

# Labor Day Message

By JACK HENNING  
Executive Secretary-Treasurer  
California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO

Labor Day this year requires public realization that George Bush is hell-bent on dismantling the American workforce.

His proposed free trade agreement with Mexico would finish industrial America.

A system already shattered by imports could not survive the transfer of critical production to Mexico.

We have already lost more than a half-million jobs to U.S.-owned operations below the borders of California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas.

Bush would exceed that total by ten-fold.

American capitalists will rush to the profit scheme of producing in a low-wage economy and selling in the high-priced U.S. markets.

A continued Bush presidency will result in a service economy absent an industrial base.

Lest there be doubt about the national directions we need only note that this week the last American-made Camaro rolled off the line in General Motors' Van Nuys plant.

A permanent shutdown for Van Nuys as G.M. put 2,600 production workers on the street, all the while operating in Mexico.

The crisis strikes at the core of our socio-economic fragmentation.

Without industrial employment our unsettled urban centers could be the graveyards of an orderly society.

The robber barons of the 19th Century purchased a succession of U.S. governments in the cause of criminal free enterprise.

Abundant industrial employment prevented popular rebellion.

Bush is testing the economic underclass, the victims of 10 years of Reaganomics.

On this Labor Day some one should advise the president that a service economy will not buy docility in the face of the scheduled desolation of industrial America.



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# Buyers Back Lucky Boycott

Two weekends of boycott action against Lucky Stores has proved that consumers will support workers fighting to preserve living wages for their families, Teamster leaders said yesterday.

Buyers responded to the boycott last weekend by turning away in droves from 40 Lucky supermarkets targeted by Teamster demonstrators in the San Francisco Bay Area and out into the Central Valley. Sales volume was down as much as 80 percent at some stores, boycott leaders reported.

"We are seeing an outstanding response to our boycott from the public," said Chuck Mack, president of Teamsters Joint Council No. 7.

"Consumer support is as strong as it was during the Safeway boycott last spring. We are gratified that people are willing to take their grocery shopping elsewhere in protest against attempts by a large corporation like Lucky Stores to force concessions and takeaways on workers."

Additional stores — as many as 50 — were to be boycotted this weekend. Plans were in place to expand the action to Lucky markets in Santa Rosa, Stockton, Salinas and Watsonville, Mack said.

Last Saturday, union members voted by better than 98 percent to reject Lucky's most recent contract proposal for 1,300 warehouse workers and truck drivers employed at three distribution centers.



Photo by Eric Johnson, Northern California Teamster.

Teamsters boycott Lucky supermarket; campaign resumes tomorrow.

The proposal was a continuation of the admittedly profitable corporation's campaign to drive wages down below levels that would permit its employees to feed, clothe and house their families at anything close to their standards of living of recent years.

Lucky's offer would have meant a wage and benefit reduction of 15 to 20 percent, Teamster negotiators said. This would be in addition to

the 27 percent reduction in purchasing power that Lucky's distribution workers have endured in the past five years while corporate profits and executive salaries have soared.

There was no progress toward getting Lucky's takeaways off the bargaining table in talks this week.

Volunteer help for this weekend's boycott action came from many sources, including from within the

International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

Five Lucky markets have been "adopted" by Teamsters members whose jobs at the huge Safeway distribution center in Tracy were saved this spring when a highly successful boycott forced Safeway management to back away from a plan to replace them all with non-union workers.

## Workers' Comp Debate Critical

The workers' compensation debate raged on at Sacramento today with the California Labor Federation continuing to demand that reforms include meaningful increases in benefits for the injured employees the system was established to protect.

Jack Henning, executive secretary-treasurer of the state federation, yesterday criticized big business for using small business to screen its own opposition to just and meaningful workers' comp reform.

The criticism came during a ses-

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sion of the joint Senate-Assembly committee that is trying to shape a compromise measure out of the large number of workers' comp measures submitted during the 1992 session of the Legislature.

"We constantly hear representatives of the largest, richest and most powerful corporate interests in this state arguing that specific improvements will be devastating to small business, when in fact they are representing their own interests," Henning declared.

"Furthermore, nothing assures the innocence of small business," Henning continued, pointing out that "in South Central Los Angeles small business operators live off and profit from the minority poor."

Although the committee is working on legislation of monumental

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# Labor Rips Bush on Job Training

George Bush came up with a \$10 billion job training proposal this week for Americans whose work gets exported to Mexico under the free trade agreement, and the AFL-CIO immediately branded it "far too late with far too little."

The AFL-CIO statement, issued minutes after Bush announced his plan on Tuesday, accused the president of trying to overcome a growing awareness that hundreds of thousands of Americans will be on the streets if the free trade agreement is ratified.

The federation said Bush's proposal wouldn't be enough to help workers already unemployed in this country, let alone the hordes who

**Alameda County Supervisors oppose the Free Trade Agreement.**

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will be jobless if corporations are empowered by the free trade agreement to shift manufacturing to Mexico without restriction.

"America needs more job training, but President Bush did not address job training today," the AFL-CIO statement declares.

"He addressed only his political problem of having no protection for U.S. workers in his North American Free Trade Agreement."

The proposal is inadequate even

for current needs, the statement continues.

"Between 20 and 30 million Americans will be unemployed some time this year, and he proposes a program for one million. For them, he offers no direct training and no new income support—just a \$3,000 voucher."

Bill Clinton pointed out that Bush's proposal is "very much like" the job training plan he has been trying out in Arkansas and has proposed for the entire country if he is elected.

"The problem is, he (Bush) can't pay for his plan because he wants an across-the-board tax cut, Clinton said during a news conference at

Little Rock.

Clinton has proposed a 1.5 percent payroll tax to finance retraining of idle American workers.

Bush said Tuesday that his job training proposal would not require any new taxes because the \$10 billion would be taken from other programs. He refused to talk about which programs would be cut.

But the Republican president pounded away at Clinton's payroll tax idea, telling trainees at a school in New Jersey that the cost would come out of their pay.

The Los Angeles Times reporter on the scene wrote that Bush was using his taxless training plan "as a bludgeon to attack...Clinton."



# Supervisors Oppose Trade Pact

The Alameda County Board of Supervisors unanimously opposes ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement as long as it contains no protections for American workers or the environment and fails to provide for communities economically and socially devastated by export of U.S. jobs to Mexico.

The supervisors stated their position last Monday when they unanimously approved a resolution proposed by the Alameda County Central Labor Council.

Similar resolutions have been adopted by the City Councils of Los Angeles and Berkeley.

The Alameda supervisors heard Owen Marron, executive secretary-treasurer of the council denounce the persons who negotiated the agreement for the U.S. as "regis-

tered foreign agents" who have accepted pay for representing the trading interests of other countries.

Marron, a vice president of the California Labor Federation, told the supervisors it was as though Benedict Arnold was negotiating for George Washington and the Continental Army.

## Trade Negotiators Served Foreigners

The people assigned by George Bush to negotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement are "multinational corporate lackies" Owen Marron, head of the Alameda County Central Labor Council, told the Alameda County Board of Supervisors this week.

Provisions that will treble Mexican sugar imports, forcing closure

of U.S. sugar mills and costing thousands of American jobs, were negotiated by Kinkaid Marsh, who has just been hired by Kraft Foods Corp. as an international sugar buyer, Marron said.

U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hill, the chief negotiator, was an advisor to the Matsushita Corp. of

or unenforced environmental safeguards.

He cited tens of thousands of jobs that have been exported from Alameda County, throwing families into poverty and homelessness and destroying the local tax base.

The labor council's resolution

was moved by Supervisor Mary King, the board president.

Supervisor Don Perata, arguing for approval, warned that ratification of the North American Free Trade Agreement would make re-industrialization of the United States impossible.

the Hitachi and Toyota corporations in the U.S., Marron added.

"These are people who have shown themselves willing to sell their services to the highest bidder with no concern for U.S. interests," Marron said. "These are the people Bush has put in charge of negotiating NAFTA."

## COPE Sets Training Sessions

Labor's tools, strategies and tactics for registering voters and getting them to the polls on Nov. 3 will be the focus of campaign planning sessions scheduled in Northern and Southern California by the State Committee on Political Education (COPE).

The sessions will be held at:

• San Francisco starting at 10 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 22, in the Lincoln Ballroom of the San Francisco Airport Hilton Hotel.

• Los Angeles at 10 a.m. Thursday, Sept. 24, in the Heinsbergen Room of the Biltmore Hotel.

The urgency of electing the Clinton-Gore ticket, preserving the Democratic majority in the Legislature, electing Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer to the U.S. Senate, and winning elections for

other COPE-endorsed candidates make the two sessions crucial, Jack Henning, executive secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation and head of state COPE, declared this week.

The keynote speaker at both sessions will be Assembly Speaker Willie L. Brown, Jr., who will address the political needs of labor at federal and state levels, Henning said.

"The jobs, future and labor freedom of America will be on the line in the presidential election, as well as the survival of social service entitlements such as Social Security and Aid to Families with Dependent Children," Henning said.

Henning cited the importance to labor of the Democratic majorities in the State Senate and Assembly.

"Without those majorities we would be the doormat for reactionary Republicans," the state AFL-CIO leader said.

Both sessions will focus on essential components for November election victories, Henning said, including use of computer-generated voter lists, encouraging members to vote by mail, effective use of phone banks, proper employment of volunteers, endorsement mailings, and getting out the vote on election day.

There is no registration fee although persons planning to attend are urged to fill out registration slips that are being distributed to affiliates and return them to the federation. Participants should make their own reservations at the two hotels, where special rates have been arranged.

## Action Due On Clinton Endorsement

Jack Henning will speak for the California Labor Federation next Thursday in Washington, D.C., when the General Board of the national AFL-CIO convenes to formalize the endorsement of Bill Clinton for president of the United States.

State federation leaders, presidents of all national and international unions, and leaders of local central bodies will be participating in the General Board session, Henning said.

On Wednesday, Henning will participate in a meeting of state federation leaders with key officials of the AFL-CIO at the national federation headquarters in Washington.

## Labor Sues to Block NAFTA

A suit challenging the constitutionality of George Bush's proposed North American Free Trade Agreement and its predecessor, the U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement of 1988, has been filed in federal court in Washington, D.C., by a coalition including the Metal Trades Department of the AFL-CIO.

The suit focuses on little-known provisions of both agreements that allow settlement of trade disputes by international panels empowered to demand pre-emption of any national, state or local laws deemed by the panelists to be restraints on trade.

Paul Burnsky, president of the Metal Trades Department and a founder of NCID, announced the filing of the seven-count complaint along with spokespersons for American Engineering Association (AEA), an employer participant in the NCID coalition.

"Under our Constitution, neither the President nor the Congress has the power to deprive American citizens who are injured by illegal trade practices of their rights to seek relief in the courts of the land," Burnsky declared.

Nearly 30 international trade panels already are resolving disputes under the 1988 U.S.-Canada Free Trade Agreement. Similar panels are a key part of the North American Free Trade Agreement, which would bring Mexico into full free-trade partnership with the U.S. and Canada.

In one recent U.S.-Canada dispute, American hog farmers saw a U.S. Trade Commission decision favorable to them reversed by such a treaty panel.

"The unlawful feature of the Free Trade Agreement is that it unconstitutionally surrenders the sov-

ereignty of the United States by giving panels comprised of U.S. and foreign lawyers engaged in the private practice of international trade law the power to reverse decisions of U.S. Courts in international trade cases," Burnsky pointed out.

"The FTA also prohibits access to U.S. courts by U.S. victims of unfair trade," he added.

Jurisdiction of the trade panels could be extended to all aspects of international trade, according to economists and legal experts who participated in a recent discussion aired by radio station KPFA-FM, the National Public Radio affiliate in San Francisco.

Peter Donahue, visiting scholar at the U.C.-Berkeley Department of Industrial Relations, pointed out that this could have devastating im-

pact upon American companies as well as upon workers.

A Mexican trucking company could appeal to such a trade panel if California or any other state tried to enforce smog laws, vehicle safety regulations or driver rest requirements on long-haul big rigs out of Mexico hauling goods anywhere in the U.S. or Canada.

The federal regulation requiring U.S. airlines to have their planes serviced in federally-approved American shops also could be deemed a restraint on trade, clearing the way for wholesale export of good-paying aircraft mechanic jobs from the U.S. to the huge new aircraft maintenance facility nearing completion at Tijuana, only minutes from downtown San Diego, it was pointed out.

## Francis Puts Trade Record Straight

An editorial in the San Diego Union arguing that the proposed North American Free Trade Agreement will create new American jobs and halt illegal immigration into the U.S. has been challenged by Joseph S. Francis, executive secretary-treasurer of the San Diego-Imperial Counties Labor Council.

Francis pointed out in a letter to the newspaper's editors that the same arguments were raised in defense of the maquiladora factories that now line the border.

"In truth, we have experienced just the opposite," Francis wrote.

Rather than providing wages high enough to keep Mexican workers home, the maquiladoras are paying wages worth less than the average Mexican earned eight years ago, he pointed out.

And instead of creating new American jobs along the border, the maquiladoras have syphoned off the livelihoods of more than 600,000 Americans, Francis said.

Illegal immigration, meanwhile, is higher than ever.

"Yes, we know entrepreneurs on both sides of the border will benefit," Francis told the editors. "They are the land speculators, import-export agents, government officials and multi-national corporations who exploit both sides to the benefit of their profit margins."

"Any consumer price survey of comparable products made in Mexico or the U.S. will quickly demonstrate that the consumer does not benefit from the cheaper labor in Mexico or anywhere else in the world."

"There are no prescribed qualifications for individuals who serve on the panels," NCID said.

In theory, anyone may apply to be a panel member and be placed on a list of prospective panel members. The U.S. Trade Representative keeps the list and appoints members.

The list currently includes U.S. trade attorneys who represent foreign corporate interests, NCID reported.

The suit asks the federal court to declare that the trade panels have no authority to review, reverse or modify decisions of the U.S. Department of Commerce, U.S. International Trade Commission or any court of law established under Article I or Article III of the U.S. Constitution.

"In addition, we have yet to calculate the added cost to U.S. taxpayers as we commit to spend millions of dollars to address health and environment problems created by the flow of raw sewage and other pollutant contaminants into San Diego as the Tijuana population continues to explode.

"Should we also mention the contribution of unrestricted vehicle emissions originating in the Tijuana area polluting the air shared by Mexicans and Americans?"

"Yes, the maquiladoras and the U.S.-Mexico trade agreement may be a great benefit, not to U.S. and Mexican workers, but to the same few who always seem to benefit at great cost to the majority of Americans and Mexicans."

## Laborers Back Clinton, Gore

The Laborers International Union of North America has added its voice to the support among AFL-CIO affiliates for the endorsement of Bill Clinton and Al Gore.

"Governor Clinton and Senator Gore offer Americans their first chance in more than a generation to once again possess the hope and vision of a truly better life," Max Warren, Laborers international vice president, said last week at Sacramento.

### Datebook

A. Philip Randolph Institute Western Regional Conference: Aug. 28-Aug. 30, Parc Oakland Hotel, Oakland.

### Publisher's Notice

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Photo by Kelly Linville

Three generations of the Geer family costumed for their Theatricum Botanicum production of 'The Miracle Worker' are, from left, Melora Marshall and Ellen Geer, daughters of the late Will Geer; Herta Ware, their mother, and, in front, Ellen's daughter Willow Geer-Alsop.

# Stage Family Honored At L.A. Fed Art Show

The family of Will Geer and the theater company founded by the late actor received Labor's Image Award for 1992 last Saturday evening during the opening of the 23rd Union Artist Show sponsored by the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor.

The Geers and their Will Geer Theatricum Botanicum were selected for the award because of their contributions to the labor movement and to the community. Members of the family and of the theatricum company accepted the award during a reception in meeting chambers of the Los Angeles City Council.

Also participating were many of the more than 100 painters, photographers and sculptors—all trade unionists or members of trade unionists' families—whose works make up the L.A. federation's 23rd annual Union Artist Show. The works will be on display until Oct. 3 in the Bridge Gallery at L.A. City Hall.

Purchase of two of the works for hanging at the L.A. federation office building was announced by Carole Sickler, coordinator of the show.

Selected by the federation were a photo by Jerome Kessler of Musi-

cians Local 47 entitled "East Blue Hill, Maine, depicting a New England house overlooking a shore scene, and a pen and ink drawing by Mary Streeter, wife of a member of Graphic Communications Local 404, entitled "Phantom Horse."

Prizes in the several categories of competition were announced by the judges, Paul Winfield, Screen Actors Guild; Scott Canty, curator of Los Angeles Satellite Galleries, and Michael Bell, Los Angeles Artistic Affairs Department.

The Labor's Image Award cited a Theatricum Botanicum program that takes inner city children out to the Geer family outdoor amphitheatre in Topanga Canyon for exposure to the stage otherwise unavailable to them.

Also mentioned were such endeavors as the show the Geer Family Singers put on early this year for Frontier Hotel strikers who had marched across the Southern California Desert to L.A., and the "Worker's U.S.A.!" review written, produced and performed at Theatricum Botanicum to critical acclaim.

Will Geer, remembered by millions as the wise and kindly grandfather of the TV Walton family, bought the Topanga Canyon prop-

erty and moved his family there to farm after being blacklisted by the movie industry during the McCarthy era.

Hollywood friends including performers, musicians and artists flocked to the canyon site and began a tradition of performing that continues today.

The group appeared frequently at labor rallies and fundraising events.

Family and friends began working toward establishment of a full-fledged, union repertory theater following Geer's death in 1978. Their efforts achieved Theatricum Botanicum, now in its 10th annual repertory season.

Being performed this year under guidance of Artistic Director Ellen Geer are Hamlet, Twelfth Night and The Miracle Worker.

## Feinstein, Boxer S.F. COPE Guests

Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer, Democratic candidates for California's two seats in the U.S. Senate, will be guests of honor at the annual fund raising dinner of the San Francisco Labor Council's Committee on Public Education (COPE) Thursday evening, Oct. 8, at the Sheraton Palace Hotel.

# A Big 'No' on L.A. Third World Zone

A Republican proposal to create a "third world" zone in Los Angeles County by suspending employee protections, minimum wages, pollution controls, building codes, employer taxes and an array of additional laws in neighborhoods devastated by last April's uprising was swiftly shot down Tuesday by a committee of the State Senate.

The contention seemed to be that capitalists, freed from restraints upon free enterprise from unions, bureaucrats, tax collectors and environmentalists, would quickly turn burned-out South Central L.A. into a blooming garden of prosperity and profit.

The "third world" label was applied by Jack Henning, executive secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation, during a ringing denunciation Senate Bill 18X by Bill Leonard, R-San Bernardino County, chair of the Senate Republican Caucus.

"This bill is a collective denial of

the rights of working people," Henning told the Senate Committee on Governmental Organization. "It is ridiculous."

Henning pointed out that the minimum wage Leonard wants to undercut in the disaster area isn't enough to keep a working family above the federal poverty line.

Henning also lashed back at the Republican senator's contention that organized labor, by insisting upon decent wages, was harming poverty-level workers. He challenged anti-labor conservatives to match labor's record of service to all working men and women.

"Superzone" is what Leonard wanted it called, but he failed to generate enthusiasm for either that name or the bill's provisions. Only one committee member, Sen. Ken Maddy, R-Fresno, voted for it.

The bill did, however, provide a clear picture of the future envisioned for California workers by the reactionary right.

It called for:

- Suspending the minimum wage for all workers in the zone and comparable wage for those employed on public works projects.
- Exempting employers from sales and use taxes, capital gains taxes, and from some payroll contributions and withholding taxes.
- Declaring that product liability laws "strongly and unfairly favor plaintiffs" and pose a "deterrent to production of goods and services"; severely limiting the amount of money a customer injured by a faulty product could recover in a lawsuit.
- Making businesses immune to the California Environmental Quality Act and to environmental protection regulations by any public agency, including the South Coast Air Quality Management District, California Integrated Waste Management Board, the state Water Resources Control Board, and local water resources boards.

• Exempting builders from rent controls, zoning regulations, permit fees, local building codes, the California Environmental Quality Act, and the Subdivision Map Act.

• Prohibiting workers' compensation for most stress injuries, eliminate vocational rehabilitation benefits for injured workers, and mandating a long list of additional changes in the workers' comp system.

• Imposing new limits on the amount of assets that can be owned by recipients of welfare under the Aid to Families with Dependent Children program.

• Waiving state regulation and inspection of child day care facilities.

• Exempting employers from any mandatory health care coverage legislation that might be passed.

• Suspending statewide participation goals for minority, women and disabled veteran business enterprises.

Education proposals of Leonard's

bill were especially harsh.

He wanted to carve out new, independent "neighborhood" school districts centering on individual high schools and the elementary and junior high schools that feed into the high schools.

Teachers in these new "neighborhood" districts would not be required to hold credentials if they had military teaching experience or occupational experience in a particular area. The new districts would have been empowered to use "merit" salary systems.

Leonard's bill called for exempting the new school districts from state minimum high school graduation requirements. It would have required schools to operate on a year-round, "multi-track" system.

A staff analysis of the measure noted that it bore a "striking resemblance" to many of the recommendations contained in the report issued last April by Gov. Pete Wilson's Council on California Competitiveness.

## Workers Festival Set for Concord

The Seventh Annual Western Workers Labor Heritage Festival is scheduled to be held Jan. 15, 16 and 17, 1993, at the Concord Holiday Inn under sponsorship of the Contra Costa County Central Labor Council.

Taking the event to a hotel for the first time means that participants and spectators will be able to stay on the festival premises, Shelley Kessler, president, and David Winters, coordinator, pointed out in an announcement this week.

Kessler said persons wishing to stay at the hotel should contact festival headquarters by Dec. 15 in order to take advantage of special rates, including \$55 for a room with two queen-size beds capable of accommodating four persons at no added cost.

The festival address is P.O. Box 7184, Santa Cruz, CA 95061. The phone is (408) 426-4940.

# IWC Relents on 12-Hour Day

The two employer representatives on the state Industrial Welfare Commission announced last Friday that they no longer are interested in legalizing the 12-hour, no-overtime day for workers in the radio and television broadcast industry.

It is the first slowing of the IWC's 12-hour-day juggernaut in the six years since pro-employer appointees of former Gov. George Deukmejian began stripping historic eight-hour protections out of the state industrial wage orders that are under the commission's control.

An outpouring of protests quite obviously had a lot to do with the announcements by the two employer representatives, James Rude, a hospital executive from Sacramento, and Lynnel Pollock, a Yolo County agri-business operator who also is the IWC chair.

They were told by IWC Administrative Officer Karla Yates that more than 7,000 letters had come in protesting the broad-

cast industry 12-hour day.

Rude and Pollock have been poised for months to legalize the 12-hour day as requested by broadcast employers but have been unable to act because there hasn't been a quorum at an IWC meeting since last spring.

With two of the five IWC seats empty, Rude and Pollock have the votes to pass anti-labor motions despite objections from Robert Hanna, a labor representative. They've been frustrated, however, because Hanna's been staying away from IWC meetings with regularity and denying a quorum.

Last Friday Rude and Pollock both indicated they'd vote against the employer 12-hour-day request any time Hanna shows up to make balloting possible.

One or the other of the two labor seats on the IWC has been left vacant for more than two years, first by Deukmejian and now by Gov. Pete Wilson, like Deukme-

jian a Republican.

The fifth seat, that of the representative of the general public, has been vacant since early this year when Wilson declined to reappoint Muriel Morse who had sided with Hanna in favor of conducting a review of the adequacy of the state's minimum wage.

Meanwhile, a bill that would prevent the IWC from legalizing the 12-hour day for the broadcast industry waited on the Senate floor for final action sending it to the governor's desk.

In another IWC action last Friday, a lawyer-lobbyist representing hospitals withdrew a petition for removal of worker protections left in place when the IWC legalized the 12-hour day for that industry.

IWC rules state that such an application is dead if the commissioners fail to act on it within 45 days. With Hanna absent, no action was possible.



# Supercuts Tries Super Busting

Supercuts, the nationwide franchiser of haircutting shops, has fired 35 employees who were scheduled to vote today on union representation and has padlocked the three shops where they worked in Marin, and Sonoma Counties.

Ron Lind, organizing director of Local 428 of the United Food and Commercial Workers, called it a blatant attempt to avoid the union here and to intimidate workers who might consider organizing at any of the more than 700 Supercuts stores elsewhere across the country.

The three shut-down shops are in Petaluma, Novato and San Rafael. Also in San Rafael is Supercuts national corporate headquarters.

Local 428 filed charges with the

National Labor Relations Board accusing Supercuts of multiple violations of federal labor law and demanding immediate reopening of all three stores, reinstatement of the fired workers with back pay, and recognition of the union as their bargaining agent. Recognition should be without an election because of the chilling effect the firings will have on employees if yesterday's ballot is rescheduled, the union said.

All three shops in question are operated by franchisees David and Sharon Moore of Fremont, who were not talking to the news media this week.

Instead, questions about the firings and the closings were being answered by spokespersons at Supercuts headquarters in San Rafael

who seemed to have trouble keeping their stories straight even though the corporation has retained the notorious and expensive union-bashing law firm of Littler, Mendelson, Fastiff and Tichy.

One announcement declared that the stores were closed and the workers fired "to give the company time to sort out the franchisees' operational problems."

The spokesperson acknowledged that she didn't know of any other "operational problems" besides the workers' desire to be represented by a union.

It also was asserted that the stores were closed and all workers fired because the premises needed redecoration. "Closed for re-

modeling" signs appeared in the store windows. At one store, the "closed for remodeling" sign vied for attention with a "grand opening" sign only weeks old.

Workers came to Local 428 for help earlier this year with stories that belied the image Supercuts attempts to project with television ads featuring enthusiastic, youthful haircutters whose work is contrasted with that of traditional hair cutters who are represented as dull and unimaginative.

It turns out that the top pay at Supercuts is \$6.25 an hour, that Supercuts demands a minimum of three haircuts per hour from each worker, and that the workers must provide their own tools and equipment.

Local 428 asked recognition on the basis of cards signed by more than 75 percent of the workers and was immediately turned down by the franchisees. Then the union asked for the NLRB election, which would have been held yesterday at the three worksites if Supercuts had not shut them down.

A corporate spokesperson said it was not unusual for Supercuts to take over from franchisees who are having difficulties running their shops.

Meanwhile, the fired workers picketed padlocked haircutting stores.

Lind said several union shops had offered the fired workers work space in spare chairs.

## Utility Workers Savor Victory At SoCalGas

Action by Utility Workers Local 132 and a coalition of community allies is forcing Southern California Gas Company to reopen 12 branch offices the company closed during 1991.

The order by the California Public Utilities Commission is a resounding victory for labor as well as for consumers, President Maureen Lynch of Local 132 pointed out this week.

"The PUC went far beyond what we asked in our petition," Lynch said. "Not only did the commissioners order SoCalGas to reopen all 12 offices, do it within 90 days and make monthly reports on compliance with the order, but they also ordered each office reopened as a full-service operation staffed by company employees. The commissioners said that minimum-service, contractor-operated pay stations would not be satisfactory."

The full-service requirement is important to the union because it means SoCalGas cannot get by with laying off employees and farming the work out to shopkeepers or others who accept gas bill payments part-time, Lynch pointed out.

That's more: SoCalGas is ordered to come back with reports on the reasons it closed other branch offices between 1987 and 1990, the year it announced it would shut down the 12 offices covered by the reopening mandate.

About 160 union jobs are saved by the order, Lynch said.

The impact on the affected com-

munities was addressed by Commission President Daniel Fessler.

"The office closures created unnecessary hardship and inconvenience in these communities," Fessler declared. "The impact of the closures fell disproportionately on the poor, elderly and minority customers. We will not allow the offices to remain closed."

Lynch predicted that the coalition victory would make it difficult for big business to keep trying to paint trade unionists as a special interest group.

And, she said, the success demonstrates that involvement in community coalitions can provide labor with powerful leverage in dealing with huge corporations.

Lynch reported last week to the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor, which had given strong support during the petition campaign and hearing process.

Copies of the PUC order were eagerly snatched up by L.A. federation delegates representing unions whose members passed petitions and mailed postcards that brought the issue before the PUC.

"Utility customers in California can celebrate with the Utility Workers Union of America, its members and all the community organizations and individuals that had the guts and strength of character to tackle the abuses of corporate power that put dollars into the pockets of a few while sacrificing the best interests of the public at large," Lynch said.

## Trade Unionists Back PBS Board Candidates

Trade unionist Howard Wallace is a candidate for election to the Board of Directors of KQED, the San Francisco Public Broadcasting System affiliate, in an election that is involving the S.F. Labor Council and members of a number of Bay Area unions.

Local 51 of the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET), which urged union members to cancel memberships during a contract dispute with KQED, now is campaigning to sign up union members before next Friday, Sept. 4, so that they can cast ballots for Wallace and for other candidates running with Wallace on the New Priorities Slate.

The board is responsible for radio station KQED-FM as well as for KQED-TV, Channel 9.

"Without the union and its members bringing together the community to push this issue of customer service over the last 18 months, the branch offices and related services would have been eliminated.

"This proves that the union gives a damn about the community," Lynch continued. "We are quite happy that the commission ruled in favor of the utility customers and even expanded the sought-after remedy to include expansion of branch office services. The process of government did work."

The coalition — entitled SOS for Save our Services — included the American Association of Retired Persons, Congress of California Seniors, California Rural Legal Assistance, Towards Utility Rate Normalization (TURN), Wages for

A main election issue is the influence exerted upon KQED programming by corporate interests that provide sponsorship money.

"The more members, the less corporate support is needed," NABET Local 51 declares in fliers urging union members to invest the \$35 a year it takes to become a full member of KQED, Inc. Low-income persons can join for less.

Wallace argues that KQED is at a crossroads.

"The station can return to its historic calling as an alternative to commercial media or it can continue its slide toward mismanagement and the embrace of corporate culture," he says.

"KQED viewers can start to take back their station and enlarge its

scope," Wallace adds. "Currently, not a single member of the 27-member board represents the perspective of union and working class viewers.

"My election as well as that of the New Priorities Slate would begin to correct that imbalance."

Wallace is a field representative for Hospital and Health Care Workers Local 250 of the Service Employees International Union. He is a founder of the Lesbian/Gay Labor Alliance. He's worked for the United Farm Workers, Mobilization for Peace, Jobs and Justice, and on the Coors boycott.

The NABET Local 51 campaign to sign up new KQED members can be reached at (415) 398-3160. New members must join no later than next Friday, Sept. 4, in order to vote in this year's election.

structure of divisional management by closing all offices and placing field crews hundreds of miles apart under the direction of a single office.

Another SoCalGas proposal — apparently abandoned — would have eliminated the corporation's entire telephone communications network and handed all dispatching and trouble-shooting over to operators located in Arizona, presumably at cheap wages held down by that state's so-called right to work law.

SoCalGas is the largest gas-only public utility company in the country. Its service area extends from Mexico northward to Paso Robles on the coast and nearly to Fresno in the Central Valley, covering all of Southern California except San Diego and Long Beach.

## Legislature...

(Continued from page 1)

importance to working men and women its proceedings are obscured by attention focused upon the budget debate.

Yesterday's committee session was followed by negotiations into the night involving organized labor and others, including employer organizations that have a stake in compensation reform.

Meanwhile, the legislators completed or prepared to complete action on a number of labor bills.

Assembly Bill 1931, the measure to prevent employers from continuing to use dangerous equipment or materials while Cal-OSHA charges are appealed, was sent to Gov. Pete Wilson's desk by the State Senate.

The bill is sponsored by the state federation and carried by State Sen.

Bill Greene, D-L.A.

Final approval was imminent on:

- Senate Bill 1699 By David Roberti, D-L.A., the state federation's bill to raise unemployment insurance maximum weekly benefits to \$350 from the current \$330.

- SB 1739 by Pat Johnston, D-Stockton, adjusting the unemployment rate "trigger" for expanded unemployment insurance benefits to enable Californians to participate in additional federal jobless pay funds.

- AB 1542 by Terry Friedman, D-L.A., making garment manufacturers liable when their subcontractors violate worker protection laws and withhold pay from employees.

- AB 2601 by Terry Friedman, prohibiting discrimination in employment on the basis of sexual orientation.

## APALA Supports Wards Cove Bill

The Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance is calling for trade unionists to support the Justice for Wards Cove Act, which would reverse the exemption of one single employer in the entire United States from the Civil Rights Act of 1991.

Dan Nishijima of Service Employees Local 1000, the California State Employees Association, said the legislation is a critical test of the ability of Asian and Pacific workers to obtain justice.

Wards Cove, an Alaskan salmon cannery, was granted special protections in discrimination disputes last November when George Bush signed the Civil Rights Act of 1991. The exemption makes it nearly impossible for Wards Cove workers to win a discrimination suit dating

back to 1973.

The plaintiffs are about 2,000 Asian-Americans, Pacific-American and native American workers, past and present, who held low-paying, seasonal work at the salmon cannery but found that they were shut out of higher-paying, non-cannery jobs with the company. Their suit and appeals reached the U.S. Supreme Court, which handed down a ruling in 1989 substantially altering standards for so-called disparate impact discrimination suit cases and making it much more difficult for workers to sue employers in such cases.

It was this Supreme Court decision that persuaded members of Congress to approve provisions in

the Civil Rights Act of 1991 prohibiting intentional discrimination and holding employers answerable for discrimination based solely upon their statistical records.

Ironically, Wards Cove—and only Wards Cove—was exempted from the act. This was attributed to extremely heavy and highly effective lobbying, which continues.

The Justice for Wards Cove Workers Act is contained in two bills, H.R. 3784 and S. 1962.

Besides signing petitions, APALA is urging trade unionists to lobby U.S. Senators and representatives in Congress and to urge their local unions to endorse the Justice for Wards Cove Workers Act.