotiations in progress: ‘Keep calm and carry on’

(Continued from front page)

just to maintain the level of benefits you currently enjoy.

While we’re bargaining with the companies to reach mutually beneficial solutions to these problems, we want you to keep doing what you’re doing: keep your head down and your ears open for news from your stewards and Union Representatives.

One thing we don’t want you to do is listen to rumors about what’s happening at the bargaining table. If you want information, come straight to the one source that only has your interests in mind: your union.

While we’re keeping informed and doing our jobs, we

must be ready for anything. “Keep Calm and Carry On” didn’t mean keep brewing your tea when a bomb exploded on your street. It meant that people should also know what they should do and do it when needed.

In 2003-04, our members knew what they had to do when the employers made unreasonable demands and we were forced to engage in one of the longest labor disputes in American history.

In 2007, our members stepped forward again by voting — twice — to authorize another strike if the companies didn’t improve their offers. Those overwhelming expressions of support helped us defeat the

two-tier wage system and win a strong contract.

We have no desire for similar confrontations this year. Just the same, should your union say it’s time to act, you should be ready to act with courage, strength and solidarity.

From the Middle East to the American Midwest, we are witnessing the power of people who are standing up for their rights. We are inspired by them as we unite to protect our living standards.

So, as the British would say, keep a stiff upper lip, keep an eye to the skies and be ready to move if and when the sirens go off.

And no matter what happens, keep calm and carry on!