



Crews Control:

They are anonymous, nocturnal and sometimes misunderstood

Down and Dirty

Workers at an Orange County medical marijuana dispensary become newest members of Local 324.

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Breaks & Breasts

Employers must accommodate new mothers who choose to breast feed and pump.

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Fun & Games

Remember to pick up discount tickets online at www.ufcw324.org. Have fun at a discount price.

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Retail Food and Meat Negotiation Update

Even though our contracts with Albertsons, Ralphs, Vons, Stater Bros and Gelsons expire 3/6/16, all wages, benefits and working conditions of the current contract remain in FULL effect during the bargaining process. We will give you updates as new information develops. Please make sure your Union has your current cell phone number if you wish to receive text alerts. As always, if you have questions, please contact your Union Representative. Thank you for your continued support and solidarity.

Editor: Todd Conger
Asst. Editor: Mercedes Clarke



UNION OFFICE HOURS
8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Monday-Friday

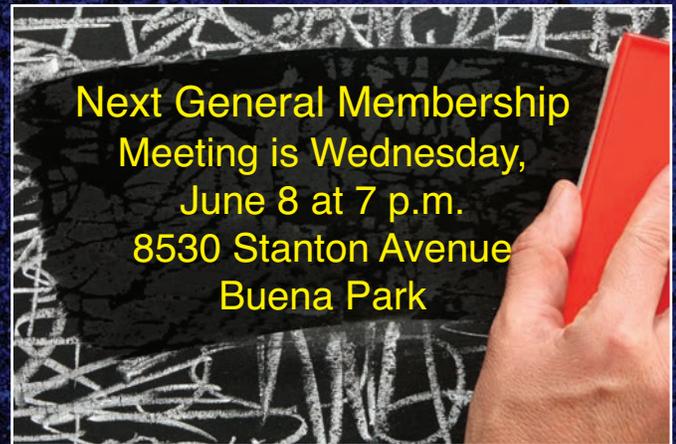
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U magazine (USES 018-250) is published bimonthly by UFCW Local 324, at Post Office Box 5004, 8530 Stanton Ave., Buena Park, CA 90622-5004. Subscription rate is two (2) dollars per year (U.S. funds) Periodicals Postage paid at Buena Park, CA.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to *U magazine*, UFCW Local 324, Post Office Box 5004, Buena Park, CA 90622-5004.

READERS: Direct all inquiries and changes of address to the **COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT**, UFCW Local 324, Post Office Box 5004, Buena Park, CA 90622-5004. Web Site Address: UFCW324.org



- Withdrawal Card Request
- Change of Address Form

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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!

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 clichés 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.

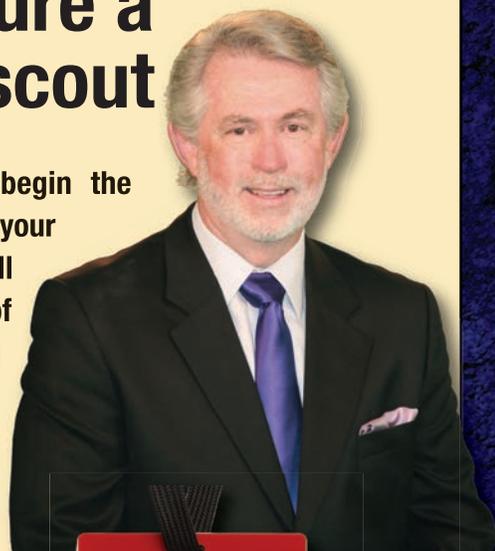
Your union's elected officers have devoted most of their lives to identifying where wage and benefit levels can be adjusted without jeopardizing a company's overall viability. Management will claim, as they always do, that even thinking about increases will put everything they have ever worked to achieve 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 union 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 union 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.



Greg Conger
President

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

Hot Topics

Words of wisdom to help you keep your job

Accommodating New Mothers

—By Field Director Chuck Adinolfi

In spite of national legal protections meant to encourage breastfeeding, nursing mothers have reported being harassed, belittled and teased by managers and coworkers about taking a break to pump their breast milk.

Your Union Rep and Stewards can help prevent these kinds of incidents by being aware of federal and state laws governing breastfeeding, educating our members on the issue when necessary, and creating an environment where pregnant or nursing women can come to the union for help without embarrassment.

Legal protections: A provision under the Affordable Health Care Act of 2010, also known as Obamacare, amended the fair labor standards act of 1938 to include protections for nursing mothers who have returned to work and need the time and space to pump breast milk for their infants.

This amendment requires employers to:

1. Allow breastfeeding workers enough time to pump breast milk for their nursing infants, as frequently as needed, for one year after child's birth. Typically, a lactating woman would need 20 to 40 minutes each session. If more time is needed past any breaks or lunches, the additional time will be unpaid.

Women are allowed to either start their shifts early or stay later to make up for the unpaid time.

2. Provide a private space for pumping. (The space can't be a bathroom and must be shielded from intrusion of coworkers). A room can be made private by having a lock on the door, placing a message on the door that the room is in use, drawing blinds or curtains, covering windows with paper if necessary, or setting up a portable partition.

3. Make these accommodations unless there are fewer than 50 employees and then only if the employer can demonstrate that this would present an undue hardship.

In California, there are civil penalties for employers that do not comply with the provisions of the law. These penalties are \$100 per each violation and are enforced by the Labor commissioner. To find out more information on this subject and your rights under the law, you can check out Labor Code 1030-1033 for additional information and how to file a claim for any violations that may have occurred on the job.

The contents of this article are not only meant for our UFCW members, but also friends and family that may not have access to this information. Please call your Union Representative for additional information or help securing your rights in the workplace.



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Be Sure to check out the website for more info!

www.ufcw324.org/retiree_club.aspx



Marijuana Dispensary becomes first to join union in Orange County

Local 324 is proud to welcome our first medical cannabis workers, employees of South Coast Safe Access. Through the hard work of our organizing department and our success in 2015 achieving ground breaking legislation in the State, we are pleased that the first of several dispensaries in Santa Ana are now organized and the employees now enjoy the protections of an excellent Union Contract.

Local 324 has been on the forefront of assuring that medical cannabis is accessible and available in a safe and responsible manner. Under the State legislation, each city sets its own regulations and parameters regarding number and size of dispensaries. This keeps the consumer and the community safe while adequately addressing the needs of the patients who rely on the product for pain or other health reasons.

The city of Santa Ana acted promptly and implemented regulations. Included in the regulations is a provision for labor peace to minimize disruptions to the business and to assure that the dispensary is able to attract the best employees with opportunities for training and stability. Local 324 worked with the City, the community and law enforcement and as dispensaries receive licenses to legally operate, the employees are excited to authorize Local 324 as their representative.

The employees overwhelmingly ratified a contract which includes wage increases, health and welfare benefits, pension, vacations, holidays, sick leave and a grievance/arbitration procedure. We are excited about bringing these benefits to employees of other dispensaries in Santa Ana.

Unfortunately, things haven't moved along as quickly in Long Beach even though several dispensaries are ready to open and operate. The employers of these dispensaries have indicated that they are not opposed to union representation

for their employees. These dispensaries have applied for licenses but the City Council has been unable to reach a consensus on sensible legislation which would provide patients in the city safe and adequate access.

As a result, Labor is working with several community groups to introduce a city wide initiative which will serve as a model for responsible, safe cannabis control, taxation and regulation. If sufficient signatures are gathered, the initiative will be on the November ballot. The initiative is supported by responsible Collectives (cannabis activists), patients, residents and the cannabis workforce



Andrea Zinder
Secretary Treasurer

and is seen as a way of bringing the industry out of the shadows to protect neighborhoods, generate city revenues and guarantee safe access to medical treatment.

Local 324 knows first-hand from our representation of pharmacies that the delivery of health care is changing and that issues such as access and convenience are key drivers. We are excited about our newest industry and members and the potential to provide union benefits to more workers and safe access and fair regulation to a product which has provided needed relief to millions of people.



Thinking outside the boxes

Night crew members don't just work different hours

Field Director Chuck Adinolfi presses two fingers against his forehead as he struggles for the right words.

"They are. They are.... different yes but..."

He finally lets out a breath and shakes his head as if defeated. "You just can't describe a night crewmember unless you have been there. If you haven't lived that life, you won't understand."

Adinolfi has lived it—obvious as he tries to describe what it's like to work a job that begins when most people are turning out the lights and setting tomorrow's alarm clock.

His stories and those of others are remarkably similar even when they come from different companies and different decades. Members with night crew experience can relate to the personal connection that crewmembers report —reminiscent of a secret society with a language all their own. They are the Free Masons of the retail grocery industry.

Their brotherhood is born from more than just the common experience of breaking down cubic tons of product and placing them neatly on store shelves with methodical precision.

Instead their kinship comes from sharing a completely different lifestyle that brings with it challenges most "normal" workers (a term they use to describe everyone not in the crew) will never experience and most likely never truly understand.

And at the end of the day, excuse the pun; night crewmembers have more in common with the Aztecs of ancient America than many of their closest friends and acquaintances. They are, after all, tied to the patterns of the sun, defying its energizing light by day and ignoring its call for retreat by night.

Most people in the grocery industry would concede that night crewmembers stand apart from others in their temperament, personality and overall approach to life's daily rigors.



they live different lives

So what makes these nocturnal superhero's tick? One common denominator should be painfully obvious. Member Israel Renteria from Food 4 Less 772 captured this better than most: "It's all about sleep. Trying to get it, going without it, living with less of it," he said. It is a bitter irony that the most physically demanding jobs in any grocery store are filled by those who get the least amount of sleep.

Food 4 Less member Alfonso Lopez said he underestimated the demands of the job. "The physical part of it has to be the hardest. There is never a day when I'm not completely exhausted at the end of my shift."

The backbreaking nature of the work itself necessitates that night crewmembers back each other up in ways not so common to their counterparts in the other



Ruling a world all their own

jobs. It is no doubt part of the reason crewmembers enjoy closer relationships with one another than do workers in any other department.

Ralphs checker Mario Frias believes the bond formed among night crewmembers is partly because they can be themselves. With no customers present, workers can dispense with the forced smiles and neighborly charm everyone is expected to display. Frias said that the nature of the work means that when

crewmembers work together, there are no distractions from customers, managers or anything else.

“When you’re at a check stand you are working **next** to your co-workers, but on morning crew (Ralphs’ term for night crew) you are working **with** your co-workers.” He recalled that the times when he was tasked with building a display or stocking an aisle with the help of another crewmember, the conversations rarely stayed superficial.

“When you work hand-in-hand with someone for several hours straight you can’t help but learn all there is to know about that person from how his kids are doing in school to his preference in tooth paste.”

Although Frias left night crew a decade ago, some of his closest friendships are those he made with co-workers on night crew.

The Night Crew Personality

If you were asked to have dinner with 20 grocery workers and not told what jobs they had in a store, most people could pick out the night crew workers by the time the appetizers were served.

It was a quirk of the industry that long interested Executive VP Rick Eiden. He got valuable insight into the reasons why when he worked under-cover on night crew for six months 20 years ago

“They tend to do a lot of things alone and keep to themselves a lot,” he observed. Of course there are exceptions to every generality, but night crewmembers themselves describe one another with similar adjectives. They are a brutish lot, rarely shy when it comes to getting what they need to finish a task. And rare is the day when a night crewmember is described as bubbly or effusive. Social butterflies they are not.

Their fellow union members site a variety





of reasons why the caricature seems to apply so universally to their nocturnal colleagues.

“It’s starting to change these days, but when I was on crew we were pretty much left out of any formal events or parties or anything the store put together,” Frias said.

Adinolfi added that even a simple outing with the family can reinforce a feeling of detachment. He cited a trip to Disneyland as an example. “When we were all done after a long day at Disneyland with the family, it ended with everyone going home tired and ready to go to sleep after a fun day and me waving goodbye as they dropped me off at work exhausted,” he recalled.

Whereas holidays bring needed rest to everyone else, night crewmembers enjoy Christmas and Thanksgiving dinners knowing that they would be clocking into work in just a

couple of hours.

In other retail-related jobs what happens on the clock stays on the clock. But night crewmembers spend a good part of day plotting a strategy for getting important activities and errands completed—often before the end of the business day.

Almost anybody working night crew is familiar with that internal debate that ensues when they are invited to a social event that takes place when they are usually fast asleep. If they choose to attend the birthday party, for example, they are exhausted during most of their work shift. If they choose to help instead

Separating your personal life from your and professional life is



of attend, their absence is noted by friends and family. Too many absences results in fewer invitations in the future.

Union Representative Matt Hart worked on a night crew for seven years during his time with Vons. He said that times like those can be discouraging.

Who can blame a member for wanting to salvage long-time relationships and still perform optimally on the job? There is some evidence in the national workforce that suggests workers who face sleep deprivation because of unusual schedules are more at risk for drug abuse than those who don't face the problem. It



is one area where unions have played a role, championing contracts and even legislation in some cases that have made treatment much more available.

But for all the challenges faced by crewmembers, most site a handful of benefits they feel outweigh the downside. Although fast paced, it is a more informal environment. Nobody is looking to be sure uniforms are properly pressed or that nametags are worn on the left not the right side.

It's not formally written into company policy, but a degree of tolerance is afforded to tardies or extended breaks. The premium pay guaranteed by the collective bargaining agreement isn't enough to cause a rift between crewmembers and the rest of the store, but some gawk enviously at what they perceive to be a casual environment. That perception is only half true.

While crewmembers need not put on a phony smile and pile on the charm for customers, they face stresses unique to the position. Some crews routinely work overtime because loads arrive hours past their scheduled delivery times and store directors often lack sympathy when aisles remain impassible at opening.

"Of course the night crew chief is usually a pretty

almost impossible for crewmembers

tough supervisor, he's usually the only sign of management that night crewmembers will ever see and that plays on their psyche," Hart said. Crew chiefs are rank-and-file members who tend to have more in common with their fellow crewmembers than with other department supervisors.

That has been known to create a unique blend of complications for newly promoted night crew chiefs who find themselves in a supervisory role over longtime personal friends. Companies offer no training in the subject, expecting the new supervisor to handle issues quietly and without drama.

Adinolfi chuckles as he recalls an incident in which he and his crew chief argued. "He was screaming at me that I needed to work faster or I wasn't going to finish the load that morning."

It ended when the crew chief dodged a case of green beans that barely missed his head. Adinolfi continued, "I think he tried to suspend me that morning. I can't recall. But I'm sure that we carpooled the next day. He was one of my best friends and still is after all these years."

Over the years company mergers, a region-wide strike, the loss of market share, increased competition and the changing face of the workforce have altered the grocery industry in deep ways.

But the job of a night crewmember has stayed pretty much the same. So too have the many daunting personal challenges that come from working what many still refer to as "the graveyard shift."

Before nightcrew, he had perfectly good brain waves

What does a depressed eskimo, a surly cosmonaut and night crewmembers have in common? They have all had their circadian rhythms interfered with and the consequences,



according to scientists, range from irritability to the increased risk of contracting a host of diseases.

Circadian rhythms are important in determining the sleeping and feeding patterns of all animals, including human beings. There are clear patterns of brain wave activity, hormone production, cell regeneration and other biological activities linked to this daily cycle.

These brain waves are influenced by natural factors within the body but they are also influenced by outside factors like light. Hence, the common denominator among those who work at night. The lack of sunlight is likely responsible for disrupting this rhythm, which essentially is there to remind the body that now is the time to sleep.





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Union Representative Jeri Hander





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8530 Stanton Avenue
P.O. Box 5004
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January-February 2016

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MEMBERS BACK TO WORK	24

BACKPAY COLLECTED:
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