



Volume 68

March 2015

Issue 1

# VOICE

O F U F C W L O C A L 7 7 0



## Welcome Haggen to Southern California!

See: "President's Report" and "From the Field," pages 2 & 4



# VOICE

O F U F C W L O C A L 7 7 0

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### UFCW 770 VOICE

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# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



**RICK ICAZA**

**President**

In our conversations with you, we often focus on the needs and challenges of UFCW members.

But we have several challenges facing us that don't just impact our members—they impact others in the industry too.

When we stand up for ourselves, we stand up for every worker in the industry. Our victories in protecting our wages and benefits reverberate throughout the industries we represent, raising wages and helping us organize.

It also shows we will not tolerate employers who seek to further fatten their profits at the expense of workers. This makes us stronger at every bargaining table as employers understand that our strength and resolve are genuine.

This issue of the Voice of 770 will touch on several good examples of our efforts having an industry-wide effect.

- We are entering our second year without a contract at our El Super grocery markets, and our efforts to get a new one are rapidly escalating. Right now we represent workers at seven of their more than thirty stores. Our victory here will help improve conditions not only for workers at the non-union El Super stores, but set an example for employees of other companies of what we can accomplish in this fast-growing segment of the industry.
- We are about to enter negotiations with Rite Aid and CVS, while we continue to organize new CVS stores. Preserving our benefits by standing unified will show potential members in the yet-to-be-organized stores that coming together really does work and pay off.
- The contract covering our Kaiser members, part of a multi-union Coalition of Kaiser Permanente Unions, expires in July. A strong showing at this industry giant will not only protect and improve the condition of our members, but raise the bar for employees across the health care industry.
- Our master food agreement will expire on March 6, 2016. Since Safeway has been sold, Kroger and Albertsons are the only employers who are part of the multi-employer bargaining unit. We are not sure whether they will continue to bargain

together or separately with the Southern California locals. We will start preparations in the immediate future..

Our goal as a union is to stand united in protecting the rights of our employees. But it has always been a core principal of our charter that our efforts must work to the benefit of working families everywhere. We always emphasize that you are a union member as well as community member—and working toward the benefit of your union brothers and sisters is also working towards the benefit of your community.

That is why consumers rally to us in times of conflict, and why we can always count on their critical support.

Our union's size, our strength, and our repeated and proven ability to stand fast in the face of corporate threats and intimidation make us formidable at the bargaining table. But it also makes us formidable in our industries—and that rebounds to the benefit of our union and our community.

We face many challenges this year and the next. I am confident that you and our union brothers and sisters are up to the task. ■

*PRESIDENT RICK ICAZA has been a member of Local 770 since 1956. He has served on the union's staff as a Research Assistant, Organizer, Business Representative and Secretary-Treasurer. He was elected President in 1981.*

# SECRETARY-TREASURER'S MESSAGE



**JOHN GRANT**  
Secretary-Treasurer

## What Does an Ethical Workplace Mean to You?

Throughout Ireland, workers are responding to a campaign initiated by their Congress of Trade Unions to speak out on “what an ethical workplace means.” They are responding with videos, pictures, comments, or tweets. (A tweet? For those of you—like me—who have never used Twitter, we have included a short explanation on how to tweet! See below.) Even Ireland’s President, Michael D. Higgins, has embraced the idea, saying this is “an important conversation that involves all of us.”

This is an important discourse, which we often touch on but never bring back to a fuller discussion, of the challenge of living ethically these days in this country. Just reflecting on the issues we discuss in this issue of *The Voice*, we see how there is often a failure of business to conduct its affairs in a decent, ethical way.

- El Super: violates the most basic of labor laws in refusing to

bargain with the union and fires workers who dare to speak truth to power—unethically refusing to recognize the voice of their workers and then terminating them for speaking out;

- Rite-Aid: attempts to deny its employees a medical plan that workers have built and negotiated over decades—unethically denying the history of their voice as well as their health and welfare.

An ethical workplace means each employee and his or her voice are respected in the workplace. It’s a standard of behavior that encompasses the treating of everyone equally, with dignity and respect.

But, to me, an ethical workplace also means where and how you conduct your business.

- When the major retail grocers created a “food desert” by abandoning the poor and communities of color and left millions of Americans without affordable access to good food: that’s unethical and wrong.
- When Kaiser has begun to partner with Walmart and Target (two of the worst mega-employers): that’s unethical and wrong.
- When business discriminates against any of the members of our communities: that’s unethical and wrong.

This is why OUTreach, UFCW’s lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender constituency

organization, is so important. From highlighting and fighting discrimination at, from, and in the workplace to rallying against violence based on sexual preference and/or identity, OUTreach enables us to understand more significantly what an ethical workplace must look like. This is why our participation, your participation, in the UFCW OUTreach Contingent in the Los Angeles Pride Parade on June 14 is vital. Go to [www.ufcw770.org](http://www.ufcw770.org) for more information.

So, that is my vision of an ethical workplace. What would you say an ethical workplace means to you?

Contribute on our website [www.ufcw770.org/ethicswork](http://www.ufcw770.org/ethicswork) or tweet us at tweet [@ufcw770](https://twitter.com/ufcw770), using the following hashtag: [#ethicswork](https://twitter.com/ufcw770).

### How to Use Twitter:

- Create a free Twitter account at [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com).
- Start following others to start building your Twitter network.
- Post a short message, or “tweet,” by using the “What’s happening?” box.
- Add categories to your tweet by using hashtags, which simply means adding the # symbol before a word (e.g. #UFCW770, #Union).
- Mention other users in a tweet to direct it towards them by using the @ symbol (e.g. @UFCW770). ■





**PAUL EDWARDS**

**Field Director**

Last year when Albertsons and Vons announced the merger of two of the largest retail grocery chains in the country, it immediately brought into question whether these major grocers would be able to operate all of their existing locations under the guidelines of the Federal Trade Commission (FTC). The second question was: If the FTC ruled that the merged company would create a market density greater than allowed by the FTC guidelines and formulas, what would happen? In fact, it was determined that 83 Vons and Albertsons stores in Southern California would need to be divested to gain approval for the merger transaction. This divestiture brought up the third and most important question affecting UFCW members: Who would buy these divested stores?

President Icaza, having the foresight that this transaction could devastate UFCW members'

## **UFCW Members Welcome Haggen to Southern California**

jobs, immediately requested a meeting with California State Attorney General Kamala Harris. At that meeting, he and Secretary-Treasurer John Grant presented the negative impact that could occur if non-union companies were allowed to take over the divested stores. This would include a loss of thousands of union jobs as well as the loss of hours that determine monetary contributions to the Trust Fund that pays for your pension and medical benefits. For these reasons, President Icaza proposed several guidelines that would protect our members' jobs.

Over the next several months, the Attorney General's Office met with your union and closely monitored the merger transaction. When it was finally complete in January 2015, it was announced that Haggen would purchase all the divested stores in Southern California. Haggen also agreed that it would operate 100% union and that they would assume the current collective bargaining agreement and abide by all its existing terms and conditions.

The end result is that all union jobs are now preserved and there will be no loss of hours or contributions to our member's Trust Fund. As the transition takes place, our members who work for Vons and Albertsons are being given the opportunity to stay in their existing, divested store, and become employed by

Haggen. In fact, 99% of our members have chosen to work for Haggen. The first of 37 stores in UFCW Local 770's jurisdiction converted to a Haggen store on March 24th in Palmdale, and the last store in San Pedro will transition in early May.

Haggen is the largest independent grocer in the Pacific Northwest. They operated eighteen stores in Oregon and Washington before expanding to the additional 146 stores purchased as part of the Vons/Albertsons merger throughout Northern and Southern California. ■

On Thursday, April 2nd, 34-year-member Jimmy Patoja shook President Rick Icaza's hand and said, "Thank you, Mr. Icaza, for all your hard work in securing our jobs and our pension and for negotiating the same contract as Ralphs, Vons, and Albertsons." A proud union member since 1981, Brother Patoja worked for Dales, then Lucky's, then Albertsons, and now the new Haggen store in Tujunga. He was elated to meet President Icaza in person.

*Paul Edwards has been with Local 770 since 1991; he served as a union representative for 15 years before becoming Field Director, overseeing all field activities for union representatives in five counties.*



**KATHY FINN**  
**Director of Research,**  
**Bargaining and Education**

Over the years, we've faced a number of challenges to our benefit plans, but none has been as potentially devastating as the current threat to our drug industry benefits. In both the unionized food industry and the unionized drug industry, most of the workers' health care benefits are administered by a trust fund that is operated jointly by the unions that represent the workers and by the companies where they work. This means all decisions about how the benefits work must be approved by the companies and the unions, which protects workers from having their benefits reduced or changed unreasonably.

At CVS, the workers in stores represented by the union prior to 2013 get their benefits through this jointly managed trust fund, but the workers in stores that joined the union more recently get their benefits through the company plan. The CVS company

### **Drug Industry Health Benefits Under Attack—It's Time To Fight Back.**

plan is controlled solely by CVS; the unions do not have input into how that plan operates on a regular basis. The workers can only address issues about how the benefits work when our contract is open for negotiations.

Recently, CVS decided to change the eligibility requirement in the company plan from an average of 23 hours per week to an average of 30 hours per week. This change will result in hundreds of workers losing the health care benefits they and their family have relied upon. We cannot address these changes until our current CVS contract expires in 2017. At that time, we will certainly negotiate about this issue and try to make health care improvements for the workers in the newly organized stores as well as the stores organized prior to 2013 that are already in the trust fund benefit plan.

In addition to this CVS issue, the health care of the entire drug industry is under attack from Rite Aid. When our Rite Aid contract expires in July of this year, we believe that Rite Aid will try to get out of the trust fund benefit plan, a plan where the unions have some control over the benefits, and instead try to put all its workers in the Rite Aid company plan, where Rite Aid can make all the decisions without any input from the workers. This

would allow Rite Aid to make changes to benefits similar to what CVS did in its company plan. This is totally unacceptable for our Rite Aid members.

Additionally, if Rite Aid pulls out of the trust fund plan, that plan would become less viable for the CVS members who remain in the plan, and their benefits would be threatened as well. Now is the time for all members in the drug industry to unite to fight this threat to our benefits.

Local 770 has begun to prepare for this fight. This year we will be holding a drug industry steward conference in May, where we will launch our campaign to preserve health benefits in our drug industry. These benefits must be preserved and improved upon for our drug industry members. After all, these companies are in the health care business. Shouldn't they be providing for the health care needs of their workers as well as their customers? ■

*KATHY FINN joined Local 770 in 1997 and serves as Director of Research, Bargaining and Education.*

Michael A.  
Straeter  
President



Jesse  
Gonzales  
Secretary-  
Treasurer

March 23, 2015

Rick Icaza  
UFCW Local 770  
630 Shatto Pl.  
Los Angeles, CA 90005

Dear Rick,

I wanted to express to you, your executive staff and great attorneys on your success in collaborating with the California Attorney General Kamala Harris in securing a commitment that the soon to be divested fifty eight Albertsons and twenty five Vons/Pavillions will be sold to a union grocery operator, namely Hagen Grocers. In fact, change in ownership has already commenced and will continue for the next three months.

All of us need to pause a moment and reflect on this momentous event. There were several articles in the Super Market News and Los Angeles Times that disclosed several suitors for these soon to be divested stores, many of whom were non-union operators.

I firmly believe if it wasn't for your efforts and leadership in this area we most certainly would have been at serious risk to suffer further, serious Market Share erosion, loss of good paying union jobs and a real funding crises for our food industry pension plan if these eighty three stores had been sold to non-union operators

The contents of your letter from October 25, 2014 which is enclosed clearly discloses what you and Local 770 did for all your sister locals in California as well as the UFCW locals outside of California and for our International Union.

In sincere appreciation for your efforts and in fulfilling 1442's financial obligation to help underwrite 770's cost in achieving the above I have enclosed a check which represents our financial obligation based upon the pro-rata allocation.

Rick, many many thanks for your vigilance and continued leadership on behalf of all the UFCW Locals in the United States.

Sincerely and fraternally yours,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Michael A. Straeter'.

Michael A. Straeter  
President

Cc: Marc Perrone, International President  
Shaun Barclay International Vice President, Director of Organizing  
Southern California CEO's

Enclosures (3)

United Food and Commercial Workers Union

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## GETTING ORGANIZED



**RIGO VALDEZ**  
**Director of Organizing**

### **Join the Boycott**

As a union, we are only as strong as our weakest link. Our union has been working to build up all our links, and the El Super link has been under construction for almost two years. That link is not weak anymore. The workers at El Super have been fighting for a contract since April of 2013. Their contract expired in September of 2013, and they have been fighting hard ever since. In the last edition we wrote about how workers were tricked into signing a petition to decertify their union. Those workers re-certified our union, the UFCW, by 75%. That is a mandate! It was a mandate to the company to sit down and negotiate. At the end of the vote count held at the National Labor Relations Board, we handed a letter to El Super's attorney asking the company to return to the table. It did not. So on December 20, the UFCW locals that represent the workers at El Super called a boycott

against all the stores the company operates in the U.S. The boycott will remain in effect until the workers get the fair and just contract they deserve.

On December 22, 2014, The Coalition for a Better El Super, a group of community and consumer organizations that came together to support the El Super workers, joined the boycott and added strength to the workers' struggle. In January, as the boycott built, the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor added the weight of the local labor movement to the fight. In early February 2015, there were 100 community-based organizations that had endorsed the boycott. Last week the California Federation of Labor added their endorsement to the boycott, by putting all locations of El Super on the Statewide Boycott list. On the eve of Cesar Chavez' birthday, we received the public endorsement of the United Farm Workers Co-Founder and civil rights icon Dolores Huerta. She asked all shoppers to honor the memory of Cesar Chavez by not shopping at El Super. As the boycott has grown, so has its effectiveness. Since the boycott started, more than 70,000 customers have been turned away—that's about 10% of everyone who walks up to an El Super.

Our efforts have also affected them in Mexico. On March 30, 2015, in Xalapa Mexico, UFCW 770 was represented at the shareholders meeting of Grupo Comercial Chedraui, the Mexican parent of El Super. Our union

had the right to address the board at this shareholder meeting. Mexican activist Blanca Velasquez Diaz spoke on behalf of UFCW 770 and its members at El Super. She shared with the company the words of Flora Castaneda, a mother of three and an El Super cashier for 11 years, explaining the reasons her coworkers and her community are protesting the company. "We are standing together at El Super because we want to be able to provide for our families. Right now, the cost of living keeps rising, but our wages don't keep up. The company is seeing that their consumers support us, and our communities won't stand for poverty pay and violations of our rights."

The El Super workers are not a weak link in our union. Over the past two years they have become one of the strongest, and they are ready to take the next step.

El Super workers deserve better—they deserve fair pay, they deserve better benefits, they deserve paid sick leave, they deserve paid holidays, they deserve affordable health care, and they deserve a fair contract. They deserve your support!

Join the fight. Join the boycott. For more information, contact your union representative and visit [www.boycottelsuper.org](http://www.boycottelsuper.org). ■

*RIGO VALDEZ is 770's organizing director. He has more than 15 years experience organizing workers for UFCW and SEIU, and was instrumental in the historic Justice at Smithfield and Justice for Janitors campaigns.*



**SAVE THE DATE!**  
 June 14, 2015

**Be Out and Proud with UFCW members from  
 all over the US and Canada!**

**RSVP with Kim Tran**  
 (213) 201-7117 or [Kim.Tran@ufcw770.org](mailto:Kim.Tran@ufcw770.org)  
[www.ufcw770.org/outreach](http://www.ufcw770.org/outreach)

## HOLDING THE LINE

### **From the faraway strike in the Emerald Isle to the at-home struggle with El Super**



**Vons 2678 in Ventura**  
*Row 1:* Susan Evans, Andy Pier, Lovana Sanchez  
*Row 2:* Carmen Rodriquez, Daniel Silva, Matthew Quitoriano, Bailey Simpson, David Blanson

**Decency for Dunnes Workers**

The UFCW across the USA and Canada showed solidarity with Dunnes Stores workers in Ireland who are on strike for decency and fairness from their company. The UFCW sent 24 solidarity photos to the striking workers, and our support has been reported in the media and plastered all over Twitter and Facebook in Ireland.

Even more importantly, the Communications Director of

Mandate trade union has advised that the knowledge of support from retail workers in North America is a source of inspiration for striking workers on the picket line—in the rain. He said:

“From Pittsburgh to Seattle and from Los Angeles to Richmond and all the way up to Canada, we thank you sincerely for your support! Our struggle is your struggle and when you need our support, we will be there too!

**SOLIDARITY WORKS!!! ■**

## ONE OF OUR OWN



On March 23, 2015, Local 770 Union Representative Cheryl Butler was honored by the NAACP at a reception for

### **Cheryl Butler Honored by NAACP**

African American appointees in Sacramento. The reception was attended by Governor Jerry Brown, whose office made the appointments.

Sister Butler will represent the Board of Pharmacy as an observer on the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), for a new School of Pharmacy at West Coast University in Los Angeles, beginning in April 2015.

By observing a key component of the accreditation process, State

Boards can better assess the efficiency of the overall process of the accreditation system. This will help to ensure confidence in the quality of training for the graduates of professional education.

We are very proud of Cheryl and her accomplishments—she is a licensed Pharmacist who worked for Rite Aid for many years and served on Local 770's Executive Board before joining the staff of Local 770. ■

## **OFFICIAL RESULTS OF LOCAL 770 NOMINATION OF OFFICERS OF UFCW LOCAL 770**

President Ricardo F. Icaza, Secretary-Treasurer John Grant, Recorder Martel Fraser and 30 Executive Board members were elected by acclamation to a new three-year term as Officers of UFCW Local 770. The new term is July 1, 2015 through June 30, 2018.

The deadline for nomination petitions to be submitted to the Election Chair was Friday, February 6, 2015, at 5 p.m. Since no other nomination petitions were received by the deadline, no further election procedures were necessary.



# La Voz

DEL UFCW LOCAL 770

## MENSAJE DEL PRESIDENTE

### **RICARDO ICAZA** **Presidente**

*En nuestras conversaciones con usted, hay veces nos enfocamos en las necesidades y desafíos de los miembros de la UFCW.*

*Pero tenemos varios retos que no sólo afectan a nuestros miembros—también impactan a otros en la industria.*

*Cuando luchamos por nosotros mismos, luchamos por todos los trabajadores en la industria. Nuestras victorias en la protección de nuestros salarios y beneficios resuenan a lo largo de las industrias que representamos, elevar los salarios y ayudarnos a organizar.*

*También demuestra que no vamos a tolerar que los empleadores busquen engordar aún más sus ganancias a expensas de los trabajadores. Esto nos hace más fuertes en cada mesa de negociaciones como los empresarios entienden que nuestra fuerza y determinación son legítimos.*

*Esta edición de the Voice of 770 tocará varios ejemplos de nuestros esfuerzos, que han tenido efecto en toda la industria.*

*• Estamos entrando en nuestro segundo año sin contrato en nuestros mercados de comestibles El Super y nuestros esfuerzos para conseguir un nuevo contrato están aumentando rápidamente. Ahora*

*representamos a los trabajadores en siete de sus más de treinta tiendas. Nuestra victoria aquí le ayudará a mejorar las condiciones no sólo a los trabajadores en las tiendas sin-uniión de El Super, sino establecerá un ejemplo para los empleados de otras empresas, de lo que podemos lograr en este segmento de rápido crecimiento de la industria.*

- Estamos a punto de entrar en negociaciones con Rite Aid y las tiendas CVS, mientras seguimos organizando nuevas tiendas CVS. Preservando nuestros beneficios y manteniéndonos unidos les mostrará a los miembros potenciales en las tiendas que todavía-no-son-organizadas que manteniéndose unidos realmente trabaja y paga.*
- El contrato que cubre a nuestros miembros de Kaiser, que es parte de una coalición de multi-uniones de Kaiser Permanente, se expira en julio. Un fuerte mostrando en esta industria gigante no sólo protegerá y mejorara las condiciones de nuestros miembros, sino elevara el listón para los empleados en la industria del cuidado de salud.*
- Nuestro acuerdo principal de alimentos se vencerá el 6 de marzo de 2016. Puesto que Safeway se ha vendido, Kroger y Albertsons son los únicos empleadores que forman parte de la unidad de negociaciones multi-empleador. No estamos*

*seguros si seguirán negociando juntos o separados con los locales del sur de California. Comenzaremos las preparaciones en el futuro inmediato.*

*Nuestro objetivo como Unión es mantenernos unidos, proteger los derechos de nuestros miembros. Siempre ha sido nuestro núcleo principal trabajar para el beneficio de las familias trabajadoras en todas partes. Siempre insistimos en que usted es un miembro de la Unión, así como miembro de la comunidad—y trabajando por el beneficio de sus hermanos y hermanas de unión también está trabajando hacia el beneficio de su comunidad.*

*Es por eso, qué los consumidores nos apoyan en épocas de conflicto, y siempre podemos contar con su apoyo crítico.*

*El tamaño de nuestra Unión, nuestra fuerza y nuestra capacidad probada y repetida de apoyo rápido frente a intimidaciones y amenazas corporativas nos hace formidable en la mesa de negociaciones. Pero también nos hace formidable en nuestras industrias—y que no solo beneficia a nuestra Unión sino también nuestras comunidades.*

*Nos enfrentamos a muchos desafíos este y el próximo año. Estoy seguro de que usted y sus hermanos y hermanas de unión están a la altura de la tarea. ■*





# UFCW Local 770

PO Box 770 Hollywood, CA 90078

[www.ufcw770.org](http://www.ufcw770.org)

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## General Membership Meeting

Tuesday, June 9, 2015  
7 p.m. • 4th Floor  
Los Angeles Office

## Office Closed

Monday, May 25 – Memorial Day  
Friday, July 3 – Independence Day

For ticket information, please visit our website at: [www.ufcw770.org](http://www.ufcw770.org)

## OFFICE LOCATIONS

### Arroyo Grande

127 Bridge Street  
Arroyo Grande, CA 93420  
(805) 481-5661

### Bakersfield

**For Kaiser Members only**  
5000 California Ave., Suite 211  
Bakersfield, CA 93309  
(661) 323-2866

### Camarillo

816 Camarillo Springs Road,  
Suite H  
Camarillo, CA 93012  
(805) 383-3300

### Harbor City

25949 Belle Porte Avenue  
Harbor City, CA 90710  
(310) 784-5340

### Huntington Park

**For Packinghouse Members Only**  
1:30 to 5 p.m. • Monday - Friday  
2701 Gage Ave., Suite 202  
Huntington Park, CA 90255  
(323) 581-2071

### Newhall

23030 Lyons Ave., #102  
Newhall, CA 91321  
(661) 726-4656

### Santa Barbara

4213 State Street, Suite 201  
Santa Barbara, CA 93110  
(805) 681-0770

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