

Keeping it real

*Retirement hasn't kept a few hundred
Local retirees from raising the roof*



Fun & Games

The Local 324 crossword puzzle is back. Read this issue cover to cover and then answer the questions



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Bigger & Better

After years of fine-tuning, the Orange County Labor Federation is getting the credit it deserves



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Alive & Kickin'

She began the Retirees' club a few decades ago and is keeping it going strong today



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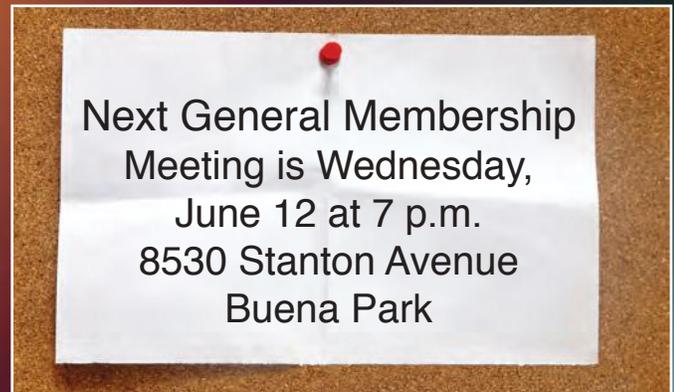
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- Withdrawal Card Request
- Change of Address Form

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!

Editor: Todd Conger
Asst. Editor: Mercedes Clarke



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Monday-Friday

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What can you do to help secure a better contract? Ask a boy scout

Success favors the prepared.

It's an axiom so old I'm almost embarrassed to include it in this space. But let's face it, some of the world's most enduring truths have become cliché's because they are repeated so often and they are repeated so often because they hold true.

On that note, let's start with the obvious. The more prepared we are for the next round of negotiations, the better the final agreement will be.

What might be surprising to some is how simple getting prepared can be.

It can be as simple as exercising some control over your personal savings. Financial strength and security are great motivators. When either side in a negotiation believes the other is desperate, the dynamic can shift dramatically. Nobody wants to be in a position of having to accept any offer on the table. Management has decades of experience sizing up and assessing their employees and crafting a strategy that exploits weakness.

I realize that it is easier said than done, but some common sense financial precautions will do more than reinforce our bargaining position. Working with the knowledge that you will be ok no matter what the outcome is invaluable. Peace of mind is, after all, one of the most cherished commodities the world over.

Another way to prepare for future negotiations is to make note of the issues most important to you and communicate those to your Union. That can usually be broken into two categories: economic and everything else.

Your union's elected officers have devoted most of their lives to identifying where wage and benefit levels can be adjusted without jeopardizing a company's overall viability. Management will claim, as they always do, that even thinking about increases will put everything they have ever worked to achieve in peril. Gee, where have we heard that before? The time is fast approaching when store managers will be given marching orders to begin the process of

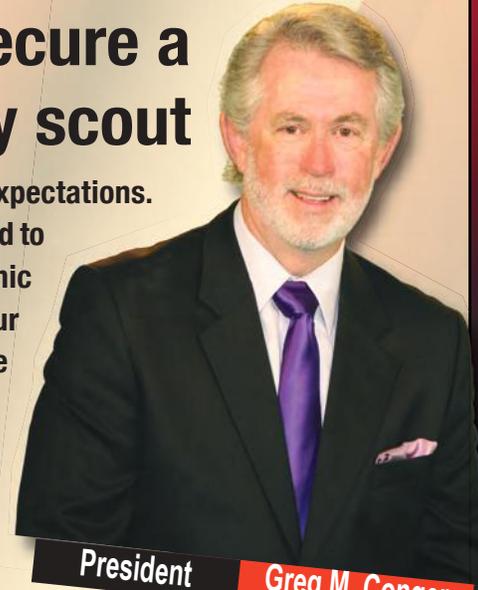
dampening your expectations.

You will be subjected to tales of economic doom facing your employer. The hope is that, out of a pure sense of duty or compassion or loyalty, you will abandon any real expectations of increases and be grateful for whatever scraps fall from the table.

Suffice it to say that stocking up on grains of salt right about now would be a wise precaution.

However, now is the time to begin communicating with your shop stewards about any issues of procedure or practice that can be addressed in a collective bargaining agreement. Work quality issues like vacation policy; schedule postings or unreasonable workload requirements are the kinds of issues that have been addressed in collective bargaining agreements in the past and still need to be dealt with. Your shop stewards and Union Representatives are highly capable of isolating the root of work-related complaints and seeing if there is a company or even industry-wide pattern that requires attention.

It seems like just last week that we signed the current Master Food Agreement. You and I both are legitimately fatigued with what sometimes seems to be an endless ordeal. But the process of getting and being prepared can take many forms and are among the most important ingredients in any recipe for success.



President

Greg M. Conger

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greg". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

UFCW challenges Northgate to raise standards for workers

A boisterous May Day march and rally sponsored by the Orange County Labor Fed (OCLF) served as the venue for Local 324 to call on Northgate (Gonzalez) Markets to improve the living standards of the nearly 3,000 workers it employs in Southern California

Northgate is one of a growing number of companies that market to the region's large Hispanic community. The march was organized to show support for immigration reform legislation currently pending in Washington, D. C.

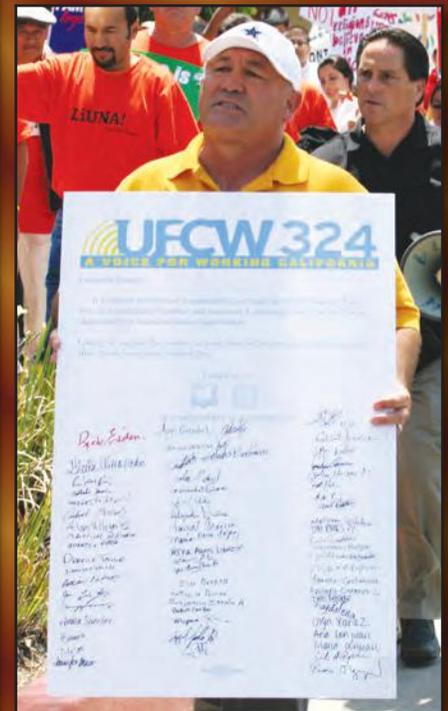
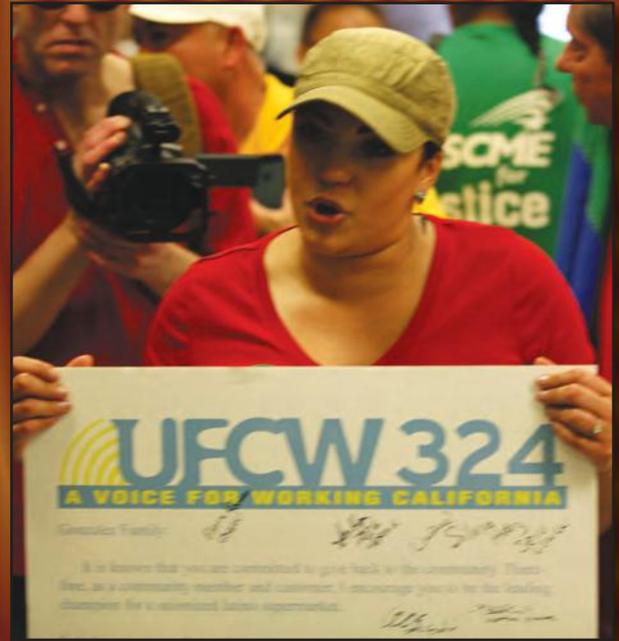
Organizers said that Northgate's longtime claim of having elevated the area's immigrant community by providing grocery products familiar to new immigrants doesn't tell the whole story.

"And what better time and place than at an event dedicated to improving the lives of millions of America's immigrants," said Local 324 Executive Vice President Rick Eiden.

The UFCW along with members of the clergy, the community, and other labor unions marched together to the Gonzalez Brothers' very first grocery store on Anaheim Boulevard. As the masses rallied outside the store, leaders from the community delivered a petition to Northgate management. The petition—signed by elected officials, and local business, clergy, and labor leaders—acknowledged the support Northgate has given to the community, but underscored the lack of support they give to their workers.

Upon reassembling outside the store, the coalition of leaders vowed to support the Northgate workers in their struggle to join the union fold. "We are committed to raising the standards of Northgate workers," said Tefere Gebre from the OCLF.

The Anaheim-based company is a privately owned grocery chain that has made sizeable inroads into the Southern California grocery industry since opening its first store in Anaheim in 1980.



Secretary-Treasurer's Report

Thousands of members choose not to fully fund HRA

The opportunity for Food Division Members in the PPO indemnity plan to fund their Health Reimbursement Account (HRA) for 2013 ended on May 31. Based upon the numbers we have reviewed to date, too many members did not fully fund their accounts.

2013 is the first year that members were required to be proactive in order to receive most of their HRA funding. In the past, completion of the HRQ was the only activity required for full funding, and the remainder of the funding was automatic. This changed in the 2011 negotiations. As of May 31, 2013, members who have not completed several healthy activities will find that there is less money in their HRA account to offset out-of-pocket costs, such as the annual deductible or doctor copays.

Initially, the thought of completing healthy activities may sound overwhelming and invasive. However, the activities we have developed through our Trust Fund are mostly quick, noninvasive, and essential. In addition, there is a menu of options, so no one has to complete a task which he or she feels is undesirable. If you are married and cover your spouse, you must complete seven activities to be fully funded. If you are single (or not covering your spouse) with children, you must complete five activities for full funding. And, if you are covering only yourself, you only need to complete four activities.

Activities for funding can be as basic as completing a contact form (providing your address, phone number, and primary care doctor information), completing an online or over the phone Health Risk Questionnaire (HRQ), or watching an online video. You can also get credit by getting a flu shot, having a physical, or visiting your local supermarket pharmacy and receiving a biometric screening. Other options include enrolling in a gym, taking a smoking

cessation class, or participating in a 5K race.

For a complete list of options, visit the Trust Fund's website at: www.scufcwfunds.com or call the local's Health Benefits department.

Some members may be wondering why we transitioned to this proactive method of funding your HRA?

During the 2011 negotiations, we agreed to this funding method because we understand the national trend towards requiring individuals to take more responsibility for their health.

We know that our members are extremely busy, working many and variable hours, raising families, sometimes working second jobs, or even going to school. But, the activities are easy and a step towards healthier lifestyles. The contact form is clearly the easiest task and demonstrates that you have selected a primary care physician. If you and your spouse complete the form, you are two sevenths of the way to full funding!

Members may also be concerned about the confidentiality of this information. The data is all collected by the Trust Fund and is not available to your employer or the union. The only information we receive is data on funding status. If you call our Health Benefits department, they can look up your activity completion, but only with your permission.

If you did not complete your activities by May 31, the money put into your account in 2013 is less than it was in prior years. Money not allocated to individual

(Continued on Page 7)



Secretary-Treasurer *Andrea Zinder*



The El Monte Berry Strike

—By Matthew Hart

On June 1, 1933, 600 Mexican and Japanese berry pickers gathered for a meeting at Hick's Camp, a barrio outside of El Monte. The pickers assembled to discuss the rejection of their recent request for a wage increase from nine cents to thirty-five cents an hour. In response to their employers' rejection, the pickers voted to stop work until their request was honored. The event would culminate in the largest strike ever in California agriculture at the time, lasting over six-weeks, expanding through the entire Southern California basin, and eventually involving celery and onion pickers. The event would become known as the El Monte Berry Strike.

A short drive from downtown Los Angeles, El Monte was a small town with a population of 4,000 residents. Predominantly Caucasian, El Monte had segregated communities of Mexican and Japanese populations who attended the same schools together and shared the same sections in movie theaters. Despite their shared experience, Japanese farmers owned 80% of the berry fields in EL Monte, and the mostly Mexican workers labored for their Japanese bosses.

The Cannery and Agricultural Workers Industrial Union (CAWIU) had been organizing in the San Gabriel Valley. When the union entered the fields in El Monte, they found a lack of organization, but an abundance of discontent -- fertile grounds for organizing. So, there was little surprise amongst the CAWIU when the strike erupted quickly. After only a few days, the strike had spread to Venice, San Gabriel, Belvedere, and Santa Monica, encompassing thousands of workers.

As the strike grew, tensions formed between organizers from the CAWIU and the predominantly Mexican berry pickers. Many among the pickers became suspicious of the communist leanings of the CAWIU and thought their own leaders rather than the white organizers of the union should lead the strike. With support from the Mexican consul, the workers formed Confederacion de Uniones de Campesinos y Obreros del Estado de California (CUCOM). Supporters of the CAWIU charged that the leadership of CUCOM were red-baiting and were working with

the police to eliminate the more radical elements of the strike. As the strike continued, it was clear that CUCOM had taken over the reigns of the labor dispute.

Another interesting dynamic of the dispute was the involvement of both the Mexican and Japanese consuls. Not only did the Mexican consul help establish CUCOM, but it also facilitated hefty donations for the strike from politicians in Mexico. Meanwhile, the Japanese consul tried to broker a settlement in order to avoid negative publicity for the farmers.

Both farmers and strikers relied on their communities for support. Residents of Hick's Camp barrio rallied around the striking pickers, donating and preparing food to bring to the line. The Japanese community volunteered to help pick the berries and even requested that the schools release their children from class to work in the fields.



With a vested interest in keeping the Mexican farm workers non-union, the El Monte and Los Angeles County Chambers of Commerce also assisted the Japanese farmers. In an attempt to garner local support, the farmers opened up their fields to the general public,

charging them only a penny per box for "pick-your-own" berries.

A month into the strike, a settlement was reached that resulted in significant wage increases. The U.S. and California Departments of Labor, the Mexican and Japanese consuls, and the Los Angeles County Chamber of Commerce all had a hand in brokering the agreement.

Both CUCOM and the CAWIU continued to represent the berry pickers for a few years before dissipating. Not until the United Farm Workers was formed twenty-five or so years later would agriculture workers again have the rights to dignity and respect in the fields. After the attack upon Pearl Harbor, the Japanese berry farmers and their families were forced to abandon their homes and fields in El Monte, placed into and held in internment camps. When reflecting upon the fate of the Japanese farmers, former berry picker Jesisita Torres stated, "After they were taken to the concentration camps, the fields were not good." Her comments illustrate the complicated yet symbiotic relationship between communities.

Too many members pass up healthcare money

(Continued from page 5)

accounts will remain in the trust fund to offset other costs and build reserves. While this is a good thing for the overall Trust Fund, it will not benefit those not fully funded and their out-of-pocket costs will be higher. With so many relatively simple tasks, it is unfortunate that many members did not reach their full funding status this year.

Beginning June 1, you can begin completing tasks for your 2014 HRA funding. The money will not be available to you until next calendar year, but do not wait, complete as much as you can early. Each year to qualify for funding, you can repeat the same exact activities over again.

Health care is always a big issue in negotiations. In 2014, the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) will add

additional complications. Still, without question, Local 324 members receive excellent medical benefits at a very low individual premium. We enjoy minimum hourly guarantees in our contracts to make certain everyone is eligible. While the nonunion world is experiencing more and more managers cutting hours to avoid providing health care under the new Obamacare 30 hour threshold, UFCW members can be proud of what they have worked and fought for over the decades.

I urge you to take action to fund your HRA and continue the tradition of high quality affordable health care.



Labor supporters, community activists take to the streets to push immigration reform



In Washington, D.C., the debate over immigration reform is nearing the boiling point as both sides of the issue claim that dire consequences face the country if their side doesn't prevail. In an effort to maintain the pressure in favor of reform, unions helped organize marches and rallies across the country May 1. Demonstrators numbered about 1,000 in Anaheim, stretching a full city block and carrying banners demanding a path to citizenship.



On the right track ...

Member Veda Kuban focuses energy on helping athletes with disabilities

Veda Kuban has never been one to shy away from a challenge or from lending a helping hand. She will be doing both again this June at the annual Summer Games at California State

University Long Beach, as a volunteer for the Special Olympics Southern California.

Kuban will arrive by bicycle by 5 a.m. on the first day of the two-day event to help assemble more than 1,000 sack lunches alongside other volunteers from Vons.

She and her peers will then help distribute the lunches to athletes, coaches, and various other participants over the course of the event.

This will be Kuban's fourth Olympics. Lunches will not be the only thing she helps distribute. For the second year in a row, Kuban's hard work has been acknowledged, as she has again been chosen to pass out medals during the awards ceremony.

"It's an honor," she said. "To be picked to help out with the medal ceremony."

Kuban is currently a Courtesy Clerk at Vons 2277 in Lakewood. She is also the lead steward, a position she filled during the prolonged contract negotiations of 2011.

"Veda really stepped up when other members couldn't," said Union Representative Maggie Land.

In reference to her Stewardship, Kuban

said, "I try to be there as much as possible for my fellow employees. If there is something I can't resolve, I always contact Tony (Union Representative Tony Sotelo has since taken over her store)."



Kuban is there for her union as much as possible too. Most recently, she walked precincts helping to get the word out about Prop. 32.

Kuban is currently enrolled in her second semester at Long Beach City College. She is working towards an American Sign

Language (ASL) Interpreter Certificate.

"I have large ASL's on all my name tags at work," said Kuban. "So, any deaf customers will know they can communicate with me."

Kuban often gets the chance to practice her sign language.

She volunteers as an aid and interpreter for the deaf in the Young Adults Disability Class at Parkcrest Christian Church of Long Beach. She also volunteers in the Youth Ministry at Lakewood First United Methodist Church where she teaches the children songs in sign language that they perform in recitals for their parents.

Veda Kuban has been a member of Local 324 since 2006.

www.ufcw324.org

Finally, it's all starting to click

Purchase discount tickets •

Obtain a scholarship application • Locate a chiropractor • Apply for a loan at the credit union • **Find your union representative** • Read the latest on the healthcare debate • Check out photos in the photo gallery • **Email your union representative** • Download a copy of your collective bargaining agreement • See the reasons why you should never step foot in a Walmart • Discover why you should stop everyone you know from shopping at Walmart • Report your change of address • **Register to vote** • Find out who represents you in the state senate • Check out the member of the week • **Find a union pharmacy** • Hear President Greg Conger's thoughts on issues • Find out if your child won a scholarship • Request forms • Find out who Local 324 represents • **Update your email address** • View all of Chris Aubin's cartoons • Request a withdrawal card • See what's happening with the Retiree's

Prescription drug abuse getting worse; pharmacists urged to be cautious

The illicit use of prescription drugs is already at epidemic levels in the United States and current trends suggest it will grow worse in the years ahead.

That is the grim assessment of both Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Agent Michael Lewis and Supervising Inspector for the California State Board of Pharmacy Janice Dang. The two were featured speakers at a continuing education class sponsored by Local 324 for members of the Professional Division.

A crowd of approximately 60 active pharmacists joined a handful of pharmacy technicians at Local 324's Buena Park headquarters to hear some of the current challenges faced by the agencies.

Both speakers noted that recent budget cuts have made their jobs more difficult, compounding the problem of illicit prescription drug use among certain segments of the population.

The growing popularity of Oxycontin is largely responsible for the recent surge in prescription drug abuse, according to DEA Agent Lewis. Entire cottage industries have been broken up by authorities who have discovered doctors and other medical professionals to be behind some of the more elaborate operations.

Other commonly abused prescription drugs are the anti-anxiety medications Xanax and Ativan, the painkiller Vicodin, and several narcotics, such as Ritalin, designed to combat Attention Deficit (Hyperactivity) Disorder. The addictive nature of many "Psychotropic" medications is directly linked to the upswing of abuse and by extension to increases in crime.

Those in attendance were urged to keep an eye out for doctors calling in scripts from long distances or outside of their medical specialty. One pharmacist shared a recent story about how police were tipped off to a corrupt plastic surgeon who had a tendency to prescribe Xanax to his post-op patients. Ultimately, pharmacy workers successfully alerted police to the activity and they moved to quash the practice.

Both Lewis and Dang urged pharmacy workers to be alert for suspicious behavior and to inform law enforcement when they suspect fraud.

Attendees received two credits of continuing education, a requirement for all licensed professionals.

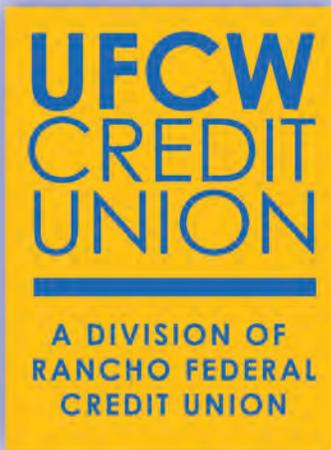


Janice Dang, Supervising Inspector, California State Board of Pharmacy



Michael Lewis, Drug Enforcement Administration





We Take Care of Our Own

A Perfect Place to do All Your Banking!

Whether you are currently a member, or still need to join, we want to be sure you know that UFCW Credit Union is the perfect place to do ALL your banking.

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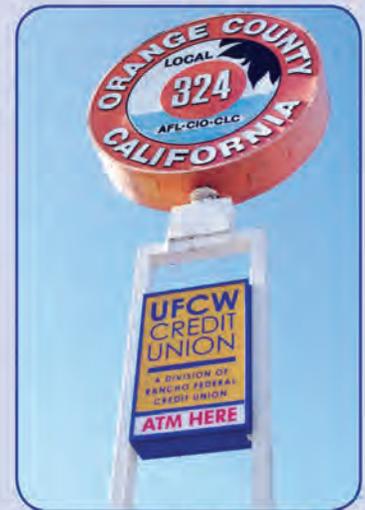
Why would you give the big banks your business when they do everything they can to break the unions? UFCW Credit Union is sponsored by your union, and its employees are part of your union.

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Make the switch! Simply call the number below or come by the office to take advantage of our low rates and low fees.

Not a credit union member? As a member of Local 324, you qualify for Credit Union Membership! Why not join today?



We're all on the same team!



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*APR = Annual Percentage Rate. Competitive information based on a survey of Chase Bank, Bank of America and Wells Fargo web sites conducted 4/15/13.

Come by the local or call the Credit Union at (714) 995-4601 x6.

Retirees' Club celebrates 42 years

On Wednesday, March 20, 2013, the Retirees' Club swore in its officers, celebrated Easter, and marked its 42 Anniversary as an organization.

It did so with what has become its traditional happening, a monthly luncheon and meeting complete with a catered hot meal, some friendly Bingo, and whenever possible, outside entertainment.

Local 324 President Greg Conger was on hand to swear the officers in, and Elvis impersonator Sean Martin brought the crowd to its feet with his tribute to 'The King'. There was also an Easter Bonnet Parade competition, with Maria Bjorklund, Lvonne Hubbs, and Eva Zinnen taking top honors.

By all accounts, the 324 Retirees' Club was a long-time in the making prior to March 18, 1971, when its first official meeting took place.

Indeed, the earliest recorded expression of the desire by Local 324 to continue to formally involve all its retirees socially can be traced back to an article in the union's then Newsletter, The Reporter.

The article in the August, 1970, issue is titled Retirees To Be Invited To All 324 Social Events, and reads: "Local 324 has long been aware that when a member of the union retires, there is still the habit of belonging to the organization."

And, "... because we know how important it is for our retirees to maintain their ties with the union," a new policy has been approved by the Executive Board and membership to the affect that from now on all "retirees



will be invited to all social events of Local 324."

The union's sentiments in the article proved both insightful and appreciated, as Local 324 Retirees' Club soon became the largest UFCW Retirees' Club in the state and one of the largest in the country.

The current, highly successful, and much enjoyed formula for the Club's monthly meetings took a whole four tries to get right.

The missing ingredient was the catered buffet, which instantly became a Club favorite and was initially offered on June 20, 1971 -- forever changing the monthly meeting into a luncheon / meeting.

"We tried serving fast food, and then cooking the meal ourselves, which was a disaster," shares current Club President Barbara Hamilton.

"Everybody looks forward to the buffet now, and for some of our members, it is the only hot, full-course meal they get to enjoy with any regularity".

Travel has always been a large part of what the Club does. Currently, they plan one big trip a year, as many

of fun and friendship

bus outings as they can book, and meet to bowl every Tuesday morning at Linbrook Bowl in Anaheim.

The Club's very first trip was a bus outing to Descanso Gardens in La Canada on July 27, 1971. The journey to publishing mogul Manchester Brody's rare 150 acre botanical collection was so popular and well-attended, that another bus outing to the (now closed) Busch Gardens in Van Nuys followed in November.

The Local 324 Retirees' Club --originally considered a temporary title --currently boasts over 300 members, prints a monthly newsletter, and is very active with Local 324's food bank. To read more about the Club or current Club President Barbara Hamilton see page 14.



... We do solemnly swear



From Left to Right: Barbara Hamilton, President; Ed Camire, Sergeant-at-Arms #1; Marian Jones, Treasurer; Lou Cruz, 1st Vice President; Keith Taylor, Sergeant-at-Arms #2; Tom Alderson, 2nd Vice President; Bonnie Ladbury, Member-at-Large #2; Carol Cluck, Member-at-Large #5; Kay Crawford, Member-at-Large #4; Diana Eastman, Corresponding Secretary; Carole Peterson, Member-at-Large #1; Lvonne Hubbs, Member-at-Large #3; and Lucille Basye, Recording Secretary.

Barbara Hamilton:

She has worn every hat, played every role and made a lasting impact on an entire movement

Barbara Hamilton first appeared at Local 324 the week the union officially opened the doors to its Buena Park headquarters in November of 1957. She came to interview for a job in the main office.

“Back then, there wasn’t much else around. The only other building in sight was Knott’s Berry Farm.”

She was hired by then Secretary-Treasurer Orrin Lutterbeck to provide vacation relief for the office staff. Hamilton did so for a year, working in every department in the main office, including the credit union.

She was then moved into the secretary pool for the Executive Office.

Prior to arriving at Local 324, Hamilton was a member of the Office Workers’ Union in Los Angeles and worked for the Dish & Pot Washers’ Union and then the Culinary USnion, in their front offices.

“I always worked for a union,” said Hamilton. “My father was a real union guy. He was a steward in the United Auto Workers Union and very active in the CIO (Congress of Industrial Organizations)”.

Newly elected Secretary-Treasurer Arthur Z. Berland promoted Hamilton to Executive Secretary, and she was eventually elected to the Executive Board at 324 as Recording Secretary.

“One day, Arthur Berland called me into his

office and asked me what I thought about a retirees’ club. I told him it sounded like a great idea, and he said, ‘Okay, it’s your baby now,’ and handed me some notes he had been working on about the club.”

Hamilton has been intimately involved with the Club ever since.

The Retirees’ Club’s first ever board of directors even honored Hamilton for her contributions to the Club during its formative stages with a Charter membership in the Club, despite the fact she was not actually eligible according to the Club’s newly adopted bylaws or an original member.

(Alvena Hayden and Wilma Hiland are also Charter members of the Club, and the only two original members left from the three hundred or so retirees enrolled into the Club prior to its extended Charter membership deadline of July, 31, 1971.)

Hamilton is currently serving her second term as Club president (1979-1983, 1998-2013), but figures she has served on the board of the Club “in every position at least once, at one time or another,” since retiring from Local 324 in 1977.

She is proud of the expanded Retiree’s Voice, the Club’s monthly newsletter. “Some members have difficulty getting around, whether because of health or lack of any regular means of transportation. The newsletter keeps these members up-to-date with all the club has going on.”

Hamilton has also been pushing to include more activities at the monthly luncheon/meetings to facilitate greater member participation, such as parades and contests. She would also like to see the Club’s dues change from an annual lump payment to either a quarterly or monthly plan.

Of her predecessor, Shari Bolam, current Administrative Assistant to the President and Recording Secretary for Local 324’s Executive board, had this to say:

“Barbara is simply a pleasure to be around and still has that spark, after all these years.”



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(ages 10+)
\$115

Children
(ages 3-9)
\$109



(2 day 1 park pass)
Expire 12/10/13

\$60



Valid thru 9/21/13

\$26



(Two Day 3 park Hopper)
Expire 12/10/13

\$69



Valid thru 09/29/13
General Admission

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available only online at www.ufw324.org

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(ages 10+)
\$17.95

Children
(ages 3-9)
\$10.95



SeaWorld
Expiration Date Varies
One Ticket Price

\$63

Tickets are on sale now in the General Office of Local 324,
at our Branch Office in Lake Forest and online at www.ufw324.org

Prices are subject to Change and Availability

NO RETURNS OR EXCHANGES

Tickets are for Southern California Local 324 Members Only



... at a discount price!

Fed Up! *After a full-fledged makeover Labor Federation scans the*

Sometimes, it's a raucous rally held outside a grocery store to enlist public support for a potential strike. Other times, it's a low-key candlelight vigil to support immigration reform.

Sometimes, its followers trumpet their union ties with clinched fists and a bellowing chant. Other times, they downplay their Labor ties, choosing instead to highlight their long history as advocates for the working class.

The organization behind each of these scenarios has as many ways of introducing itself as there are languages on earth. Ironically, that accomplishment alone may be the Orange County Labor Federation's (OCLF) most impressive accomplishment—bringing together seemingly disparate groups of workers and political activists to craft a single, powerful message.

In many ways, the OCLF's success comes from finding the perfect recipe for blending the social and professional aspects of its mission. It beckons to a time in American history when Labor-driven political machines successfully parlayed ice cream socials and backyard barbecues into citizen action that dominated local city halls and made

lasting imprints on daily life for years to come.

Those days are relegated to history books, but county labor federations throughout California are trying to bring some of that power back with varying levels of success.

Some of the Labor movement's most seasoned veterans have been impressed with how rapidly the Orange County Labor Federation can shift from a beehive of social activity and spirited conversation to a hyper-focused legion of cause-driven activists. That kind of rapid mobilization has ensured that workers aren't left out of public policy debates that impact them personally.

"The Fed has become Labor's megaphone," said Local 324 President Greg Conger. "It has become the resource of first resort for every union in Orange County that has something to say, and that includes basically everybody. That is no small feat."

Local 324's own Rick Eiden has served as the President of the OCLF for 15 years. He has seen it evolve from a loose band of like-minded political junkies to a well-oiled machine of professional agitators.

Eiden said that fundamentally altering the Labor Fed's



years in the making, the Orange County terrain in search of a fight

inner voice had been a goal of many of its more active members for some time. But, he and others on the Fed's governing council concluded that such change was not likely to happen without professional management.

And thus, in 2006, an open call for applicants capable of navigating the Fed through waters fraught with danger became the focus of the search for a full-time administrator.

When the dust settled after many interviews, Tefere Gebre emerged as the operational director of the sprawling and sometimes unruly organization. Unfazed by the chaos surrounding the early days in his new role, Gebre saw in the Fed a potentially powerful force for change even in a conservative stronghold like Orange County.

And, contrary to popular belief, the organization's skill in bringing people together both physically and emotionally around a common cause is not the result of many years of practice.

The OCLF's ability to muster a formidable brigade of volunteers has been the result of a new optimism born from the handful of tangible changes adopted by the organization in recent years. Even the occasional inter-

union squabbling that happens any time large labor unions collaborate has taken a backseat to the more important goal of self-defense.

"Union leaders all across California had the courage to move forward with pro-worker legislation at a time when labor was under siege everywhere in the country. Some might have chosen instead to seek shelter and hide," Gebre said.

Anyone wondering whether the organized labor's choice in

(Continued on Page 18)

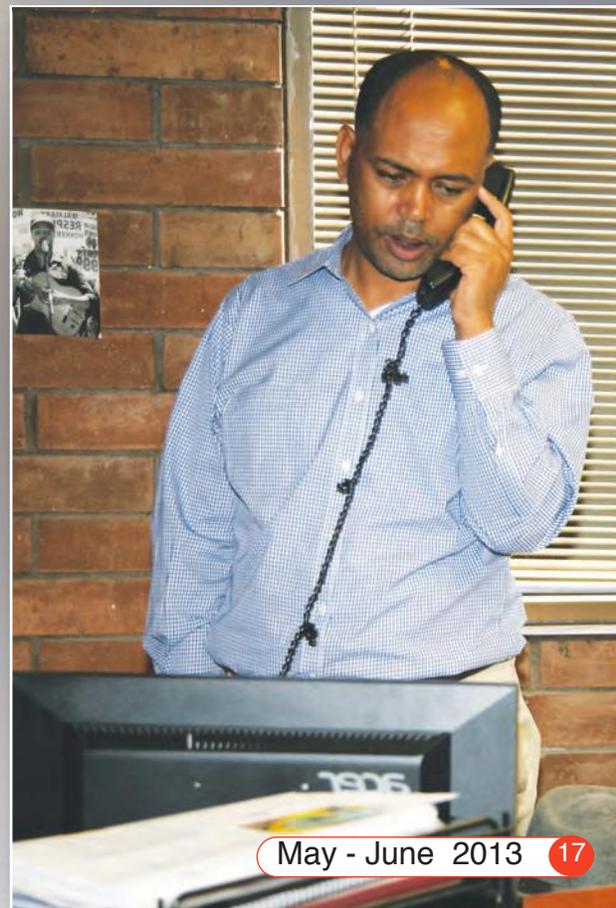


UFCW International Rep. Bernie Enrique speaks with a student government leader about plans to protest the decision to invite Walmart VP Kimberly Sentovich to speak at UC Irvine's commencement.



Above: Julio Perez and community activist Reverend Sarah Halverson urge the roughly 1,000 marchers to share with Northgate employees the value of union membership.

Left: Tefere Gebre motivates an already enthusiastic crowd as activists prepare for a long walk through the streets of Downtown Anaheim.



Today's OC Labor Fed sets the bar

(Continued from page 17)

California was a good one should refer to a map highlighting political gains and losses for pro-labor politicians nationwide over the past seven years. It will show, among other things, devastating losses at all levels of government. In some states, like Wisconsin, those losses were epic in nature and began a prolonged anti-union legislative assault by Republicans that continues to draw blood to this day.

The one notable exception to the onslaught was California. Here, voters handed pro-union politicians a super majority in the legislature, the governorship, both seats in the U.S. Senate and crushed a ballot initiative designed to weaken organized labor's ability to speak out on public issues.

The credit can be distributed widely, but few would argue that it could have happened without union members.

A direct result of the OCLF's inner and outer makeover has been a labor federation infused with a new eagerness to challenge convention.

In the past, when comparisons were made with other county labor feds in California, the OCLF routinely ranked at the bottom in member participation, member turnout, and money raised, to name just a few.

Lucky for Gebre, the revolution in

the field of analytics prompted member unions to set high standards for a reinvented OCLF, one that is not afraid to insert itself into the middle of local politics in a highly visible way.

New inventions and methodologies have given the OCLF's members a scientific, non-political way to measure success or failure. Before this sea change in metrics, the only way to judge the effectiveness of an organization like the Labor Federation was to see who won and who lost at the ballot box every two years.

But, that method couldn't measure how many volunteers worked to aid a cause. It couldn't measure how hard they worked or how efficiently. It could only catalogue the fact that the political map looked roughly the same before and after every election—a system that discouraged volunteers and deflated die-hard supporters.

The new system shows exactly how many volunteers the Labor Fed has managed to enlist for a particular campaign, how many face-to-face contacts each has made, how many voters have changed their mind on a given subject, and how many have requested more information before committing.

The new hyper-accurate system has rewarded the OCLF, trans-

forming it into one of the top performing labor feds in California in several categories, including most money raised and most direct contacts.

Gebre currently directs a staff of ten employees who have become astute at recognizing opportunities for progress. The team is currently trying to build momentum to encourage the University of California at Irvine to un-invite a top Wal-Mart executive from speaking at its upcoming graduation ceremony.

It is also the umbrella organization that brings workers from other unions together to join in demonstrations, protests, and rallies that draw attention to anything from corporate foot dragging during contract talks to social injustices that requires public scrutiny.

As the Labor Fed's prominence increases, one might expect Gebre to capitalize on the heightened influence that comes with it. That, kind of talk, however, runs counter to his philosophy.

"There is no such thing as waiting for the right time," he said as he rushed from behind his desk and out the door, headed, of course, to another rally. "When the topic is human rights for working people, waiting for the right time to act is insulting. Now is always the time."

The Fed has become Labor's megaphone.



—President Greg Conger



Walmart paycheck won't feed the kids

As Mother's Day approached, Charlene Fletcher, mother of two, found herself occupied with the needs of other families, attending to the crush of shoppers at the Walmart in Duarte, Calif., where she works.

On Mother's Day itself, she would be in the store, making sure shoppers had one last chance to pick up a heart pendant or a personalized mug for mom. For the past four years, Fletcher has had to work every Mother's Day, along with every New Year's Eve, and nearly every weekend.

Like many employees at Walmart, the largest private employer in the United States, Fletcher is required to work whenever the company needs her, which almost always means spending weekends and holidays at the store.

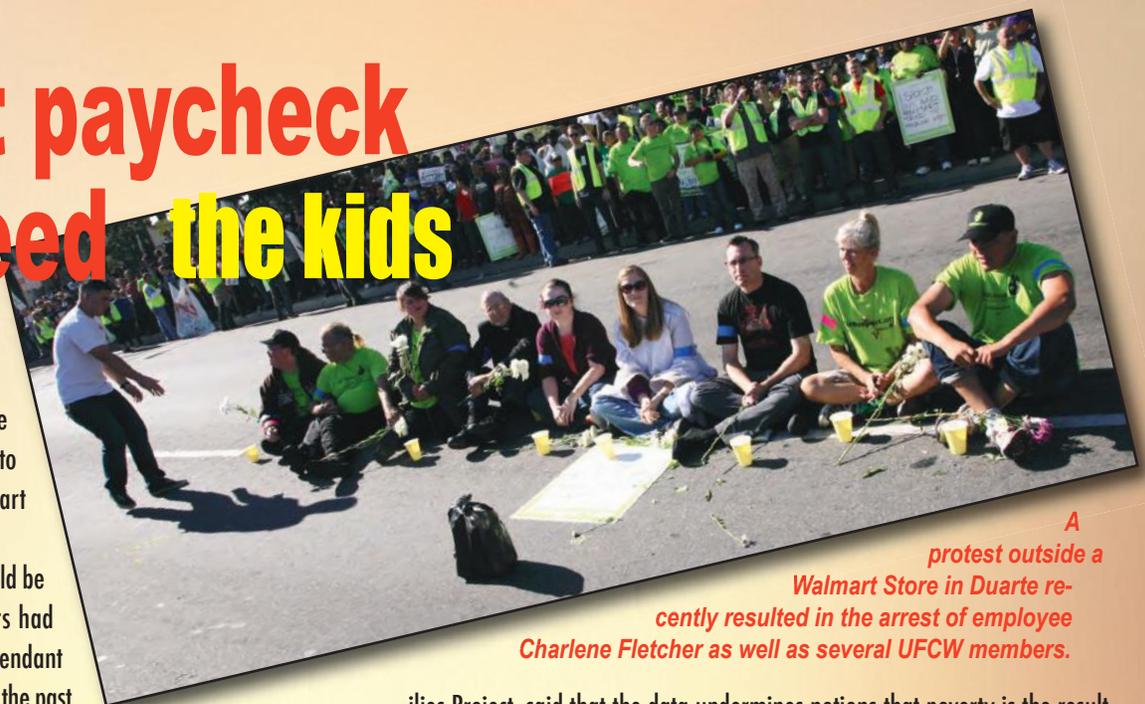
Yet even as she makes available most of her working hours, she earns so little that she has to rely on government assistance to feed her kids. For Fletcher, 32, motherhood is not merely something to celebrate one day a year: it's the status that qualifies her for the federal Women, Infants and Children program, which provides mothers with vouchers that they can exchange for milk and fresh produce.

Relying on help from the government is "embarrassing," she said. "Nobody should have to do that, especially with what Walmart makes."

Fletcher earns \$9.40 an hour, placing her among the growing ranks of workers around the country who are officially poor. Since the official end of the Great Recession, low-wage jobs have grown nearly three times as fast as better paying jobs, according to the National Employment Law Project.

Many of these workers are mothers and fathers. According to a recent report by the Working Poor Families Project, nearly one-third of all working families in the United States earn what the report defines as a low income, up from 28 percent in 2007, the first year of the recession.

Brandon Roberts, manager of the Working Poor Fam-



A protest outside a Walmart Store in Duarte recently resulted in the arrest of employee Charlene Fletcher as well as several UFCW members.

ilies Project, said that the data undermines notions that poverty is the result of laziness or irresponsibility while debunking the idea that the typical low-wage worker is a teenager making an extra buck after school.

"We know that these are people who are serious about work," he said. "They bring all the significant cultural habits and norms that we care about, and despite that, are still earning so little that they qualify as poor."

For Fletcher, being poor means living in a one-bedroom apartment with her husband, their 7-year-old and a baby.

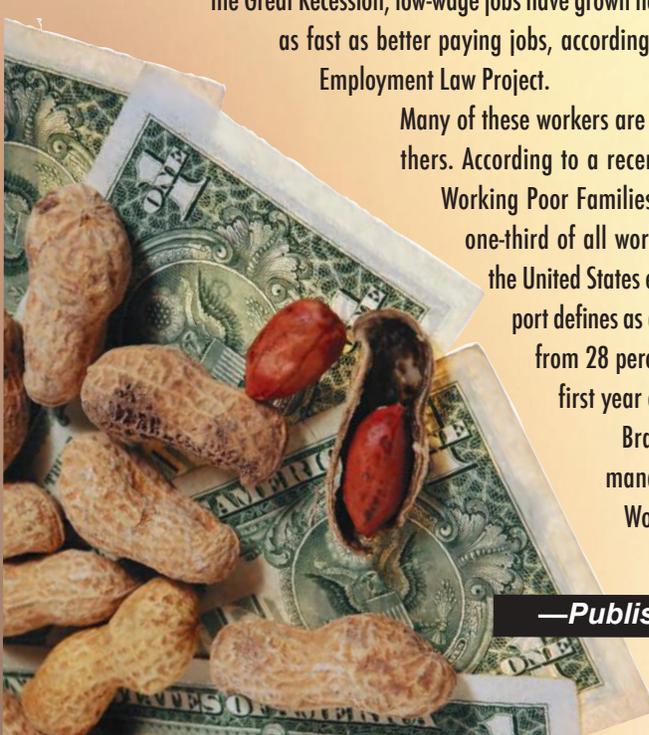
"We all stay in one bedroom," she said. "We managed to get all three beds in here – the crib, the twin and my grandmother's old-fashioned bed frame."

Although Fletcher's husband works full-time, the couple also qualifies for California's medical welfare program, which pays for Fletcher's asthma medicine and the children's shots and check-ups. Fletcher and her husband applied for the benefits shortly after she started working at Walmart, and Fletcher still gets heated when she thinks about her first meeting with the caseworker.

"All she could say was, 'Just be glad you even have a job,'" Fletcher recalled. "We all appreciate our jobs, but I kind of resent that remark. The problem is that this company is getting rich off the consumers and off of what we do for them, and yet they don't give back."

According to Fortune's recent ranking of America's 500 biggest companies, Walmart replaced ExxonMobile at the top of the list in 2012, posting revenues of \$469.2 billion.

Fletcher said she expected Mother's Day at the store to be stressful. Since she joined Walmart, she said, the store has cut staff and leaned on the remaining employees to fill in the gaps. Fletcher operates the phones, relaying calls between customers, managers, and workers, and said she often has trouble getting employees on the line. "They can barely maintain their departments, let alone answer a phone call," she said.



—Published in *Huffington Post Business Report* May 13, 2013

Word on the street

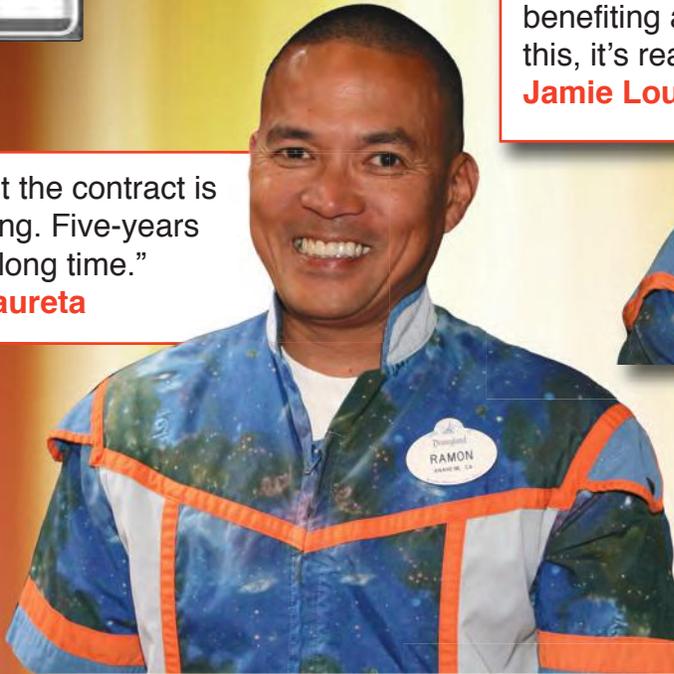
Q

Disney Members: What do you think of your new contract?

“

“It’s ok, but the contract is way too long. Five-years is a really long time.”

Ramon Laureta



“The part-timers are benefiting a lot from this, it’s really good.”

Jamie Loughridge



“This contract benefited part-time employees more than it did full-time employees.”

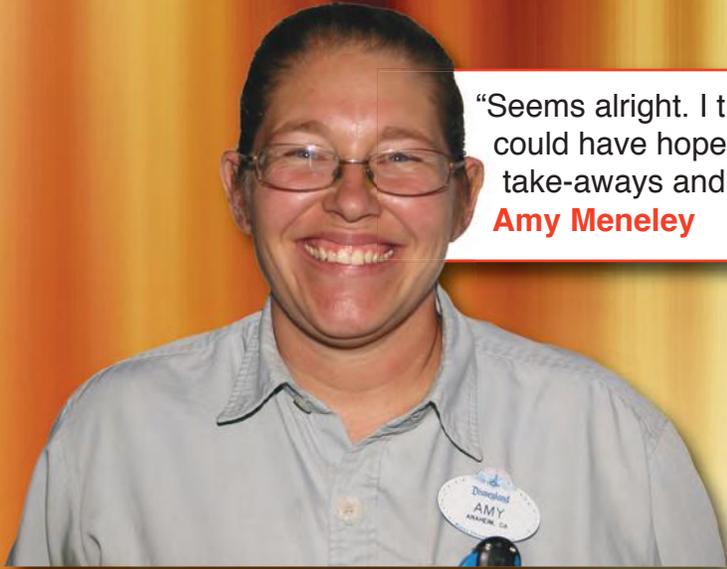
Shane Hopper



“It’s really cool. We got raises, and the part-timers are finally getting something for their hard work too.”

Elizabeth Navarro





“Seems alright. I think it’s the best we could have hoped for. There were no take-aways and we got a 401K too.”

Amy Meneley



“I’m happy we got a 401K, which is great and shows that the union really does listen to what we want.”

Mike Francis



“It’s good. We (part-timers) get more disciplinary points and are almost equal to full-time people.”

Danielle Torres



“It’s a good contract for us, and a great contract for the part-timers”

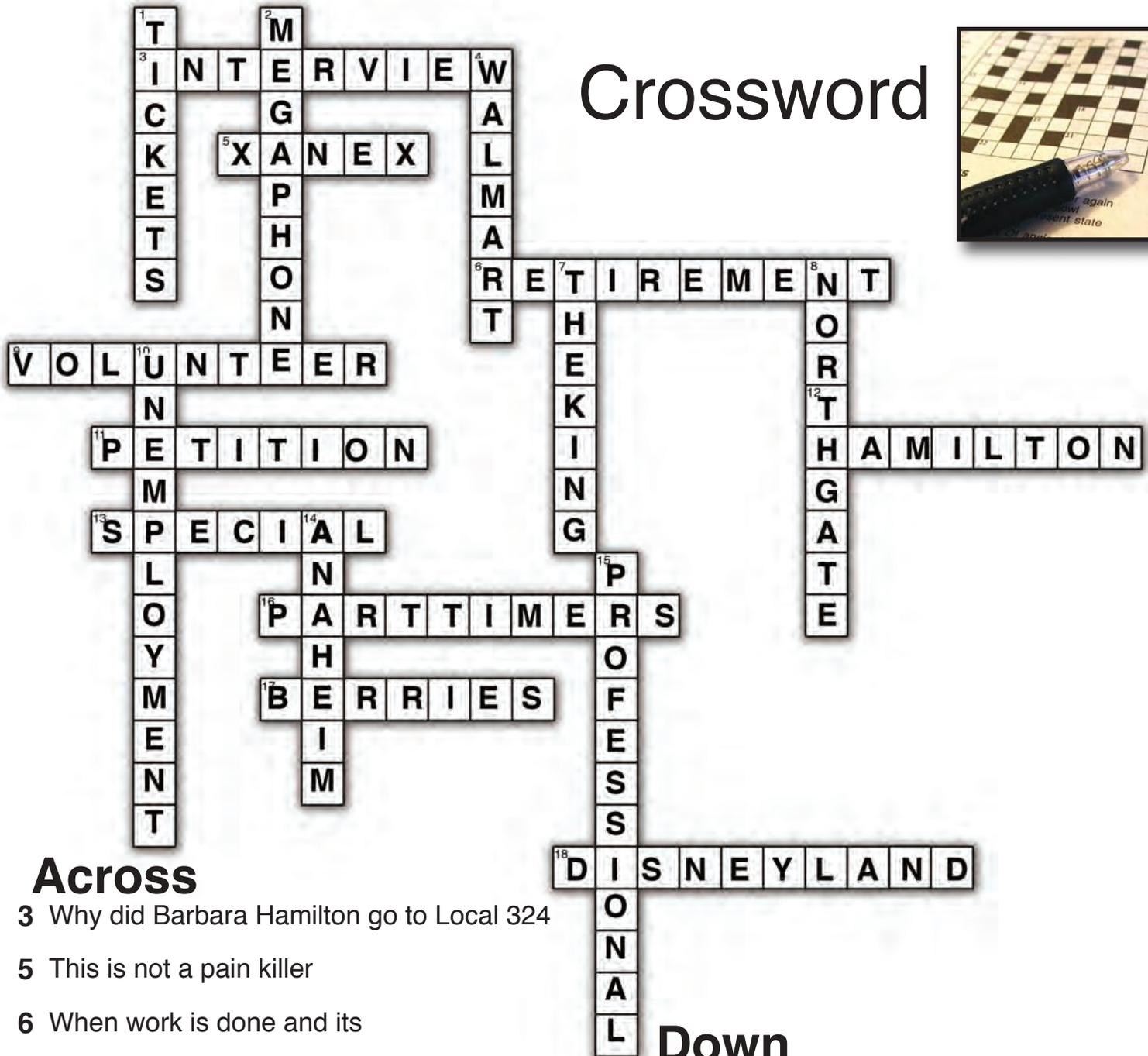
Kyle Wolf



“As a part-timer, it was really beneficial to me.”

Allen Lim

Crossword



Across

- 3 Why did Barbara Hamilton go to Local 324
- 5 This is not a pain killer
- 6 When work is done and its
- 9 Veda Kuban does a lot of this in her spare time
- 11 It was delivered to Northgate Market in Anaheim May 1
- 12 She's an institution in Local 324
- 13 The 'Olympic' games for people with disabilities
- 16 These workers did better than most in their new contract
- 17 Migrant Mexican and Japanese workers picked them in El Monte
- 18 Workers there just got a pretty good contract

Down

- 1 You can get these off of our website
- 2 Conger said the OC Labor Fed is like this for us
- 4 The worst thing to happen to the planet since the Bubonic Plague
- 7 Elvis is known by this nickname
- 8 It is the UFCW's latest organizing target
- 10 The more successful Walmart is, the more likely you'll experience this
- 14 It was the first location of Northgate Market
- 15 The UFCW Division that caters to pharmacists

Off the wall



A six-year-old goes to the hospital with her mother to visit her Grandpa. When they get to the hospital, she runs ahead of her mother and bursts into her Grandpa's room. "Grandpa, Grandpa," she says excitedly, "as soon as my mother comes into the room, make a noise like a frog!"

"What?" said her Grandpa.

"Make a noise like a frog because my mom said that as soon as you croak, we're all going to Disneyland!"

Your most direct route to the unemployment line ...

WAL★MART

How's that for 'saving money and living better'?

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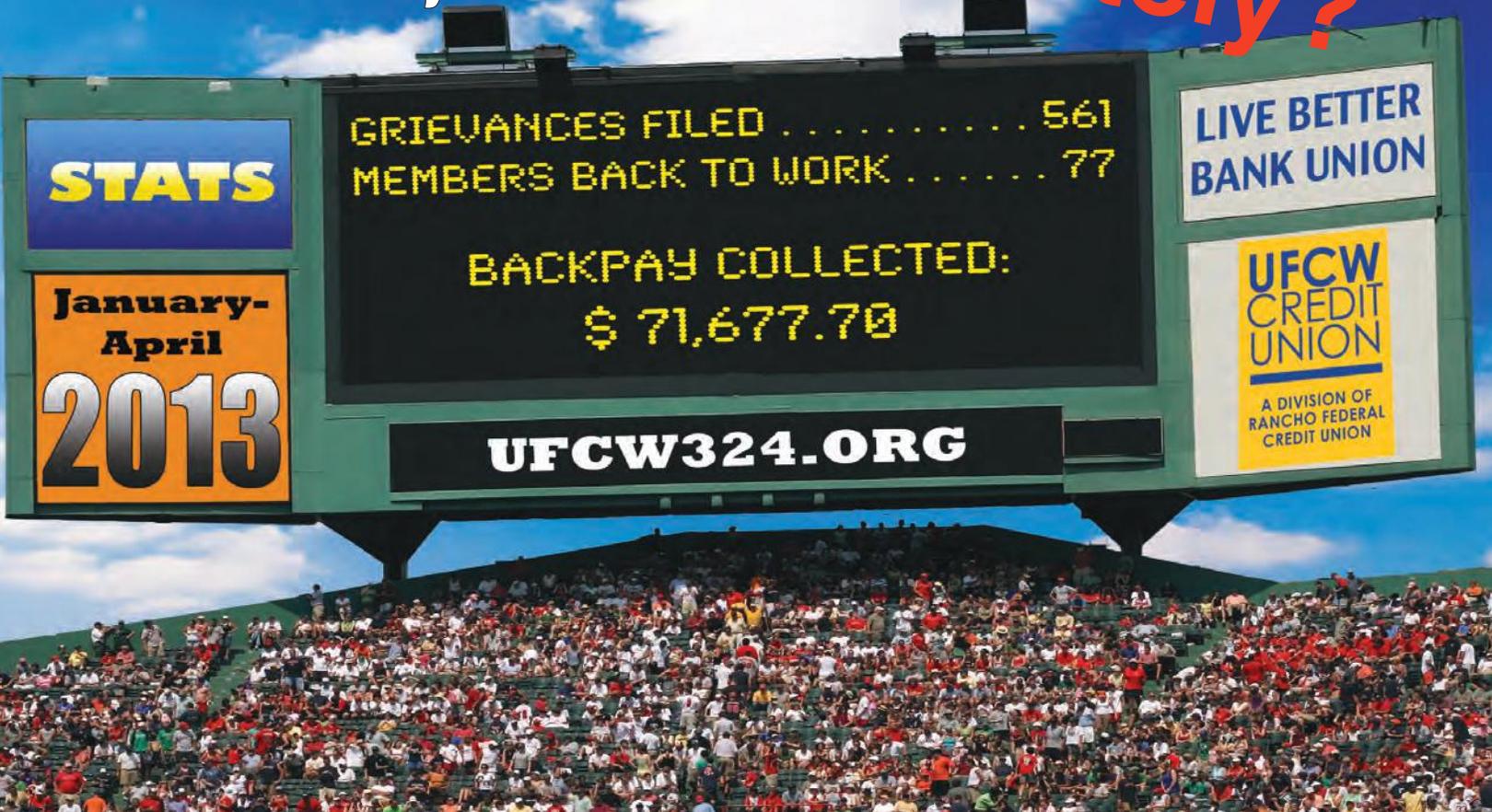


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What have you done for me *Lately?*



STATS

January-
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2013

GRIEVANCES FILED 561
MEMBERS BACK TO WORK 77

BACKPAY COLLECTED:
\$ 71,677.70

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LIVE BETTER
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