



Teamsters Local 117

# Teamster Talk



*Fighting for Workers' Rights Since 1936*

Teamsters Local 117: 14675 Interurban Ave. S, Suite 307 • Tukwila, WA 98168 (206) 441-4860 • www.teamsters117.org

## TEAMSTERS AT DAVIS WIRE FIGHT FOR RESPECT

Local 117 members vote 55-1 to authorize a strike



Workers at Davis Wire voted 55-1 to authorize a strike.

Local 117 Teamsters, employed at Davis Wire, are in the fight of their lives. At this dangerous wire mill, workers are being pressured to work 12-hour shifts without a break, for dozens of days in a row.

There have been serious accidents at the company: Workers have suffered lost fingers, wire punctures, crushed bones, and deaths.

Despite the dangerous working conditions, Davis Wire has proposed steep increases in the amount workers pay for their health care.

### DAVIS WIRE: GIVE WORKERS A BREAK!

Company managers strongly discourage workers from taking their legal breaks.

There is no break room at the facility to speak of, only a cramped hallway, where workers sit on the grimy floor to eat their

lunch. More often than not, workers eat lunch at their machines, with dangerous equipment running.

On February 29, the workers voted 55-1 to authorize a strike. Workers have been without a contract since December 1 of last year.

### WORKPLACE ACTION

On Friday, March 16, Local 117 staff converged on the company's facility

in Kent, and pulled workers off the floor so that they could take their statutorily-permitted 10-minute break. Workers swarmed the break room in a united show of union solidarity and power.

"We stand together. You can see everybody pulling together today, taking a break with their Union," said Shop Steward Robert Bruner, a machine operator at the company.

Your Local Union was in federal mediation with Davis Wire on March 19. At that meeting, the company was unwilling to budge from its anti-worker positions.

*If the company continues to insist on substandard proposals, we will be calling on all members of Local 117 to stand in solidarity with their Brothers and Sisters at Davis Wire. Talk to your Business Representative about how you can get involved.*



*If you trash our contract, we will dump you!*

## RECYCLE POWER!

Teamsters stand united in recycle bargaining

It was a full house at the Teamsters building. Parking was hard to come by, and the Union hall was packed.

Puget Sound recycle and yard waste drivers were meeting to build solidarity and strength as they fight to achieve a fair contract in the recycle industry.

### RECYCLE CONTRACTS EXPIRE IN MAY

Local 117 is currently in bargaining with Waste Management and Allied Waste over contracts for 250 members; Contracts for members in both groups expire at the end of May. All signs indicate that there will be tough negotiations ahead.

At the Waste Management meeting, members had plenty to say about what it will take to achieve a fair contract:

"Unity is the most important thing – we have to stick together. That means turning out for contract meetings and backing each other up at work," said Scott Parker, a driver at Waste Management's

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# FOOD SERVICE TEAMSTERS GET ORGANIZED

## Bargaining with Sysco and FSA kicks off this summer



Members meet to build a communications network

**W**ith bargaining in the food service industry just around the corner, Teamsters 117 members at Sysco and FSA are getting organized.

Contract surveys are being finalized, steward elections are in the works, and rank-and-file leaders are stepping up and

talking up the union on the shop floor.

Before long, a demands meeting will be scheduled where members will have their opportunity to provide input prior to negotiations getting underway this summer.

Contracts for 283 drivers and warehouse workers in the two shops expire at the end of August and all indications point to challenging negotiations ahead.

"Our solidarity sends a message that we are organized and will not be pushed around," said Secretary-Treasurer Tracey A. Thompson, who, together with Local 117 President John Scearcy, will lead negotiations in the industry.

### ESTABLISHING A COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK

As union members, an important part of preparing for bargaining involves setting up a rank-and-file "communication network." A communications network consists of 10-member groups; each group has a captain. Captains are responsible for keeping their assigned members informed during negotiations.

On Saturday, March 31, 30 members in the food service industry met to set up the network. Drivers and warehouse workers at Sysco along with warehouse workers from FSA sat down with seniority lists and divided them into 10-person groups.

"It is our job to relay information to members," said Brian Brown, one of the steering committee captains, who works the graveyard shift at FSA. "Whenever there is a meeting or a solidarity action, we'll need to let members know."

"The work we do today will help us achieve better communication, better turnout for meetings, and greater member involvement, which will increase our leverage at the table," said President Scearcy.

Together with a strong group of Stewards, establishing an effective communications network is another indication that Teamsters in the food service industry are united and ready for the challenges ahead.



Local 117 members at Allied Waste and Waste Management all agree - it's our time!

## RECYCLE POWER!

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Sno-King facility.

"It takes all of us - united we stand, divided we fall," added Garry Hanson, a Shop Steward at Sno-King.

"We need to trust in our bargaining team that they are going to negotiate the best contract possible," said Erik Lund, a commercial floater, who works out of Waste Management's Seattle facility.

### PICKET EXTENSION AT ALLIED WASTE BUILDS SOLIDARITY

The solidarity-building meetings had a tremendous effect.

Just two weeks after the April 17 meetings, Local 117 Teamsters at Allied Waste displayed incredible courage when they honored extended picket lines at four area facilities set up by striking workers from Alabama.

The Alabama Teamsters, who had been without a contract for over a year, went on strike after the company backed out of a negotiated contract agreement. Solidarity pickets in support of the workers were immediately set up in Ohio and New York.

On March 29, a week after the strike began, extended pickets spread to the Seattle area. Local 117 members rallied behind their striking Brothers and Sisters in Alabama. 100 percent exercised their contractual right to honor the picket lines.

The pressure of Local 117 members honoring the lines led to immediate results: Alabama Teamsters achieved a tentative agreement within 48 hours. Teamsters in Ohio and New York also achieved agreements with the company. All three agreements have since been ratified by the members.

The united front of Teamsters at Allied Waste standing up for their rights shows the incredible power of Union solidarity!

"Our actions let the company know that they can't push us around," said 7-year Teamster George Blakeley, who drives for Allied Waste, Bellevue.

### RECYCLE & YARD WASTE WORKERS - THE FUTURE IS NOW!

Now the fight for a fair contract in the recycle industry turns to the Puget Sound region. Upcoming bargaining dates with Allied Waste and Waste Management have been scheduled for early May.

***You can support Teamsters in the solid waste industry by joining the Teamsters Recycle Power! group on Facebook, and by following developments on your Local Union's website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org). For Local 117 recycle and yard waste workers, the future is now!***

# STEWARDS BUILD POWER AT ANNUAL SEMINAR

## 220 Shop Stewards meet at the WSCC to build solidarity and strength



Local 117 members gather for the 24th annual Shop Steward seminar and appreciation day.

“Our goal is to lead the resurgence of the labor movement in the Pacific Northwest,” said Secretary-Treasurer Thompson as she laid out her vision for the future at the 24th annual Shop Steward Seminar and Appreciation Day.

“As Stewards, you are the backbone of this Union and will lead us to a better, more secure future for working families,” she said to the roughly 220 Stewards who attended the event at the Washington State Convention Center on Saturday, March 10.

The theme of this year’s seminar was building leverage during contract campaigns.

Andy Banks, the Director of the IBT’s Department of Strategic Campaigns, recounted the 2010 contract fight with Waste Management. Workers speaking out in the media helped lead to the ultimate success of the campaign, Banks said.

A distinguished panel of labor leaders, including Jonathan Rosenblum (Working Washington), Paul Bachtel (ATU), Ray Goforth (SPEEA), and Lynne Dodson (WSLC) discussed ways of building union power when bargaining in the public sector.

Karin Jones of the IBT’s Training and Development Department retold the vibrant history of the Teamsters Union from its founding in the late 19th century.

Between sessions, Stewards gave passionate testimonials about their experiences as Teamsters:

“It’s important to have the Teamsters in

our workplace so that we are strongly represented and we have a voice,” said DOC Shop Steward of the year, Greg McCombs of the Coyote Ridge Correctional Center.

Kris Fish, a Steward at Kraft said, “I can sum up the Teamsters with one word: pride.”

Linda Nelsen, a longtime Steward for King County’s professional and technical employees, said that this year’s seminar was the best she has ever attended. Nelsen is on the Union’s community sponsorship committee.

“We provide sponsorships for members doing good work in their community. In exchange for the sponsorship, they carry out the Teamsters’ message,” she said.

In all, it was an exciting event. Thanks again to all Local 117 Shop Stewards for your dedication, service and for all of the tremendous work you do on behalf of your co-workers and on behalf of this great Union.

## Scholarships for Teamster Families



2011 Alfieri scholarship recipient, Andy Nwaelele

Your Local Union is pleased to announce the following scholarship opportunities for Teamster families:

### LOCAL 117 JEFF ALFIERI SCHOLARSHIP:

Teamsters Local 117 is now accepting applications for the 2012 Jeff Alfieri Scholarship.

The deadline for submitting applications is May 11, 2012. The Local 117 Jeff Alfieri Scholarship of up to \$2000 is awarded to outstanding graduating High School seniors whose parents are members of Teamsters Local 117.

### LOCAL 117 SOLIDARITY SCHOLARSHIP:

The Local 117 Solidarity Scholarship is awarded to

members of Teamsters Local 117 in good standing seeking to further their education. Applications are accepted on an ongoing basis.

### ITWC SCHOLARSHIP:

The International Teamsters Women’s Caucus (ITWC) is now accepting applications for the 2012 ITWC Scholarship.

The International Teamster Women’s Caucus awards two (2) scholarships annually not to exceed five hundred dollars (\$500 USD) each to deserving high school seniors based on academics. The deadline for submitting applications is May 1, 2012.

For more information, including eligibility requirements and scholarship applications, visit your Local Union’s website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org).

# TEAMSTER HOOP DREAMS

Seattle Housing Authority Shop Steward brings kids hope



SHA Shop Steward William Polk's basketball team: "The Teamsters."

For his entire adult life, William Polk has given back to his community. "To be a positive influence on the lives of young people brings back positive results," says the 13-year Teamster, a Shop Steward at the Seattle Housing Authority.

## A LIFETIME OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

Polk started working with kids at the High Point Community Center when he was in his teens. He has been volunteering there ever since.

His current gig, as coach of a co-ed basketball team for kids ages 6-10, keeps him busy. During basketball season, which runs from September through April, he puts in about 80 hours a month.

A true unionist at heart, Polk has aptly-named his squad "The Teamsters." Before tipoff of each game, his kids bellow out, "Go Teamsters!"

Polk has coached kids who have won state championships and kids who eventually wound up in the NBA. Martell Webster of the Minnesota Timberwolves played for Polk.

## COMMUNITY SPONSORSHIP PROGRAM

Like elsewhere in the country, many of Seattle's High Point residents have fallen on hard times. Court fees,

uniforms, trophies – it all adds up; many families can't afford to have their kids play, Polk says.

To help offset the costs, Polk applied for support through Local 117's community sponsorship program in 2010. Polk's team was awarded a sponsorship by the Local 117 Executive Board later that year.

"I was so excited to get the sponsorship. I knew it would help support the youth of low-income families who want to play," he said.

From time to time, spectators ask Polk about the Teamsters. The Teamsters empower others in the same way that I believe in empowering kids, Polk tells them.

"I tell my kids: 'Don't listen to people who say you can't achieve your dreams. You can do what you want in life if you put your mind to it.'"

## Let the boss know... THE TEAMSTERS ARE IN THE HOUSE!



Local 117 Office Staff, Jeannie Hoyt

Boss got you down? Put it back in his face with a **Teamsters Til I Die** T-Shirt!

Your Local Union offers an assortment of Teamsters' apparel that you can

wear at work, home, membership meetings, Local 117 events, and during contract campaigns.

## LOCAL 117 ONLINE STORE

With your Local Union's new online store at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org), ordering your Teamster gear is now easier than ever. You can find:

- ✓ **Beanies**
- ✓ **Baseball caps**
- ✓ **Assorted T-Shirts**
- ✓ **Canvas jackets**
- ✓ **Vests**
- ✓ **Sweatshirts**
- ✓ **Do rags**
- ✓ **Lapel pins**
- ✓ **More!**

## FIRST-CLASS DELIVERY SERVICE!

Once you make an order, your Business Rep. will deliver the item(s) to you in person at your shop!

So show your Union colors and let the boss know: **The Teamsters are in the house!**

## LOCAL 117 EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

April 21, 2012 - Local 117 Bowl-A-Thon

April 28, 2012 - International Workers' Day March & Rally

May 1, 2012 - May Day March & Rally

## FOLLOW YOUR LOCAL UNION ON THE WEB!



Join your Union's Facebook page, follow us on Twitter at @teamsters117 and watch Local 117 videos on YouTube!

Sign up online to receive an electronic copy of Teamster Talk at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org).