

President's Newsletter

Office of the President
United Farm Workers of America, AFL-CIO
La Paz, Keene, California 93531



Vol 1 No. 16
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PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Planning for the Future

In the next few issues of the Newsletter we will reserve this space to talk about some of our plans and ideas for improving the management of the union. We'll introduce you to some new administrative projects we're developing for the near future. This week, however, we'll focus on the importance of management and planning in furthering the goal of turning the union over to the workers.

Looking back, it seems that for many years organizing was the main business of the union. But now with more than one hundred contracts and thousands of workers to service, we are forced to change our earlier concepts and re-evaluate our purpose.

Last summer we distributed a form asking many of you to answer the question, "What is the business of the union?". It will take a long time before we can fully answer that question, but your responses guided us in setting the direction the union will take in the next few years. In reading each of your thoughts, ideas and suggestions, I realized many things: that we are lacking in many areas such as administration and training, that we have very little knowledge of collective bargaining, and that we consider ourselves as a movement first and a union second. So we took a long, hard look at the direction of our organization and saw that we weren't headed on a straight course towards collective bargaining. And what's more, if we continued in the same direction, we could never turn over the business of running the union to the workers.

In trying to understand what we were doing wrong, I began to read everything I could find on management and planning, and discovered a whole new science on how to operate an organization smoothly and efficiently. Management includes everything from how to plan and administer programs and facilities, to how to organize paper work. We've learned through experience that it's much harder to manage paper than it is to organize people. Administering contracts is only one part of the paper work. Every day we spend hundreds of man hours processing medical claims, legal papers, letters, membership records, and dozens of other pieces of information. With management we found there are solutions for all of the problems we faced in getting the work done quickly and effectively. And we realized that in order to give the workers the services they need, we must implement new management techniques.

Planning is probably one of the most important techniques of good management. The more we learn about it, the more we realize we can no longer exist without it. Instead of making quick decisions on a day-to-day basis, the leadership is establishing long range goals and priorities. This sets us on a direct course and we are then able to focus our efforts on one or two main areas. Most of the staff and ranch committee leadership will be involved in the planning process at one time or another and next week we'll go into more detail on how that will be done.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Arbitration

UFW Wins Donlon Arbitrations

Three arbitration matters involving Donlon Trading Company,

Oxnard, were settled in our favor last week according to Sister *Barbara Macri*, Arbitrations Division Director.

Brother *Santos Lopez* received \$3,149.00 in back pay and got back his original seniority date along with 775 hours for the Robert F. Kennedy Medical Fund (\$128.00) and vacation credit. We filed the original grievance when the company improperly recalled and then laid off Brother *Lopez* and improperly took away his seniority. He was elected Vocal of his Ranch Committee on September 16, 1977 and was laid off on September 22, 1977.

We filed a grievance against the company for Brother *Ramiro Espinoza* because he was improperly laid off for seven days and got fewer hours and less overtime than other truck drivers. The arbitrator ruled that the company violated the contract by discriminating against a worker for union activity. (Brother *Espinoza* was steward of his crew.) He was awarded seven days back pay and overtime earnings amounting to 7.2% of total hours awarded for a total of \$480.00, RFK for the total number of hours of back pay and vacation credit.

Brother *Porfirio Romero* who was unjustly discharged will receive more than \$1,000 back pay (from September 20, 1977 until the end of the tomato season in November) and more than 300 hours RFK. The arbitrator ruled the company discriminated against him for union activity. Brother *Romero* was elected Secretary of his Ranch Committee on September 16, 1977 and was fired on September 20, 1977. The company is to remove both discharge and warning notice from his work record.

The arbitrator stated that the patterns of all three grievances were primarily the same. Problems appeared at the time workers became involved in union activity. He said that if the spirit of the contract is to be upheld, if there is to be harmony in keeping with the terms of the collective bargaining contract, both the company and union must follow the word of the contract as close and as often as possible. In speaking of Brother *Romero's* case he stated, "It is difficult to understand how the grievant, who was considered a good picker since he commenced working for the company, suddenly loses his ability to detect bad from good fruit. It is strange that problems started when the grievant was selected as a union representative."

Negotiations

Imperial Valley

Mario Saikhon, Inc., largest lettuce shipper in the Imperial Valley and one of the biggest cantaloupe and watermelon growers in California signed a contract with us February 9. Executive Board Member *Marshall Ganz* credits the hard work of Negotiator *Ann Smith* and the excellent negotiating committee headed by Brother *Jesus Reyna* for the agreement which brings 350 new workers under UFW protection. Since one of Saikhon's operations is in Wellton, Arizona, our union will be recognized in that state as well as California. The Saikhon election held January 7, 1976 resulted in a score of UFW, 156; Teamsters, 62; no union, 3; and challenged ballots, 70. We were certified collective bargaining agent August 18, 1977.

The contract's new foot rate for cantaloupes sets a precedent for the industry. Rates go from \$4.75 per foot in 1977 (one foot of a three-foot high truck bed) to \$5.25 per foot—a 12% increase—plus time and one-half for Sundays (\$7.87 1/2 per foot). Cantaloupes are harvested daily including Sundays. Wage rates for watermelons will be negotiated at the field depending on field conditions and are not included under the "no strike" clause.

The agreement calls for an eight hour work day for lettuce workers who previously had to work 10 to 11 hours per day. The new lettuce rate is 54 3/4¢ per box going to 57¢ per box in July, 1978. Other provisions include frost season waiting time after the first hour, one hour travel pay for the 80 mile drive to Wellton, Arizona, transportation for loaders and paid mileage for irrigators after the first location.

The base wage is set at \$3.55 per hour and will go to \$3.70 per hour in July. Tractor drivers: \$4.37 1/2 per hour now, \$4.52 1/2 in July. Irrigators: \$3.60 per hour now and \$3.75 in July or \$86.40 and \$90.00 for 24 hour shifts.

Retroactivity dates back to August 18, 1977—date of certification—for company regulars. Retroactive wages for irrigators will be 45¢ per hour; thinners, 40¢, and tractor drivers, 26 1/2¢ to 37 1/2¢ per hour. The rate of 2¢ per retroactive to February 14, 1977 will be paid to California lettuce trios. All retroactive wages are to be paid to workers by March 3, 1978.

The contract provides for paid vacations and the usual contributions to the RFK Medical Plan, MLK Farm Worker fund and JDLC Pension Fund. Expiration date is January 1, 1979 to coincide with other vegetable industry contracts. Renegotiations will begin in October, 1978.

Delano

The first rose contract in the Delano area has been signed with Conklin Nurseries. UFW First Vice President *Dolores Huerta* negotiated the two year contract which covers 150 workers at peak.

In the first year the contract has hire-in wages at \$3.30 per hour, going to \$3.45 per hour after two weeks of work. In October of 1978 the basic rate increases to \$3.60 per hour and in 1979 to \$3.70. The wages are retroactive to November 7, 1977 to cover this last season's harvest. The contract also provides for contributions to the Union's Robert F. Kennedy Medical Plan, Martin Luther King Jr. Fund, and Juan de la Cruz Pension Fund in the second year of the contract. Workers will also receive vacation pay and paid holidays.

The UFW was certified at Conklin Nurseries August 19, 1977 nearly two years after the election of November 1975, which the UFW won with 70 votes to 29 votes for no union. Nine votes were challenged.

Sister *Huerta* has been negotiating with three other rose companies: Mount Arbor, Montebello and McFarland, which have been accused of bad faith bargaining by an ALRB hearing officer.

Field Office Training

Florida

Looking toward the day when all union functions will be turned over to farm workers, emphasis has been placed on training designed to accomplish this goal.

In accordance with this plan, Brother *Frank Ortiz* recently spent 10 days in Florida holding training meetings with UFW staff who will, in turn, train ranch committee leadership. He explained the entire union structure beginning with the National Executive Board and continuing on through La Paz administration, field offices and ranch committees. He defined roles of union representatives and ranch committee members as they relate to the structure. He also helped organize the offices so they can function more effectively and worked with staff on planning short range goals and programs. Florida staff, under the direction of Brother *Stephen Roberson*, will now train ranch committee members.

While visiting the Florida field offices, Brother *Ortiz* met ranch committee leaders. He found them to be dynamic, anxious for information and extremely receptive to the idea of receiving training.

Imperial Valley

Training is also going on in Calexico. Board Member *Marshall Ganz* reports they have developed a new manual for handling grievances and a meeting covering the first step of the grievance procedure was held on January 25, 1978. Purpose of the training is to teach ranch committees and stewards how to handle grievances.

Follow-up meetings were held to reinforce the training and to make sure the material covered was completely understood. A meeting covering the second step of the grievance procedure was held February 8, 1978. Training will be reinforced by

follow-up meetings and detailed answers to any questions which might arise.

Staff training is emphasizing self-organization, coordination, follow-up and planning. Field Reps are using one hour of each day to plan their activities, concentrating particularly on actions which need to be followed up.

CITIZENSHIP PARTICIPATION DEPARTMENT

Second Mechanization Conference Held

Union members from Oxnard, Santa Maria, San Ysidro and San Jacinto joined Los Angeles area UFW supporters for a day-long conference on mechanization February 11. Held at Mount Carmel High School in Los Angeles, the event drew more than 300 participants. Along with participants from local Los Angeles colleges, five University of California campuses were represented: UC Santa Barbara, UC San Diego, UC Riverside, UC Irvine and UCLA.

The morning program featured a union-produced filmstrip on mechanization in both English and Spanish, and union leaders speaking on the effects of the machines and what can be done to counter this threat to farm workers. Groups in afternoon workshops discussed what might be done to alert the public to the menace of the machines and the plight of displaced farm workers.

Citizenship Participation Director and Board Member *Mack Lyons* and his staff presented the program and coordinated the day's activities. Boycott and field office staff were responsible for bringing in union members and supporters.

The last conference of the series will be held February 25, 1978 - 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Jefferson School, 7th & Andrade, Calexico, California

OFFICIAL NOTICES

Latest Elections

Mel Finnerman, Inc. /Calexico, Oxnard/lettuce, celery/UFW, 117; Int'l, 30; no union, 29; challenged, 30; void, 4.

New Contracts

Howard Rose Co./Hemet (Coachella)/roses
Conklin Nurseries/Delano/roses
Mario Saikhon, Inc./Calexico/lettuce, melons

Personnel

| New Staff | Location | Department |
|---------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Antonio Amezcua | La Paz | Cent. Admin. |
| Javier Angulo | San Ysidro | CAD |
| Sue Ardisson | Salinas | NFWHG Clinic |
| Salvador Bustamante | Calexico | CAD |
| Christine Clark | Lakeland, Fla. | CAD |
| Bruce Gagnon | Avon Pk, Fla. | CAD |
| Carlos Garza | Apopka, Fla. | CAD |
| Mary Jill Kelly | Ft. Pierce, Fla. | CAD |
| Joaquin Ramirez | Delano | CAD |
| Ruth Trevino | Oxnard | MLK Camp. Ctr. |

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Peter Velasco, N.E.B.

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Vol 1 No 29
May 22, 1978



PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Richard Chavez Visits Washington State Workers and Chicago Supporters

Executive Board Member *Richard Chavez* received front page coverage in Washington newspapers when he told reporters on a recent trip the UFW plans to help workers organize in that state.

Brother *Chavez* was invited by Chicano students to speak at Eastern Washington University in Spokane. He also visited the union office in Sunnyside, Washington in the Yakima Valley, where organizing is being headed by Brothers *Roberto Treviño* and *Jesus Lemos*.

In Sunnyside Brother *Chavez* held a press conference to explain that we have been offering services to farm workers in the valley for about seven years, but recently the workers asked us to help them organize towards obtaining union contracts. Thousands of workers, he told the press, are ready to begin organizing in the hops—a plant used in beer brewing—as well as in other crops. Brother *Chavez* made it clear we are not ruling out the possibility of using strikes or boycotts in Washington, if it's necessary. He said right now the union is mainly interested in offering economic assistance and guidance, while the workers themselves will take on the main responsibility in organizing.

When asked about probable opposition to our organizing efforts, Brother *Chavez* replied that we always expect opposition to unionization.

Later that day Brother *Chavez* met with about 1000 workers at an evening rally, where he spoke of earlier organizing struggles in California. He told the workers that at some point their fight would lead to a strike and to be ready for a difficult struggle when it came. He said strikes take a great deal of commitment and sacrifice, in our brief history they had led to people getting blacklisted, jailed and in some instances, killed.

Brother *Chavez* gave the workers an explanation of the law in California which allows workers to vote by secret ballot election for union representation.

Before leaving Brother *Chavez* told the group, made up of many young, enthusiastic workers, the Union has committed itself to help them in their organizing efforts, and will set up offices in whatever parts of the state the workers call us.

The next day Brother *Chavez* flew to Chicago to help our boycott staff thank about 1000 long-time supporters for their continuous help over the years. The fund raising event, which took place about a week before closing down the boycott office, was co-sponsored by the UFW and the J.P. Stevens boycott, and featured Brother *Chavez* and Brother *Sol Branzel* of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union as the main speakers. Also on hand, were National Farm Worker Ministry President, *Olga Sierra Sandman*, and a former J.P. Stevens employee, *Myrtle Cribbs* of Georgia.

Brother *Chavez* urged our friends in Chicago to continue to help with the J.P. Stevens struggle and to help in other labor causes as well. The event raised \$15,000 to help the J.P. Stevens boycott and to fund UFW organizing drives and strikes.

ORGANIZING

Victory at Rancho Sespe

Workers at Sespe Ranch claimed the sixth victory at an Oxnard area company in recent weeks. The two hundred workers voted: UFW, 116; no union, 53; challenges, 4, and void, 1.

The company, located in Fillmore, just 30 miles from Oxnard, has in past years held the reputation for worst conditions and lowest wages in the area. In 1975 Oxnard growers used workers at Sespe to break their strikes.

But company tactics could not break the spirit of these workers. According to UFW organizer *Artie Rodriguez*, the company promised the workers they could use a certain building to conduct their meetings. However, the night of the first big meeting workers arrived at the building to find that all the locks had been changed. Not to be stopped, the workers found an open area between the houses and called it "la oficina de cuatro vientos", the office of four winds. The next day workers cleared the area and hung banners, and from then on it was used as the meeting place.



Photo by Ned Dunphy

Rally at Rancho Sespe the night before the election

The night before the election a big rally was held with a mariachi band and speakers from the workers and the union. In preparation for the rally, the workers made 50 flags with eagles on them, set up the stage and sound equipment, invited representatives from six other citrus companies, and composed a corrido which they sang that night.

The organizing for the election was done in just thirteen days, almost entirely by the committees of workers, and coordinated by a steering committee. President, Don *Catarino Rangel*; Secretary, *Jamie Zepeda*; Treasurer, Don *Jesus Toledo*; First Vocal, *Rogelio Rodriguez*, and Second Vocal, Don *Felix Arellano*. We wish to congratulate all the other members of the organizing committees whose names we could not all mention here.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Negotiations

Blythe

The UFW reached its first agreement with a Blythe area vegetable grower at Nish Norian Farms in the Palo Verde Valley near the California-Arizona border. The one year contract covers the company's 25 year round employees and 90 employees at peak.

The agreement is a breakthrough in the Union's drive to negotiate contracts with growers in the Blythe region. The Union was certified as bargaining agent at three other area ranches after winning elections conducted by the ALRB.

But all three companies are refusing to bargain with the UFW and have appealed the certifications to the state Court of Appeals. One of the three certified companies, High and Mighty Farms, was the destination of a busload of farm workers that careened into an irrigation ditch in January 1974, killing 19 workers. An investigation later fixed the blame for the high death toll on safety violations on the bus, which was owned by a farm labor contractor.

The base wage level jumped from a previous rate of \$3.25 per hour to \$3.55 per hour when the contract begins. In July minimum wages will increase to \$3.70 per hour. The rate for

an irrigator's 24 hour work shift goes from \$70.24 to \$86.40 under contract

The agreement also calls for paid holidays and vacations, and medical, pension, education fund and citizenship benefits.

The Union had filed unfair labor practice charges against Nish Norian for bad faith bargaining, and as part of a settlement the company will pay all its workers 12% of their 1977 earnings

The UFW won an election at the company October 13, 1975. The results were. UFW, 29, Teamsters, 22; challenged ballots, 1. The Union was certified on November 30, 1976.

Arbitration

Salinas

A grievance regarding a work stoppage at California Coastal Farms in Salinas was recently arbitrated before J.J. Griffin, arbitrator.

The case involved the firing of an entire crew, including the steward, for refusing to work in a lettuce field that had already been cut twice before. The company charged the crew was fired for just cause by refusing to perform work as requested. However, neither the union nor the ranch committee president were notified of the stoppage, as called for in the contract, and were thus unable to try to resolve the problem

Although the crew violated the contract, Griffin stated he could not uphold the company's actions because they did not fulfill the requirements of the contract either. The crew will be rehired as "new" employees through the hiring hall, except for the steward who remains discharged. Workers will be allowed to regain their seniority at the end of the 1978 or 1979 seasons, depending on previous status.

At the hearing Griffin spoke of the seriousness of work stoppages. "I can't think of a more serious breach of agreement against the company and against the union, for workers to take it upon themselves to withhold their labor.

"The contract clearly states that there shall be no slowdown or strikes. If the Union does not deliver on this promise, it is a heinous breach of the contract.

"Every one of you, whether you voted for it (work stoppage) or not, broke the word of Cesar Chavez. He promised no interruptions of work, and you broke that promise. Which one of you would be proud to make Cesar a liar?

"Some of you, under oath, said that you did not vote for the stoppage; and that if you were exercising your individual conscience, you would have continued to work. From one point of view, those of you are doubly damned. You broke Cesar Chavez' word and your own. You were not men enough to express your views to your fellow workers."

Coachella

Four grievances involving hiring hall violations were arbitrated with Maggio Tostado, a Coachella vegetable grower.

In one case the steward, Brother *Eugenio Luna*, was not properly notified of a work recall, and a new worker was hired instead. The company was asked to pay *Luna* one-day's wages and benefits for the loss of work

In another case, Brother *Juan Hernandez* was given the difference of what he had made one day and what he would have made if he had been given the higher paying job, which the company gave to a new worker

In the other cases the company also hired workers without going through the hiring hall or providing proper notice as

agreed to in the contract. In these cases the Union will be made whole for any benefits and dues the Union lost as a result of the contract violation. Said payment will include interest at 7%

The company was not ordered to pay workers who were bypassed because of its failure to go through the hiring hall this time. But the arbitrator warned the company that if future violations occur, they will be liable to pay wages to the workers who were waiting at the hiring hall.

ADMINISTRATION

Transportation Conference Held

On April 23rd we held a transportation conference at our headquarters in La Paz with over 50 staff members present. The purpose was to gather information on our transportation needs and to begin planning for quality transportation at a reasonable cost to the union

The ideas generated from the conference will be used in formulating new policies on the purchasing, assigning and care of cars. To assist in this project an Advisory Council on Transportation, made up of five rank and file staff members, will recommend policies and priorities taking into account the needs of the whole union.

In addition we will be assigning a transportation officer in each geographic area to be responsible for the maintenance and registration of local cars. The transportation officers will also instruct drivers on the care of their cars and make recommendations on the good or bad performance of the cars and their drivers.

RFK MEDICAL PLAN

Does the Kennedy Plan cover chiropractor care?

No. Chiropractic care of any kind is not covered by the Kennedy Plan. The rules of the Kennedy Plan do not allow it. Even though there is a law in California that requires some insurances to pay for chiropractic services or treatments, this law does not apply to the Kennedy Plan

If you have a question about the RFK Medical Plan, please send it to us at the President's Newsletter, P.O. Box 62, Keene, CA 93531

OFFICIAL NOTICES

Latest Elections

Rancho Sespe/Oxnard/citrus/UFW, 116; no union, 53, challenged ballots, 4; void, 1.

Latest Certifications

Sun World Packing Corporation/Coachella/citrus/4-25-78 ✓
Adam Farm/Santa Maria/row crops/3-16-78 ✓

New Contracts

Nish Norian/Blythe/vegetables ✓



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