



# Teamsters South Sound

Members of Teamsters Local 117



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

## GRIEVANCE WINS LEAD TO BACK PAY FOR MEMBERS

### Grievance Wins at the City of Tacoma and the PAF

**B**eing vigilant about enforcing your contract makes you a good unionist; it can also pay dividends down the road.

That's what Teamsters in the **City of Tacoma's General Unit** and the **Public Assembly Facilities (PAF)** discovered after two recent grievance settlements resulted in back pay compensation for over a dozen members.

Craig Hamburg, a Shop Steward at the City of Tacoma, helped defend members' rights in the City's Streets and Grounds Division. Hamburg filed a grievance after nine members who had worked in advance of a snow emergency were denied premium pay that they were entitled to as outlined in their contract.



#### CHANGE IN WORKING CONDITIONS

"They decided to change the way they'd always done business," Hamburg said. "They told us that they'd be doing a shift change, but that they wouldn't be paying us the overtime."

After filing the grievance, Hamburg, along with Local 117 Business Representative Jeff Clark, met with management staff and the City's Public Facilities Director to discuss the issue.

The meeting resulted in a settlement that paid members over 80 hours in back pay compensation. The City and the Union also agreed to clarify the language, which ultimately strengthened the contract.

"We don't have an adversarial relationship with management, but we felt like we needed to work this out. Everybody is happy with the outcome," Hamburg said.

#### KEEPING THEM HONEST AT THE PAF

A similar grievance led to the resolution of an ongoing issue at the PAF.

The City had not been paying members as leads even though they were performing lead work. When Local 117 learned about the violation, Public Sector Coordinator Matthew House met with the City and successfully resolved the issue on behalf of PAF members. ●

#### Defend your Rights at Work!

- ✓ **Stay Informed.** Attend Union meetings and visit your Union's website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org).
- ✓ **Know your rights.** If you don't have a copy of your contract, request one from your Business Representative. Then read it!
- ✓ **Enforce your contract.** Your contract is meaningless if it's not enforced. If you suspect a violation, talk to your Shop Steward. If your Shop Steward is unavailable, contact your Business Representative or call your Local Union at 206-441-4860.

## GROUPS VOTE IN THE TEAMSTERS' PENSION

### Toward a more secure retirement



**M**embers in the public sector across the South Sound and beyond are voting to improve their

retirement security by including the Teamsters' pension as a defined benefit in their collective bargaining agreements.

Local 117 just signed an MOU with the City of Tacoma after members voted for the pension in January. At the City of Kent, members recently voted to double their pension contributions, while Teamsters at Water District 25, the City of Pacific, and several units in King County have also started making pension contributions.

The plan is well-funded, and, as the largest area-wide multiemployer pension plan in the United States, it covers more than 230,000 active participants through pension agreements in 13 Western states.

"For me, it's a no-brainer," said Paul Johnson, a Shop Steward at the City of Kent. "There's nothing like it on the market."

If you are a Local 117 member and are interested in negotiating the pension into your contract, talk to your Business Representative about setting up a presentation with a pension professional to answer your questions.

**Information about the pension is also available at [www.wctpension.org](http://www.wctpension.org).** ●

## A message from your Secretary-Treasurer



Brothers and Sisters:

Late last month the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) released its report on Union membership for 2012. Sadly, the percent of workers who were members of a Union fell to 11.3 from 11.8 percent. Shockingly, Union membership fell despite the fact that **union workers in 2012 earned \$200 per week more in median wages than non-union workers.**

Not surprisingly to me, Union membership was highest among workers aged 55 to 64 (14.9 percent belong to Unions) and lowest among workers aged 16 to 24 (only 4.2 percent belong to Unions). We really have done a poor job of educating our young people about the value of Unions.

As the War on Workers continues to rage, Union-represented workers have had to become ever more vigilant in asserting our legal rights. In 2012 there were 19 major strikes or lockouts (the BLS defines a major strike or lockout as one that involves more than 1,000 workers) that resulted in 148,000 workers withholding their labor. As a comparison, major strikes in 2011 involved 113,000 workers. Do these statistics show that more and more Union members are standing up for their rights? You bet they do.

To most of America, the BLS statistics are just a bunch of numbers. Teamsters Local 117 members understand that what's happening with Unions across our Country is more than just a math equation. We know that Union density matters. We know that more Union members translate into more leverage at the bargaining table. We know that the Union difference matters. We know that Union wages and benefits mean that we can take care of our families. We know that without a Union contract, employers will change our wages, hours and working conditions whenever they want.

An employer representative recently accused me of being "radicalized". I owned that characterization. I have been radicalized by opportunistic employers who are making money off the backs of their workers, but refuse to compensate those workers for their efforts. I have been radicalized by the inequities in our society. I have been radicalized by the incredible strength and determination of so many of our members who have taken on the fight at Coca Cola, DOC, Waste Management, SCS, Davis Wire, and UNFI.

Here's what employers need to know about Teamsters Local 117. We're not looking for a fight. But we will fight for workers' rights. And when we fight, we win.

In Solidarity,

Tracey A. Thompson  
Secretary-Treasurer

## NEW BUSINESS AGENT



**Brian Blaisdell**

**B**rian Blaisdell is your Local Union's new Business Agent, representing the City of Fife, the Town of Steilacoom, UEBT, and the Tacoma Humane Society. Brian brings a unique skill set to Teamsters Local 117 from his 21 years' experience in the laundry industry. He has been a steadfast Union activist and a committed community volunteer throughout his career.

*"I want to fight for workers' rights and work hard to negotiate fair contracts that value our members and their families. We need to be ready to stand up to the employer when issues come up and not let those issues go."*

Brian Blaisdell can be reached at 206-441-4860 ext. 1241 or by email at [brian.blaisdell@teamsters117.org](mailto:brian.blaisdell@teamsters117.org). ●

## Scholarships Available for Members of Teamsters 117

**A**re you the parent of a high school-aged senior in need of money for college? Your son or daughter may be eligible for one of the following scholarships:

- ✓ **HOFFA SCHOLARSHIP**  
*Deadline: March 31*
- ✓ **ITWC SCHOLARSHIP**  
*Deadline: May 1*
- ✓ **LOCAL 117 ALFIERI SCHOLARSHIP**  
*Deadline: May 10*

Check the scholarship rules and guidelines at your Local Union's website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org).

# WELCOME! New 117 Shop Stewards from the South Sound



**A**mong the twenty Local 117 members who attended the training for new Shop Stewards on Saturday, March 2 were six new Stewards from the South Sound region. The training covered a range of topics, including grievance handling, new member orientation, elements of just cause, and a Steward's general role and responsibilities. Representing the South Sound at the training were:

- **Russell Barber**, South Sound 911
- **Sally Easton**, South Sound 911
- **Justin Fitzgerald**, City of Tacoma
- **Rich Hill**, City of Auburn
- **Teresa Lorberau**, TPD - Crime Analysis Unit
- **Susan Marihugh**, Tacoma Public Library

## **What is the most challenging part of your job?**

**SALLY:** Being able to do everything in one day. We have massive workloads and a smaller workforce than we used to.

**SUSAN:** The hardest part of my job is disciplining my staff. I hate doing that.

**RUSSELL:** Keeping up with all of the changes. At my job, I have to constantly educate myself and a lot of that reading is done outside of work.

## **Why was it important for you to get involved in your Union?**

**SUSAN:** I got involved because I want to know what's going on and I want to be in on the decision making process for our future contracts.

**TERESA:** I got involved when I found out that our unit was one of the few groups at the TPD that was not unionized. It was a good thing that we got unionized otherwise we would all be taking furloughs right now.

**RUSSELL:** At our agency we have a history of adversarial relationships.

I got involved because I want to help change that. We just combined multiple agencies into a larger agency, so this is a really vital time for us.

**SALLY:** That was the same for me. I wanted to help with the major change we made from LESA to South Sound 911. It means a lot for our future.

## **What did you learn today that you can bring back to your workplace:**

**RICH:** I learned a lot about the grievance process - how to break it down to see if it's just a complaint or an actual grievance, timelines, things like that.

**SALLY:** I learned that if we want to be organized and unified, we need to go out of our way to see people on different shifts so that we know what their concerns are.

**SUSAN:** I learned that it's important to make sure that new employees feel welcomed and that they know how the process works.

**RUSSELL:** I learned that there is so much more to the Union than what

the Shop Stewards generally pass along. I learned that we need to get our bulletin boards up-to-date. Right now, ours is pretty disorganized.

## **Anything else you'd like to add?**

**SUSAN:** How can we get one of those really cool Teamster coats so we can go to the grocery store and look tough?

## **NOTES:**

- **Thanks to Russell, Sally, Justin, Rich, Teresa, and Susan for taking the time to sit down and share their ideas and experiences after the training. We welcome you and all of the other new Shop Stewards at Teamsters 117!**
- **Don't forget that the Local 117 Shop Steward Seminar and Appreciation Luncheon will take place on Saturday, March 16.**
- **To get a cool Local 117 jacket, go to [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org) and click on the Local 117 store. ●**

# STOP THAT BILL!

By creating a defined contribution, SB5851 would put your retirement security at risk



Local 117 members at Lobby Day on February 21.

Legislators down in Olympia are pushing forward a bill that would put public sector employees' retirement security at risk.

Senate Bill 5851 aims at supplanting public employees' defined benefit plan, or pension, with a defined contribution plan, or 401k.

When the market crashed in 2008, it decimated millions of workers' 401ks across the country. SB5851 would ultimately expose public employees in the State of Washington to the same kind of risk.

Local 117 has been on the ground in

Olympia fighting the bill.

Lobbyist Teresita Torres, together with our labor partners, signed on in opposition to the bill when it was heard by the Senate Ways & Means Committee on March 1. Your Union also sent out an action alert urging members to tell their legislators to oppose the bill.

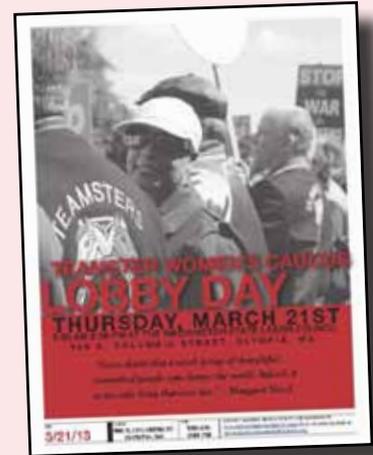
**TAKE ACTION! Protect your retirement**  
**Call the Legislative Hotline in Olympia at 1-800-562-6000 and tell your representatives that SB5851 is bad public policy and would harm workers' retirement security.**

## DEFENDING COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND WORKERS' COMP

In addition to the fight against SB5851, Local 117 members are lobbying this session in opposition to SB5347, a bill that would undermine public employees' collective bargaining rights, and a series of bills designed to privatize our State's workers' compensation system.

**If you would like to join fellow Local 117 members for our next Lobby Day on March 21, contact Political Action Coordinator Lily Wilson-Codega at 206-794-2606.** ●

## Join Us! Lobby Day in Olympia



Our elected leaders have the power to safeguard our collective bargaining rights, prevent job loss in the public sector and raise revenue to protect Teamster families across Washington State.

Please join us for our 4th lobby day of the 2013 legislative session sponsored by the Teamsters Women's Caucus:

### LOCAL 117 LOBBY DAYS - 2013

- **March 21**
- **April 18**

Local 117 Lobby Days are an opportunity for you to speak with your representatives about critical issues you face on the job.

On March 21, we will be meeting at the Washington State Labor Council offices at 9 a.m. (906 S. Columbia St., Suite 330) in Olympia to distribute materials and for a brief orientation over coffee before we head out to legislative appointments throughout the afternoon.

**For more information, contact Local 117 Political Action Coordinator Lily Wilson-Codega at 206-794-2606.** ●

## LOCAL 117 EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

- March 16** - Shop Stewards' Seminar starting at 7:30 a.m.
- March 21** - Local 117 Lobby Day in Olympia starting at 9 a.m.
- March 21** - General quarterly membership meeting at 7 p.m.
- March 21** - New member orientation meetings at 12 p.m. and 6 p.m.

### FOLLOW YOUR LOCAL UNION ON THE WEB!



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

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