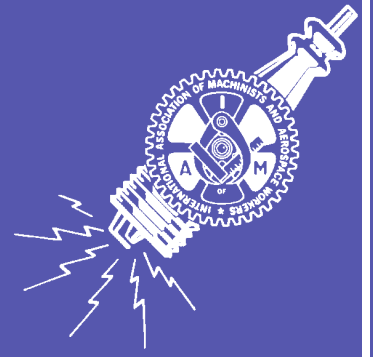


# The IAM District 190 Sparkplug



VOL. 3, NO. 2

February/March 2001

Serving the Active and Retired Members of IAM District Lodge 190

## SFO organizing victory; 400 new members at Swissport

On January 8, Local 1414 was recognized as the bargaining agent for the 370 baggage handlers, passenger service people, maintenance workers, aircraft cleaners, ground service and aircraft mechanics who work at Swissport. "This is the District's biggest win in the last ten years," explained Area Director for Organizing Mike Munoz. "This is a tremendous victory."

The Swissport victory is not isolated—it's part of the SFO Organizing Project, launched in 1999 by the San Mateo and San Francisco labor councils in response to the airport's massive expansion. To ensure that the new employees have a chance to join unions, the Machinists have been working with the councils, as well as the National AFL-CIO, the United Food and Commercial Workers, the Teamsters, Service Employees, Office and Professional Employees, and the Hotel and Restaurant Employees.

### SFOrganize takes flight

In early 1999, the Labor Councils called upon several unions to work together to line up the necessary political support at the SFO Airport Commission to win a card check ordinance.

"The unions concluded that it made sense to organize together because we would have increased political power, could share resources like staff and research, and could have unified communication," recalls Shelley Kessler, executive secretary-treasurer of the San Mateo County Central Labor Council.

Card check means that workers can sign a membership card, and once the union collects cards from a majority of workers, the company



After cards are tallied, Swissport workers proudly display banner

recognizes the union. Card check is supposed to come with employer neutrality—which generally means that the employer doesn't hire anti-union consultants and use unfair labor practices to undermine a union election.

"We've made great progress this past year," says Don Barker, coordinator of the multi-union effort. "I think we've shown what unions can accomplish when we work together and build a broad base of support in the community."

Currently 30,000 people work at the airport, and two-thirds of them are already union members. In its first year, the SFO Organizing Project has organized more than 2,000 of the 10,000 unorganized workers at the airport.



Left: Signing up for the union. Right: Swissport workers enjoy union victory cake

"I am supremely confident that the seeds planted by the SFO organizing team will blossom into a shining example for all labor to follow," Walter Johnson, executive secretary of the San Francisco Labor Council, adds.

### The Swissport campaign

The IAM began collecting cards at Swissport in July 2000 and they applied to the company to accept the cards in August. With 240 cards in hand, the union had a majority, but dissatisfied employees continued to quit. Due to the high turnover rate, the company fought the legitimacy of the cards that the union had collected. So, the union collected more cards.

And more, Swissport did not remain neutral. In fact they ran a

serious anti-union campaign, soliciting people to request their cards back. "We couldn't have won an election with the kind of intimidation campaign that they ran," says Munoz.

"We had a majority," observes District 190 Organizer Pedro Mendez. "The company was just messing with us."

Swissport's resistance shows that some companies prefer to play hard ball, despite the pro-labor climate fostered by the organizing project, the airport commission, and local community and political leaders, including San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown.

Rather than certifying the cards in November, the company forced the union to go into arbitration. In January, the arbitrator counted the cards and found that the union indeed had a majority.

"Lots of people worked on this campaign," says Munoz. "But first and foremost we have to credit our organizer, Pedro Mendez, who did a fantastic job. We won, because of Pedro. His ability to speak to workers and explain how the union works and why it would be a benefit to employees—was critical."

Swissport runs night and day, seven days a week. "So we had to be there at all shifts to talk with the workers," Munoz continued. "I also give major credit to Don Barker, with the SFO Organizing Project, and Sissy Wood with the AFL-CIO. And all of our Business Representatives participated in our weekend blitz, where we made house calls to the employees, so many thanks for their hard work."

"Now we set dates for negotiations," Munoz said.

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IAM District Lodge 190  
7717 Oakport Street  
Oakland, CA 94621

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## UNION MEETINGS

### Local 801

c/o D.L. 190  
7717 Oakport Street,  
Oakland, CA 94621

#### Membership Meeting

Third Thursday of the month at 4:00 p.m.  
February 15 • March 15 • April 19  
Note: February meeting is at 7:00 p.m. at Fallon NAS Galley. Meetings generally held at the Carpenters' Hall, in Reno. For more info: 800-655-2182

### Local 1101

1150 So. Bascom # 23  
San Jose, CA 95128

All meetings held at  
Lion's Blind Center:  
101 North Bascom Ave.  
San Jose

#### Executive Board Meeting

First Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.  
February 1 • March 1 • April 5

#### Stewards Meeting

First Thursday of each month at 8:00 p.m.  
February 1 • March 1 • April 5

#### General Membership Meeting

Second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.  
February 8 • March 8 • April 12

### Local 1173

1900 Bates Ave., # H  
Concord, CA 94520

#### Membership/Shop Stewards Mtg.

Third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.  
February 15 • March 15 • April 19

#### Executive Board Meeting

Second Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.  
February 8 • March 8 • April 12

#### Retirees Club Meeting

Call Local for current meeting times

### Local 1414

150 South Blvd.  
San Mateo, CA 94402

#### Shop Stewards Meeting

First Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.  
February 1 • March 1 • April 5

#### Executive Board Meeting

Second Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.  
February 8 • March 8 • April 12

#### General Membership Meeting

Third Thursday of each month at 6:30 p.m.  
February 15 • March 15 • April 19

### Local 1528

713 16th Street  
Modesto, CA 95354

#### Executive Board Meeting

Last Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m.  
February 22 • March 29 • April 26

#### General Membership Meeting

First Wednesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.  
February 7 • March 7 • April 4

### Local 1546

10260 MacArthur Blvd.,  
Oakland, CA 94605

#### General Membership Meeting

First Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.  
February 6 • March 6 • April 3

#### Shop Stewards Meeting

First Tuesday of each month at 5:30 p.m.  
February 6 • March 6 • April 3

#### Executive Board Meeting

Thursday preceding membership meeting at 6:30 p.m.  
February 1 • March 1 • March 29

#### Senior's Luncheon

First Wednesday of each month at 12 noon  
February 7 • March 7 • April 4

#### Alcoholics Anonymous

Every Saturday, 9 a.m., at Local 1546

### Local 1584

8130 Baldwin Street  
Oakland, CA 94621

#### Membership Meeting

Third Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m.  
February 15 • March 15 • April 19

#### Executive Board Meeting

Preceding Monday at 7:00 p.m.  
February 12 • March 12 • April 16

#### Retirees Club

First Tuesday of each month at 12:30 p.m.  
February 6 • March 6 • April 3

### Local 1596

4210 Petaluma Blvd. No.  
Petaluma, CA 94952

All meetings are held at  
Lucchesi Community  
Center: 320 N. McDowell  
Blvd., Petaluma

#### Membership Meeting

Third Tuesday of each month at 8:00 p.m.  
February 20 • March 20 • April 17

#### Executive Board Meeting

Third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.  
February 20 • March 20 • April 17

### Local 2182

967 Venture Court,  
Sacramento, CA 95825

#### Executive Board Meeting

Second Tuesday of each month at 6:00 p.m.  
February 13 • March 13 • April 10

#### General Membership Meeting

Second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m.  
February 13 • March 13 • April 10

#### Retirees Club - VISTA CLUB

Third Wednesday of each month at 11:00 a.m.  
February 21 • March 21 • April 18



## ENERGY CRISIS

### Electrical union denounces layoffs, calls for long-term solution to crisis

The energy deregulation debacle is affecting us all—from rolling blackouts to higher bills. New crises seem to arise daily. We read about what the utilities and legislators and governor recommend. Here's the viewpoint of IBEW Local 1245, which represents the majority of PG&E workers.

The union representing about 14,000 workers at Pacific Gas & Electric warned California citizens in early January that layoffs announced by PG&E and Southern California Edison were no solution to the current energy crisis—and in fact could make the situation even worse.

"Reliability must be protected during this crisis. If the utility workforces are reduced, service and reliability will suffer even further erosion," said Jack McNally, Business Manager for IBEW Local 1245 and chair of the Coalition of California Utility Employees.

Edison has begun laying off 1,850 workers, including about 400 contract linemen belonging to Local 1245. PG&E has begun laying off 1,000 workers, all of whom belong to Local 1245.

At the current cost for wholesale electricity, the savings to Edison from laying off these employees and reducing customer service would buy less than 5 minutes of generation per day from the California Power Exchange.

"It is obvious that layoffs will not help the utilities' financial problems—not in the slightest," said McNally.

#### Solutions — Not Layoffs

Rather than layoffs, which further threaten service reliability, Local

1245 has advocated both short-term and long-term solutions to the crisis.

In the short-term, the union believes it is critical to head off utility bankruptcy, which could lead to more layoffs, further deterioration of service, and negative ripple effects throughout the California economy. The IBEW therefore supports the emergency measure adopted by the Legislature on Jan. 18 is designed to keep the power flowing while Davis tries to secure long-term contracts at reasonable prices with the unregulated generators.

Many observers suspect that market manipulation by the unregulated generators is at least partly responsible for today's astronomical prices.

For the longer-term, Local 1245 has been working with Senate President Pro Tem John Burton and other legislators to craft legislation that will restore public authority over California's power supplies—authority that was largely ceded to federal regulators and the marketplace when electricity was deregulated in 1996.

The union strongly supports the legislature's efforts to block any further divestiture of the regulated utilities' generating assets, particularly hydro power. The union is participating in on-going discussions with policy makers to explore the possible creation of a state power authority to build new power plants.

## Moving?

If you plan to move or have moved already, please notify your Local Union office immediately. Use the mailing label on this newspaper, or write your name, local number, and address clearly and send it to your Local. See calendar on this page for your local union's address.

The IAM District 190

## Sparkplug



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lodges and notification of any meeting or election in this paper shall constitute official notice per Article B, Section 4 of the IAMAW Constitution and Articles V and VII of District Lodge 190 By-Laws.

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Beagle & Bleiweiss Communications • Debra Chaplan, Managing Editor



## AROUND THE LOCALS

### IAM takes Tracy Chevrolet

Welcome to the 12 new members of Local 2182 who work at Tracy Chevrolet. These auto technicians and lube technicians voted for the union on December 15, and the election was certified by the NLRB on December 26. Bargaining is set to start soon.

This wasn't the first time that the union tried to organize this shop. In November, 1999 the IAM narrowly lost its election "after the owner made promises to the employees about the benefits they'd get if they voted the union down," explained organizer Joe Coy. But he didn't keep his promises. "This time around, there wasn't much of an anti-union campaign," Coy said. "I think he figured he spent the big bucks last time, so he didn't try any shenanigans."

"This was a good win for us," says Area Director Mike Munoz. "It's important to start gaining strength in Tracy and in the Central Valley. Joe Coy did a great job, as did all our supporters inside the shop."

### Talking to Lexus—again

Three years ago, the employees at Lexus of Concord voted for union representation. Local 1173 entered negotiations, but quickly hit a wall. After many months of no progress and numerous labor law violations, the mechanics walked out—tool boxes and all.

With no mechanics on the job looking for a contract, there was little the union could do...except wait for the legal challenges to wend their way through the courts.

And wend they did. In November, 2000, the NLRB finally ruled that the company utilized a variety of unfair labor practices and had to get back to the bargaining table.

"We're trying to work through this and get a contract," said Area Director Vern Dutton. "The main thing is, we're back at the table." With more meetings scheduled, we'll keep you posted as to whether an agreement is reached.

### Hard nut in Walnut Creek

Local 1173 is in hard bargaining with Walnut Creek Honda and in fact, lawyer David Rosenfeld was called in to be chief spokesman for the union. According to Area Director Vern Dutton, the company has taken some positions that don't look promising.

"We had a strike here about eight years ago, and it was ugly," explains Dutton. "We filed unfair labor practice charges and won.... But of course they appealed." After five years of court fights, which the union won each step of the way, the members were finally awarded back



### Local 1584 honors retirees

Local Lodge 1584 honored the above members on December 5, 2000 with a luncheon at Francesco's Restaurant in Oakland. 58 people were eligible for 50-year awards, and 49 were eligible for 45-year awards. Nine of each group attended the luncheon.



Dale Alsgood received a plaque for being a Machinist in Good Standing for 62 years. He's flanked by Local 1584 President Michael Mellow and Secretary-Treasurer Marge Kolb. Dale worked for Owens Illinois and retired in January 1980.

pay, pension, health and welfare and a new contract. "But that contract is now up, and this owner is up to his same old tricks," Dutton says.

This employer also owns Parker Robb Chevrolet, and that dealership's contract is up in six months. This may be a tough year at both dealerships.

### Keep Sacramento moving

Sacramento Local Lodge 2182 successfully negotiated a new five year agreement with the City of Sacramento for two units—Machinists and Automotive. The agreement includes wage increases ranging from 11% to 21% depending on the COLA Index, with other improvements such as increased City contributions into the pension and health and welfare, safety glasses, safety shoes, simplification of incentive plan, some equity adjustments and the elimination of a wage grade.

This successful agreement was

possible with the support and assistance of the union negotiating committee consisting of Chris Wheeler, Pat Gonzalez, Dean Thomas, Henry Mini, Alan Yamamoto and John O'Hare and Business Representatives Howard Hays and Mark Martin.

"It took many months of meetings, strategy setting and hard bargaining, but I believe we got a contract that meets the priorities that our members set," said Business Representative Mark Martin. "This is a fair contract."

### Uphill battle at Indian

For nearly a year, Area Director Mike Munoz has been working hard to organize the workers at Indian Motorcycle in Gilroy, but it's been an uphill battle. Now the NLRB is ruling for the union.

The NLRB is taking Indian Motorcycles to court in February in an attempt to have the company ordered to reinstate seven employees

that the union and NLRB allege were fired for union activity.

The union started organizing the Gilroy facility in early 2000. The employees were fired in May and June.

With 200 dealerships across the U.S. and Canada, Indian Motorcycles produced 5,000 motorcycles in 2000. In December the company laid off 200 of its 700 employees because, they claim, their suppliers were not keeping pace with production.

"Our union represents Harley Davidson," Area Director Mike Munoz explained. "The union has strong support at Indian, but due to the firings and the layoffs, people there are afraid. We're not going to go away."

### Record settlement

Local 2182 just settled Sacramento dealership Harrold Ford's contract in a record two bargaining sessions.

The three-year contract, ratified overwhelmingly by union members, calls for a full range of economic improvements in pension, health and welfare and wages—and no take-aways. All journeymen classifications—parts, service and body shop departments—will receive a \$1.25 per hour increase the first year of the contract. This agreement puts the dealership in the top 10% of Sacramento-area dealers.

"We don't want to talk about the past," said Business Representative Mark Martin. "But our last negotiations were grueling. We went 10 months without a contract, but as a result of using an interest based bargaining process, all parties—company and union—are satisfied with the agreement," Martin explained.

"This was a real team effort," Martin added. He particularly wanted to thank Clint Scoggins, Curtis Cornelison, Robert Strawmier and fellow Business Representative Howard Hays. "I also want to thank the company committee for their efforts: Dave Helling, Fred Harrold and Bill Bergaus."

### Back at Summit

Once the Teamsters at Summit Logistics settled their six-week strike and went back to work in November, the 22 Machinists also went back to work. But they don't have a contract yet.

"We're meeting on January 30 to bargain for a new contract that's completely separate from the Teamsters," explained Local 1546 Business Representative David Asplin. "After more than 30 negotiating sessions, when the Teamsters finally walked out, we hadn't even started talking about Machinists issues. Our situation is different from the Teamsters, and now we'll have our own agreement to deal with it," he said.

## Local 801

### Special Meeting Announcement

The General Membership meeting for February will be held at a different time and location:

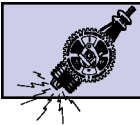
**7 p.m.**

**Thursday February 15**

**The Galley**

**Fallon Naval Air Station**

If you have questions, contact Mark Martin at: 800-655-2182.



## WORKPLACE PROFILE

# Making bricks since 1868

Nestled at the end of the San Rafael peninsula, the L.P. McNear Brick and Block is the oldest brickyard in Northern California—founded in 1868. It's a family business, so anyone who's not a McNear is a union member—mostly Laborers, with a few Teamsters and five Local 1596 members keeping the machinery and vehicles moving.

Producing more than 16 million bricks each year, as well as running a growing concrete block operation, McNear's is known as a medium-sized brick yard. Its only competition in the area is in Sacramento.

Bricks are basically made of dirt and water. "These days, we also add chemicals, but mostly just for color," explains Dan McNear, great grandson of founder J.A. McNear.

For years, McNear's excavated its raw materials right there on the site. And today, they still collect rain water. "Hey, it doesn't have to be clean," McNear says.



Dan McNear stands below one of the old worker cottages at the brickyard



Located in beautiful San Rafael, McNear's makes 16 million bricks a year

### Historically speaking

Originally, John A. McNear ran ferry boats from Petaluma to San Francisco. He was in the poultry feed business when Petaluma was a major poultry district. When he bought the site, it included a cattle ranch and a brick yard. McNear's has been kept as a closely held family business ever since.

"In the old days people lived here because it was so far away from everything else" McNear explained as he toured the facility. "They had lots of little dorm-like cottages up in the hills, and a cook house where the meals were served."

When Dan's grandfather died in 1972, the family sold its land to the neighboring rock quarry, but leased back the facilities. What was once the cattle ranch is now subdivided into million dollar housing developments around China Camp.

"There's so much old stuff here—like buildings and equipment. We rent it out for commercials," McNear said.

For many years, McNear's was in the explosives business. "In fact, we

had ATF license number one."

The brickmaking process includes crushing the raw material, running it through the brick machine, stacking it, drying it, fitting it, sorting it, then stacking it again in cubes for shipment. The kiln runs seven days a week, round the clock.

"Business has been good this year," says McNear. "We've had trouble keeping stuff in stock. . . . Actually, we're working three months out."

Many of the guys in the yard are related. "Our turnover is really low, mainly through retirement, but when openings do come up,

people try to bring in family members," McNear says. "But this is the first year we had to hire outsiders. It's tough getting good workers."

### Working at McNear's

Paul Perinoni has been at McNear's for 27 years. He started as a laborer. "We maintain everything. . . whatever is running and rolling, we take care of," he said. "It's on-the-job training here. You come in with skills but you learn from just working here—you catch it."



Machinist John Capeheart

John Capeheart came to McNear's 12 years ago, after the Presidio closed down. "They send us to classes to learn how to do some of the stuff. They just hired two new Machinists, which was critical, because when Paul out sick for a while, I was working 12 hour shifts non-stop."

Brian Kirby is in charge of keeping the concrete block machines moving. He's been at McNear's for 15 years. "This is a good place to work. We have the freedom to do the work. It's a family owned business, and I think that translates into company loyalty and care for the employees here."

Sean Babot is the newcomer to McNear's and the union. He was a ride mechanic at Six Flags until a few months ago. "It's like moving from uptown to downtown. I'm not in Kansas anymore. This is less technical and more labor intensive than at Six Flags."

Robert Turner just came to McNear's from the Richmond Landfill three months ago. "It's not too different," he said. "I'm still dealing with dirt and water. I just try to keep everything running."



Bricks are cut by machine and stacked by hand, ready to go to the kiln

## What's the most valuable benefits of being a union member . . . and what's



**Paul Perinoni**  
L.P. McNears—San Rafael  
Local 1596

"Retirement. Everybody needs something to look forward to. What would you have if you didn't have a union? I have no complaints."



**Dave Rushing**  
JM Equipment—Modesto  
Local 1528

"The benefit is security and your wages are stable. The higher-ups can't mess with you. I don't have any gripes, but of course I want more money and less work."



**Bethany Norwood**  
Silgan—Riverbank  
Local 1528

"The top benefit is the pay—I'm sure that non-union folks get paid less. The thing I'd improve is getting medical benefits for retired people. Other than that, I'm a happy camper."



**John Capeheart**  
L.P. McNears—San Rafael  
Local 1596

"Retirement...and having all the people in the union stand behind you. Dues are high, but that's life—the benefits come with it."

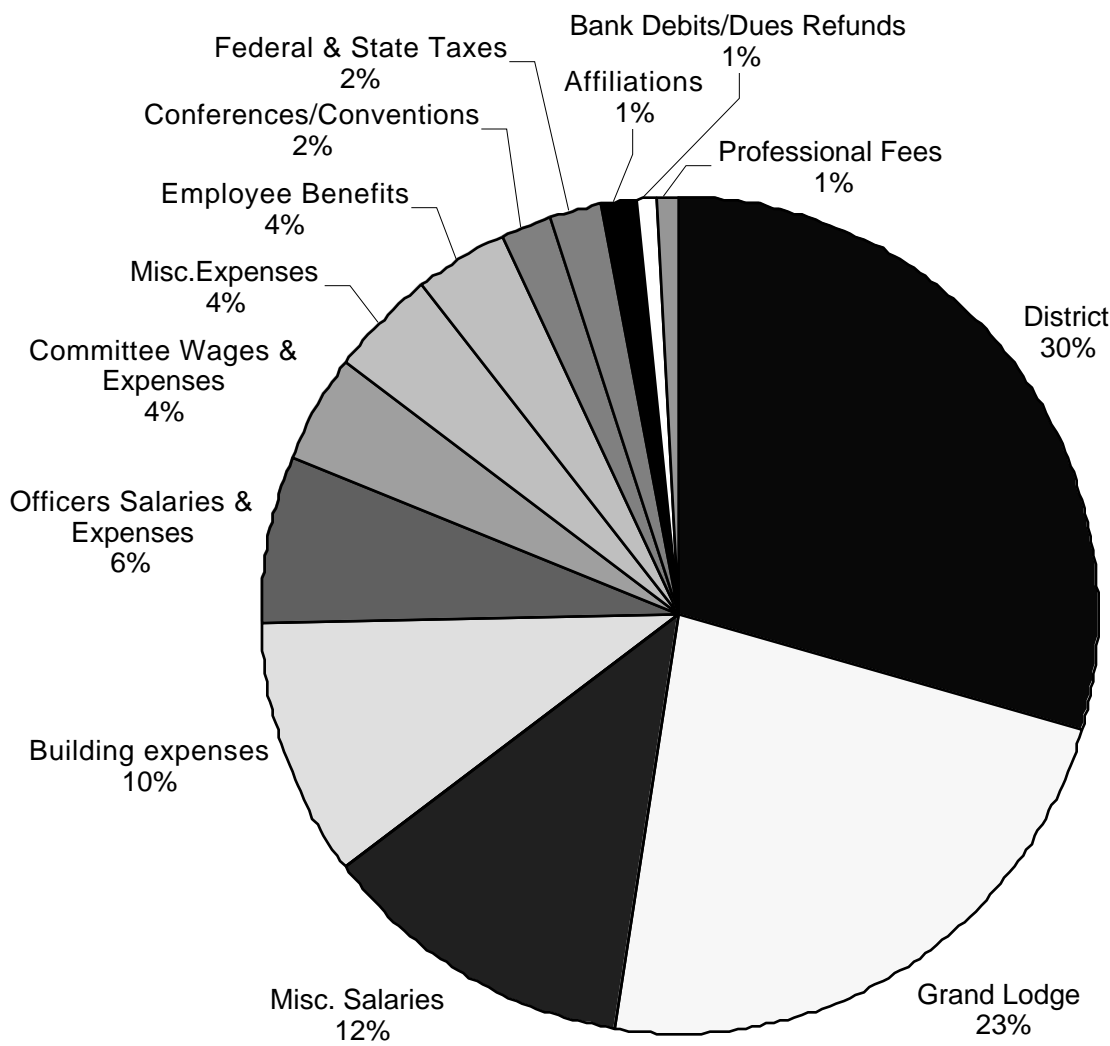


**Earl Fife**  
Silgan—Riverbank  
Local 1528

"I've been a union member for 37 years. I believe it protects our jobs and increases the quality of people—because they stay. My gripe—shop stewards should be paid."

# Where your dues \$ goes

Sample: Local 1546's Pie



For many working men and women, union membership represents an investment that ensures their protection from inconsistent and unstable management in the global economy. For just a few dollars a day, IAM members are able to attain a degree of workplace protection that is virtually impossible in a non-union environment.

Wages for IAM members covered by contracts are 25% higher than comparable non-union wages. "The total compensation for IAM employees, which includes all benefits, rises to more than \$26 per hour—36% higher than what non-union workers receive. From that point of view, IAM membership dues are an investment that definitely pays dividends.

"Dues are always going up.... How come every time we get a raise, it seems our dues go up?"

That's the lament of several members we interviewed. This is a reasonable question, and we attempt to provide you with the answer. The reason we say "attempt" is that every local is different.

One thing to know is that dues only go up once a year—in January. And the increase is based on wages in effect on August 31 of the previous year.

And of course, the leadership in each local has discretion over some of the funds. For example, several Locals have term life insurance policies but a few Locals just did away with these policies to minimize the dues increase. Additionally, each local earns income from strike fund and other savings accounts—how much and what percentage of the Local's expenses this covers vary widely.

Here is the pie for Local 1546, and how each dues dollar is split. The expense categories are typical for all the locals, but the specific percentages may vary.

**District Lodge** 30%

This fee covers half the salaries and benefits for all of the Business Reps. who negotiate the contracts and service the membership, District officers and organizing staff; arbitration, negotiations and other legal fees; production and mailing of the *Sparkplug*; and much more. (Note: Machine and Manufacturing Locals pay \$18 to the District. Historically, this is because the shops are larger so they need fewer Business Reps. to service them.)

**Grand Lodge** 23%

This fee covers Strike Benefits, Operating Expenses that include salaries and benefits for headquarters and field office workers; data processing; the cost of operating and maintaining the IAM headquarters

building; telephones; postage; a portion of Business Representatives salaries; Field Staff Activity; expenses and salaries for the various departments including legal, research, Organizing, legislative activity, communications, the IAM Journal and other educational materials; membership in the AFL-CIO and other labor organizations; and executive expenses.

**Misc. Salaries** 12%

This covers the Local's clerical staff—wages and benefits.

**Building Expenses** 10%

This includes the upkeep and repair, taxes, telephone and other utilities. (Some locals pay rent or mortgages.)

**Officers' Salaries/Expenses** 6.4%

**Committee Wages/Expenses** 4.6%

**Misc. Expenses** 4.3%

This category puts together contributions, asset purchases, meeting expenses, printing, copies, social, strike expenses

**Employee Benefits** 3.7%

This is the health and welfare and pension plans for the clerical staff and officers.

**Conferences/Conventions** 2%

**Federal/State Taxes** .18%

**Affiliations** .14%

This includes dues to the California Labor Federation, the California Conference of Machinists, and appropriate county Central Labor Councils.

**Bank Debits/Dues Refunds** 1%

This is for bounced check fees from member dues and other refunds.

**Professional Fees** .07%

This covers the accountant and legal counsel.

## ur biggest complaint about the union?



**Sean Babet**  
L.P. McNears—San Rafael  
Local 1596

"Knowing that you have a large affiliation behind you protects your future and your job security. I just wish they'd take my dues out of my paycheck."



**Harold Moreland**  
Silgan—Riverbank  
Local 1528

"Stability. There are rules to play by and everybody knows the rules. I don't have any complaints—I go with the flow."



**Todd Gilmour**  
JM Equipment—Modesto  
Local 1528

"Having the security of the union standing behind us. My gripe is that we should have open proposal meetings before negotiations, rather than have a plan put before us."



**Brian Kirby**  
L.P. McNears—San Rafael  
Local 1596

"Retirement—we negotiated for a good pension that will actually support you. And seniority—they can't fire you when you get older. My gripe is that the dues are too high and keep going up."



**Larry Franco**  
Silgan—Riverbank  
Local 1528

"My gripe is that the union protects the lazy people. Some folks get away with murder because the union is behind them."

**What's the best union benefit & what can be improved?**



**Laura Angle**  
Silgan—Riverbank  
Local 1528

*"When we have a problem we can go to the union, and they help. I wish that they wouldn't raise dues every time we get a small raise. And they should be more investigative."*



**Robert Turner**  
L.P1  
McNears—San Rafael

*"Retirement is a good plus. I've only been a member for three months and haven't had any complaints yet—I hope that continues."*



**Keith Willey**  
JM Equipment—Modesto  
Local 1528

*"Benefits—health and 401K. I don't have any gripes."*



**Gilbert Jesus Silgan**  
—Riverbank  
Local 1528

*"The union gives you security—nobody can take your job. And it provides a good retirement plan. I'd like to see a medical plan for retirees who want to retire a little bit early."*



**Bob Martin**  
JM Equipment—Modesto  
Local 1528

*"Job security and our benefits that we negotiate during contract time. My only gripe is wanting to get our prescription drug payments quicker."*

**Important notice to members who use the Blue Cross PPO**

As of January 1, the 27 Sutter Hospitals are not accepting any Blue Cross patients, but fortunately the two health care entities have recently resumed talks. Close to half of the hospitals in the Bay Area are affiliated with Sutter, so if you are insured by the Blue Cross Preferred Provider Organization, this change affects you.

The Trust has agreed to continue to cover the cost difference for members on Blue Cross PPO who use Sutter facilities through March 31. If Sutter and Blue Cross do not come to agreement by then, the Trust will review the indemnity plan for other options. Stay tuned.

**Special Notice  
Local Lodge 1596 Retirees**

The membership voted to eliminate the local's Life Insurance term policy at the Local Lodge meeting held on January 16, 2001.

The officers of the Local regret this decision and tried to find a way to continue the plan. Unfortunately, in order to minimize the impact of recent dues increases on active members, the officers felt that this policy was expendable. They investigated continuing the policy for retirees only, but that would have been cost-prohibitive.

Most working members have life insurance through their Health & Welfare coverage. That insurance is not affected by this change.



ATPA is the administrator for the Automotive Industries Pension and Welfare Trust Funds and Machinist Health Plans (Active and Retiree).

**You can contact us at  
510-836-2484.**

**What's the best union benefit & what can be improved?**



**Roy Neidigh**  
JM Equipment—Modesto  
Local 1528

*"Health benefits is our number one worry and benefit. I can't gripe because I don't attend union meetings!"*



**Rich Barone**  
Silgan—Riverbank  
Local 1528

*"It puts us on more equal terms with the company. In a non-union shop, you don't have rights or set agreements. My gripe is that the business reps are stretched too thin. One guy can only do so much."*



**Suzanne Ventura**  
Silgan—Riverbank  
Local 1528

*"Wages and job security. I'm happy with our contract, but I'm concerned that the union doesn't represent the old timers, especially when they get hurt on the job. And job description changes were forced on us."*



**John Moyer**  
JM Equipment—Modesto  
Local 1528

*"My wages—there's no doubt in my mind that our wages would be 20% less if we weren't union. I don't have any gripes about the union."*



**Michael C. Holder**  
Silgan—Riverbank  
Local 1528

*"The wages and job security with seniority—this is critical during layoffs. I'd like to see all union members give 100% to the job and not take advantage of their protections."*

**What's the best union benefit & what can be improved?**



**Phil Rivera**  
Silgan—Riverbank  
Local 1528

*"Collective bargaining. Our salaries aren't as rich as the CEO, but it's a pretty good deal. It would be nice to see our Business Rep more."*



**Jim Rebiero**  
JM Equipment—Modesto  
Local 1528

*"Guaranteed good wages is the most important benefit. I don't have any gripes—I recommend the union to anyone who might want to join."*



**Mary Jones**  
Silgan—Riverbank  
Local 1528

*"The benefit is to be part of a strong union. Now that our local has new leadership that's more open, I hope to get involved again."*



**Ernie Walk**  
JM Equipment—Modesto  
Local 1528

*"Protection for your job. I'm satisfied with the union and have no gripes."*



**Lance Erwin**  
Silgan—Riverbank  
Local 1528

*"Medical coverage is most important. My complaint is that they raise the dues every year—I want financial disclosure of where the money is going."*




**BENEFITS NEWS**

**New prescription drug program for AI Welfare Fund participants**

Historically, members of the Automotive Industries Welfare Fund have paid full purchase price for prescription drugs at the retail pharmacy level, and then submitted their receipts to the fund—and waited 6-8 weeks for reimbursement. That's all changing.

The Trustees of AIWF have recently contracted with a national pharmacy benefit manager to provide a prescription drug benefit for PacifiCare and Direct Pay Plan members. Starting March 1, all retail and mail order prescriptions will be filled by Rx America.

This plan is modeled on the plan devised in 1995 for Kaiser members, who receive their pharmacy prescriptions directly from Kaiser by paying a modest up-front co-pay (**Note:** Members who use Kaiser will continue to get their prescriptions filled at Kaiser.)



**How to use the program:**

- Doctor writes prescription
- Check the participating pharmacy listing for the nearest location or call 1-800-770-8014
- Present your RxAmerica ID card to the pharmacist. No claim forms required.
- Pay the required co-pay only (\$5 for generic/\$10 for brand name).

There will be no change to the formulary so all of the same drugs that are now covered under the plan will still be covered by RxAmerica.

Participating pharmacies include most Albertsons, Sav-On Drug, Longs Drugs, K-Mart, Wal-Mart, Target, the Medicine Shoppe, Rite Aid and Walgreens, as well as many

independent pharmacies.

With the new prescription drug card, no claim forms will be required. You will receive two RxAmerica ID cards in the mail in the middle of February. When you use your new card at an RxAmerica pharmacy you will pay a small co-payment when the prescription is filled and have no

further responsibility.

**Co-Payments are:** \$5 for generic, \$10 for brand name—both for up to 34-day supply.

RxAmerica will also replace Merck-Medco as the mail order provider. You will receive new mail order claim forms to be used for all prescriptions filled after March 1, 2001. There is also a \$5 for generic and \$10 for brand drug co-pay required for mail order prescriptions which can still be filled for up to a 90-day supply.

**Note:** Medicare eligible members of PacifiCare/Secure Horizons will continue to receive their prescriptions through PacifiCare.

Watch your mailbox in February for official notification from the Trust Fund Office as well as a welcome packet from RxAmerica that will contain your new ID cards.

**What's the best union benefit & what can be improved?**



**Glen Hotchkiss**  
JM Equipment—Modesto  
Local 1528

*"Insurance is a big factor. Without it you're lost. I haven't thought about any gripes."*



**Mel Parrott**  
Silgan—Riverbank  
Local 1528

*"Job security is number one. I'm concerned about dues increases and where the money goes. We need answers from the District."*



**Don Pereira**  
JM Equipment—Modesto  
Local 1528

*"Having good medical benefits is the main thing. I can't think of any complaints."*



**Debbie Garber**  
Silgan—Riverbank  
Local 1528

*"You've got people behind you that stand with you and give support. Being in the office, we aren't as noticed during negotiations. The company knows we're union, but our fellow members don't."*



**Scott Harding**  
JM Equipment—Modesto  
Local 1528

*"Wages and benefits. I don't have any gripes."*



## Behavioral Health

### Helping you navigate life's challenges

PacifiCare Behavioral Health makes it easy to get confidential help with problems interfering with your work. Problems like stress, drug and alcohol abuse and family and marriage concerns. A dedicated team is available 24 hours a day to get you to the care that is right for you and your family. For more information, call toll-free, 1-800-491-3334. All calls are strictly confidential. We can help make things better.

## FOCUS ON UNION MEMBERS



Steward of the Year Tim Kopp displays his plaque

Tim Kopp has been a member of Local 1546 for 12 years, and worked at The Ford Store, previously known as Ed Chovanes Ford, for all but the

### Tim Kopp—Local 1546's Steward of the Year

first year. He never expected to be named Shop Steward of the Year at the Local's stewards dinner held last December in Castro Valley.

"Tim exemplifies the best of our shop stewards," says Area Director Don Crosatto. "Chovanes was an old family institution, but they sold to Mossy, a non-union company out of San Diego. Tim was able to keep the group together and bring them to a new contract. It wasn't easy."

#### New owners try to bust union

In December, 1999 the dealership's owners informed the employees that the store was for sale and that it was an asset purchase outright. "The sale really came out of the blue. They had talked about remodeling or moving, but never selling. They said that the new owners were not assuming the contract

or the employees or anything else," Kopp explained. "We'd have to get hired by the new employer, which included re-submitting our resumes and passing all the tests again."

Kopp says that the new owners wanted to bust the union. "But after five months, they realized that they couldn't find replacements for us."

Kopp has no question that the employees could easily have gotten new jobs at other dealerships, "but we didn't want this place to go non-union. We needed 51% to stay on to keep control. We all stuck together—none of us quit."

"I kept the group together and tried to ensure that everyone passed their tests." All but three of the 25 Teamsters and Machinists got rehired by the new owners.

"The night before the deal closed escrow in May, we rejected the con-

tract. Because time was of the essence, we worked out a tentative agreement—we voted not to strike and to try to work out the language."

Business Representative Craig Andrews was instrumental in putting the final pact together. "There was lots of stuff thrown in on the last day," Kopp says. "The most crucial part of the contract was elimination of the two-tier pension. This was as important for us as it will be for members at other dealerships."

Kopp says that the new employers have been fairly decent. A move to a new facility on Marina Blvd. is slated for May, 2001.

"The guys working here really stepped up to the challenge," Kopp says proudly. "It would have been so easy to get a job elsewhere. We expect that our next contract will be much easier."

### Conrado Sevilla—Organize and retire

After 29 years working at Wesgo, a Belmont-based ceramics maker for the high-tech industry, Conrado Sevilla just retired. But not before helping his fellow workers get unionized and ratify their first contract.

Sevilla came from the Philippines in 1969 and started working as a tool and die maker. "I didn't think about enjoyment.... I thought about money all the time. Just work, work, work," Sevilla explained.

"But I came to see that in America, you're supposed to enjoy your life at the same time you earn money. That's when I realized that the people here really suffered a lot."

Sevilla explains that during his first few years, "firing was rampant—but somehow I survived."

Then the company was bought out. "The new management listened to the employees and it was a nice

atmosphere here for awhile."

That's until 1990, when Morgan, a large British company, bought the facility. "That's when the problems really started," Sevilla recalls. "It felt like forced labor. We were always being threatened and nobody could question their policies."

*In America, you're supposed to enjoy your life at the same time you earn money.*

Sevilla and his fellow workers became increasingly worried when they saw that they were considered 'at will employees' in Wesgo's new Employee Policy booklet.

"I talked to people and realized that it's time for us to get some protection. . . even though I knew I'd be

leaving," Sevilla explains. "I hoped that the union could help protect the employees from the company."

The union organizing drive started in 1999. Sevilla spent his time talking with minority and immigrant workers. "I tried to show them that the company's open door policy was only for those who speak English. I told them 'Because you are quiet, you work but aren't paid—the only way to get a voice is with the union.'"

Wesgo's election was held in November, 1999, and the contract was ratified in September, 2000.

Sevilla explains that before they got a union, the workers never knew how much they'd be paid or what their raises would be. "Now with the contract, we have set grade levels and pay scales. That was the best thing that the union gave. We're very happy about it."



Sevilla enjoys the election victory

Like many long-time workers, Sevilla was at the top of his pay range when the union came in, so he didn't reap much financial benefit.

After years of working hard and being "money hungry," Sevilla looks forward to doing nothing at home. "I'll be glad to help with the union. I'm still connected with the employees over there, and my phone is open for any type of problem."