



TEAMSTERS LOCAL 117

# DOCK TALK

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

Members of Teamsters Local 117

Spring 2011



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



GROCERY SUMMIT & FAMILY BARBECUE!

TEAMSTERS BUILDING, TUKWILA  
SATURDAY, MAY 21 @ 10 AM

Teamsters in the grocery industry are gathering for an industry-wide Grocery Summit to prepare for upcoming contract negotiations. The Summit will take place on Saturday, May 21, at the Teamsters Building in Tukwila at 10 AM.

The idea behind the Summit is to build solidarity and bring the power of a united grocery membership into the bargaining process.

The Summit will be the first meeting for members of all the grocery houses to discuss ways to improve communication and establish partnerships across the industry before bargaining starts this year.

The event will also be an opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with other Teamster leaders in the industry and to identify key topics for contract negotiations. Teamsters who work in the grocery industry at Safeway, Fred Meyer, Unified Grocers, and SuperValu will be in attendance, along with other Union members.

After the meeting, we will fire up the barbecue and enjoy an old-fashioned Teamsters chowfest! This is a family event, so bring your spouse and kids!

Indoor seating will be available in the event of rain.



SuperValu Teamsters Brian Lester (r) and Marty Munce (m), along with Business Rep. and President John Scearcy (l)

## TEAMSTER BIKERS AT SUPERVALU RIDE FOR WORKERS' RIGHTS

There is perhaps no more iconic symbol of freedom in America than the motorcycle.

Ever since a mangy Peter Fonda as Captain America in *Easy Rider* cruised his chopper across the deep South under a helmet swathed with stars and bars has the motorcycle represented this country's rebel nature, our affinity for risk, and our love of the open road.

Teamsters have long viewed both motorcycle riding and Unionism as natural expressions of American freedom. The Teamsters Motorcycle Association and Teamster Motorcycle Club have longstanding chapters across the country. Teamster biker clubs from Ohio to New Jersey to California donate

to children's charities, assist in organizing drives, and rumble together to strike lines in defense of good Union jobs.

Teamster brothers and sisters who ride together and work together know that their livelihoods depend on speaking with one voice.

### SUPERVALU BIKERS RIDE TO RALLY

At Local 117, two Teamsters from SuperValu carried on this proud tradition when they rode together to the **We Are One – Put People First** rally in Olympia on April 8.

On a glorious spring day, Marty Munce and Brian Lester, together with their Business Agent John Scearcy, motored

see Teamster Hogs, Page 4

# FRED MEYER TEAMSTERS TURN UP THE HEAT ON HEALTH CARE



*Fred Meyer Teamsters - Top, Left to Right: Nancy Santos, Al Meier, Brian Sparks, Bob Bonomo, Joe McDowell; Bottom Row Tom Pena, Rich Pribly and Trevor Taylor. Photo by Tim Kirby.*

As grocery negotiations approach, Teamsters at Fred Meyer are fired up over health care. Fred Meyer, which is owned by Kroger, operates the only major grocery warehouse in our area whose employees are not covered by Teamsters health and welfare.

Teamsters at Fred Meyer know that their health benefits are substandard and they are speaking out. The Company has tried to silence them by restricting the content of their Union bulletin board, but members are demanding that their voices be heard.

## YOUR LOCAL UNION NEWSLETTER

Two Teamsters at Fred Meyer, Tim Kirby and Nancy Santos, have requested that their articles on the health care issue be published in Dock Talk. The articles are published in their entirety here.

*Thanks, Tim and Nancy, for speaking out in your Union newsletter! If you want to publish an article in Dock Talk, contact Local 117 Communications Coordinator Paul Zilly at 206-441-4860 ext. 1269.*

## THE FIGHT FOR FAIR BENEFITS AT FRED MEYER



**By Tim Kirby**

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

I would like to say that I am proud of all the

achievements we have made while working at the Fred Meyer Distribution Center. We operate with strength, integrity, and credibility. And as we forge ahead into contract negotiations, let's do so standing shoulder to shoulder ready to take a stand. We are number one in the industry and should have the number one contract as well.

One of the biggest sticking points is medical. We can all agree that cost is constantly going up and the fact that the company is unwilling to help bear the load is quite frankly shameful. It seems our deductibles and premiums are going up every year for less coverage. We need

to demand not only what we deserve but what other warehouses (including Clackamas) are already getting and that is Teamsters Medical.

We know that employers are thinking every day about ways to cut back on wages, benefits, and positions. However, we are strong and well prepared to defend ourselves from these attacks. If employers want to take away our Health and Welfare or erode any part of our agreements, we need to let them know they will have a fight on their hands.

The Teamsters are one of America's largest and most diverse Union and we, as Fred Meyer employees, are ready to organize and fight for what we want and deserve. We are ready to organize. We must stand strong and hold management's feet to the fire.

My fellow brothers and sisters, you do have a voice. Use it for the rights and aspirations, not just for yourself, but for those to come behind you.

In closing, we are not the best because we are the biggest. We are the biggest because we are the best.

## THE STRONG CASE FOR TEAMSTERS MEDICAL



**By Nancy Santos**

At Fred Meyer, we have seen major increases in our deductibles. It's like we don't even have medical coverage,

it's so bad. Kroger is taking a lot of money from us while they continue to rake in record profits.

Hearing the details of Teamster medical and learning what Safeway, SuperValu and Unified Grocers are paying towards their employees' medical was shocking. Finding out that Kroger is paying for Teamsters medical for their employees at the Fred Meyer distribution center in Clackamas was a big slap in the face.

I feel Teamsters who were not at our demands meeting needed to know. I spread the word and didn't sugarcoat it. Everybody should be equally outraged. We all need to ask ourselves: Would you rather pay a high cost for inferior coverage or fight for superior coverage with no premium cost plus have retirement medical? Retirement medical is priceless and necessary with PEER 80. We cannot accept anything less than Teamsters medical. We cannot continue to open the door to be taken advantage of. It's imperative that we take a stand now and send Kroger a message that we demand industry standards.

The groundwork has already been laid by the other grocery warehouses. Thankfully, their hard work and determination negotiating their contracts gives us the leverage to fight for industry standards. Kroger is #1 in the industry, but they aren't giving their top producing Fred Meyer warehouse what everybody else is getting. They aren't even giving us what the Clackamas DC is getting. We are doing the same job for the same company! Is it fair for one Fred Meyer distribution center to reap the benefits of Teamster medical but not the other? How can anybody with an ounce of pride be okay with that?

The other grocery warehouses' contracts are up after ours. They have paved the way for us to have a good contract. Let's not disappoint them by accepting a mediocre contract and lowering the bar.

The Fred Meyer distribution center in Puyallup is one of the top producing facilities throughout Kroger. We shouldn't have to fight for industry standards – we should be setting industry standards! We are a huge part of their success. We are 367 skilled Teamsters represented by the 2nd largest Teamsters Local in the country. We have power! We just need to use it and stay united. As I've said before, nobody can fight for you if you aren't willing to fight for yourself.

## SAFEMART DEMANDS ROUNDS OUT MEETINGS AT ALL MAJOR GROCERY SHOPS



*Members of the Safeway Produce Steering Committee meet to prepare for bargaining.*

Steering Committee members in the grocery industry have helped organize demands meetings for Local 117 members at all major grocery warehouses. The purpose of the meetings was to identify issues that will be critical in bargaining, develop top priorities, and discuss strategies for success.

The last of the grocery demands meetings was held on April 23, when over 100 members at Safeway gathered together at 10 AM and 5 PM in their Union hall in Tukwila.

### SAFEMART TEAMSTERS SPEAK OUT

At the two meetings, Safeway members spoke to Shop Steward Joe Harmon about why it is important to be involved:

"I came out to support my fellow Union members and address all of the things that need to be addressed for the new contract," said Cesar Camarena, a Shop Steward in the produce section of the Safeway Distribution Center in Auburn.

Also representing Safeway produce at the meeting was Stefan Stowell: "This is about fairness. We have a difficult job and we need to make sure labor standards are where they should be and that our employer maintains what we need so that we can have a decent

quality of life."

On the grocery side, Fred Piunno, a longtime Teamster of 24 years, weighed in: "I came out because I am concerned about the contract, and I care about what's going on. Everybody feels the same way."

At the 10 AM meeting, there was an especially strong showing of Latino members. Carlos Quezada was one of the many Spanish-speaking members on hand:

"Estuvo muy bien la reunión. Me gusto todo lo que dijeron e explicaron. Me da gusto de que Joe Harmon y Cesar Camarena hagan sido los delgados en nuestro grupo y que hagan traído más gente en nuestro lado de produce," he said.

Now that our concerns have been voiced at demands meetings and through contract surveys, the next step is to come together as an industry and build Union solidarity at the Teamsters grocery summit on May 21. Remember that we will be barbecuing after the meeting and that your families are welcome!

***Special thanks to Brother Joe Harmon for interviewing members and taking photos at the meeting!***

## Teamster Hogs

Cont. from page 1

their hogs from the Union hall in Tukwila to the Capitol steps carrying this powerful message:

"What's happening in Wisconsin and across the country is an attack on the working people, plain and simple. We need to stand up together and fight, otherwise pretty soon the only jobs you will be able to get in this country are Wal-Mart-style jobs," said Munce, a Teamster who has worked at SuperValu for 36 years. "I am proud to be part of this important event," Lester said.

### UNION MEMBERS UNITE AS ONE

The rally was organized by the Washington State Labor Council and its affiliates to fight back against the attack on workers that is taking place across the country, from Wisconsin to Ohio to Idaho to right here in Washington State, as anti-Union politicians and their corporate cronies attempt to strip workers of their hard-earned wages, benefits, and rights to bargain collectively.



## Teamsters Local 117

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Munce and Lester joined over 10,000 proud Union members, including over one hundred Teamsters, at the rally. "It was an awesome show of support for Wisconsin and for Unions. I've never seen so many people dedicated to defending the rights of workers," Munce said.

Munce and Lester, like so many of us in the grocery industry, recognize that our basic freedoms as working people are under attack. Unscrupulous corporate interests are attempting to rob the American worker of the freedom to have a solid Union job, the freedom to feed and care for our families, the freedom to bargain collectively, the freedom to live a dignified existence without the fear of losing our jobs or our homes.

"This rally showed the world that there is powerful solidarity among working people and that we will not stand by and have our rights in the workplace stripped away," Searcy said.

*If you are interested in forming a Local 117 motorcycle club, please contact Business Representative and President John Searcy at 206-441-4860 ext. 1240.*

## IBT TO AUDIT PRODUCTION STANDARD AT UNIFIED GROCERS



Confusion at UG.

Your Local Union has requested that the International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) conduct an audit of the production

standard at Unified Grocers.

Your Union's request for an audit comes as a result of changes to the system that have affected the standard and led to disciplinary action against members of the Local.

The audit will be conducted by an IBT industrial engineer and will cover forklift drivers, order selectors, loaders, and receivers. Once the audit has been officially scheduled, we will let you know.

"An audit is necessary because the new system is not working correctly. I have a three page itemized list of problems that need to be addressed," said Shop Steward Ken Garcia, who has worked in the warehouse for 22 years. Garcia said that the new Triceps system was installed and became fully functional in October last year.

Garcia filed a grievance after fellow members cited numerous issues with the new system. "We've worked under a production standard for years, but it needs to be a fair and equitable standard. The new system is flawed. An audit will show that," he said

Your Union will continue to aggressively defend the rights of members at Unified Grocers through the grievance and arbitration process. If you have any questions, talk to Business Representative Cecil Fouts at 206-441-4860 ext. 1228.

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

May 21, 2011 - Grocery Summit  
June 16, 2011 - Membership Meeting

**WANTED!** Reporters, writers, photographers and other Teamsters in the grocery industry who want to contribute to this newsletter. For more info., contact Communications Coordinator, Paul Zilly at 206-441-4860 ext. 1269.

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.