

President's Newsletter

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



Vol. 1 No. 36
July 10, 1978



PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Executive Board Holds Quarterly Meeting

The second quarterly meeting of the National Executive Board for 1978 was held in La Paz, the union headquarters, June 15-17 with all Board members present.

One of the first items discussed was the upcoming Political Endorsement Conference in San Jose, Sunday, July 30. The conference will feature California candidates seeking endorsement for office. The conference will be held at San Jose's Performing Arts Center from 9 am until early afternoon, and will be followed by a barbecue and entertainment.



Photo by Susan Schumacher

The National Executive Board - from left to right: President *Cesar Chavez*, *Mack Lyons*, Second Vice President *Eliseo Medina*, *Jessica Govea*, Secretary-Treasurer *Gilbert Padilla*, *Pete Velasco*, *Marshall Ganz*, First Vice President *Dolores Huerta*, and *Richard Chavez*.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS

Organizing

UFW Department and Entity heads presented their quarterly reports to the Executive Board. Organizing Director *Eliseo Medina* reported that in the last three months we won 13 elections (mostly in the Oxnard and San Diego areas) representing more than 3000 workers. In all these elections the workers did the organizing of the election with the staff providing coordination and expertise. The new Organizing Department has been planning long range goals for organizing in California and other states. In California Brother *Artie Rodriguez* is directing organizing in the Central Coast region, Brother *Scott Washburn* is heading operations in the South Coast region, and Brother *Tanis Ybarra* is directing organizing in the Central Valley.

Contract Administration

Contract Administration Department Director *Gilbert Padilla* reported that 25 contracts were signed with California companies in the second quarter: 8 in the Delano area, 6 in the Oxnard area, 4 in the Calexico/Blythe area, 2 in San Diego County and 3 in Northern California. This brings the total number of California contracts to more than 130, with the largest number of contracts in the Salinas/Watsonville area.

In addition, CAD has been involved in training workers to administer their contracts. Brother *Frank Ortiz* has been meeting with ranch committees in Lamont, Firebaugh and the Napa Valley to begin training.

Juan de la Cruz Pension Plan

Brother *Kent Winterrowd* reported to the Executive Board

that, after studying pension plans from over 50 different unions and organizations, he has started to put together a plan for the Juan de la Cruz Pension Fund. This plan will be presented to representatives of the different ranch committees for their input and approval. Brothers *Winterrowd* and *Richard Chavez* will begin meeting with the ranch leadership where we have contracts, certifications and pending certifications within the next two months with a slide show presentation and brochures that will explain all the different options and benefits available in a pension plan. The ranch leadership will provide input as to which benefits they feel are the most appropriate and essential for farmworkers. Their recommendations will be presented to the Juan de la Cruz Pension Fund Board of Trustees for their final approval.

The Juan de la Cruz Pension Fund was started in 1973, the same year that our brother *Juan de la Cruz* was shot and killed by a scab in Arvin. We've negotiated the pension fund in most of our contracts since then.

Transportation

Brother *George Sheridan*, Transportation Director, reported to the Executive Board on the progress his new department has made. One of the most important developments has been the appointment of an Advisory Council on Transportation, which held its first meeting on June 12, 1978.

The overall goal of the Transportation Department is to provide quality transportation at a reasonable cost to the Union. The Advisory Council was set up to enable the department to reach that goal, and to assist the president in effectively meeting the Union's transportation needs. The Council, whose members are sisters *Cynthia Bell*, *Gretchen Laue*, *Alice Thompson* and brothers *Marc Johnson* and *Gerardo Vasquez* will be meeting on a regular basis to give advice regarding projected transportation needs. They will also recommend priorities and plan educational programs for the staff.

Board Passes Resolution

The Executive Board passed a resolution which requires that 10% of a ranch community be present when meeting in regards to the discipline of a member. In cases where a ranch community member is being disciplined, the Ranch Committee presents a recommendation to be voted on by the community. In the interest of being fair to ranch community members on trial and because justice and democracy are best assured when as many community members as possible participate in the decision-making process, this resolution was unanimously accepted.

H-2 Workers Strike in Texas

Presidio, Texas is in the news again. In June, 1977, President *Carter* ordered the importation of over 800 H-2 or temporary foreign workers to harvest onion fields despite objections from the U.S. Department of Labor.

Responding to pressure from the AFL-CIO and our union, Labor Secretary *Ray Marshall* pledged last year that Presidio growers would not again be able to rely on H-2 relief. But in early June of this year, after DOL refused grower requests for more H-2 workers, the employers convinced an El Paso, Texas federal judge to order the Immigration and Naturalization Service and the Labor Department to admit the H-2 workers. The judge also ordered the growers to pay the imported farm workers a minimum wage of \$2.97 per hour.

On June 26, 150 H-2 workers at Bill Bishop Ranch (Griffin and Brand) struck melon fields in the 110 degree heat because the company refused to provide cold drinking water or toilet facilities and paid only \$2.65 per hour, far below the \$2.97 ordered by the court.

Five UFW members attempting to communicate with the workers from the side of a public road were arrested by Presidio County sheriff's deputies and charged with obstructing traffic. They were held on \$1,000 bond each by a local justice of the peace.

We immediately issued a strongly worded telegram to Secretary *Marshall* protesting the Presidio injustice. "Mexican farm workers imported under the H-2 program in Presidio are virtual slaves to area melon growers," we said. "American resident workers in Presidio were laid off or fired from their jobs to make way for H-2 workers. Presidio events make a mockery of H-2 regulations and the Department of Labor's ability to enforce them."

By July 1, the growers did pay the \$2.97 wage in response to the earlier strike. But the exploitation of farm workers from both sides of the border continued.

The H-2 regulations require the DOL to ensure that resident

workers get first preference for farm jobs. Only if domestic workers are unavailable may growers request temporary foreign workers, and then only if they meet minimum wage and working standards set by the DOL. Growers have traditionally discouraged employment of resident farm workers or refused to hire local people entirely to make way for the importation of H-2 workers.

ORGANIZING

Yakima Valley Farm Workers Want UFW

Farm workers at a large Washington State agricultural company are organizing under the black eagle banners of the United Farm Workers, and the company is gearing up to fight the union.

On June 29, we sent a wire to Green Giant Company Regional Personnel Manager *Dwayne Dunlap* notifying the company that the union represents a majority of its workers for purposes of collective bargaining. "We hereby request a secret ballot election to prove our majority status," we stated in the telegram. "Such an election can be held by a neutral third party designated by the parties." We asked the Dayton, Washington-based company to contact Brother *Roberto Treviño*, our Washington state representative, to discuss election procedures.

By July 3, Green Giant Agricultural Superintendent *Jim Cornaggia* distributed to the workers a copy of a letter he sent to Brother *Treviño* refusing the union's request for an election. "There is no reason to recognize the union as bargaining agent," *Cornaggia* wrote. "We have no intention of entering any negotiations with you as suggested by Mr. Chavez's letter. No useful purpose would be served by any discussion on this matter." Our telegram to the company did not ask for negotiations. We only asked for an election.

A committee of 30 Green Giant farm workers representing the company's employees met for 20 minutes on July 5 with company official *Dunlap* at the firm's Dayton office. The workers, led by committee chairman *Bill Ford*, told *Dunlap* the workers want the UFW to represent them and pressed their demand for a secret ballot election.

Dunlap said that there is no law in Washington state providing for union elections for farm workers. The farm workers, repeating a request we made in our June 29 wire, said an election can be conducted by a neutral third party agreeable to both sides. Finally, *Dunlap* refused the workers' election demand.

We then issued a statement blasting the company for refusing its farm workers' just demand: "The Green Giant Co. should be condemned for its blatant denial of the rights of its farm workers to a secret ballot election and representation by a union. The buying public in America should be made well aware of Green Giant's disregard for the rights of its farm workers."

Supporters Now Get Newsletter

About 150 key supporters from cities across the country are now receiving the President's Newsletter twice a month. This is in addition to 1000 workers who are now receiving the Newsletter weekly. Supporters and workers who receive the Newsletter are responsible for sharing the information with their co-workers or with the other supporters.

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RFK MEDICAL PLAN

What do I need to send in to make sure my claim is accepted and paid?

Before any claim is accepted it has to be checked to be sure it's a Completed Application. A Completed Application means that a Pink Form and the other necessary forms have been filled out, signed and sent in **together** for each claim.

For example, if you are covered by the Kennedy Plan and took both your son and daughter to be seen by your doctor, you must fill out and sign separate Pink Forms for your son and daughter. Your Doctor must fill out separate Green Forms for your son and daughter. You then attach the Pink Form for your son to the Green Form for your son and send them to the Plan. You must do the same thing for the Pink Forms and Green Forms for your daughter, that is, send them in together. You can not use one Pink Form for both your son and daughter, nor can your doctor send in one Green Form for both you son and daughter.

If the Plan Office receives the Pink Forms by themselves or the Green Forms by themselves, they will be returned to you until the Pink Form is sent in together with the Green Form.

Make sure then that a Pink Form and whatever other necessary forms are needed for your claim are sent in together.

OFFICIAL NOTICES

Reminder

The five members of each organizing, negotiating and ranch committee in California shall be delegates to the Political Endorsement Conference. If a committee has not elected all five members, or if one of the members is unable to attend the conference, the committee must choose other persons from the ranch community to be delegates to the conference. In order to provide full representation, five delegates from each ranch community must attend the conference.

New Certifications

G and S Produce/Imperial Valley/lettuce/June 22.

PERSONNEL

La Paz Transfers	From	To
Jane Barela	Service Cntr	RFK Medical Plan
Juan Cadena	RFK Medical Plan	Contract Admin.
Lori Huerta	Pres. Staff	Service Cntr.
Jose Ruiz	Service Cntr.	Contract Admin.
Chris Schneider	Pres. Staff	Contract Admin.
David Valles	Security	Contract Admin.
Winnie McDonald	Chicago Boycott	Membership
Gary Clements	Chicago Boycott	Word Management
Maxine Lowy	Chicago Boycott	Word Management
Ramona Holguin	Negotiations	F a r m w o r k e r I n s t i t u t e f o r E d u c a t i o n a n d L e a d e r s h i p D e v e l o p m e n t F I E L D
Maria Rifo	Camposino Cntr	FIELD

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