



# www.ufcw324.org



## **NEW** website strengthens membership

### Bread & Butter

*Local set to open Food Bank for members hit by the recession.*



**Page 8**

### Courage & Valor

*Military service honored among members and families.*



**Pages 16-17**

### Dollars & Sense

*Credit Union staff proudly boasts membership in Local 324.*



**Pages 18-19**



**4** Check's in the Mail  
Trust Fund reimbursements are finding their way to the garbage.



**5** Sec.-Tres. Report  
This year's conference merged high technology with tradition.



**6** Yesterday's News  
The real Norma Rae revealed.



**7** Hot Topics!  
The fine line between insubordination and free speech discussed.



**8** Feature story  
Food bank aims to serve members struggling to make ends meet.



**9** Word on the Street  
Members offer their two cents on what makes a good website.



**15** Off The Wall  
Who is on the chopping block today?



**16** Special feature  
Members or their family members honored for military service.

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## President's Report

# Website showcases Local's commitment to reaching all generations of members



President **Greg M. Conger**

I recall it as if it happened only last week. A young union rep came to my office to ask if we would consider allowing him to create a website for the Local.

He made a convincing case for going forward with the new site, but I couldn't help but offer my two-cents on the subject anyway. I approved his request but cautioned him not to get too caught up in the project. "I think the Internet is just a passing fad" I said.

That was actually 1994 and UFCW Local 324 became the first UFCW Union in Southern California to "Post" a website.

The official unveiling of [www.ufcw324.org](http://www.ufcw324.org) revealed a site that folds the most modern design elements into a clean, easy to navigate format that smoothly escorts users from every topic of interest taking the shortest route possible.

The days of clicking on a half dozen website icons and suddenly finding yourself lost in a cyber-maze with no landmarks to figure out where you are, no breadcrumbs to find your way back and enough frustration to make you forget what you logged on for in the first place are gone.

Our new site features a media room, a place where users can find current and back issues of U Magazine and U too. The entire collection of locally produced videos can be found alongside videos from other unions on topics of interest to most. A brand new feature here

is also the 324 Photo Gallery where users might find themselves or a friend memorialized by a U Magazine photographer.

You can fill-in union request forms such as withdrawal status changes, vacation waivers, change of address and healthcare forms.

In all likelihood, the site will take on a different look in a few months because we want it to reflect your tastes. State-of-the-art user tracking software will



show us what you like the most and want to see more of and what you don't like. We will adjust the format and overall presentation to make your interests easy to find and simple to use.

But apart from the many new features the site showcases, our website renovation project itself speaks volumes about our feelings on the subject of member interests. We are steadfastly committed to

providing the most accurate, timely and relevant information to our members as humanly possible.

Moreover, we are keen to the latest trends in communications, helping ensure that we reach our newest and youngest members with the very tools they are using to reach their friends. We have spent most of our careers learning that our own experiences in life, while valuable indeed, may not reflect the collective experiences of a membership as diverse as ours. In short, we are open-minded.

And on that note, this website is both a symbolic image that confirms our embrace of change and progress as well as a practical tool that will make doing union-related business a much easier process. So those of you who suggested that we change our approach to some of our younger members in our overall style can take solace in the fact that today, your message rings loud and clear. Look around. It's all starting to click.

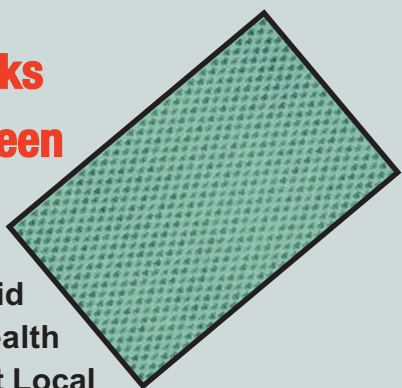
## “The check is in the mail” Please don’t throw it away

With Daily headlines lamenting the state of the nation’s economy, one would think that receiving a reimbursement check from the benefits Trust Fund would be welcomed by all members.

Why then do hundreds of members toss those checks into the trash as soon as they get it?

Common sense suggests that those members haven’t acquired mass fortunes and no longer need the extra cash.

**Trust Fund checks are mailed in green envelopes**



“It’s a mistake,” said Michelle Dobias, Health Benefits Supervisor at Local 324.

Trust Fund officials are convinced that members often mistake their reimbursement checks with the explanation of benefits data that is sent out after every visit to a provider.

The explanation of benefits material is sent in a blue envelope bearing the Trust Fund’s logo on the back. Reimbursement checks are mailed in the same envelopes except they are green. Both look exactly the same—except for the color.

Some estimates place the number at tens of thousands of dollars annually that go uncollected by members who are owed reimbursement from the Trust Fund for anything from an overpayment to out-of-pocket expenses.

This is not a windfall that Trust Fund officials hope will bolster the fund’s investment portfolio.

“Generosity has its place,” Dobias said. “But this is money that the members have worked hard for—it’s theirs.”

## Secretary-Treasurer’s Report

### Stewards Conference demonstrates how old-fashioned ‘word of mouth’ can blend with modern technology



Secretary-Treasurer **Andrea Zinder**

This year’s Steward’s Conference was a bit of a paradox. How? Because at the same time we were touting our technological savvy and open embrace of modern communication’s tools, we were also showcasing our commitment to the old-fashioned, time-tested reliance on people.

Our Stewards Program is one that reinforces the importance of members talking to members. It is the main ingredient in a recipe that will

and its critical importance whether someone works union or non-union. They learned about their role in representing you if you are called in by management to a security investigation and they heard about organizing opportunities under the Obama administration.

Your union steward is a resource for you. Every store or facility has at least one union steward and many have two or more. Your steward may have the an-

until a representative can attend. Always ask for representation before the meeting begins and call either your union steward or your union representative.

<http://www.com>

evolve over time but will always include the core principles of talking to the people you work with and spreading the word.

At our annual steward’s conference on Sept. 17, we packed the hall with almost 400 union stewards who spent the full day learning, laughing and networking.

It was a tremendous opportunity for our stewards to preview our new web page, watch entertaining and educational videos produced by Local 324’s communications department, to see old friends and to share new stories. Our stewards learned about the importance of health care reform

swers you need to contract or other questions. If your steward does not have the answer, he or she knows where to get it. Our Union Reps are available to you and members are always welcome and encouraged to call us for assistance.

But our stewards work with you every day and are available often at a moment’s notice. For this reason, we are providing our stewards with more knowledge and tools so that they can assist on some matters.

Many of our stewards already represent members when they are called in for investigatory meetings. These often involve loss prevention and every member has a right to have representation if they believe the meeting could lead to discipline. In these circumstances, if representation is requested, management must suspend the meeting

Unions are all about people joining together, looking out for one another and having a collective voice which is greater than any individual.

Through the leadership of our Union Representatives and Union Stewards, we are committed to making sure that every voice at the workplace is heard and that your rights are protected.

*Andrea*





## The Real Norma Rae

—By Matthew Hart

Few who have seen the movie, *Norma Rae*, could forget the powerful image of Sally Fields as she stood on her workstation with a sign that read “union,” moments after her character was terminated for organizing. This moment would inspire anyone whose natural tendency is to fight for dignity and respect. Some, however, may be surprised to know that this moment was not woven in a Hollywood studio, but rather in a textile factory in Roanoke Rapids, N.C. It was not Sally Fields, nor Norma Rae, who first stood on her workstation in direct defiance of management; rather her name was Crystal Lee Sutton, a woman whose act was the inspiration for the character and the movie that would shed light on the southern textile industry and the struggle to unionize the south.

Sutton was a self-described “lint head,” having been third generation in the textile mills. She began working at the factory at age 17, working the 4 p.m.-to-midnight shift, reloading the fast-moving looms with shuttles of yarn. After leaving to try a series of waitressing and sewing jobs, she returned to J.P. Stevens in 1972, making \$2.65 an hour for folding towels.

After about five months on the job, Sutton attended her first meeting of the Textile Workers Union of America (TWUA). Since 1963, the union had tried to organize the 34,000 workers in 80 mills operated by Stevens, the nation’s second-largest textile manufacturer. The company would stop at nothing to ensure that their factories would remain free of unionization.

Sutton became an advocate for the union and began working with a TWUA organizer, Eli Zivkovich, a former coal miner from West Virginia. She sported a union pin on the shop floor and the company took notice of her actions.

In response to her union activity, she was repeatedly called into the front office on minor infractions, from talking too much to standing in the bathroom for too long. Every time she was called in, she was armed with a book that Zivkovich had given her, called “What the Company Will Do for You.” The pages were blank. She used the book to take notes on her bosses’ complaints, which, she said, “blew the boss men’s

mind. They couldn’t believe I was doing this.”

Sutton’s friction with the company came to a head when the company posted an anti-union letter on the bulletin board that attempted to ignite racial tension by claiming the union would be run by black workers. Sutton began to copy down the content of the letter. Several managers told her to stop but she ignored them all, folded up her copy of the letter and put it inside her bra, “figuring, well, nobody will get it down there.” She was immediately terminated.

When she went back to her workstation to gather her belongings, she asked a co-worker for a marking pen. She then grabbed a piece of pasteboard and wrote the word “UNION” on it. Sutton then climbed on to her table and stood up, slowly turning the sign around. Co-workers stood stunned. Machines began to shut down. As the factory lay silent, workers began raising two fingers in the air for victory as an act of solidarity.

Soon the police chief arrived taking Sutton to jail, kicking and screaming.

The following year, 1974, TWUA won the right to represent the 3,000 textile workers at seven plants in Roanoke Rapids, including J.P. Stevens. Four years later, the National Labor Relations Board awarded Sutton her job back and she received \$13,000 in back wages. She came back to work two days and then quit.

Crystal Lee Sutton went on to work a series of jobs, including a brief spell as a union organizer for the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (formerly the TWUA.) Throughout the remainder of her life she continued to be an outspoken advocate for unions and working people.

Crystal Lee Sutton died on Sept. 12, 2009.



Crystal L. Sutton



Sally Field played Crystal L. Sutton in the movie “Norma Rae.”

# Hot Topics

Words of wisdom to help you keep your job

## When fighting with the boss, use common sense

—By Field Director Chuck Adinolfi

Insubordination has always been grounds for termination in our industries. But recently, companies have expanded the definition of insubordination to include everything and the kitchen sink

Insubordination is the act of deliberately disobeying a lawful order from someone in charge of them. The rule has always been obey now, grieve later. This is still excellent advice and could save you from a suspension or termination.

There are three reasons that you may not follow a direct order, and have a good defense:

1. The order would cause you to do something that is illegal.
2. The order would cause you to do something that is immoral.

3. The order could endanger you, causing you to do something this is unsafe.

The person giving you the order must be in charge or have the authority to give orders. He/she should make it clear that there are consequences for not following their directive. For instance, “I’ve asked you to go out and get the shopping carts. If you don’t, I’m suspending you.” This is a pretty clear order that was given by a supervisor.

It is not wise to push the limit on this issue. Many supervisors do not make their request that clearly, but they are quick to discipline for insubordination. Even though your Union may successfully argue that point, I would advise you to follow the simple advice that is worth repeating – obey now, grieve later.



## Enjoy Your Retirement!



For fun and friendship join the UFCW Retirees’ Club!

- \*Monthly Luncheons
- \*Semi-Annual Pancake Breakfasts
- \*Annual Fashion Show
- \*Annual Indoor Picnic
- \*Regular Bingo
- \*Party Bingo
- \*Bowling
- \*Arts & Crafts
- Easter, Patriotic, & Christmas Boutiques
- \*Reduced Travel Trips

As a member of Local 324 you are welcome to participate in many of our activities. For information please call: Barbara Hamilton (562) 431-7545, Carole Peterson (714) 521-6820, or Marion Jones (714) 536-7315

# Food bank aims to help struggling members



Local 324 member, Dana Palmer stocks shelves at the union's food bank with boxes of dried pasta and cereal. To maximize the food bank's effectiveness, Dana said that the food bank will soon be able to accept donations, but will hold donors to a strict list of pre-approved items. "It's not just an opportunity to clear out your cupboards of unwanted items—there's a real need out there and we want to be sure that we cover the necessities."

Most people probably would not consider the current economic recession to be the best environment for opening a new bank.

That didn't stop union officials from allocating an entire office suite on the second floor of its Buena Park headquarters to a new bank that seeks to help local members hardest hit by the current economic downturn.

But members eager to take advantage of grand opening deals like free checking or low interest credit cards will have to look elsewhere.

This bank won't be storing burlap sacks full of crisp hundred dollar bills, but is likely to have plenty of macaroni and cheese for customers in need. Its steel reinforced storage racks will be filled with canned goods, dried pasta and personal hygiene products like tooth paste and deodorant.

The union's new food bank represents the Local's latest endeavor to help combat the effects of the recession. Its primary beneficiaries are those members and their families who, for whatever reason, find themselves in financially precar-

ious positions and in need of assistance.

The food bank will operate differently, explained Dana Palmer who will operate the food bank Monday through Friday. Her role will be to help identify potential recipient's needs and, upon approval from



Union Representatives make sure the food reaches our members.

"There are a lot of benefits to being in a union that we don't brag about or publicize for obvious reasons," said President Conger, referring to the guaranteed confidentiality

extended to those who receive help.

"Being in a union—being a member of Local 324— means that there are people out there looking out for you. It may never apply to you or anyone you know, but if you are in our local we're not going to let you go hungry."

The food bank is scheduled to be in operation effective Nov. 1. If you or someone you know needs assistance, please contact your shop steward or union representative.

# Word on the street

What would you like to see in your union website?



"A page dedicated to Frequently Asked Questions."  
Bill Hunter  
Food 4 Less 388



"Purchase discount tickets online."  
Matt Whitson  
Albertsons 6176



"Pictures of members."  
Priscilla Lozano  
Stater Bros 30



"Organizing Process with current campaigns."  
Ila Mali  
CVS 8861



"Being able to purchase discount tickets online."  
Jane Nguyen  
Albertsons 6105



"Knowing the rules about the larger violations of the contract."  
Ken Hungerford  
Ralphs 249



"I would like to purchase discount tickets online."  
Sonny Chopra  
Rite Aid 5496



# Local stewards boldly declare 'Labor is Back'

## Conference sees unveiling of union's newest treasure

### Leadership urges stewards to seize opportunity



Organized Labor's committed followers have braved the most hostile environment since the birth of the movement and the time has come to shift from defense to offense.

That was the underlying message

(continued on page 14)

### Largest group of 324 stewards ever to assemble in a single location are part of a trend

**M**ore shop stewards from UFCW Local 324 assembled in one place than ever before, according to union officials.

The official count for the September 17 event stands at 375.

"Every year we try and out do ourselves and I think we've gotten a reputation for taking it one step further every year," said Executive Vice President Rick Eiden.

The energy spent to raise the bar each of the past four years appears to be paying off, if comments by stewards are any indication.

"It keeps getting better every year, but I don't



know what they can do to make next year better," said steward Kelly Pierce, who attended her 5th conference when she signed in Sept. 17.

... began as dark as a cave a mile underground. Suddenly, the flicker from giant  
 ...ers rush by. Bright white flashes of shadowy people, places ... memories.  
 ...ng ... falling back in retreat—then charging forward with confidence. A child's voice  
 ...ces, the voices—none look familiar. The only thing keeping you moving forward is the strange sense that you have been there before.  
 ... your own convoluted reality. The girl's voice declares bravely "everything

... movie screens illuminate the walls like a strobe. A surreal maze of num  
 ... . A distant throbbing inches closer with each reverberating thump building ... grow  
 ... breaks monotonous pulses of sound and light with a confused and cautious declaration ... "the  
 ... Somehow, in some inexplicable way, the unknown felt more familiar than  
 ... had changed." Oddly, she sounded more curious than frightened. And then it finally started to click

introducing

# www.ufcw324.org

A full year and-a-half after announcing that Local 324 was undertaking the ambitious task of renovating its website, Union leaders finally pulled a shiny black sheet from atop a 50-inch plasma television screen, revealing a site so completely revamped that it bore no resemblance to its predecessor.

A standing-room-only crowd of union stewards and guests from throughout the UFCW erupted in approval as the primary picture front and center of the just-unveiled website played a video introducing President Greg Conger.

After a sustained ovation, Conger took the podium and immediately touted the benefits of the new website. He sited the overall project that spanned more than 18 months as the latest example of the Local's embrace of technology as well as its commitment to ensuring frequent and open communication with a vast membership.

Although the conference did not provide time for hands-on demonstrations for attendees, the initial critiques seemed largely favorable. A thumbs-up

from shop stewards was a big endorsement for the website. "These are the people who are going to tell the members in their worksites whether this is a worthwhile resource to use. Without their backing it would never get off the ground."



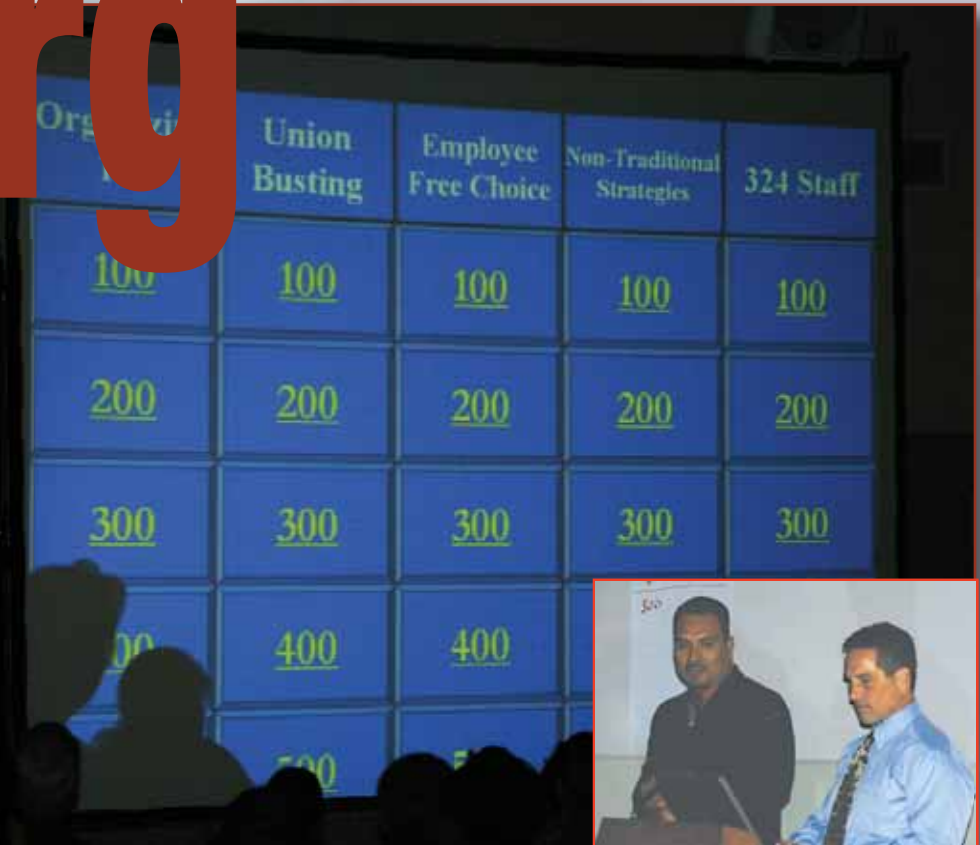
## And the question is ...

Approximately 375 stewards broke into two breakout sessions and promptly dispatched to opposite ends of the building Sept. 17.

In the upstairs session, Rick Eiden and Gilbert Davila hosted a session of "Union Jeopardy." The method aimed to imprint the primary points of their overall theme—Organizing 101 and the Employee Free Choice Act.

Eiden said the interactive approach also motivated stewards to retain lecture material by rewarding them in the form of points for their respective teams.

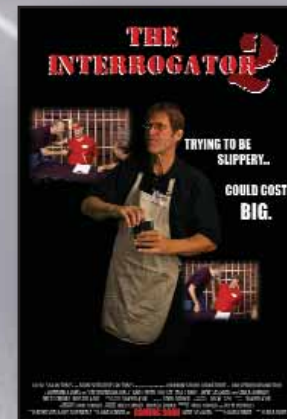
"It got everybody involved in a personal way" he said.



Union Organizer Jose Perez (left) and Executive Vice-President Rick Eiden emcee the mock game show.

## Movie teaches what not to do

The second of two breakout sessions, designed to give stewards more intimate and interactive training, touched on the various roles stewards often play as they grapple with issues in their worksite. Field Director Chuck Adinolfi used a sequel to a popular video in last year's conference to demonstrate some of the do's and don't's.



# Off the wall

## Years ahead will be pivotal

(Continued from page 10)

delivered to the crowd of union activists, many of whom have volunteered to assist their union on political issues.

Conger seized on that track record of pro-active membership and sited the Employee Free Choice Act as an example of activity anyone in the audience can take to help Labor seize the moment.

"We could have just as easily themed this year's conference Labor is Back and we must be prepared."

Although both speeches captured the Conference theme "Change is Here • Labor is Back," they each took a different approach to it. Zinder used her

time at the podium to remind the crowd that the favorable change of leadership in Washington, D.C. is a great help for Organized Labor; it should not be used as an excuse to become inactive.

In fact, she said, the many new opportunities that arise from having a pro-Labor federal government may require stepping up their activism.

But, as we revel in the good work we've done, the tremendous change we accomplished, never forget - our work is far from complete.

After years of union bashing during the viciously anti-worker Bush administration, we have opportunities not seen in a decade.



- Withdrawal Status Request
- Change of Address Form

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

SSN: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

email \_\_\_\_\_

If requesting withdrawal, what was your last day worked? \_\_\_\_\_

If we don't know where you live or how to reach you, there's no telling what you might miss out on in the future.

**U have to tell us!**

**Next General Membership Meeting is Wednesday, December 9<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. 8530 Stanton Ave. Buena Park**



**Syed Karim**



## Syed Karim named Steward of the Year

In a year that offered plenty of qualified candidates for the honor, Syed Karim from Pavilions became the third ever steward to earn the coveted title "Steward of the Year."

Karim became a recognized personality at the union hall when he volunteered to help organizers carry the message to the employees at Fresh & Easy last year. The activity soon evolved to a full-time job when he became a SPUR.

Karim's instinct to lend a hand

carried over into virtually every activity in which Local 324 requested volunteers—he has since raised his voice at numerous other rallies.

His reaction to garnering the honor captured Syed's modest disposition.

"I didn't volunteer because I wanted to win a great prize I volunteered because they asked me," he said. "It is a great honor that I will remember always."

# In Honor . . .

UMagazine and UFCW Local 324 salute the thousands of men and women who are serving their country by wearing the uniform.

Among the millions who can proudly declare themselves to be among our country's veterans are thousands of current and former Local 324 members. Here are just a few. . .



Private Dallas Harber-Axup, US Army, son of Judy Harber. (Albertsons #6154) Currently serving in Fort Richardson, Alaska.



**Above Left:** Private First Class Travis Kaufman, US Army, currently serving in Fort Hood, Texas. **Above Right:** Private First Class Ryan Kaufman, currently serving in Fort Bliss, Texas. Both are sons of Sharon Kaufman (Albertsons #6151)

Brian McInally, US Army 173rd Airborne Division, Vietnam 1968-1969. Stater Bros. #154



**Left:** Corporal Steven Meyer, US Marine Corps, son of Susan Meyer. (Ralphs #33) Currently serving 2nd tour in Afghanistan. **Above:** Staff Sergeant Jon Meyer, USMC 1974-1980. (husband)



Private First Class Jason Edenfield, US Air Force, son of Lisa Edenfield, (Ralphs #59) currently serving in Fairfield, California.



**Left:** Joshua A. Feceu, US Army Specialist, son of Adriana Feceu (Ralphs #64) currently serving in Egypt.



Private First Class Emerson Sotelo, US Marine Corps, brother of Dennis Sotelo, (Health Benefits Department) currently serving in Yuma, Arizona.

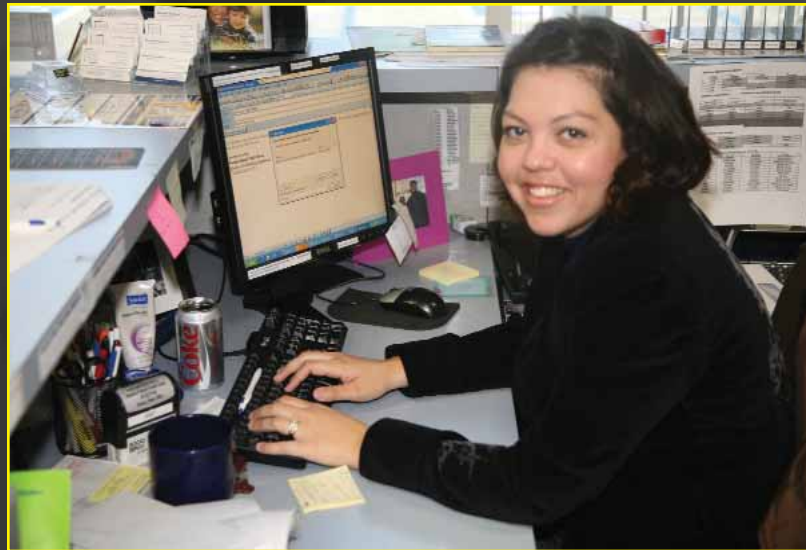
# Rancho Federal Credit Union — **so** union, they put it in their name



When big international banks were piecing together risky Mortgage loans to people who couldn't afford to pay attention, Rancho Federal Credit Union was continuing its practice of providing fair and sound loans to union members throughout Southern California.

Some of the staff of about three dozen employees have pointed out that "doing the same 'ol same 'ol every day is what has kept them out of trouble.

The fact that all of them are members of Local 324 couldn't have hurt.



## RFCU Buena Park



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PERIODICAL  
POSTAGE  
PAID

*What have you done for me* **Lately?**

**STATS**

January-September  
**2009**

GRIEVANCES FILED ..... 1,305  
MEMBERS BACK TO WORK ..... 199

BACKPAY COLLECTED:  
\$ 518,317.65

**UFCW324.ORG**

New Site

Visit us  
at  
←