



## Spencer Hogue's Column

### Interest in unions near all-time high

**I** am truly honored to fill the role of president of Joint Council 3 as Steve Vairma has moved on to bigger and better things (retirement).



Steve led Joint Council 3 for 16 years and leaves behind a great legacy. The foundation he built has given us the tools to continue building on his successes and grow our Joint Council into the future.

I want to personally thank Steve for his mentorship and the example that he was to me. I am forever grateful for his leadership. I wish both him and his wife Teddy all of the best in a well-deserved retirement.

\*\*\*

In my 33 years of involvement in the labor movement there has never been this level of interest from the American worker when it comes to belonging to a union.

You see news stories nearly every day talking about organizing victories, strikes and the plight of workers. High profile organizing victories like those at Amazon and Starbucks have energized workers that seek better pay, benefits and working conditions.

High profile negotiations and labor disputes are also showing a whole new generation the collective power of labor. Winning strong contracts for our members is the fuel that keeps this flame lit. And when it comes to strong contracts, the Teamsters and more specifically the local unions in Joint Council 3 deliver the goods.

With the recent gains and interest in the labor movement comes mounting pressure from our enemies. Unfriendly employers, politicians and dark money groups are attacking labor and the American worker like never before.

Recently in Montana, Principal Officers Erin Foley, Jim Soumas and hundreds of Teamster members led the charge once again to defeat the anti-union, anti-worker "right-to-work" legislation that was

*Continued on page 4*

Teamsters Joint Council No. 3  
10 Lakeside Lane – Suite 2 • Denver, CO 80212

### New Joint Council 3 president

## Organizing is labor's lifeline

Spencer Hogue, the new president of Teamsters Joint Council 3, is well aware that a local union's success depends on organizing new members.

It has been nearly 60 years since approval of unions in the United States has been this high, according to a recent Gallup poll.

Times are changing.

Polls show non-union workers are becoming more favorable toward unions and the workplace changes they support. And, lo and behold, the general public's bias against workers has ebbed as people have begun to realize what is good for workers is generally good for everybody.

"The organizing atmosphere seems to be better--now perhaps the best in years--for organizing new members," said Spencer.

That fact grabs Spencer's attention:

"Let's get busy."

The veteran labor leader began his union career early. He served first as a union steward in both package and feeder operation at UPS. In 2007, he was appointed a trustee on the Local 222 executive board. Later he became recording secretary.

During his time at UPS, Spencer was a union activist, volunteering time organizing, educating members, and holding management accountable.

Like many other unions at the time, Local 222 was suffering a significant loss in membership due to closures, deregulation, and economic conditions.

In 2010, Spencer became a business agent for Utah Teamsters Local 222 in Salt Lake City.

It didn't take long for him to realize that organizing members was the lifeline for his local union's survival.

At the time, labor union participation in the nation's workforce had been on a slow but steady decline for about 50 years

Three years later Spencer was elected secretary-treasurer, a position in which he believed he could do something about building the local union's membership. He did.

In nine years under his leadership, the membership grew by 70 percent, and the general fund grew by more than 300 percent.

\*\*\*

*Continued on page 4*



### Fort Collins Teamsters meet IBT president O'Brien

*In April Teamsters General President Sean O'Brien met with a contingent of Anheuser-Busch Teamsters from Colorado Local 267 at the Brewery, Bakery and Soft Drink Conference in Tampa, Florida. O'Brien gave the keynote address at the meeting. In the photo left-to-right are Kenny Rodriguez, Lori Schleber, Kevin Kohlberg, Mike Cova, Local 267 secretary-treasurer, IBT President O'Brien, Earth Lindsay, Local 2667 president, Reed Gard and Josh Lara.*



# LOCAL UNION REPORTS: UTAH

**Local 222**

Secretary-Treasurer  
Spencer Hogue



## Local 222 scholarship winners are exceptional

### TEAMSTERS LOCAL 222

Proudly representing workers in the State of Utah since 1931

2641 South 3270 West • Salt Lake City, Utah 84119

Phone: 801-972-1898 • Fax: 801-972-8226

[www.teamsterslocal222.org](http://www.teamsterslocal222.org)

#### BUSINESS AGENTS OF TEAMSTERS LOCAL 222

Spencer Hogue — ext. 28

Marty Cowin — ext. 15

Britt Miller — ext. 17

Jeff Kendall — ext. 14

Jeff Steffon — ext. 18

Grant Edwards — ext. 29

Garrett Tuttle — ext. 100

Alex Rojas — ext. 27

Allen Tracy — ext. 16

Josh Ikola — ext. 13

Gabriella Killpack — ext. 26

Amanda Story — ext. 20

Carly Lunt — ext. 21

Cora Lucero — ext. 11

SALT LAKE CITY — Teamsters Local 222 is proud to announce this year's Ralph J. Taurone scholarship winners. An exceptional group of students applied. As always, we are proud to be working with these youth and grateful to everyone who has donated or participated in our fundraising events to make this possible.

Our Golf Tournament this year will be held on Saturday, June 3. We are looking forward to a great event. Our goal is to match last year's efforts in fundraising and continue to award \$30,000 or more per year to aid in the continuing education of the youth of our membership.

This year's winners are:

Kylee Robbins	Kalli Thalman
Jordyn Andreasen	Evan Birkinshaw
Sierra Brown	Daija Hutchins
Kenidee Gunter	Arionna Archuleta
Hoyt Blomquist	Brooklyn Sampsel
Mackenzie Archuleta	Deisel Blackburn
Addison Flint	Ainsley Drake
Roger McDonald	Kenyon Farnsworth

Salanieta Malohifo'ou Jayden Li

### Alex Rojas Business Agent

**American Airlines** — A lot of progress has been made in negotiations. If you can, please follow them on Facebook and Instagram to stay up to date with the latest news.

**Hertz** — We will be gearing up for contract negotiations for the Gold and CSR departments. We will be branching out soon with contract proposals and meetings.

**UTA** — We are in the process of contract negotiations as I write this. Negotiations are going very well with a lot of progress being made. The leadership at the local level was successful at freezing UTA's federal grants to the amount of \$260,000,000 because of the latest legislation that was just passed here in Utah HB 243.

**American Red Cross** — Contract negotiations are going very well. Getting

closer for a final proposal to be put forth with the members.

Once again, I would like to thank all the stewards for everything you do!

### Jeff Steffon Business Agent

**UPS HUB** — The company thinks they can eliminate jobs and have supervisors perform them. Well now they are paying three

times as much in grievances.

Shop steward Melissa Breen has been on the front lines defending the contract and holding the company accountable. While the company continues to lay off employees daily, management continues to hire.

Shop stewards continue to go to the new hire classes and sign-up new members and educate them of their rights.

### Utah Retirees

## Warm days beckon outdoor activities

SALT LAKE CITY — With summer here we can enjoy warm weather, work in our gardens and yards and enjoy outdoor activities with our families.



You will miss out if you do not come and check out our club. It is about friendship, socializing and reminiscing. Being a club member is like honoring our union, which has given us so much security in our retirement with our pensions.

We had a potluck at our May meeting. The club supplied fried chicken. This was our 45th year as a club, so it was our birthday party. A good time was had by all. Thanks to all who brought a dish to share. We honored our mothers with a rose for Mother's Day. The June meeting

is on the 14th, and we will have croissant sandwiches.

A sad note. On March 18 our past president, Dave Fackrell, passed away. He was president for nine years. Our club sent a beautiful bouquet to his memorial. He will be greatly missed.

Meetings are on the second Wednesday of the month at 1 p.m. New retirees have their dues paid by the union for the first year. This includes you and a guest. The Teamster Union Hall is located at 2641 So. 3270 W., SLC. Any questions contact Jim Chandler at 801-513-5402. If you call, please leave a message and your number as we screen our calls. You can also text, 801-698-9959 or e-mail [jchan5000@yahoo.com](mailto:jchan5000@yahoo.com)

**Jim Chandler**  
President

## Labor's lifeline . . . cont.

Continued from page 1

Since the onerous Taft-Hartley legislation was passed over President Truman's veto in 1947 the job of unionizing workers has been recognized as organized labor's single most difficult job, one unfortunately that many unions do not choose to perform.

To Spencer, organizing new members—in both free bargaining and right-to-work states—is the key to the labor movement's future. Economic education of its membership must, of course, be a prime factor in building union strength.

Spencer's labor education began in 1990 when he started working part time at UPS as a teenager. For the next seven

years, he worked in almost every capacity at UPS. Then he was offered a job as a delivery driver, and it changed his outlook.

\*\*\*

The new council president praised Montana Teamsters for their nonpartisan approach to lobbying, which recently helped the state legislature defeat a right-to-work proposal.

"There is no one party that is right on every issue, but we must demand that the politicians we support also support us," he said.

Spencer and his wife have two children, a 21-year-old son and an 18-year-old daughter who recently graduated from high school.

MAY/JUNE 2023 • VOLUME 67 NO. 3 • OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF JOINT COUNCIL OF TEAMSTERS #3  
Covering Arizona, Colorado, Montana, New Mexico, Utah, Wyoming and Idaho



**JOINT COUNCIL #3 EXECUTIVE BOARD**  
SPENCER HOGUE — Utah, president

KARLA SCHUMANN

DUANE GROVE

ERIN FOLEY

JESSICA PRATHER

ANDREW PALMER

DEAN MODECKER

Published bi-monthly as the editorial journal of Joint Council of Teamsters No. 3, 10 Lakeside Lane, Suite 2E, Denver, CO 80212. Subscriptions paid by membership dues. Rate \$4 per year. All address changes should be mailed or telephoned to local union office (the address and phone numbers appear in the local union columns). We must have the member's Social Security number in order to make an address change.

POSTMASTER: Send address change to Rocky Mountain Teamster, 10 Lakeside Lane, Suite 2E, Denver, CO 80212. We must have the complete reader identification number (top line of mailing label) in order to make an address change.

The opinions which appear in bylined articles in this newspaper are not necessarily the opinions of Teamster Joint Council #3 or the editorial staff. Letters, articles and photographs are welcomed, but they may be abridged to meet space requirements.

Address newspaper correspondence to Editor, Rocky Mountain Teamster, 10 Lakeside Lane, Suite 2E, Denver, CO 80212. Address all other union correspondence to the appropriate local union.

Periodicals postage paid at Denver, CO and at additional mailing offices. Printed in the U.S.A.

USPS 469-420 — ISSN 0888-9082



# LOCAL UNION REPORTS: NEW MEXICO

**Local 492**

Secretary-Treasurer  
Andrew Palmer



## Uncertainty clouds contract negotiations

ALBUQUERQUE — There is a lot of uncertainty and contract questions from UPS, ABF, and T-Force, concerning either the fast-approaching contract expirations, or just questions about negotiations in general.

I am sorry, but there is not a lot we in the hall can talk about when it comes to active negotiations currently underway. As information is sent out from the IBT I will make sure it gets to each of you.

If you are not currently signed up to the 492 website or app please consider doing so, as this will give me the ability to communicate with each of you as quickly as possible.

All you need to do is go to teamsters492.org and register, as well as either the Google Play or Apple app store to download the app. In the meantime, please know that our national negotiating teams are working around the clock, when necessary, to get each of us the contracts we deserve.

The Teamsters Local 492 Retirees Organization has recently gone through a change in leadership. First, I would like to thank Phil Tuff, our outgoing president. Sir, thank you for your years of dedication.

Also, thanks to Brother Moises Ortega who recently took over as new president of the organization. Brother Ortega was a long-time business agent for this local union, and I am thankful he decided to stay

involved.

If you are a retiree from Local 492, the Retirees Organization needs your support. Please call Moises at (505) 362-0646.

### Ernest Ortega David Trujillo

#### Business Agents, UPS

Brothers and sisters, Local 492 has been busy during these last couple of months since the last publication of the RMT, and we hope all is well. We would like to thank you for the warm reception we've gotten during the center visits we've had throughout the state recently.

In keeping with our commitment to strengthen and further educate our membership, Local 492 will be hosting IBT training and development instructors as well as bringing DRIVE representatives to centers throughout the state.

On June 10 and 11 Local 492 will host an internal organizing training seminar which will teach members how to educate other members about the importance of being union and the rights and benefits that come with a collective bargaining agreement. This training is meant to strengthen our union from within.

On June 17 we will be hosting the stewards training seminar also instructed by IBT

Stewards Training Department. Both experienced and new stewards will benefit from the knowledge gained during this seminar that will teach contract enforcement as well as many other helpful things necessary to help our membership.

Also, Local 492 will be taking part in a DRIVE campaign and we will be visiting as many centers in the state as possible in the two weeks ending June 17 and June 24. We look forward to seeing you all and bringing someone from the International to see our state and meet our members.

As we head into summer, we want to remind you all to stay hydrated and find ways to cool off. Use your negotiated breaks to help with that but make sure to code out all time taken. Be safe, have fun and enjoy your summer.

### Joe Russom White Paper

Congratulations to our three new stewards, Ben Martinez (Triad), Alex Pino (Creamland) and Tracy Naranjo (NCRTD). I look forward to working with all of you.

Openers have been sent out for upcoming negotiations with EVSWA and ATF. Teamsters 492 would like to apologize to members who were caught up in telephone confusion regarding the registration for the

Southwest Multi-Craft Safety Incentive Training classes. We believe the problem has been taken care of.

Also, a reminder for the upcoming steward seminar and internal organizing seminar, we need RSVPs to assure that everybody attending will be accommodated.

Please email or reach out to your agent. Again, we will have representatives from the International presenting these seminars so please make every effort to attend.

Work safe everybody and remember to report any accidents immediately.

In closing, I would like to stress the importance of all members keeping up with dues being deducted. I strongly recommend members take note of this on their paychecks and make sure dues are being held out by the company before it becomes an issue.

#### New retirees

Martin Martinez (YRC)  
Ken Cano (Creamland)  
Craig Arrellano (ABF)  
Juan Reyes (UPS)  
Lydell Holtegaard (ABF)

# The Union Difference is clear

#### *Health Insurance*

People in a union participating in job-provided health insurance: **75%**  
People without a union participating in job-provided health insurance: **48%**

#### *Pensions*

People in a union participating in guaranteed (defined-benefit) pension plans: **70%**  
People without a union participating in guaranteed (defined-benefit) pension plans: **13%**

#### *Paid Sick Leave*

People in a union with paid sick leave: **91%**  
People without a union with paid sick leave: **73%**

#### *Median Weekly Earnings*

People with a union median weekly earnings: **\$1,095**  
People without a union median weekly earnings: **\$892**

#### *Black Working People*

Black working people in a union median weekly earnings: **\$905**  
Black working people without a union median weekly earnings: **\$711**

#### *Latino Working People*

Latino working people with a union median weekly earnings: **\$954**  
Latino working people without a union median weekly earnings: **\$686**



# LOCAL UNION REPORTS: ARIZONA

## *Local 104*

Secretary-Treasurer  
Karla Schumann



## USFoods members win huge contract

**Josh Graves**  
Vice-President

**PHOENIX — US Foods** – The members at US Foods ratified a new 5-year contract with huge gains. These members have always been willing to fight, and that effort paid off for them as they won a strong contract.

We are one of the first locals in 20 years to negotiate a new group into the Western Conference of Teamsters Pension Trust Fund.

Other highlights include wage increases of \$7.60 for the drivers, \$7.45 for warehouse, \$9.25 for fleet mechanics, and \$10.25 for warehouse mechanics, two weeks paid parental leave, Bluetooth for drivers, and 100 percent employer-paid Teamster insurance. I am extremely proud of this group and genuinely enjoyed leading the negotiations.

**Republic Services** – The negotiations are ongoing as we are about 75 percent done with the South Yard's contract and started negotiations for the North and East Yards in May.

Republic Services is a difficult employer, but these workers have done the hard part by choosing to stand up and become Teamsters. We will continue to fight until we reach strong contracts to bring to these future Teamsters for a vote.

**Ruan/Holsum** – The union held a contract proposal meeting on May 13 and negotiations start on July 7 and July 11. Please check the union board for updates. Any questions feel free to give me a call.

**Martin Brower** – I would like to welcome Brother Jose Espino back to work at Martin Brower after we received an arbitration award of reinstatement with full seniority.



*Republic Service workers vote to join Teamsters Local Union No. 104*

We are still waiting for the decision on the off-bid arbitration and hope to have the decision within the next 30-60 days. We will be looking to schedule contract proposal meetings soon so please check the union boards for the notices.

**Russell Medigovich**  
Business Representative

**Bakers Commodities** — Members at Baker Commodities ratified a new contract with a 100 percent yes vote. There were

many new improvements to the contract but now all of the members are covered under one collective bargaining agreement.

The union shortened the amount of time that the probationary period can be extended to 30 days. Time served while working for a temporary agency will serve as time worked for the purpose of probation.

Other economic highlights: The members will receive an extra paid holiday, wage increases of \$4.70 over the term of the agreement, 100 percent paid Teamster insurance, contributions to a company pension plan along with company contributions to the Teamster 401(k), and increases into the tool and boot allowances.

**Dawn Schumann**  
Political Director

**PHOENIX** — Every once in a while, someone comes into your life that is a mentor, friend, parent figure, and an example of what a cornerstone looks like.

Debbie Davis, president of the Phoenix Retiree's Club has officially stepped down from her position. She is the brightest light you will ever meet. Her dedication to the Teamsters over the years has been admired and her tenacity for life is unwavering.

Cliff Davis, president emeritus was a dedicated Teamster who retired in 2001. He became the president of the retiree club shortly after his retirement. When Debbie retired in 2007, they stayed true to themselves traveling and loving all their beagles. After Brother Davis passed away in 2015, Debbie was voted in to be the president of

the Retiree's Club.

Sister Davis, through the years, has taken the retiree's club to higher levels: Volunteering at local food banks, collecting backpacks for underprivileged children, participating in the VSNA book drive, and so much more.

Every year the Retiree Holiday party has grown by leaps and bounds. We transform the meeting hall into a winter wonderland. Every year, without fail, the retirees would gather to fill bags full of goodies and would stay until the last child left.

Memories were made every year and with time, it is the legacy of those that we will hold close to us forever. When asked to walk in the APS Light Parade, without hesitation, the retirees would show up. Debbie would always take the lead with a smile that would light up a room.

Now, it is her time to shine even brighter. Debbie has found love again and we could not be happier. We wish you nothing but the best in this chapter of your life.

Debbie, thank you for taking me under your wing and into your family. I am most thankful for your love and guidance through the years. We have walked many miles together and I am grateful for your presence in our lives. I wish you and Wayne the best of years filled with fun.

When I grow up, I want to be like you.

Teamsters Local 104 was blessed to have you.

*In Unity,  
Dawn Schumann*



*Local 104 workers demonstrate union power outside Chipotle*



# LOCAL UNION REPORTS: COLORADO

**Local 455**

Secretary-Treasurer  
Dean Modecker



## A message from our secretary-treasurer

**DENVER** — My name is Dean Modecker, and I am your new secretary-treasurer.

First, I want to thank Steve Vairma for building a machine of a Local Union with a thriving membership, a plan to organize, and a vision of a local union that reflects the faces of its members. His work has laid a strong foundation for all of us to grow this union.

For those who don't know my background, I was raised in a Teamster household with a father who also served as principal officer of Teamsters Local 537. My father never cut me slack and demanded that I make my own way in our great union. I respect him for that.

So, in 1990, I became a Wonder Bread Teamster, and over the ensuing 33 years, I have held every position in our local union – steward, trustee, recording secretary, vice president and now secretary-treasurer. In addition to the local union, I have served the International Brotherhood of Teamsters as vice chair of the Bakery-Laundry Conference, and international organizer, and assistant to the director of the Food Processing Conference.

Through all these years, my focus has been solely on our members: We are only strong if we build strong, active members who are willing to do the work to win strong contracts, organize members in traditional Teamster industries – and some that are not so traditional.

We need to focus on areas that give us additional power and work to find the politicians who support working families,

fighting for member protections that address the threats posed by automation, engaging and mobilizing our young members. They are the future.

Let me reassure you that we are not rebuilding this local union; we're going to grow what we have and make it stronger. And we are going to have some fun while we do it!

Here's my motto, sisters, and brothers:

**Leaner, Meaner,  
Greener**

**Don Ramsey**  
Business Agent  
Airline RLA  
Contracts



Congratulations to Steve Vairma on his retirement. A great leader, teacher, mentor, boss and friend. His retirement was celebrated in the last week of April and the room was packed with admirers from around the country. What a presentation and career, topped off with the creation of the Steven P Vairma Scholarship fund for Local 455 families. Thank you, Mr. Vairma.

**United Airlines** — United seems to be on an investigative rampage. I remind you that although you are required to cooperate and be truthful when being questioned for investigations, it is not necessary to volunteer more information than is asked.

I am also asking members to think before reporting to the company any actions and feelings. Many times, EAP, or the union can assist in resolving differences before

### All in the family!

United Airlines retiree, Glenn Nilsson surprised by sons, Scott and AJ, with a drive-by presentation of Glenn Teamsters retirement jacket. Glenn is a 35-year United Airlines employee and Teamster shop steward.

Son AJ helped design DIA and son Scott is also a Teamster shop steward for Windigo Logistics. The boys surprised Glenn with a breakfast date and "just a quick stop at the local union hall for Scott. Scott frequents the local, so the surprise was secure.

The family love is very apparent and was often spoken of at work. Great job on the career and raising of your family Glenn!



Scott Nilsson, Glenn Nilsson, AJ Nilsson

reporting to management. Once in their hands the company has been very aggressive towards the employees.

On the positive side, one of our members who was discharged in 2021 will be returning and is in the process of rebadging.

**American Airlines** — The CWA-IBT Association Bargaining Committee met for negotiations with management in mid-April to continue in the seventh round of talks. Art. 6 OT (CS), Art. 7- OT (Res), Art. 9 Filling of Vacancies, Art. 18 Sick leave, Art. 19 Holiday Vacation and Art. 20 Vacation proposals were exchanged.

Tentative agreements were reached for language in Articles 7 and 19. They remain open for economic portions. Nineteen articles remain. Updates can be found on Facebook.com/AmericanAgentsConnected.

This is my last report for American and Frontier members.

Organizer/Business Agent, Kathy Tiihonen will be representing the American and Frontier Airlines members.

**Frontier-ACA** — Frontier paid out \$17,400 to the Aircraft Cleaning Agents for a grievance originated and researched by Steward Delisa Reid for shift differential on holidays and vacations. Great work and congrats!

**Frontier-MX** — Day shift grievance for field service bypasses due to record keeping deficiencies by the company is close to being settled and company record-

keeping is being updated and made available for the union.

**Southwest Airlines Material Specialists** — Great visit to new hangar and awesome job on researching and resolving grievances this month Jason.

**Jason Abbott**  
Business Agent

Teamsters Local 455 members should give a warm welcome to our newest members, Eagle Rock Distribution workers in Littleton, who are now working under the recently ratified Denver Eagle Rock contract, after a long and successful fight for recognition.

In yet another victory, ALSCO Denver Teamsters unanimously ratified their new agreement that provides increases in commissions, base pay, and pensions. These members' demonstration of solidarity led to the first commission increase in more than a decade.

I would like to give a special thank you to Steve Vairma. What can I possibly be said about a person who has done so much for organized labor. His hard work and dedication in representing the working class has truly made a difference. His leadership will be missed, but Steve's retirement is well deserved. We wish him a retirement full of health, happiness, and friendships.

Continued on page 9

## Your Teamsters Union

The International Brotherhood of Teamsters, with 1.4 million members, is one of the largest labor unions in the world. It is also the most diverse union in the U.S.

Today, it would be hard to identify a Teamster on the streets because we are everywhere. The union represents everyone from A to Z – from airline pilots to zookeepers. One out of every ten union members is a Teamster.



# Slow down! Stop writing those nasty letters

**Slow down!  
Stop writing those  
nasty letters**

**Roberta Brazell  
Business Agent**

Everyone is pumped about the ongoing UPS negotiations and the possibility of a new contract, and what they want in it, and what they want stricken, or perhaps, let's strike the bastards.

I've engaged in interesting conversations with members in discussing all aspects of the process. Unfortunately, at the same time, it is necessary for us to keep our eye on the current contract and stay vigilant.

We must continue filing grievances on violations of the contract against the company for not honoring or respecting the existing contract.

We must continue to educate our members about their rights under our contract, so they may understand their rights under any contract.

\*\*\*

Some employees think supervisors are friends who have the workers' backs. If so, think again. The supervisors will save their own jobs first, certainly before saving yours!

Stop and think about the text message you are sending to supervisors. Those messages end up being used against you or other members that may find themselves in a bind.

In short, stop sending text messages to your supervisors. I'm not talking about messages that inform the company if you'll be absent from work or that you're running late. I'm talking about messages expressing opinions about supervisors and co-workers. Those messages end up doing more harm than good and are a pain in the ass.

Stop sending text messages!

In this world of technology, it is hard to stay out of harm's way—and truth be told—the "way" UPS is making "budget cuts" to make record profits.

Unfortunately, those cuts come your way as well.

\*\*\*

UPS drivers: If you've been reading my columns, you know my goal to inform you of what the company is doing. It is head-hunting employees and how, I believe, they are being dishonest about it.

We are seeing a lot of terminations for drivers not making valid delivery attempts. For example, you have a ghost pick up and you close it out of your board without driving to the location. Or maybe a customer said, "don't bother coming to my business tomorrow because we are closed."

So, you sheet it as closed without going to the location or making a valid attempt.

The company spins that as "dishonesty."

Thus, you, according to the company, have falsified company records by recording that you went there when you didn't.

Another popular favorite of the company is scanning at the location of the delivery or pick up. You must be at the location of the delivery or pick up when you sheet the package as closed or delivered, not in 1, or whatever the status of that delivery is.

It must be recorded at that location. If you have an issue with recording it at the location or make a mistake, communicate that with your management team, through the DIAD.

Teamsters are not rats. So, stop writing offensive statements against other Teamsters. Instead, talk about the issue, get a steward or someone to mediate your issue.

Slow down. Let's not be so quick to write an offensive statement or rat out a brother or sister Teamster.



## ALL HANDS ON DECK

*These members of Local 455 are helping with UPS negotiations. They are, left to right, A.J. Sessions (business agent), Roberta Brazell (business agent), Scott Andersen (business agent), Eric Snodgrass (business agent), Johnny D (retiree), Alan Frisbee (president and business agent), Joe Smith (business agent), Bill Shaffer (retiree), Gabe Amaya (steward), and Jon Hansis (retiree).*

**Eric Snodgrass  
Business Agent**

One of our sources of strength as Teamsters is our willingness to fight in the event of a labor dispute. There's a chance that opportunity could present itself to Teamsters at UPS this summer.

We are fed up with excessive overtime, harassment, payroll issues, supervisors working, unresolved safety issues, and unjust terminations. If we want things to get better in this next contract, we must be willing to strike if the contractual demands of our union are not met.

We must be emotionally, mentally, and financially prepared to stand up and preserve the power of our union. If we don't walk the picket line when the time comes,

we stand to lose what we have spent decades fighting to acquire.

This would probably be a good time to start putting some money aside. We all hope that we don't have a work stoppage and that we can reach an agreement we are happy with—that would be the best-case scenario. Nevertheless, it's still a good time to prepare for battle.

I'd like to celebrate the retirement of three drivers in Longmont (see picture). John Deforest (over 31 years), Jon Hansis (34 years), Bill Shaffer (23 years). Congratulations and thanks for all your hard work serving your community and standing strong with your Teamster brothers and sisters!

\*\*\*

Congratulations to Steve Vairma on his remarkable career! Steve, thanks for fight-

ing for the wellbeing of countless people for over four decades! Enjoy it, brother!

\*\*\*

Congratulations to our new secretary-treasurer, Dean Modecker, our new president Alan Frisbee, and our new vice president Herb Whitaker

**Ron Baird  
Business Agent**

YRC — YRC is still hiring road drivers. We are waiting for the company to start the process of renegotiating the contract.

Line drivers: Make sure when you leave the terminal you have a working ELD. It is a DOT requirement. Paper logs are for emergencies only. If you are cited by the DOT, the ticket goes on your CDL license.

ABF — We held a strike vote and

received all yes votes. This allows the IBT National Negotiating Committee to let the company know that all of our members are in support of going on strike if necessary.

USF Reddaway — We still need mechanics at the Henderson shop. If you know of anyone who might be interested in a job, tell them to go to myyellow.com and apply.

We've had some issues with the ELDs in some of the tractors that have been sent to Grand Junction. The company is trying to make sure that the ELDs are compatible with the tractors there. Remember, you need a working ELD before you leave the terminal.

Transervice — I want to thank the members for using the QR code. This will make it easier to inform you when we will

*Continued on page 7*



Continued from page 6

be holding proposal meetings, and finally to vote on the contract when it is negotiated.

We have had several grievances filed by the stewards to stop the dispatchers from not abiding by the first-in, first out language in the contract. Also, some overtime issues have been settled.

Drivers: Pay attention to what you write on your logs for delay time. The company is watching and writing up. If you are not sure what to write down, call dispatch for instructions.

**Canteen** — Drivers, pay attention to your product expiration dates. The company is watching and writing up members up for expired products and listing it under job performance.

**DHL** — The new contract books are here and have been given to your stewards. See them if you have not received one.

### Greg Marshall Business Agent

Congratulations to Dean Modecker, Alan Frisbee, and Herb Whitaker on their new important roles at the local union. The

many years of steadfast work and experience are already being applied 24-7. The membership is excited!

The solidarity UPS'ers have shown for their upcoming contract is exactly what is needed these days to keep the American worker on top. Every department, standing shoulder-to-shoulder for better pay and working conditions, is the only way to achieve this.

The large parking lot rallies before the start of their shifts, walking the hubs late at night, pledge cards and signs in the windows of their one thing: The membership is active, united, and ready to fight for what they deserve. I love it.

T-Force had to reschedule their regional panels to focus on the contract negotiations at the beginning of May. Please stay tuned for updates on negotiations.

We are dealing with a different company this time around and we expect results. The freight committee has put a great proposal together and it is way overdue.

Penske members: we are all still waiting for the company to get its ass in gear over the Teamster 401k plan that should be up and running by now.

We are tired of the slow, drag-their-feet attitude, and excuses they have given over the past few months. I met with the company in June, and I will cover that in the next Rocky Mountain Teamster and will again be demanding they enact this contrac-

tual language immediately!

Stay safe, stay healthy, and I hope to see many familiar faces and lots of new ones this summer at all the Local 455 functions we do every year!



Left to right: Principal Officer, Dean Modecker; Business Agent, Don Ramsey; UA Retiree, Glenn Nilsson; President, Alan Frisbee; Vice-president, Herb Whitaker

## Local 17

Secretary-Treasurer  
Duane Grove



## Chris Rodriguez: Rest in peace, brother

DENVER —Recently, Local 17 lost one of its treasures. On Tuesday, April 25, 2023, Chris Rodriguez passed away peacefully.

Chris has a long history with Local 17. He was appointed steward at the Colorado Springs UPS Center in 1989. In 1992, Chris was elected as a trustee for Teamsters Local 17.

In 1997 he was hired as a business agent for Teamsters Local 17 and was appointed as the union representative for members in the State of Wyoming after Teamsters Local 17 acquired Local 307 (Wyoming) through a merger. He sat on grievance committees at the state, JAC and

national levels.

He was appointed to the UPS Central Region, UPS-CSI and UPS-national contract negotiations during his service to Teamsters Local No. 17.

I personally had the honor of working with Chris directly during his last year of work before he retired. Together we spent many hours together, drove many miles together, shared many meals together and resolved many grievances together for our members.

He was and will always be a close friend of mine. I will miss him.

## Local 267

Secretary-Treasurer  
Mike Cova



## Union, company working on summer schedule

FORT COLLINS — With summer quickly approaching, most of you are aware of these unprecedented times regarding production inside the brewery.

We have been working closely with brewery management—offering solutions that keep everyone working as much as possible this summer as well as enjoying time with their families.

The bottom line is that no matter how much production we have, there will always be a few of us that are working too little or

too often. The company and the local union have agreed to keep the seasonal employees working throughout the summer to provide regular employees with more time off if they choose to take it.

In April, the Local 267 board sent a contingent of officers to the Brewery, Bakery & Soft Drink Conference in Tampa, Florida. General President Sean O'Brien gave an inspirational speech that kicked off a very entertaining 4-day event.

Continued on page 8



You can help build Teamster political power by joining the thousands of Teamsters who already contribute to DRIVE.

Talk to your local union or on the web at

[www.teamster.org/drive](http://www.teamster.org/drive)



Continued from page 7

In late April, members of Local 267 attended the JC3 conference which also included a retirement and scholarship dinner for Steve Vairma, long-time principal officer of Local 455 and Joint Council 3 president.

In May, Earth Lindsay, Local 267 president, and I attended an agent meeting in Merrimack, New Hampshire to discuss contract proposals and upcoming contract negotiations.

While there we also attended a Celebration of Life for long-time Teamsters leader David Laughton. The event was held in Manchester, New Hampshire, and was a tribute to the life and achievements of our friend and brother Dave Laughton.

Keynote speaker, General President Sean O'Brien, led off with a wonderful tribute. New Hampshire United States Senators Maggie Hassan and Jeanne Sheheen, United States House Representatives Chris Pappas, and Ann McLane Kuster, and local officials paid their respects and shared stories.

A truck parade was held — driven by Teamster drivers in memoriam of Dave Laughton. David will be greatly missed by

everyone whose lives he touched.

Sierra's Race Against Meningitis, 5K walk/run will be held live this year on June 17, 2023, at 8 a.m. at Foundations Church, 1380 Denver Ave., Loveland, CO 80537. The race helps raise meningitis awareness and saves lives.

\*\*\*

Kenny Rodriguez, executive board officer, will be our contact for the local this year. If you would like to volunteer, please contact the Local at 970-482-2749 and we will get you in contact with Kenny

As in years past, Joint Council-3 and Local 267 continue to support SRAM by contributing \$1500 to the program, and the use of JC3 parade truck "BIG" proudly serving as the starting line stage for the 5K walk/run.

We encourage all members, and their families to support SRAM on race day and along with their contributions. Please visit sierrasraceagainstmeningitis.com. SRAM continues the work of saving lives and needs our support.

Sierra's Race has attracted thousands of participants every year and raised hundreds of thousands of dollars—raising

awareness of bacterial meningitis and providing thousands of free vaccinations to protect families from the heartbreaking loss of a loved one.

**Linked Union**

Local 267 app and website, hosted by LinkedUnion is a one-stop shop for members of the local to find schedules, benefits information, and local contracts.

Members can sign up for push notifications that inform them of breaking news and

events happening at the local or in the brewery. To date, over 83 percent of our members are registered.

Members are encouraged to download and make use of this app. Contact the union office at 970-482-2749 or through the website: www.lu267.org home page to get set up with a log-in and password.

I wish you all a great summer!

In solidarity,  
Michael Cova

**Colorado Retirees  
Summer hiatus**

DENVER — Colorado Retiree's monthly meetings fro June, July and August 2023 have been suspended for the summer. We will resume our monthly meetings Friday, September 15, 2023.

Our meetings are held on the third Friday of every month at the UFCW Hall in Wheatridge at

7760 West 38th Avenue. Coffee, doughnuts and good conversations start at 1:00 p.m. with the membership meeting commencing at 1:30 p.m.

We have several drawings for cash prizes at each meeting. Hope to see you in September. Have a wonderful, safe summer.

—Ed Stratman



**LOCAL UNION REPORTS:  
MONTANA**

**Local 2**

Erin Foley  
Secretary-Treasurer



**Negotiations underway for many contracts**

BUTTE — Contract negotiations are underway in many of our bargaining units. As the bargaining committees work through negotiations, the union encourages every member to participate in meetings and vote on your conscience.

The Teamsters have been coming up with more ways for members to participate and be involved. For instance, at Local 2 we can have Zoom meetings along with in-person meetings, digital surveys, texting and emailing for proposals as well as electronic voting.

Negotiations are a time when issues and decisions are made that impact each member's wages, hours, and working conditions. It is important for all voices and concerns to be considered.

You are the union, and the union is strongest when members are involved all the time! We need to come together as one and sound our collective voice.

You may be in a smaller unit with only a few people, or you may be a UPS member where there are thousands of people being represented, the union benefit is the same: As a member, you get representation as an equal to your employer.

As we all pushed through the pandemic, we are now faced with rising inflation and housing costs. Together we raise these

concerns and demand some of the highest wage increases in history. Despite our historic increases, for some, it still doesn't feel like enough.

We work to accomplish fair contracts and fight when employers are reluctant to see the struggle of working people of Montana who recently faced legislative attacks that threatened both public and private sector bargaining rights, pay checks, and pensions just to name a few.

All Teamster members are facing trying times. Fifty percent of Local 2 consists of public sector bargaining units. The silver lining for public sector is that the Teamsters led a hard fight in pre-budget negotiations in the summer and fall of 2022, which led to the passage of a historic legislation.

House Bill 13 included the largest across-the-board pay increase for state employees ever! The entire labor movement couldn't have accomplished what we did at the Legislature without the support and participation of our members.

The phone calls, messages, testifying and rallies we did at the Capitol this year were impressive. The unity and strength that all unions have across this great state helped every hard-working Montanan. We need to keep showing up and getting involved.

**A message from  
Jim Stone**

After 16 years of being a Teamster business representative, I have decided to retire as of June 30, 2023.

It has been my distinct pleasure to represent the members of Teamster's Local 2. I know that I leave Local 2 in great hands with Erin Foley, secretary-treasurer, our leader, and the staff that is in place. I thank you all for your friendship, teamwork, and support over the last few years. I know that you got this!

There are so many people who have assisted me from the International to other locals. In particular: Secretary Treasurers Jim Soumas, Local 190, Spencer Hogue, Local 222, and Erin Foley, Local 2. They have been instrumental in my success. I can't thank you enough. I will miss you all.

I want to thank all the stewards who do the hard work in their shops. Without your assistance on the ground floor things wouldn't be what they are.

Also, the trustees and administration



**Jim Stone, longtime Local 2 official, retires**

staff of the Utah-Idaho Security Fund. You have been unbelievable to work with!

There are so many to thank. I can't name them all in this column but know that I appreciate you all. I am retiring, but not

Continued on page 9



## Montana Local 2 ~ continued

Continued from page 8  
going away, I just won't see you as much. I wish you all great things in the future.

Thank you all for the opportunity to be your representative.

### Thank you to Jim Stone By Erin Foley

As the leader of Teamsters Union Local 2, it is my immense pleasure to write an article about our retiring senior business agent, Jim Stone. Jim has been an outstanding member of our team for the last 16 years, and his dedication and hard work will surely be missed.

Jim's contributions to the labor move-

ment have been invaluable, and his service to Local 2 has been nothing short of remarkable.

Throughout his tenure, Jim has displayed a level of professionalism, commitment, and leadership that has inspired all of us. He played a key role in engaging with employers, developing training programs, and advocating for the rights of our members.

One of Jim's most notable qualities is his



Above - left to right: Kalani Paea, Jim Stone, Ray Schonsberg, Erin Foley, Jason Thompson and Aaron Ralph



Jim Stone, in the middle, at a UPS steward training session with Spencer Hogue (right) and Darren Davis (left).

incredible acting abilities when it comes to training new stewards.

His approachable persona, vast knowledge, and the way he delivered his message made him a great mentor to many. Jim understood the importance of passing on the baton to the next generation of union leaders.

Jim's professionalism and dedication will be missed. However, we are grateful for the time we had with him. His guidance, insight, and vision for Local 2 have been critical to our success, and we will

continue to build on his legacy as we move forward.

On behalf of the entire Local 2 team, I would like to commend Jim Stone for his unwavering commitment to the labor movement and his remarkable service to our organization.

We extend our congratulations on his retirement and wish him all the best in future endeavors. Thank you, Jim, for everything you have done to support the union, and we will always be grateful to you!

## LOCAL UNION REPORTS: MONTANA

### Local 190

Jim Soumas  
Secretary-Treasurer



## UPS members don't let snow chill their spirits

**BILLINGS** — Local 190 scheduled a UPS parking lot rally for April 13, 2023, and wouldn't you know it, Mother Nature imposed her will by bringing rain and snow to the party.

Well, the moisture was a welcome guest and the Teamsters members refused to let a little rain mixed with snow dampen the day. Part-time steward Eric Johnson and Tyler Cervantez helped coordinate the event along with several other stewards and energetic UPS Teamster members.

Local 190 started setting up the tables and tents around 7:30 a.m. providing hot coffee, donuts, Franz bagels, and warm welcomes to all.

The team had a full agenda for the day: First and foremost, to educate all the members with updates on contract negotiations, the importance of providing a current address to the local union if you want to be able to have your strike benefits provided,

and sticking together to fight for a better contract.

Later in the afternoon Local 190 ordered some pizza and Pepsi products to keep the rally energized. Numerous additional pledge cards were filled out along with continuing efforts to update addresses. We had a great turnout, and the group sent a strong message to UPS management that the Teamsters will unite to bargain for a stronger contract.

Local 190 helped celebrate the retirement of two members working for UNFI. Jeff Grove and Matt Carlin decided to retire on the same day after 43 years of dedication to their employer and working alongside one another.

Jeff has served as the union steward for many years and has participated in numerous negotiations. Matt is going to move to Boise to live close to his daughter while Jeff is going to enjoy hobbies like

riding motorcycles and hunting.

Local 190 has met with the Yellowstone County Commissioners to request an immediate pay raise to address the staffing issues and working conditions at the Yellowstone County Detention Facility (YCDF).

Union stewards Danya Dee Webb and Jake Dunker have been sounding the alarm about working conditions and staff retention at the facility. YCDF has faced a severe staffing crisis for several years which results in several forced overtime shifts each week.

At least 20 new positions are needed to fix staffing issues and ensure the security and safety of both inmates and employees. To solve the issue, workers are requesting a competitive pay raise to recruit new officers, and a program to decrease burnout and protect the safety and wellbeing of officers and inmates.

"The overtime eats our staff alive," said Jake Dunker.

"The facility has been down at least 20 officers for over two years and there are currently only six officers with more than five years of experience working the floor. By offering competitive compensation, we can attract and retain the best candidates who will help us provide the highest safety and security for everyone involved."

The Yellowstone County Detention Facility is the largest in Montana, with more than 600 inmates and is currently operating well beyond capacity. After numerous attempts to revamp recruitment, testing and hiring processes under the current wage, the union and the facility have for several years struggled to retain and attract new officers. YCDF needs a wage level that will bring in new recruits and retain current staff. If not, the facility will continue to fall further behind.



# Child labor laws under attack in many states

Violations of child labor laws and state legislative proposals to roll back these protections are on the rise across the country, according to a comprehensive new Economic Policy Institute report on child labor standards.

The number of minors employed in violation of child labor laws has increased 37 percent in the last year and skyrocketed 283 percent since 2015. Meanwhile, at least 10 states have introduced or passed laws rolling back child labor protections in the past two years (Arkansas, Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Hampshire, New Jersey, Ohio, South Dakota, and Wisconsin).

The report comes as recent high-profile investigations have uncovered child

labor violations across the country, including at Packers Sanitation Services, Inc., which illegally employed more than 100 children between the ages of 13 and 17 in hazardous occupations at meatpacking facilities.

These children worked illegally on overnight shifts cleaning razor-sharp saws and other high-risk equipment, and at least three suffered injuries. Recent Department of Labor cases and media reports have also made clear that unaccompanied migrant youth left in limbo by a broken U.S. immigration system have become particularly vulnerable to exploitation by employers.

“Child labor laws are under attack in states across the country, just as violations

of these standards are rising. The trend reflects a coordinated multi-industry push to expand employer access to low-wage labor, with the end goal of rewriting federal child labor laws and other worker protections for the whole country,” said Jennifer Sherer, senior state policy coordinator for EPI.

“Children of families in poverty, and especially Black, brown, and immigrant youth, stand to suffer the most harm from such changes,” she said.

Already in 2023, eight bills to weaken child labor protections have been introduced in six Midwestern states (Iowa, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, Ohio, and South Dakota) and in Arkansas, where a bill repealing restrictions on work for 14- and 15-year-olds was signed into law just last week.

Iowa’s proposed bill has generated national headlines for being particularly extreme: The bill proposes lifting restrictions on hazardous work to allow children as young as 14 to work in meat coolers and industrial laundries, teens as young as 15 to work on assembly lines, and 16- and 17-year-olds to serve alcohol, among a long list of changes.

Primary proponents of these laws are business groups and their state affiliates, particularly the National Federation of Independent Business, the Chamber of Commerce, and the National Restaurant Association. Hotel, lodging, and tourism associations, grocery industry associations, home builders, and Americans for Prosperity—a billionaire-funded right-wing dark money group—have also supported bills in various states.

Industry lobbyists have attempted to justify the changes to child labor laws by citing the decline in the labor force partic-

ipation rate among 16- to 24-year-olds over the last two decades.

However, the report shows that these declines are due to a larger share of young adults being in school to obtain more skills and education, a positive trend—for both individuals and the economy—that should not be slowed or reversed.

The report concludes with policy recommendations for lawmakers at both the federal and state levels.

Congress should increase penalties for child labor violations and address chronic underfunding of agencies that enforce labor standards, eliminate occupational carve-outs that allow for weaker standards in agricultural employment, pass the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, and implement immigration reforms that curb the exploitation of unauthorized immigrants and unaccompanied migrant youth.

At the state level, lawmakers should eliminate subminimum wages for youth and raise the minimum wage, eliminate the two-tiered system that fails to protect children from hazardous or excessive work in agriculture, strengthen labor standards enforcement, and empower young people to build and strengthen unions.

“Instead of competing in a race to the bottom on child labor standards, states must strengthen child labor laws amid a rising number of violations,” said Nina Mast, state economic analyst for EPI.

“In particular, states should eliminate significant gaps and exclusions in existing child labor laws, boost protections beyond the minimum standards mandated by federal law and improve job quality for workers of all ages.

---

## HOGUE: *all-time high . . . cont.*

*Continued from page 1*

being pushed by our enemies.

This fight is a prime example of how we need to change our approach to politics. Our political action committee, Democrat Republican Independent Voter Education (DRIVE) says it all. There is no one party that is right on every issue, but we must demand that the politicians that we support also support us.

Without support from pro-labor, pro-worker Republicans, RTW legislation in Montana would have passed. American workers and their rights in the workplace should not be a partisan issue. Other states in our Joint Council were also attacked during the most recent state legislative sessions.

We were mostly successful in pushing back on these bad bills, but they will be back with the same anti-worker agenda,

and we must be willing and ready to take them on every time. Standing up for the rights of workers is what the Teamsters are all about.

Our Joint Council is made up of over 40,000 members covering seven states and is the largest geographical area of any Joint Council. We are fortunate to have incredible leaders in every local union. I look forward to coordinating with all of them to better serve the members we currently represent and to organizing the workers that are desperately looking for a way to improve their lives.

Our power is and always has been dependent on us working together collectively. Without unity and solidarity, we fail; with it we are an absolute force to be reckoned with.

In Solidarity,  
Spencer Hogue



## THE CLEAREST CASE FOR TAXING BILLIONAIRES YET

*Last year, the world's wealthiest lost billions and didn't suffer one bit.*

By Sam Pizzigatti

**S**ometimes the daily news about our billionaires just doesn't make sense. Last year, for instance, ended with a torrent of news stories about how poorly the world's billionaires fared in 2022.

Bloomberg tagged the 12 months that had just gone past "a year to forget," with almost \$1.5 trillion "wiped from the fortunes of the richest 500 alone."

All global billionaires taken together, Forbes chimed in, lost \$1.9 trillion in 2022. Some 148 of the world's 2,671 billionaires even lost their billionaire status.

The year's biggest billionaire losers? Some of America's deepest pockets.

Larry Page saw his Google-driven fortune drop \$40 billion. Mark Zuckerberg watched \$78 billion evaporate off the wealth Facebook created for him. And Amazon's Jeff Bezos had to swallow a minus \$80 billion.

But honors for the biggest nosedive of all have to go to Elon Musk. The world's richest man at the start of 2022, Musk ended the year losing both his top slot and some \$115 billion from his personal fortune.

So did all these losses have our billionaires shaking in their boots? Did they start tightening their belts a bit in 2022? Spend less on the world's most fabulously

expensive luxuries?

Not exactly. In fact, not all.

The world's most celebrated purveyors of pure extravagance actually registered record years in 2022. Rolls-Royce had its best-ever annual sales total, selling a record 6,021 "motor cars," up 8 percent over 2021.

"Our clients," Rolls-Royce's CEO crowed on New Year's Day, "are now happy to pay around half a million Euros for their unique motor car," a sum equal to about \$540,000 in the United States, the company's single largest market.

"Our order book stretches far into 2023 for all models," the Rolls-Royce chief added. "We haven't seen any slowdown in orders."

Lamborghini had an even better 2022, with 9,233 vehicles sold — a 10-percent jump over last year. The company's biggest market? The United States.

Americans drove off Lamborghini lots with 2,771 new cars in 2022. The automaker's most popular model runs about a quarter-million.

Realtors who cater to the ultra-rich set had an equally boffo year in 2022.

In a down real-estate market, the highest of high-end residences still pulled in mega sums at closing time. The year's top 10 home sales in the United States, notes the luxury-oriented Robb Report, "totaled roughly \$1.165 billion, proving that, impending recession or not, luxury real estate will always be traded."

How can all this luxury be? How can the richest of

the rich be spending fantastic sums in a year when they're seeing fantastic falls in their personal net worths?

Simple. In the realms of the super-rich, losing a billion — or even many billions — makes no difference whatsoever in real daily life. Net worth down a few billion? You can still afford anything your heart could possibly desire.

No one alive today needs fortunes worth dozens of billions to live astoundingly large. A mere billion would suffice. So, truth be told, would a mere tenth of a billion. In the day-to-day lives of billionaires, a few billions or so have no practical significance — except when it comes to increasing their political power at the expense of the rest of us.

Taxing those billions to support the common good, on the other hand, could make an immeasurable difference in the lives of millions — and our democracy.

We need more than a dip in grand concentrations of private wealth. We need a world without billionaires.

*Sam Pizzigatti co-edits Inequality.org at the Institute for Policy Studies. His books include The Case for a Maximum Wage and The Rich Don't Always Win. This op-ed was distributed by OtherWords.org.*



## IT'S TIME FOR SUPREME COURT TERM LIMITS

*The mounting scandals surrounding Clarence Thomas show the danger of lifetime appointments without ethical standards.*

By Sonali Kolhatkar

**A** pair of new investigative reports about Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas are a testament to the need for better guard rails against moneyed influence.

The first bombshell story from ProPublica highlighted how a billionaire named Harlan Crow befriended Thomas after he became a Supreme Court justice and treated him (and often his wife, Virginia "Ginni" Thomas) to luxurious vacations almost every year. Thomas didn't disclose those trips.

ProPublica followed that up with another story that Crow had actually purchased property from Thomas. Thomas didn't disclose this either. Stranger still, Thomas's mother has continued living there while the billionaire has been making expensive renovations. homa.

The cozy relationship between Crow and Thomas has borne fruit for wealthy elites: the justice has rou-

tinely sided with moneyed interests and their influence on policymaking.

Thomas was already under scrutiny for the political and financial activities of his wife.

During Barack Obama's presidency, Ginni Thomas founded a "Tea Party" nonprofit called Liberty Central, a move the New York Times described as "the most partisan role ever for a spouse of a justice on the nation's highest court."

She later became a lobbyist and led a small, secretive organization called Liberty Consulting. In 2011, Politico reported that she touted "her 'experience and connections' to help clients 'with governmental affairs efforts.'"

Ginni Thomas again made headlines last year for having pressured former White House chief of staff Mark Meadows to try to overturn the 2020 election results. More recently, the Washington Post published an investigation into anonymous donations totaling \$600,000 made to another organization Ginni Thomas leads that stokes the right's vicious culture wars.

Although the Thomases offer arguably the most

explicit examples of corruptive influence on the Supreme Court, they are not alone.

In December 2022, the New York Times revealed that an innocently named charity called the Supreme Court Historical Society has "become a vehicle for those seeking access to nine of the most reclusive and powerful people in the nation." The organization has raised millions of dollars from secret donors, in large part from "corporations, special interest groups, or lawyers and firms that argued cases before the court."

Justices attend the Supreme Court Historical Society's annual dinner, offering a tantalizing chance for individual attendees to influence them — as the leader of an anti-abortion group apparently took advantage of.

It is no wonder there is growing public disap-



*Continued on page 5*



# LOCAL UNION REPORTS: IDAHO

**Local 983**

Jessica Prather  
Secretary-Treasurer



## National UPS bargaining ongoing

POCATELLO negotiations are still ongoing at the national level. We have reached tentative agreements at the Joint Council and Western Region levels and will share those details when we can.

IEC Warehouse has reached a tentative agreement as well and will hopefully be ratified by the time this goes to press

We also have some exciting news that will hopefully improve communication and allow you to have information at your fingertips – we are building an app! Stay tuned for more information on that but in the meantime, if we don't have it already, please send us your email address to [teamsterslocal983@yahoo.com](mailto:teamsterslocal983@yahoo.com)

We will also be updating our website that will sync with the app. As always, solidarity is going to be especially important. Please continue communicating the importance of being a union member, especially in a right-to-work state.

The union isn't the business agent, it is the workers standing strong and as one! We are in this together and it should never be about one man for himself. We encourage you to look around and remember that there is power in numbers and working together is where our strength lies. If you are interested in being a volunteer organizer/activist, please let us know!

We are continually internally organizing at all of our shops and centers. The more members we have that are informed of the contract language, the more grievances we

file to make the company abide by the agreement.

Non-members don't have a say when it comes to making proposals and voting on contracts. Please communicate and have open discussions with your co-workers about the importance of being a union member. If every current member could sign up one new member each month, we would have that much more power at the bargaining table to get what you all deserve.

Thank you for your membership and solidarity and as always, if you have an issue or question, please don't hesitate to contact us.

We would like to congratulate all of our recent retirees: Mark Blumhorst, Kelly Byers, Klar Werth, Bruce Johnson and Jesse Rodriguez, all from Basic American Foods, along with Merilee Longoria from Lamb Weston. We wish you the best of luck in your retirement! If you are starting to think about retiring, please call our office to schedule an appointment with our WCOT Pension representative.

In-person interviews are back every other month, but you can also always call them over the phone! The application process can take several months so make sure to plan ahead if possible. We will be more than happy to help you fill out your application! If you want to contact the pension office directly, call 1-800-531-1489 or create an account at [www.wcotpension.org](http://www.wcotpension.org).

Remember to contact us for any

address or phone number changes. Also, if you are going to be off work for a month or more due to illness, leave of absence, lay-off, etc., please contact us regarding being placed on withdrawal until you return to work. As a dues-paying union member, Local 983 provides a \$4,000 life benefit for you. Please make sure your beneficiary

information is up-to-date by contacting us.

We hope to see you at our upcoming general membership meetings at the Local Union Hall: June 1 at 7 p.m. August through September meetings will be suspended. October 5 at 7 p.m. at 10 a.m. December 7 at p.m. You can find us on Facebook to stay up to date!

## KOLHATKAR: Supreme Court . . . cont.

*Continued from page 2*

proval of a body whose decisions impact nearly every aspect of our lives.

Justices have lifetime tenure — ostensibly to protect them from partisan pressures. But that only works if there are watertight regulations for preventing corruption — and actual consequences for violating them.

After Watergate, Congress passed the Ethics in Government Act (EIGA) to ensure that officials like Supreme Court justices were independent of moneyed interests. Thomas appears to have violated the EIGA, but there is no direct mechanism to hold him accountable short of Congress impeaching him — a move that has no precedent in the last 200 years.

No other democratically run nation on the planet gives its highest court justices lifetime tenure. Now legal experts are recommending term limits.

Democratic senators have introduced the TERM Act, which would introduce 18-year terms for Supreme Court justices. A new justice would replace one who was termed out every two years, and presidents would have two opportunities during each four-year tenure to appoint new justices.

The U.S. should join the rest of the world's democratic nations in upholding an impartial judiciary — it might even save billionaires like Harlan Crow some money.

*Sonali Kolhatkar is the host of "Rising Up With Sonali," a television and radio show on Free Speech TV and Pacifica stations. This commentary was produced by the Economy for All project at the Independent Media Institute and adapted for syndication by OtherWords.org.*

### Hansen's History

## Teamsters organizers active in 100 plants

*Reprinted from the March 1993*

*Rocky Mountain Teamster*

**By Jim Hansen**

Organizers for Teamsters Joint Council 3 are presently active in more than 100 organizing campaigns involving about 2,500 potential members in the seven-state council area.

Reports issued recently by Joint Council area organizers Frank Frauenfeld, Denver, Al Longoria, Salt Lake City, and Ed Bagwell, Phoenix, indicate that there is an upswing in interest shown by unorganized workers.

"We're busy. There's no question about that," said Frauenfeld. "And we're hoping that the new administration in Washington will give us the tools

to successfully complete all of these campaigns."

While the union continued to organize during the Reagan-Bush years, Frauenfeld said, the unions were often frustrated by inordinate delays in National Labor Relations Board decisions and the pro-management bias exhibited by the board when decisions were made.

New contracts have recently been negotiated with Rainbo Bakers, Inc., Kinger Soopers, Inc., Hospital Cooperative Laundry, Babbitt Transportation, Lynde Air Division of Union Carbide, Hertz Equipment Rental, the Hangout, SHIFA Services, Albertson's, Lance Excavating, Christensen and Griffith, Reynolds Brothers and Ron Lewis Construction, among others.

In addition, various council local unions are in negotiations with about 30 newly organized compa-

nies. Representation elections are pending at 17 plants, and more than 50 cases are in various stages of litigation.

Moreover, in addition to the activity reported by the council organizers, several local unions successfully completed organizing campaigns on their own.

Jack Parker, president of Joint Council 3, said he was encouraged by the organizing activity in the Rocky Mountain area. "We continued to organize all through the dark ages of Reagan and Bush," he said, "so we know how to handle adversity. We're hoping, however, that a new attitude will emanate from Washington that will finally give the worker—union and non-union alike—a break.

"If that happens, and I think it will, just watch the job our organizers will do."