

President's Newsletter



Vol. 1 No. 55
November 27, 1978

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



PRESIDENT'S OFFICE

Negotiators Graduate From Education Center

One of our dreams—the education of our members and staff—took another step towards being realized when the first class of 11 students graduated from the Fred W. Ross Educational Center on November 11.

The graduation ceremony ended 10 months of intensive training in collective bargaining with particular emphasis on contract negotiations. The graduates, Brothers *José Castro, Paul Chavez, Luciano Crespo, Emilio Huerta, David Villarino, Danny Romero, Jorge Rivera, Xavier Sandoval, Donnell Satterfield, Mike Schwartz, and Henry Torres*, will be assigned throughout the state to help negotiate contracts at ranches where the workers have voted to have the union represent them.

In our talk with the students and the parents, friends and members of the La Paz community who came to share in the graduation exercises, we said that the Fred W. Ross Educational Center represents a major long term commitment to our goal of developing an educational program that will enable anyone in the union to achieve his or her highest potential. It has become and will continue to be one of the major undertakings of our movement.

The decision to begin the school was made during a period when we were under tremendous pressure to immediately provide staff for negotiations. But the decision was made by the National Executive Board to train our people and wait for up to a year before assigning them to the important work that has to

be done. Under the circumstances, it was a very difficult decision to make.

The beginning of the school was a calculated risk. More than anything else, it represented hope. The decision was a complete reversal of how we had accomplished things in the past. Often-times in the past we have not had the time or the facilities to train people in the complexities of negotiations and we have, at times, suffered because of this. Therefore, this graduating class is important not only because it is the first graduating class from the Collective Bargaining School and an initial step towards the fulfillment of a dream which traces its roots to the very beginning of the movement. It is also important because with this graduation, the leadership of the union has made its point in a very real way. We believe that our faith and hope in the determination and resolve of these candidates will be confirmed.

The November 11 commencement exercise also symbolizes the commitment of the union's leadership to train and develop men and women who serve the movement to their highest potential. In this way, we also give others hope that they will be able to play just as important a role in building the union as the students. Everyone in the movement can have an equal opportunity to assume leadership and responsibility.

We also said that the education that these negotiations candidates and future students at the Fred W. Ross Center will receive is not academic and unconnected with life. It is purposeful and centered around the student's cultural and social environment. True education is best achieved through real

life action, and we look forward to the day when hundreds of farm workers can go through this Center and learn how to better respond to the challenges they face.



PONDERING REMARKS—*Fred Ross* organizes his thoughts at graduation ceremonies.

Brother *Fred Ross*, the school's namesake, also spoke to the graduates. He told them what an honor it was for him to be present for this great day. Other commencement speakers included UFW Executive Board Member *Richard Chavez*, director of negotiations, and Brother *Fred Schmidt*, former regional director of the CIO in Texas and currently a consultant instructor for the school.

During the commencement ceremony, which started with a special Mass, recognition was given to Sister *Rosemary Cooperrider* from La Paz, who coordinated the sewing of special shirts that the graduates and their instructors wore. The shirts, which were designed during my fast in Arizona in 1972, are made of manta, a cloth traditionally worn by poor people.

Despite the rain and snow, close to 300 guests, including friends and families of the graduates, came to the Commencement ceremony. Dinner was served after the commencement at which the students acknowledged the help of consultants *Paul Chown*, from the University of California at Berkeley, and *Doug Thompson*, of the State Conciliation Service. Following the dinner, a dance was held in the East Wing Hall of the Educational Center.

The Fred W. Ross Educational Center opened on January 16, 1978, under the direction of Brother *Pete Moya*. In addition to the negotiations instruction there is also a program in progress to train staff in contract administration. This class is due to graduate in mid-January, 1979. A new school of 10 students opened Monday, November 20, to train new students in field office administration. All students also take classes in English or Spanish in addition to their other courses.

Instructors at the school are Brothers *David Martinez, Amalio Madueño, Pat Bonner* and Sisters *Maria Rifo, Rhian Miller, and Karen Schlossman*. School staff includes Sisters *Ascencion Higuera*, curriculum



HISTORIC EVENT—Graduates from Fred W. Ross Educational Center acknowledge applause at opening of La Paz commencement.

UFW photos by Ned Dunphy

director, *Cynthia Paredes*, administrator, and *Maria Nuñez*, assistant administrator.

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

Campbell Soup Unit Signs Contract After Short-Lived Boycott

Farm workers at the Pacific Mushroom Farm, a subsidiary of Campbell Soup Company, ended a ten week strike at the Pescadero, California company with the signing of a two year contract on November 6.

Agreement on the contract averted a planned nationwide boycott of Campbell Soup products after contract talks had deadlocked. Farm worker support committees across the U.S. and Canada had prepared to initiate the boycott when news came from the company that it had agreed to farm worker contract demands and wished to resume negotiations. AFL-CIO President *George Meany* had also telephoned the chairman of Campbell's board of directors to inform him that the UFW had asked for AFL-CIO sanction of the planned nationwide boycott drive. The boycott action came eight weeks after the Pacific Mushroom workers walked out on strike due to the company's failure to bargain in good faith.

The agreement calls for minimum wages of \$3.85 per hour for the first six months, \$4.00 per hour beginning May, 1979, and \$4.15 starting in November of next year. It also provides for nine paid holidays per year, including Washington's Birthday, Good Friday, Memorial Day, July 4 (American Independence Day), September 16 (Mexican Independence Day), Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Year's Day.

Pacific Mushroom workers will qualify for vacation pay after one year's continuous service to the company. Vacation benefits range from one week off with 2% of yearly wages after one year's service to four weeks off at 8% of annual pay for 20 years' service. The contract also provides for medical and pension benefits, Citizenship Participation Day Fund and Mar-

tin Luther King Jr. Farm Worker Fund.

The UFW won an election at the company in August, 1977 (UFW-170, no union-5). We were certified as bargaining agents later that year and negotiations began in January, 1978.

All 210 Pacific Mushroom workers walked out on strike on August 26, after eight months of nearly fruitless bargaining. The Agricultural Labor Relations Board filed a complaint against Pacific Mushroom and Campbell Soup last summer for bad faith bargaining.

Bargaining began in earnest in late September and October and agreement was reached late last month. The contract was ratified by a vote of 189 to 1.

Our congratulations go to all the workers at Pacific Mushroom who stayed strong throughout the strike. Special credit for the contract should go to the members of the Negotiating Committee, Brothers *Salvador Amezquita*, president; *Miguel A.G. Montesinos*, secretary; *Ramiro Guerrero*, *Jose A. Alvarez*, *Eduardo Perez*, and *Pablo Camacho*, committee members. The regular UFW negotiator was Sister *Marion Steeg*.

Farm Workers Sign First Orange County Contract

The union's first contract with an Orange County grower was signed on November 2 in Brea, California. The UFW and Select Nursery signed a three year agreement covering the firm's 150 year round workers.

The contract calls for first year minimum pay of \$3.15 per hour (up from \$2.75), \$3.35 per hour in the second year, and \$3.65 per hour in the third year.

It also contains 16 1/2 cents per hour employer contribution to the Robert F. Kennedy Medical Plan, 5 cents per hour to the Martin Luther King Jr. Farm Worker Fund and 15 cents per hour to the Juan de la Cruz Pension Fund.

The workers at Select Nursery voted for the UFW in an election on June 7, 1977. The union was certified on September 9, 1978, after farm worker supporters in Orange County launched a letter writing campaign to the Agricultural Labor Relations Board, requesting that the union be certified.

Special thanks should go to the Orange County UFW Support Committee and the Human Rights Commission of Orange County, whose members supported the workers' year long struggle to win a contract.

Congratulations go to the workers at Select Nursery for getting a contract, and special recognition goes to the members of the Negotiating Committee, Brothers *Felix Lomeli*, *Tomas Duran*, *Jose Duran Silva*, *Eugenio Lemon*, and *Arturo Rojas*.

Settlements

Sun Harvest-El Mirage

A grievance involving 13 irrigators at the Sun Harvest ranch in El Mirage, Arizona was recently settled.

The grievance arose when the 13 irrigators, Brothers *Victor M.A. Carrillo*, *Francisco Gaxiola*, *Manuel Perez*, *Victor Herrera*, *Alfonso Solano*, *Hipolito Hernandez*, *Roberto Ricardes Jr.*, *Trinidad Ortega Flores*, *Juan Avila*, *Manuel B. Avila*, *Lupe de la Rosa*, *Hilario Delgado*, and *Victor M. Correillo*, were not paid for a half hour at lunch as provided in the contract's supplemental agreement. The company agreed to pay the irrigators their half hour lunch pay for all the days that the company failed to comply with the contract.

Credit for this settlement should go to the Sun Harvest Ranch Committee, led by Brother *Reuben Martinez*, president. This ranch committee should be congratulated for the excellent job it is doing representing the workers in Arizona. They have been able to resolve every grievance this year without once having to resort to arbitration. Other members of the committee are Brothers *Simon Rodriguez*, vice president; *Simon Montoya*, secretary; *Eleazar Armenta*, *Quitero Gardea* and *Mariano Garcia*, committee members. Credit for the settlement should also go to ranch steward Brother *Raul Diaz*.

OFFICIAL NOTICES

New Contracts

Pacific Mushroom/ Pescadero/ mushrooms/ Nov. 6.

Select Nursery/ Brea/ nursery/ Nov. 2.

President's Newsletter

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

Non-Profit Organization
BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Keene, Calif. 93531
Permit No. 1

Lydia Trickey
2812 22nd St
Lubbock, TX 79410