



TEAMSTERS LOCAL 117

# DOCK TALK

News from the hardworking men and women of the grocery warehouse division

Members of Teamsters Local 117

Summer 2011



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## WASHINGTON TEAMSTERS LEAFLET 50 FRED MEYER AND QFC STORES STATEWIDE

### Kroger greed is hurting Washington's families



Tim Kirby, a 13-year Fred Meyer employee, talks to a customer at the Fred Meyer store in Puyallup.

Over 300 Teamster grocery warehouse workers, their families, and labor and community partners handbilled 50 Fred Meyer and QFC stores statewide on August 20 and 21, demanding that the stores' parent company, Kroger, provide its workers and their families with quality, affordable health care coverage.

Teams of workers and their supporters leafleted all major stores in the Puget Sound region as well as stores in Vancouver, Burlington, Sequim, Shelton,

Spokane, Port Orchard, and Lacey.

"The general public needs to know that Fred Meyer is putting an undue burden of medical costs on the backs of its workers and their families," said Secretary-Treasurer Tracey A. Thompson.

#### FRED MEYER WORKERS SPEAK OUT

Tommy Eidson, a Fred Meyer employee who leafleted with his wife and three children at the Fred Meyer store in Puyallup on Sunday, talked about the impact that switching to Teamsters medical would have on his family.

"I have a chronic medical condition and currently pay \$900 out-of-pocket bimonthly for prescriptions. The Teamsters plan would save my family thousands of dollars a year," he said.

Another Fred Meyer employee, Steve Ballou, had this to say:

"My son has Type 1 diabetes. We took him to the hospital twice last year and it cost us thousands of dollars out-of-pocket. Fred Meyer needs to start taking care of its workers and their families."

Shop Steward, Aaron Schrupp, got hit with massive medical bills when his daughter was born two years ago. He had to apply for financial assistance so that he could pay his bills.

#### KROGER RAKING IN THE PROFITS

Kroger reported over \$432 million in profits in the first quarter of 2011. Its CEO, David Dillon, has been paid over \$25 million in the last five years.

Yet despite soaring profits, Kroger refuses to provide Teamster grocery workers at Fred Meyer with the same medical coverage as other unionized workers in the industry, and instead has initiated a campaign to undermine the collective bargaining process.

It's time that we all join with Teamsters at Fred Meyer and fight back!

**A huge THANK YOU to everyone who participated in the leafleting action!**  
**To sign up for future solidarity actions,**

# TEAMSTERS AT FRED MEYER AUTHORIZE STRIKE!

## Warehouse turns out in force; group is unified



Teamsters at Fred Meyer cast their ballots at strike authorization vote meeting on August 5.

On August 6 and 7, Teamsters employed at the Fred Meyer grocery distribution center in Puyallup voted in overwhelming numbers to authorize a strike. Two hundred eighty workers turned out for the vote, which took place at the Teamsters hall in Tacoma.

"This vote shows the company that we are ready to fight for fair benefits and that we are not going to back down," said Nancy Santos, who has been with the company for over 16 years.

### STANDING STRONG TOGETHER

Signs of Union solidarity pervaded the strike vote meetings. Members wore 'Solidarity is the Language that We Speak' stickers while munching on jumbo homemade chocolate-chip cookies, compliments of Jim Maier and his wife. One member, Josh Putnam, wore a T-shirt that advertised the strike vote on one side and read, 'Teamsters Medical Now!'

on the other.

"This contract affects our entire family," said Putnam's wife, Angie, who helped make the shirt.

### COMPANY SCARE TACTICS

The company had sent letters to its employees before the vote urging them to vote no, which only infuriated the group and increased turnout. "These letters are Bulls\*&t," several members called out.

The company has also been surveilling its employees and engaging in other unlawful conduct intended to undermine the collective bargaining process and intimidate its workers.

### A FIGHT TO MAINTAIN INDUSTRY STANDARDS

Teamsters at three other grocery warehouses – Safeway, SuperValu, and Unified Grocers – voted to ratify their contracts on July 30, leaving Fred Meyer

as the only Teamster grocery house in the area that has not settled its contract.

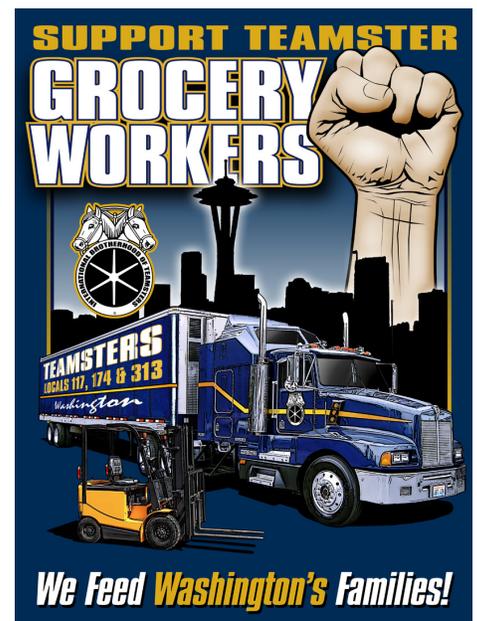
Bargaining between the Teamsters and Fred Meyer started on June 8. A contract extension expired on August 15. Since then, the company has built a fence around the perimeter of the facility and paraded scab labor through the warehouse in an effort to intimidate workers.

"Our medical bills continue to soar and this company keeps getting richer. It's time for Fred Meyer to stop trying to intimidate us and provide what all of the other companies in the industry provide - quality medical coverage," said Tim Kirby, a 13-year Fred Meyer employee.

Fred Meyer is a subsidiary of Kroger, Inc., a \$14.7 billion dollar company based in Cincinnati, Ohio. Kroger pays its CEO David Dillon \$7.5 million a year.

The Fred Meyer facility in Puyallup is one of Kroger's most productive facilities.

*Your Brothers and Sisters at Fred Meyer need your support in their fight to maintain fair and equitable standards for Teamsters in the grocery industry.*



# TEAMSTERS AT SAFEWAY, SUPERVALU, AND UNIFIED GROCERS RATIFY 3-YEAR LABOR AGREEMENTS

On Saturday, July 30, hundreds of Teamsters at three of the area's major grocery houses – Safeway, SuperValu, and Unified Grocers – voted in overwhelming numbers to ratify new, 3-year labor agreements.

The agreement contains annual wage increases and important protections against the rising cost of health care for grocery workers and their families.

***Congratulations to all of the Teamsters in the grocery industry on achieving this victory!***

## **HARD WORK PAYS OFF**

Your Union would not have been successful in achieving this agreement without your strong support during

negotiations and the dedication and unity of your Union Bargaining Committee.

***Thanks again to your Bargaining Committee for their tremendous work!***

Your newly-ratified contract takes effect immediately. Wages and other economic gains reflected in the contract will be applied retroactively as of July 10.

The new agreement will expire on July 12, 2014.

A printed version of your contract will be available through your Business Representative as soon as the final documents are prepared. If you have questions about your new agreement, please talk to your Business

Representative.

## **BARGAINING WITH FRED MEYER**

Even though bargaining with Safeway, SuperValu, and Unified Grocers is now complete, it is important to bear in mind that your Union is still bargaining with Fred Meyer over a labor agreement affecting nearly 400 Teamsters in the grocery industry.

Your unwavering support of your Brothers and Sisters at Fred Meyer will be critical to ensuring that fair and equitable industry standards are maintained.

***Thank you for the incredible work you do to feed Washington's families and for your strong support during negotiations!***

## ***Fred Meyer Teamsters Speak Out!***

***"Why is it important for Teamsters at Fred Meyer to have quality health care benefits for themselves and their families?"***



**STEVE BALLOU**  
12-years

***"I have a Type 1 diabetic child. He was hospitalized twice last year and I had to pay thousands out-of-pocket for medical costs."***



**TIM KIRBY**  
13-years

***"Our medical bills continue to soar. It's time for Fred Meyer to step up and provide the same benefits as other companies in the industry."***



**NANCY SANTOS**  
16-years

***"All of our hard work makes Fred Meyer the leader in the industry. We are united on this and we are not going to back down."***



**JOSH PUTNAM**  
12-years

***"I'm giving the best years of my life to this company. They should be able to give something in return. I want my kids to be protected."***

# LOCAL 117 TRUSTEE JESSE HOWARD III SAYS GOODBYE



*Local 117 congratulates Jesse Howard III on a tremendous Teamsters career!*

**A**fter toiling an entire career with too little sleep or sunlight, longtime Teamster Jesse Howard III will finally be getting his fair share of both.

Jesse, who retired from Unified Grocers on July 30, is migrating south, to the sunny desert climes just outside of Palm Springs.

Jesse will never again have to rise at midnight to make a 2am start time on the receiving dock. Never again will he have to endure the rainy and dark winters of the Pacific Northwest.

## **NO VEGGIES FOR JESSE!**

After 32 years working with perishables, Jesse also says he doesn't want to see produce for a while. For a practicing vegetarian, this will pose an interesting challenge.

"I'm looking forward to sleeping normal hours, getting lots of sunshine, and working on my 'evolving' golf game," he says.

## **JESSE'S TEAMSTER FAMILY**

Jesse Howard III has been a stalwart rank-and-file Teamster leader for years. He started his career at Associated Grocers in 1979 as an order selector. In the three decades that followed, he operated a pallet jack and did bull pick on a forklift before becoming the main receiver on the produce receiving dock.

Jesse got involved in his Union early on. He made it a habit to stop by the old Teamsters hall in downtown Seattle to visit Local 117's former Secretary-Treasurer John Williams, his Business Representative at the time.

For voicing his concerns at work, he gained the respect of his co-workers, who encouraged him to run for Shop Steward. Nearly 20 years ago he was elected to the position, and he remained there until his retirement last month.

## **AG GROCERY STRIKE**

One defining moment in Jesse's Teamster career was the 9-week AG strike in 1990. "The strike created an incredible sense of solidarity for all of us - loaders and drivers alike. We were all fighting the same battle together and when we returned to work, we were stronger and management respected us," he said.

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD TRUSTEE**

Jesse also served for 14 years as a Trustee on the Local 117 Executive Board. "My experience on the Board was enlightening and enabled me to see the Union from a different perspective. I saw firsthand the dedication of the people working at the Local," he said.

All Teamsters who know Jesse respect him for his integrity, intelligence, resolve, and fierce dedication to defending the rights of working people. His absence will be felt by his co-workers at Unified Grocers and the staff and E-Board of the Local for many years to come.

The Local 117 Executive Board has appointed Scott Anderson, an experienced Teamster from Safeway, to replace Jesse as Trustee.

*Congratulations, Jesse, on an incredible Teamsters career!*

## **CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!**

**Teamsters at Safeway, SuperValu and Unified Grocers are needed to assist in solidarity activities in support of your Sisters and Brothers at Fred Meyer as they fight to achieve quality health care coverage for their families.**

**For more information, contact Local 117 Organizer Brenda Wiest at 206-441-4860 ext. 1256.**

*Thank you for your support!*

## **MARK YOUR CALENDARS!**

August 26, 2011 - BTU Blood Drive & Back-to-School BBQ  
September 15, 2011 - Membership Meeting

For more Teamsters news, visit the Local 117 website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org). Connect with other Local 117 members on Facebook or follow your Union on Twitter.