

President's Newsletter

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



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PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Suggestions by Members at Mechanization Conference

All suggestions and recommendations made by union members or others at the recent mechanization conference that include non-cooperation with mechanization, boycotts and strikes against machines and other suggestions for action in the fields regarding the issue are prohibited under our present contracts.

Mori Bill Meddles in Farm Labor Law

The farm workers are strongly opposing a bill by Assemblyman *Floyd Mori* (D-Hayward) which would make major changes in the structure of the Agriculture Labor Relations Board and vest increased power in the ALRB general counsel's office.

Mori is chairman of the legislature's Joint Committee to oversee the ALRB.

The *Mori* bill, AB 2247, would grant complete control over nearly all ALRB personnel to the general counsel. The union opposes the *Mori* bill on the following institutional grounds.

The ALRB needs unity—a working relationship between the board and the general counsel's office. When the law was created in 1975, the legislature envisioned a cooperative relationship. The law allows the board to delegate such authority as is necessary to the general counsel, while still retaining ultimate control over all ALRB activities.

Under the guise of giving the general counsel total control over the agency's personnel, the general counsel could make his own policy. We face the specter of a lawyer representing the board and the general counsel each arguing conflicting positions in court under the *Mori* Bill. If you don't have a cooperative relationship in government decision making you have an agency going in two different directions.

The *Mori* bill is meddlesome. We've been living in relative peace with the growers—we are negotiating contracts and trying to improve our collective bargaining relationship. The bill is basically *Mori's* idea. It is not legislation we see all the growers jumping to support, although the Farm Bureau and the Council of California Growers—representing the extreme grower position—have endorsed it.

Both growers and the union expect one voice from the ALRB. We need a balanced approach to government. Ours is a system of checks and balances. Both growers and the UFW agreed to a balanced and unified approach for the board during the negotiations which resulted in the compromise farm labor law 2 1/2 years ago. The law was written to ensure that both segments of the agency—the board and the general counsel's office—worked together. That is the way it should be.

The *Mori* bill is a meat axe approach to agricultural labor relations. We are getting along much better with the growers than we are with *Mori*. *Mori* and his Oversight Committee should just fold up shop rather than meddle as they do.

Mori did not contact the union before he introduced his AB 2247. When First Vice President *Dolores Huerta* tried to talk to him, *Mori* kicked her out of his Sacramento office. Union supporters in the Hayward area are organizing in opposition to the legislation.

U.S. Ponders Bracero Issue

Officially the Carter Administration says it is against reviving the bracero program which imported hundreds of thousands of Mexican migrants to U.S. fields during World War II until 1964. But on a recent trip to Mexico, Secretary of Agriculture *Bob Bergland* stated that suggestions to reintroduce the old bracero program were being explored. The statement was well publicized by the press in both countries and within a few hours *Bergland* issued a statement saying he had been misunderstood and that the Administration is not actively considering a return to the bracero program.

Other high ranking officials have visited Mexico recently, including Vice President *Mondale* and Attorney General *Bell*. Neither made any reference to the bracero program while there, but it is no secret that Mexico is anxious for the Carter Administration began a massive labor importation program as soon as possible. A high government official in the Administration told us that Mexico feels that its unemployment situation is so critical that it could have serious political and social repercussions. To relieve the unemployment pressure Mexico needs to export more than one million workers to U.S. fields and factories.

Mexico's key bargaining tools in this issue are some items the United States needs and wants badly, especially natural gas and low oil prices. Politically it's a tough issue for this Administration to resolve because many of the labor, church and political leaders who helped elect Carter are set against the bracero program, as we are.

We have made our position well known to the Carter Administration in countless telegrams and discussions with officials. At the Third Constitutional Convention in August 1977 we adopted a resolution condemning the bracero program and pledging to seek support to stop any attempt to reintroduce it in this country.

Rather than importing an exploitable work force which leaves at the end of each harvest, we feel immigration quotas should be expanded to allow more Mexican Nationals to become permanent residents, giving first priority to the families of those already living in the United States.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Nagi Daifallah Vacation Plan



Photo by David Koehler

Maria G. Perez, Indio, to receive first vacation check signed March 1, 1978.

More than 200 Coachella farm workers are receiving the first checks under the new Nagi Daifallah Vacation Plan. The plan was established February 13, 1977 to benefit the many migrant workers who never qualify for regular company vacation plans.

At present 8 companies, all in the greater Coachella area, have agreed in their contracts to pay into the fund: David Freedman Company, Travertine Company, Beckman & Bender, Valdora Ranch, Ranch No. 2, Richard A Glass Company, Schell Ranch & Packing, and Coachella Valley Citrus.

The companies are paying 5¢ per hour worked by each employee into the fund.

The Board of Trustees for the Nagi Daifallah Vacation Plan is composed of two union and two grower representatives: UFW President, *Cesar Chavez*; Secretary-Treasurer, *Gilbert Padilla*; *William Steinberg* of Freedman and Travertine Ranches; and *Morgan Ward* of Schell Ranch.

Workers covered under the plan this year will be receiving vacation plan checks for 1978 in late December. Workers have a period of up to four years to apply for vacation plan benefits. More than 2,000 workers are eligible to apply for 1977.

AGRICULTURAL LABOR RELATIONS BOARD

Appeals Court Rules on Arrests of Organizers

California's Third District Court of Appeals in Sacramento has thrown out the arrests of two UFW organizers for trespassing on a labor contractor's labor camp. But the court also ruled that the Agricultural Labor Relations Board has no interest in a labor contractor's camp, leaving the right of access in such camps unclear.

The appeals court threw out the 1975 arrests of Organizers *Jan Peterson* and *Pancho Medrano*—Sister *Peterson's* case because her First Amendment rights outweighed the property rights of the contractor and Brother *Medrano's* arrest because he had not been properly ordered to leave the camp. Through the Legal Department we argued that the First Amendment protects union organizers' rights to speak with workers in the camps. But although the court restricted the ALRB's jurisdiction in contractors' camps in this case, it did not clearly support the union's right of access under the broader First Amendment grounds.

We intend to exercise our legal options and take steps to have the decision changed so it will have no effect. The Legal Department feels we have a good case.

The same appeals court also has an unfair labor practice case before it involving UFW charges against the employer of the labor contractor at whose camp the arrests took place. The ALRB upheld the ULP against the grower for the actions of the labor contractor.

LABOR

Field Offices to Help Coors Strikers

Citing the fact that the Adolph Coors Company has broken 16 unions in the past 10 years and is currently trying to destroy Brewery Workers Local 366, UFW National Boycott Director *Michael Lacinak* called on field office directors to enlist the support of UFW members. He spoke of the Coors strikers leaving their homes and families to take the story of their struggle for survival to the people as we once did, and of the need to inform our membership of Coors' degrading and discriminatory practices.

Although the company is feeling the effects of the boycott—sales of Coors in California (major consumer state) was down 15% in December with overall sales down more than 2 1/4 million barrels in 1977—much more work is needed. Brother *Lacinak* asked directors to plan activities such as picket lines, delegations and marches. He distributed posters, leaflets, buttons and bumper stickers, suggesting that buttons and bumper stickers be sold for 50¢ each to raise money for the strikers and their families.

Second Vice President *Eliseo Medina* reported that Coachella has already scheduled a rally for April 5, 1978—the first anniversary of the Coors strike. All ranch committee members and stewards have been informed and they are getting the word out to every UFW member in the Coachella Valley.

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Plans are underway for a food drive which will culminate April 5. All food collected will be brought to the rally in Coachella where a money collection will be taken. Food and money will then be turned over to Coors strikers.

BOYCOTT COORS BEER

OFFICIAL NOTICES

UFW Founding Day

Sixteen years ago on March 31, 1962, we left the Community Service Organization and began the task of building a union for farm workers. It has been a long struggle with many sacrifices, much suffering and even deaths. In spite of the hardships, we accomplished our goal—we have a farm workers' union.

Founding Day—March 31 —was set aside by the executive board as a day to be observed movement-wide. In accordance with this policy, be sure to spend at least one hour of staff time remembering the founding of our union.

Make it a day of celebration and reflection. Ask one of the old Chavistas in your area to talk about the early days of the union. Read from Jacques Levy's book on the founding of the union and the first few years. Have a staff person research the early days and present a report or readings. Have a worship service, sing union songs, invite farm workers or supporters to share a meal with you.

These are only a few suggestions. Be creative and think of other ways to celebrate this very special day.

Latest Elections

Cattle Valley Farms/Coachella/cattle, cotton/UFW, 14; no union, 7.
California Lettuce Co./Calexico/Lettuce/UFW, 27; no union, 4.

New Contracts

Montebello Rose Co./Delano/roses
H.P. Metzler (includes the former Patterson & Hale Co.)/Lamont/tree fruit
William Hubbard Co./Calexico, Arizona, New Mexico/lettuce, tomatoes

Personnel

New Staff	Location	Department
Leopoldo Trevino	Coachella	CAD
Hank Paredes	La Paz	Security
Ana Vejar	La Paz	Cent. Admin.

We send wishes for a speedy recovery to Executive Board Member Mack Lyons who is on the sick list. Get well soon, brother. We all miss you.

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M.F.W.M. Chris Hartman