

Desert Edge

UFCW LOCAL **1167**
a **VOICE** for working America

Spring 2023

Official Publication of United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 1167



A cut above

Union members enjoy better pay, stronger rights

President's report:

Proposed merger casts shadow

Union offices closed

Mar 31 - Cesar Chavez Day
April 7 - Good Friday
May 29 - Memorial Day
July 4 - Independence Day

Membership Meetings 2023

March 22 / June 28

September 27 / December 13

Regular membership meetings reconvene in Bloomington.

Meetings start at 7 p.m.

UFCW Local 1167 Auditorium
855 W. San Bernardino Ave.
Bloomington, CA 92316

CDC guidelines will be observed.
Outlying new member meetings, and membership meetings will be posted on our website.

DESERT EDGE

Joe Duffie
Editor

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**CORRECT
ADDRESS
AND
PHONE NUMBER
A MUST!!**

You lose out if there is no correct address and telephone number on file for you. We know the problem: People move frequently. But it only takes a phone call, a minute with your Union Rep or a visit to our website, ufcw1167.org, where you can complete an address change form. It could avoid a big problem with a hospital, medical claim or pension inquiry.



If you have problems with alcohol, drugs, children & adolescents, family, emotional issues, gambling, marriage and/or financial/legal issues, eligible active or retired members can call the toll-free MAP number at the Health Management Center any time, day or night, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

All calls are confidential.

Food Division
call (800) 461-9179

Drug Division
call (866) 268-2510

Notice to all 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: YOUR DUES ARE NOW DUE AND PAYABLE. IF YOUR DUES ARE NOT PAID ON OR BEFORE THE FIRST OF EVERY MONTH, YOU WILL AUTOMATICALLY SUSPEND YOURSELF.

Members can now go to our website: www.ufcw1167.org, and fill out a membership application to have dues deducted from their paycheck!

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.

Nonpayment 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!



Watch your mailbox!

for important information from your health benefits Trust Fund.

Got questions? Contact the Trust Fund (ext. 424):

(714) 220-2297 • (562) 408-2715 • (877) 284-2320 • www.scufcwffunds.com

Proposed merger casts a shadow over industry

Answer the call to help when called upon

A dark cloud hangs over the supermarket industry, a cloud with ominous potential for disaster.

I'm referring to the proposed merger between Albertsons Companies Inc., owner of Albertsons, Pavilions, Safeway and Vons stores here in Southern California, and the Kroger Family of Companies, which operates Food 4 Less and Ralphs.

It's hard to overstate the consequences of this \$24.6 billion merger if federal regulators allow it to go through. Kroger is the largest supermarket operator in the United States and Albertsons is the second largest.

Both companies deny that employees and customers would be harmed, but experience informs us otherwise.

We remember all too well what happened when Albertsons acquired Safeway back in 2014. To appease the regulators, the merged company sold 146 Albertsons, Pavilions, Safeway and Albertsons stores to a small Northwestern chain called Haggen. While Haggen was a well-meaning union employer, it botched the expansion and was forced to declare bankruptcy within a year, causing thousands of workers to lose their good union jobs.

Meanwhile, it stands to reason that reduced competition could mean even higher prices for consumers than they're already paying.

In Local 1167's jurisdiction, a merger would essentially leave Kroger and Stater Bros. as the major chains, but it's doubtful that Stater Bros., a locally based operator with a good union record, would be able to compete equally with a huge conglomerate over the long term. Then we have to take into account the prospects of Gelson's, Super A Foods and other smaller union employers.

Smaller shopping centers also face dim prospects. Many stores would close, especially where Kroger and Albertsons outlets are situated close together, meaning these centers would lose "anchor" tenants that are crucial to their bottom line.

And there are the pension implications. Every three years or so, we negotiate with the union employers to get sufficient



JOE DUFFLE
President

contributions made to our pension fund for those who receive their pensions now or will receive them in the future. We want to make sure that the fund remains solvent so that when you retire, there will be funds there to provide you a pension.

Many take it for granted, but it's a fact that for every hour worked, your employer makes contributions to the health benefits and pension funds based on your straight-time worked. When there are fewer union workers earning these contributions, the funds will have fewer resources to sustain their current levels of benefits.

The UFCW fights back

In conjunction with other UFCW unions in California, Local 1167 urged government regulators and the courts to stop a \$4 billion payout by Albertsons to its shareholders. Unfortunately, the courts allowed this cash grab by wealthy institutional investors to proceed.

Albertsons' management insists the company still has the resources to pay its obligations to the union pension funds if the merger is blocked by regulators, but we're not so sure. Albertsons is in no position to pay the cash dividend. The company owes \$4.9 billion in pension funds nationally and \$7.58 billion to creditors.

I'm not saying these things to scare our members, but I cannot stress enough that everyone should be concerned. The impending merger between Kroger and Albertsons will undoubtedly have ripple effects across the industry.

The UFCW refuses to stand by as the rest of this story unfolds. We are urging the Federal Trade Commission, as well as state and federal legislative bodies, to take action to block the merger altogether. In this regard, it's incredibly important to elect legislators who have working peoples' values at heart.

We are fighting this tooth and nail. We will fight to make sure pension funds remain solvent. We will attend hearings in Washington, D.C. and in Sacramento. And if you should need to be there as well, we may call on you to testify and share your stories.

Come help this fight!

We're doing all we can, but our members in the supermarkets deserve to know the facts about the dark clouds descending on their industry.

2022: It PAYS to be UNION!



Back pay and benefits restored to members: **\$103,900.33** Jan.- Dec. Total 2022
 Members reinstated: **274**
 Grievances settled: **1,035**

What's Happening



Just Born

Vanessa M. Lindsay, Vons, had a new daughter, Emily Rae Lindsay, born June 1, 2022, weighing 7 lbs. 14 oz. and measuring 19.5" long. ... **Celia Dominguez**, Ralphs, had a new son, Abel Anthony Dominguez, born Jan. 14, 2023, weighing 9 lbs. 8 oz. and measuring 22.5" long. ... **Angela Carrillo Segura**, Rite Aid, had a new daughter, Adelynn Hernandez, born Jan. 24, 2023, weighing 8 lbs. 6 oz. and measuring 19" long. "We welcomed our second daughter!"

Congratulations to all the new mommies and daddies!



Just Married

Roger A. Montgomery, Stater Bros, married Roxana R. Garcia on July 9, 2022 in Hesperia, CA. They honeymooned in Hawaii. ... **Vanessa M. Barnett**, Vons, married Andrew Lindsay on Feb. 24, 2022 at the Riverside Court House.

Congratulations to our newlyweds!



Just Retired

The months of December, January and February brought us several new retirees.

Thomas Nunez worked for Stater Bros. for 46 years. ... **Cindy Weinschenk** worked for Vons, Hagen and Gelsons for 45 years. ... **John Garcia** worked for Ralphs and Yasuda Bros. Market for 41 years. ... **Susan Hayes** worked for Vons for 41 years. ... **Enrique R. Quezada** worked for Vons for 40 years. ... **Jay Devogel** worked for Stater Bros. for 39 years. ... **Ronnie Delarosa** worked for Albertsons for 38 years. ... **Anthony R. Aguirre** worked for Stater Bros. for 37 years. ... **Debra Bechtel** worked for Alpha Beta and Ralphs for 37 years. ... **Juan Carpinteyro** worked for Vons, Tianguis and Pavilions for 37 years. ... **Maria Navarrete** worked for Ralphs for 37 years. ... **Annie Diaz** worked for Stater Bros and Thrifty for 36 years. ... **Marco Arroyo** worked for Stater Bros for 35 years. ... **Peggy Devlin** worked for Lucky's and Rite Aid for 35 years. ... **Ramiro Hernandez Florez** worked for Lucky's and Albertsons for 35 years. ... **Veronica Bender** worked for Stater Bros for 35 years. ... **Janet Smith** worked for Thrifty and Rite Aid for 33 years. ... **Teresa Jensen** worked for Stater Bros for 33 years. ... **Brenda Martin** worked for Alpha Beta, Lucky's and Albertsons for 31 years. ... **Carol Coulombe** worked for Stater Bros for

29 years. ... **Audrey Macneil** worked for Albertsons and Smith's for 28 years. ... **Lexine Zimmerman** worked for Stater Bros and Sav-On for 26 years. ... **Linda Hill** worked for Albertsons and Stater Bros for 26 years. ... **Anna Alcalá** worked for Rite Aid for 25 years. ... **Suzanna Knisley** worked for Stater Bros for 21 years. ... **Judith J. Maxim** worked for Vons for 16 years. ... **Jeanette Hill** worked for Vons for 9 years.

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



New laws expand workers' rights and protections

New state laws hold the promise of changing the working lives of Californians for the better. The laws, which took effect on Jan. 1, cover the following areas:

Pay transparency: Under Senate Bill 1162, companies with 15 or more employees are required to include the relevant pay scales in their job listings. The law could make it easier for applicants to appreciate the substantial wage differences between union and non-union employers.

Sick pay: Employees who need to take leave from their work to care for a sick family member are helped by the Family Rights Act, which protects employees taking a leave of absence, and the Healthy Workplaces, Health Families Act, which requires employers to provide paid sick leave. Another law, Assembly Bill 1041, expands the definition of “family member” to include an extended blood relative like an aunt or uncle or someone else whose relationship to the

employee is like that of a family member.

Protected leave: Under Assembly Bill 1949, employers with five or more workers must allow employees to take up to five days of leave upon the death of a family member, as long as it's within three months of the date of death of the family member. This leave may be unpaid, although employees must be allowed to use any vacation, personal, sick or other paid leave they have available. Many members of UFCW Local 1167 already have paid bereavement leave negotiated in their agreements.

Hiring discrimination: Senate Bill 523, the Contraceptive Equity Act, expands existing employment anti-discrimination law, making it illegal for employers to require disclosure of or discriminate based on an employee or prospective employee's decision to use or access a particular drug, device, product or medical service for reproductive health.

Union retail workers get better wages — and the gap is growing

An analysis of wages in the retail industry shows union members earn substantially more than their non-union counterparts do — and the gap is growing.

The study, conducted by the Reuters news service, reviewed two decades of wage data compiled by the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The researchers found the weekly pay differential between union and non-union retail workers increased from \$20 in 2013 to more than \$50 in 2019. In 2020, wages continued to increase for union workers as a result of the COVID pandemic.

The study also refuted Amazon's claim benefits would decline if a union bargained on its employees' behalf.

Reuters said one factor in the “union advantage” is the higher number of hours worked by members under union contracts as well as health benefits and retirement accounts seldom available to non-union retail workers.

Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world. —Nelson Mandela

UFCW CHARITY FOUNDATION

2023 SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

In 2023 the UFCW Charity Foundation will award several SCHOLARSHIPS, up to \$8,000 each, to UFCW members or their unmarried dependents under the age of 20.

For more information, and to find out if you are eligible, please visit:

ufwcharityfoundation.org/scholarship

The scholarship application will be available online from February 13, 2023 – May 14, 2023.

UFCW
CHARITY FOUNDATION

Cesar Chavez led struggle for agricultural workers

One of the most celebrated American leaders in the struggle for social justice was Cesar Chavez. On March 31, we remember and honor him on his birthday.

In the 1960s and 1970s, Chavez led thousands of farm workers, most of them Latino, in an epic quest for recognition and respect. His union, the United Farm Workers, organized widespread boycotts of grapes, lettuce and other produce grown in the Southwest and along the Pacific Coast, and its members were heard chanting “Si se puede!” (“Yes we can!”) on news broadcasts across the nation.

Chavez was born on March 31, 1927 in San Luis, near Yuma, Arizona. His parents, Libardo and Juana, immigrated to the United States from Mexico to start their own farm and grocery store. The family had a modest income that allowed Chavez to attend elementary school for a while.

Eventually, the Chavez family lost its store in the Great Depression and Chavez had to work in the fields. Adding to the misery, his father was injured in a car accident.

After serving in the Navy during World War II, Chavez returned to the fields, working in farms across the Southwest. In 1952, he was hired as an organizer for the Community Service Organization (CSO), which encouraged farm workers to become U.S. citizens and register to vote.

From organizer to social justice icon

In the early 1960s, Chavez used his



savings of \$1,200 to form the National Farm Workers Association. NFWA focused on organizing farm workers into a formidable union that would address socioeconomic and political issues the CSO refused to tackle.

By 1965, Chavez’s personal pitches to farm workers netted more than 1,200 members for NFWA.

One of his early successes was the Delano grape strike. From 1965 to 1970, Chavez, along with Gilbert Padilla and Dolores Huerta, formed picket lines at many ports in Central and Northern California, as well as consumer boycotts. He walked 300 miles from Delano to Sacramento to plead with lawmakers to support the farm workers.

Grocery stores eventually refused to stock grapes and several grape corporations relented, accepting the NFWA’s demands for recognition and wage increases. The NFWA also organized a successful nationwide

boycott of lettuce.

Chavez participated in many actions for farm workers in the years after the grape and lettuce boycotts. He was arrested several times, endured hunger strikes and confronted hostile growers who sometimes threatened him with violence.

Believing that a successful union of farm workers had to be formed and led by the workers themselves, he spent much of his time recruiting, training and inspiring workers to band together and negotiate their own contracts. When he was able, he taught farm workers how to read and speak English.

By 1974, his organization merged with the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee, led by Filipino organizer Larry Itliong, to form the United Farm Workers of America, which still works on behalf of farm workers.

Chavez died at the age of 66 on April 23, 1993. He was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom posthumously the following year.

Several states, including Arizona, have recognized Cesar Chavez’s birthday as a holiday. In 2014, President Obama called for March 31 to be a national holiday, but it is not yet officially recognized by Congress.

Today, Chavez’s slogan, *Si se puede!* is used by activists for many social causes. He is frequently compared with Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and Mahatma Gandhi as a great campaigner for justice, fairness and equality.

Food and Drug Conference



Local 1167 representatives attending the Food & Drug Conference included, at left, Kenny Parada, Nicolas Romero and Joe Parham, and at right, Alan Kontra and Lisset Gallegos. Pictured below are Josh Fernandez and Cisco Magana.

Union leaders share insights at Food & Drug Conference

Union leaders from across the United States shared their perspectives on political engagement, union organizing and prospects for pro-worker legislation during the 2022 Food & Drug Conference.

A panel discussion on “Leveraging Workers’ Capital to Benefit and Grow Union Membership” featured Steve McCourt, an economist at Meketa Investment Group and an investment consultant for the UFCW’s Southern California pension fund, and UFCW 8-Golden State President Jacques Loveall. The panelists described efforts to promote environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards for trustees of union-affiliated pension funds with billions of dollars in assets.

Kirk Vogt, secretary-treasurer of UFCW 8-Golden State, led a spirited conversation with Jim McLaughlin, president of UFCW Local 99 in Arizona, New Mexico and Utah; Brian String, president of UFCW Local 152 in New Jersey, Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania; Dan Pedersen, president of Local 876 in Michigan; Steve Lomax, president of UFCW Local 1996



in Georgia; and Amber Baur, executive director of the UFCW Western States Council.

The audience cheered as Pedersen noted both chambers of Michigan’s state legislature will be controlled by pro-worker representatives in the wake of a successful election. “We expect a bill to repeal ‘right to work’ will be sent to Gov. Gretchen Whitmer sooner rather than later,” he said.

FDC participants also applauded when Lomax and McLaughlin described their unions’ successful efforts to elect pro-worker candidates in their states. In addition, Baur and String described efforts by the UFCW to pro-

mote pro-union legislation in the states they serve.

The Food and Drug Conference continued with Larry Innocent, president of Pharmacy Benefits Solutions, outlining strategies for reducing the costs of pharmaceutical medications, including customized drugs designed to fight cancer and other diseases. During his remarks, Innocent described his harrowing but successful fight against stage 4 cancer.

The conference also included a presentation by award-winning speaker Andy Masters, who offered constructive advice on “Working and Living: Finding a Balance.”

In her remarks to conference attendees, FDC Director Ellen Anreder talked about the importance of making the best use of one’s time on Earth.

“Our souls are hungry for meaning, and we can be grateful every day our souls are nourished by the meaningful task of serving working people and their families,” she said. “We are changing the world, making it more fair, more just and more free. For this reason alone, we can say yes, our lives do matter, and every second we spend devoted to this task makes us more worthwhile human beings.”



Our Members at Work: **Stater Bros. 193, Moreno Valley**



Time flies for veteran steward Darryl Chappell

Time goes by so fast,” says Darryl Chappell, a meat manager at Stater Bros. 193 in Moreno Valley. “I should have gotten more involved in the union way before I became a steward 15 years ago.”

Chappell, 53, has worked at Stater Bros. 193 for 10 years. All told, he has 33 years in the industry, though he’s always worked in Moreno Valley.

He started in the grocery department, then took a break before getting his position in the meat department.

“I love talking with the customers,” he said. “It’s all about customer service for me. Our loyal customers have followed me around Moreno Valley and it’s so great to serve them and help them with their needs, especially around the holidays.”

“I love working here, just love it, but time goes by fast,” he added. “Time sneaks up on you. I thought I was only going to be here a couple years, and now it’s 30 years later. It’s amazing.”

The fleeting-time syndrome hit him hard recently when he started thinking about retirement.

“The young members don’t realize how much they’re going to need the union when they start working in this industry,” Chappell said. “The more involved we get, the stronger our union becomes and the better the contracts we have.”

He continued: “The union has been such an important part of my life and will be a big part for rest of life with a pension and retirement benefits. I tell the young ones now to get involved and get educated on what the union is all about.”



Darryl Chappell

Chappell said, “The union is safety and security. Security is the biggest word I can use to describe the union.”

“I can’t imagine going to work somewhere without the union. You have security and scheduled breaks and safety protocols, and most importantly, you have someone on your side to turn to. Without a union behind you, management can fire you for no reason. But not with a union!”

The health benefits have played a huge role in his life, he said.

“I had three kids early on in my career,” he said. “Sure, we have to pay more now for health care than before, but when my children were born, I had to pay nothing. The insurance and ben-

efits that come with a union take you all the way to the pharmacy to help pay for prescription medication.”

“It’s funny,” he said. “Some of us old-timers sometimes sit around in the break room and chat about how we didn’t pay anything for our health care, and the young kids just look at us with a funny look on their faces. But it’s true, all of it.”

“For example, if you go to work at Amazon, you can make \$19 an hour, but what are the benefits? Take a look at the union package and you’re making \$30 an hour. There is stuff that comes with union pay you don’t see on your paycheck.

“My mom works non-union for a hospital and she pays \$900 a month for health insurance. Even if you’re promoted through the corporate ranks, you’ll still end up paying \$600 a month for insurance and that’s just for you. It doesn’t even include your family.”

Chappell has been married to Rosa for 18 years. She’s a manager for a senior center in Riverside. He has five adult children: Darryl Jr., Danny, Ashley, Mercedes and Isaiah.

In his spare time, he loves to build things.

“I’ll build anything with tools and wood,” he said. “I recently built a 15-foot table for the family.”



**Stewards Conference 2023:
It's happening June 15!
Contact your union rep for details!**

In Memoriam

Martha Cisneros, an all-purpose clerk formerly employed by Food 4 Less, died on December 5, 2022, at the age of 60. She had been a continuous member since December 2015.

Robert Delamater, a retired meat cutter formerly employed by Gemco, Lucky, and Stater Bros., died on December 3, 2022, at the age of 81. He had been a member since June 1964.

Dick Ely, a retired food clerk formerly employed by Market Basket, and Vons, died on November 16, 2022, at the age of 84. He had been a member since November 1964.

Amy Ganahl, a retired food clerk formerly employed by Stater Bros., died on November 16, 2022, at the age of 64. She had been a continuous member since September 1979.

Shirley Michaels, a retired food clerk formerly employed by Stater Bros., died on January 9, 2023, at the age of 88. She had been a member since March 1953.

Kevin M. Richardson, a meat wrapper formerly employed by Stater Bros., died on August 28, 2022, at the age of 26. He had been a continuous member since November 2020.

Beverly Rogge, a retired food clerk formerly employed by Vons, died on December 20, 2022, at the age of 91. She had been a continuous member since February 1969.

Richard Smith, a retired food clerk formerly employed by Ralphs, died on November 17, 2022, at the age of 69. He had been a continuous member since September 1970.

Margaret Vega, a food clerk formerly employed by Alpha Beta, died on November 23, 2022, at the age of 94. She had been a member since April 1959.

Lexine Zimmerman, a food clerk formerly employed by Stater Bros., died on December 18, 2022, at the age of 69. She had been a continuous member since December 2000.



Our Members at Work: President Duffle store visits



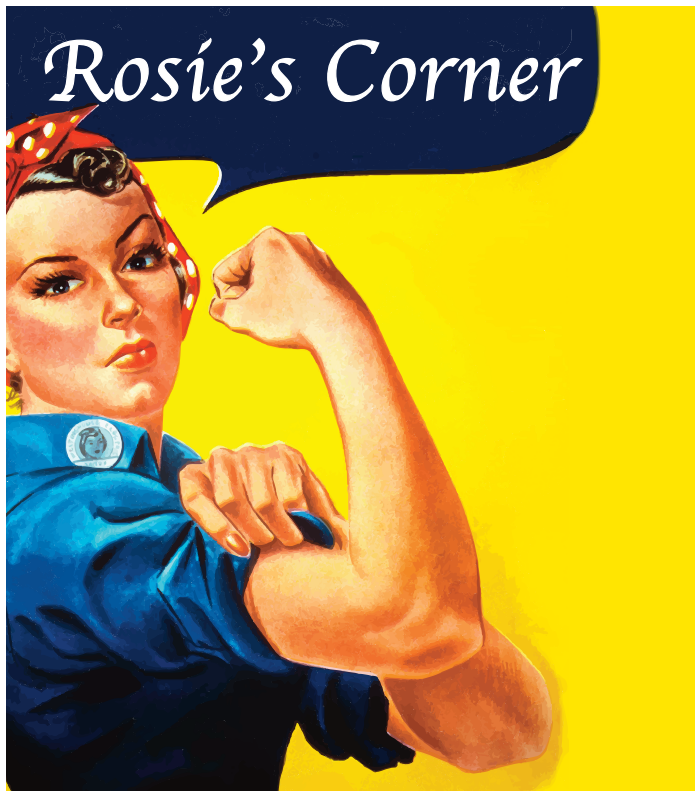


Fighting for workers' rights



UFCW Local 116 Organizing Director Yesenia Gonzalez addressed a rally in front of a Cardenas store in Ontario on March 13. Also participating were workers from Cardenas, community leaders, members and staff from Local 1167 and UFCW Local 1428, and supporters from other unions, including the Teamsters, SEIU and CWA, among others. The rally was called to raise public awareness of the fight for workers' rights.





The continuing fight to pass the Equal Rights Amendment

would be subject to the military draft and sent to fight in the Vietnam War. They also said this could mean the end of gender-specific bathrooms (sound familiar?) and an end to the favored status of women in child custody disputes.

Swayed by such arguments, legislatures in five states — Idaho, Kentucky, Nebraska, Tennessee, and South Dakota — voted to rescind their approval of the ERA. Opponents then declared the amendment dead when it failed to attain the required 38 ratifications before a congressionally mandated deadline on March 22, 1979.

Congress has since extended that deadline, but only one additional state, Nevada, has voted to ratify the ERA.

It's a shame that a matter of simple equity can be sidetracked, but this is the reality we face in this age of political polarization and cultural divisions.

We can take comfort, however, in knowing that attitudes — and people's hearts — can change over time.

Controversies relating to gender and personal freedoms have been creating dismay among many Americans who, realistically or not, had hoped that our country was inching toward a new era of mutual acceptance and equal rights for all.

The aftermath of last year's reversal of *Roe v. Wade* by the United States Supreme Court has pushed the "culture wars" into new territory, with every state becoming a potential battleground not only for abortion rights, but also for an array of other issues of importance for women, men and others who don't conform with simple definitions of identity.

In times like this, it's easy to overlook that positive change can take a long time. Some fights are won and some are lost in the near term while the long term struggle for equity continues.

Consider, for example, the ongoing fight to enact the Equal Rights Amendment.

The ERA is a proposed amendment to the United States Constitution that was first advocated by American feminists Alice Paul and Crystal Eastman back in 1916. In its current form, the proposed amendment reads, "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." It also states that "The Congress shall have the power to enforce, by appropriate legislation, the provisions of this article."

It wasn't until the feminist movement gained steam in the 1960s and 1970s that the ERA was able to pass both houses with strong support from both Democrats and Republicans. It was then sent to the states, where it appeared the ERA was destined to quickly win the necessary support of 38 legislatures.

A total of 35 states approved the amendment when a conservative activist named Phyllis Schlafly mounted a successful campaign to stop the ERA. Schlafly and her supporters argued that, should the amendment become part of the Constitution, women



Women voiced support for the Equal Rights Amendment as they marched in New York City to mark the 60th anniversary of the 19th Amendment recognizing women's right to vote.

Keep your job!

Avoid insubordination charges by doing what you're told

Ever since we were little, we have had to listen to people in positions of authority. Our parents told us what to do and we'd get punished when we didn't obey. Our schoolteachers told us what to do and we'd get bad grades or other forms of punishment when we didn't obey them.

Now that we are adults, we have other forms of authority that we deal with, including bosses and supervisors, among others. But this time the punishment for disobedience is more severe. If you do not do what your bosses tell you, you could get disciplined, up to and including termination.

Not doing what you're asked or told to do is called insubordination.

The dictionary defines someone who is insubordinate as one who is not submitting to authority or is rebellious. If someone is insubordinate on the job, this behavior could lead to termination.

The best way to deal with insubordination is to avoid it. If someone in a position of authority tells you to do something, do it. The general rule is that if the directive is not immoral, illegal or unsafe, you should comply. If a situa-



David Simmering



Christina Puggsley

The contract language protects you, but you should not try to interpret the contract. Let your union representative make sure the rules, regulations and protections of the contract are followed.

tion comes up and you are unsure, contact your union rep immediately.

Sometimes, two supervisors will give you conflicting directions. In most cases you should always follow the direction of the higher-ranked supervisor in your store. In any case, if you are put in this situation, we advise you to communicate with each supervisor to figure out which direction to follow.

If a manager or supervisor asks you to do something that you think is not correct according to your union contract, you should still do it, then notify your union rep and we'll work to rectify the situation. That's what union

representatives are here for — to make sure the contract is followed.

Language protects you

The contract language protects you, but you should not try to interpret the contract. Let your union representative make sure the rules, regulations and protections of the contract are followed.

Sometimes, coworkers or supervisors will try to tell you what the contract says. Even though they are trying to help and may have the correct answer, it is in your best interest to call your union representative to be sure to get the right answer. Your rep may give you an answer that you don't like, but be assured it will be the correct one.

Even if you know your manager is telling you to do something you know you are not supposed to do because you sincerely believe you are more versed on the contract than your manager, just make a note of it and do it. At your first opportunity, call your union rep and discuss your problem. A grievance will be filed on your behalf if there has been a violation of the contract.

Food Division: Report vacation waivers to maintain health coverage

Food members, including pharmacists and members at the Stater Bros. meat plant, are urged to fill out Loss of Eligibility (vacation waiver) forms to maintain health coverage. This does not apply to Rite Aid clerks, Rite Aid pharmacists and CVS clerks.

NEW MEMBER MEETINGS

Are you a new member of UFCW Local 1167? Has one of your co-workers recently joined our union?

Get a one-time \$65 credit toward your initiation fee when you attend a New Member Orientation Meeting within six months of your hire date.

Call (909) 877-5000, ext. 3 for answers to any questions. CDC guidelines will be followed.

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

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 & Pension Info" icon. Visit us at ufcw1167.org.

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Schedule vacations NOW!

In the early months of the New Year, many of us take the time to look back on the past 12 months and think about how we can make 2023 happier, healthier and more enjoyable. One way to do that is to start preparing now for our hard-earned vacations.

When the weather is cold and wet at the end of a busy holiday season, some of us might be tempted to postpone planning a holiday that won't happen for several months, perhaps in the sunny days of summer.

But if you want to enjoy your vacation when you want to have it, and for the duration you need, the time to start preparing is 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.

It also helps to coordinate with your co-workers 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 time allows you time to travel, spend time with family or to simply relax. Using this time wisely is key to staying healthy and maintaining focus while you are away and when you are back on the job.

MAP can help with stress caused by shootings

The recent rash of mass shootings in Monterey Park, Half Moon Bay and the attacks at a Tops Friendly Market in Buffalo, N.Y., and a King Soopers store in Boulder, Colo., in the past two years, has added to the already significant stress being felt by workers in the retail food industry.

People affected directly or indirectly by such shootings can experience symptoms of anxiety and depression. While everyone's level of resilience is different, these events can interrupt our sense of order, safety and happiness.

Here are a few tips that experts recommend in the wake of tragic events:

- Pay attention to your emotional health and let yourself feel your emotions.
- Interact with your community and check on others.
- Avoid overexposure to media, which can contribute to post-traumatic stress symptoms.
- Maintain daily habits and avoid changing routines dramatically.
- Reach out if you need professional support.

Remember that you can reach out for help if you are struggling or need support. Your union's Membership Assistance Program (MAP) offers counseling opportunities, including grief support resources, that might help.

For information about MAP services, call one of the phone numbers in the box at right.



If you have problems with alcohol, drugs, children & adolescents, family, emotional issues, gambling, marriage and/or financial/legal issues, eligible active or retired members can call the toll-free MAP number at the Health Management Center any time, day or night, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

All calls are confidential.

Food Division

call (800) 461-9179

Drug Division

call (866) 268-2510

CDC cites an increase in alcohol-related deaths

Mortality in the United States directly attributable to alcohol rose 26% during the first year of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to new data from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Alcohol is often overlooked as a public health problem, but it is a leading preventable cause of death.

The CDC's report focused on more than a dozen kinds of "alcohol-induced" deaths that were wholly blamed on drinking.

Examples include alcohol-caused liver or pancreas failure, alcohol poisoning, withdrawal and certain other diseases. There were more than 52,000 such deaths last year, up from 39,000 in 2019.

The rate of such deaths had been

increasing by 7% or less each year in the two decades before the pandemic. But in 2020, deaths jumped 26% to about 13 deaths per 100,000 Americans which is the highest rate recorded in at least 40 years.

Another report looked at a wider range of deaths that could be linked to drinking, including motor vehicle accidents, suicides, falls and cancers.

More than 140,000 such alcohol-related deaths occur annually, based on data from 2015 to 2019, the researchers said. About 82,000 of those deaths are from drinking too much over a long period of time and 58,000 are from causes tied to acute intoxication.

Excessive drinking is associated with chronic health problems such as liver cancer, high blood pressure, stroke

and heart disease. Drinking by pregnant women can lead to miscarriage, stillbirth or birth defects. And health officials say alcohol is a factor in as many as one-third of serious falls among the elderly.

It's also a risk to others from drunk driving or alcohol-fueled violence. Surveys suggest that more than half the alcohol sold in the U.S. is consumed during binge drinking episodes.

Even before the pandemic, U.S. alcohol consumption was trending up, and Americans were drinking more than when Prohibition was enacted. But deaths may have increased since the COVID-19 pandemic began for several reasons, including the fact that people with alcohol-related illnesses may have had more trouble getting medical care.

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