cfo5407

Silence on Labor Appointee

The news that California's chief labor statistician has an anti-worker record and no experience or training pertinent to her position continues to go unreported in any of the state's commercial news media.

Dorothy Vuksich, who has voted against labor consistently as a member of the state Industrial Welfare Commission, has been chief of the Division of Labor Statistics and Research of the Department of Industrial Relations for two weeks now without comment by a single newspaper of general circulation or any radio or TV station.

Fed, LCLAA get results with Chiapas protest. See Page 3

This is despite the sensitive nature of Vuksich's new office and the far-reaching impact of the reports the division is supposed to produce at its headquarters in San Francisco.

For one thing, the Division of Labor Statistics and Research determines the comparable wages that must be paid to people employed on public works projects. Several bills seeking to alter, abolish or suspend comparable wage currently are before the Legislature, submitted by members of the Republican Party that Vuksich has served on national and state levels for many years.

For another, the division Vuksich now heads is responsible for supplying the Industrial Welfare Commission with facts and figures on such questions as adequacy of the minimum wage. Vuksich, as a member of the IWC, adamantly refuses to consider whether the minimum wage satisfies requirements of law even when statistics supplied by her predecessors show it to be woefully inadequate.

Vuksich's appointment by Gov. Pete Wilson as chief labor statistician apparently took place on or about Feb. 21, even though that day was a state holiday.

But it is impossible to say for sure just when she started the job because nobody in the administration is talking.

The governor's appointments staff declined comment and referred California AFL-CIO News to the governor's press relations office. A glib-sounding person at the press office said first that any question about Vuksich's appointment should be submitted by mail, but then relented and promised to have somebody in authority call back. Nobody ever did.

Vuksich herself has declined to return phone calls. John Duncan, deputy director of industrial relations in charge of public relations on the staff of Director of Industrial

(Continued on Page 4)

California AFL-CIO News

Official Publication of The California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO

Vol. 37—No. 8 533 March 4, 1994

Women View Work Issues At Conference

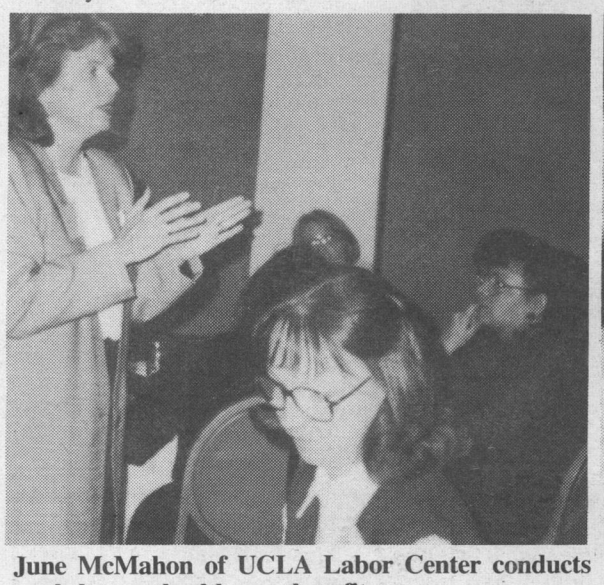
The Women's Conference sponsored by the California Labor Federation drew overflow audiences for panel discussions, workshops and seminars last week at the Los Angeles Biltmore Hotel.

"Workshops were overflowing," said Kathleen Kinnick, director of women's activities for the state federation and coordinator of the conference. "We had to bring in extra chairs. Participants are overwhelmingly enthusiastic. They are asking for such events to be held annually."

A panel discussion on women in non-traditional employment led off the conference on Thursday afternoon, Feb. 24. It was the first of a series of programs dealing with key issues currently confronting women in the workplace.

Janice Wood, vice president of the California Labor Federation and vice president of the Communications Workers of America, moderated the discussion. Panel members were Nema Jayroe, business representative of Glaziers, Architectural Metal and Glass Workers Local 636 of Los Angeles; Suzanne Acone, an apprentice electrician in Orange County, and Cynthia Fralick, Los Angeles County firefighter.

Assembly Member Delaine Eastin fields questions after her keynote address to Women's Conference. Photos by Diana Volpini, OPEIU Local 3



June McMahon of UCLA Labor Center conducts workshop on health care benefits.

Kathleen Kinnick, left, conference coordinator, greets Assembly Member Gwen Moore.

The conference was called to order earlier on Thursday afternoon by Kinnick. There was a welcome by Jim Wood, executive secretary-treasurer of the Los Angeles County Federation of Labor.

Cynthia McCaughan, coordinator of women's activities for the Civil Rights Department of the national AFL-CIO, gave the first address of the conference immediately after the welcomes, focusing on the national scene and pending federal legislation.

Jack Henning, executive secretary-treasurer of the state federation, addressed the conference on Friday morning. He was introduced by Kinnick who opened that day's sessions.

The Keynote address by Assembly Member Delaine Eastin, D-Fremont, followed Henning's remarks.

(Continued on Page 4)

Health: Labor Targets Voters

Brochures laying out the reasons the AFL-CIO is backing President Clinton's Health Security Act have been mailed to thousands of Californians as part of organized labor's nationwide campaign to counter misrepresentations and distortions and show the general public that labor represents their interests in the health care debate.

The brochures being mailed in this state are signed by Jack Henning, executive secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation, and Lane Kirkland, president of the national AFL-CIO. They are addressed personally to each recipient and they tell exactly how the addressee can contact his or her congressional representative to urge votes for health care reform that meets the AFL-CIO's criteria.

"Tell your representative the piecemeal proposals offered by Reps. Cooper and Michel, and Sens. Chaffee and Gramm are NOT real reform and will not work," the recipients are warned.

There is an explanation of how health care costs affect all union contracts and destroy many of them.

"Union members have seen money that might go for wages and other benefits drained away for health care," the message states. "Three quarters of all workers who strike have health care as the core problem.

"Union members lose their jobs when union products are undercut by competing employers who don't provide health care to their workers," the message continues.

"If that trend continues, eventually no employer will provide health insurance coverage to employees. Health Security requires all employers to provide health coverage," it adds.

Farm Workers Plan Pilgrimage

The United Farm Workers of America will start a 300-mile pilgrimage up the San Joaquin and Sacramento valleys from Delano to the State Capitol at the end of this month to dramatize the continuing exploitation of those who harvest California's crops.

It will retrace the historic 1966 march led by Cesar Chavez that first called widespread attention to injustices that workers in the fields are forced to endure.

The pilgrimage—peregrinacion in Spanish—will start at the UFW's 40 Acres outside Delano on March 31, the first anniversary of the death of Chavez, which this year is Holy Thursday in Easter Week, UFW President Arturo Rodriguez announced. During nightly stops at towns along the route the spirit of the union will be celebrated with music, plays and discussions

Marchers will arrive at Sacramento on Saturday, April 23, the first anniversary of Chavez' death. There they'll celebrate a mass dedicated to the end of suffering for farm workers and their children.

And on Sunday, April 24, the UFW will rally on the steps of the State Capitol to call for justice for farm workers. UFW members will return to the Capitol on Monday, April 25, to talk with members of the Legislature about lack of enforcement of the farm worker protection laws that do exist in California.

Friends of the union are invited to participate in the peregrinacion either by walking with farm workers for portions of the 300 miles or by helping with activities and celebrations at places along the route to Sacramento, Rodriguez said.

The UFW president cited a rebirth of dedication and support for the union in the year since Chavez died.

"And yet, when we meet with farm workers we are too many times witnesses to the blatant disregard of their rights as laborers and human beings." Rodriguez declared.

"They get paid substandard wages, if they get paid at all. They live in the fields, in trees, in cars with their children. They are cheated and lied to by unscrupulous labor contractors."

The march is inspired by Chavez' example of what can be accomplished through action and commitment, Rodriguez said.

"The peregrinacion is our most effective tribute to Cesar, and it will be more successful with participation of our friends," he added.

Those who want information about walking in the peregrinacion or taking part in celebrations along the way are asked to contact Eva Royale, the UFW's public action manager, at 240 Golden Gate Ave., San Francisco, CA 94102. The phone is (415) 441-5008.

California AFL-CIO News (ISSN 0008-0802). Second Class postage paid at San Francisco, Calif.

Archives Marks Anniversary

"Eight Years of Making History Work" was the theme as the Labor Archives and Research Center at San Francisco State University observed its anniversary with a reception and program last Friday evening, Feb. 25.

There was special attention to the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union. An exhibit of documents and photographs depicting "The ILWU Then and Now" was unveiled in the archives reading room, where it is scheduled to remain on display through next Labor Day.

The LARC 1994 Distinguished Labor History Lecturer was Professor David J. Olson, who occupies the Harry Bridges Chair for Labor History at University of Washington. The lecture is an annual feature of the LARC anniversary observances. Olson spoke on "The Origins and Establishment of the Harry Bridges Chair and the Center for Labor Studies at the University of Washington."

A tribute to David Jenkins, the labor activist, educator and archives co-founder who died last year, was presented by Jim Herman, president emeritus of the ILWU.

Master of ceremonies was Robert Cherny of the S.F. State History Department. Eric Solomon, university librarian, welcomed the nearly 200 participants.

LARC Director Lynn A. Bonfield reviewed progress of the archives since its founding by labor movement activists eight years ago, citing the impact of recent university budget cuts and success of the fund-raising campaign launched last December in an effort to keep archives programs intact. The search continues for space to house the growing collection of materials and keep them available to students and researchers, who numbered 866 during 1993 even with curtailed hours, she said.

Prizes were presented to winners of the annual S.F. State Student Essay Contest by Rick Gutierrez, president of the S.F. State Chapter of California Faculty Association, the contest co-sponsor.

First place went to Elizabeth Aife Murray for her essay entitled "Domestic Work and Poetry." Second place prize went to Margaret Anne Conway for "Union Blues."

There were two honorable mentions: Matt Black for "Miners of Sumah Orcko" and Tawnya Renee Dudash for "Hot Box: The Impact of Stigma on Peepshow Dancers."

Excerpts of the winning essays were read by Carma Muir Berglund, S.F. State performing arts graduate, who is departing after three years on the archives staff to become executive director of the Amador Arts Council.

Newly named Associates of the Labor Archives and Research Center were presented by Nikki Bridges, co-chair of the associates along with Jack Henning, executive secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation.

The evening closed with a program by singer-songwriter Linda Allen of Seattle.

Associate Status Honors Volunteers

Twenty-three new Associates of the Labor Archives and Research Center were presented by Nikki Bridges at the LARC Eighth Anniversary celebration with these citations:

Jim Ahern, president of Fire Fighters Local 798, for skill in presenting S.F. firefighters' history.

Henry Anderson, former research director of the Farm Workers, for creative use of original research.

Joe Barry, American Federation of Teachers, for bringing together the academic community and labor movement.

Maria Brooks, for creative talents in presenting labor's stories.

Mina Caulfield, for service as a judge in S.F. State Student Essay Contest.

Sarah Cooper, for preserving and presenting history of labor as director of the Southern California Library of Social Studies and Research at Los Angeles.

Fred Glass, California Federation of Teachers, for creatively presenting the story of teachers and their commitment to education.

Mike Henneberry, United Food and Commercial Workers, for recognition of the importance of labor's art work, cultural history and archival preservation.

Karen Hossfeld, California Faculty Association, for judging the S.F. State Student Essay Contest and for presentation of labor's stories through her publications.

Bill Issel, California Faculty Association (CFA), for historical research and writings bringing labor history to all people, and for service to the archives as board member of special projects.

Edith Jenkins, for creative talent in presenting labor's stories of social justice and labor's culture.

Ed Mackin, Marine Engineers, for continuing support of labor's vision.

Shirley Ann Moore, CFA, for historical research bringing labor's stories to all people.

Kerry Newkirk, Service Employees Local 535, for service to the goals of social justice and skill in maintaining the record.

Abdiel Onate, CFA, for years of service as a judge in the Student Essay Contest.

Jim Potterton, CFA, for years of bridging the gap between the academic community and the labor movement.

Nancy Quam-Wickham, for presenting labor's past in today's classrooms.

Jeff Quam-Wickham, Inland Boatmen, for service to social justice and preserving labor's history.

Johnetta Richards, CFA, for service as judge of the Student Essay Contest.

Kevin Ward, Ironworkers, for use of creative talent in preserving labor's history on video.

Carol Webb, for service on the archives advisory board representing the South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council.

Diana Webb, for serving labor's goals of social justice through CLUW, Local 1100 of the UFCW and many other organizations.

Nancy Zinn, for service on archives advisory board, where she shared her knowledge of archival administration.

Labor Finances What It Builds

The eight-story, 303 Almaden Plaza office tower in downtown San Jose was officially launched last week by representatives of the AFL-CIO Building Investment Trust that is financing it with $20 million, the union workers who are erecting it, and officials of the city that it will benefit.

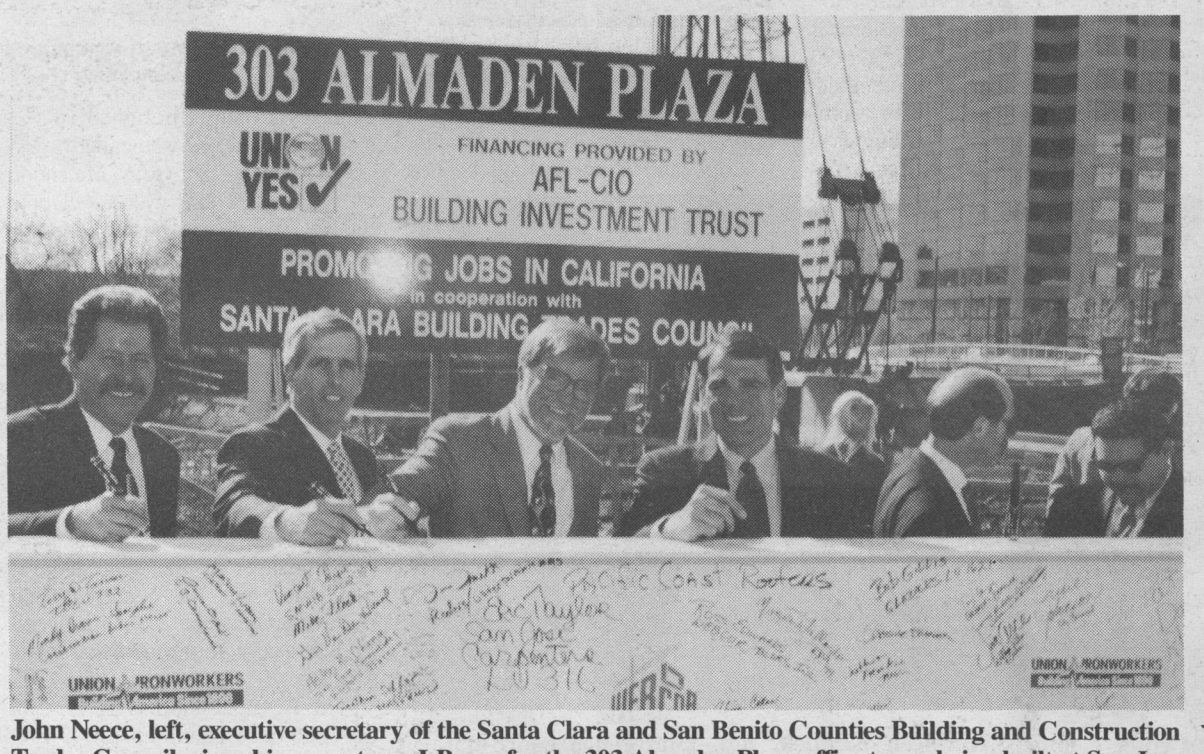
In lieu of ground-breaking, there was a ceremonial signing of a heavy steel I-beam that becomes part of the structure.

Among those taking part were John Neece, executive secretary of the Santa Clara and San Benito Counties Building and Construction Trades Council; Jeff Greendorfer, regional executive for the investment trust; Mike Arnold, the trust's national director of investor relations, and Henry Pitts, a vice president of the Baltimore bank that hands the Investment Trust's funds.

Scores of Union workers also signed the beam, as did San Jose Mayor Susan Hammer, Redevelopment Agency director Frank Taylor, and representatives of the developers.

The mayor praised the collaboration of labor, business and municipal government.

"The construction of this new building means good construction jobs are coming to San Jose," Hammer declared during ceremonies at the site on Feb. 24.



John Neece, left, executive secretary of the Santa Clara and San Benito Counties Building and Construction Trades Council, signs his name to an I-Beam for the 303 Almaden Plaza office tower being built at San Jose by union workers with financing by the AFL-CIO Building Investment Trust. Also affixing their signatures are, from left, Henry Pitts, representing the Baltimore bank that handles Investment Trust funds; Frank Taylor, executive director of the San Jose Redevelopment Agency, and Mike Arnold, national director of investor relations for the Investment Trust. Jeff Greendorfer, second from right, Investment Trust regional executive, tells a news reporter how the organization channels workers' retirement and benefit fund reserves into union-built projects aimed at enhancing American communities. Photo by Pro Photo

Arnold, speaking for the AFL-CIO trust, said, "This $20 million investment in San Jose is the latest in a long list of projects in California funded by the AFL-CIO Building Investment Trust."

The trust invests worker funds from retirement and benefit reserves in secure projects that provide jobs for skilled building trades workers and benefit local communities, Greendorfer pointed out.

Among more than 50 California participants in the trust are California Public Employees Retirement System, Northern California Sheet Metal Workers Pension Funds, Pacific Coast Roofers Pension Fund, IBEW Local 332 Trust Fund of San Jose, the Culinary, Bartenders and Hotel Workers Pension Fund of San Francisco, and Stationary Engineers Local 39 Pension Fund.

The new building will stand opposite San Jose Hilton Hotel and San Jose Convention Center. The area's light rail system stops at its door. An outdoor public plaza will connect via a footbridge with the Guadalupe River and the Children's Discovery Museum.

IBM Marketing and Service Operations for Silicon Valley will be a major tenant in the 150,000 square feet of rentable space. An integrated garage will have some 400 parking spaces.

Developers are William Wilson & Associates of San Mateo. Webcor Builders, Inc., is the prime contractor. The design, with exterior panels of French limestone and polished black granite, is by architects Hellmuth, Obata and Kassabaum, Inc., under the design team of William Valentine and Ali Moghaddsi. Completion is expected by the middle of next year.

Datebook

Executive Council California Labor Federation: March 8-9, Sacramento Hilton Inn.

A. Philip Randolph Institute State Conference: March 17-20, Queen Mary, Long Beach

Joadie Awards Benefit for We Do The Work: March 25, Sheraton Palace Hotel, San Francisco.

Executive Council, California Labor Federation: April 10-12, Cathedral Hill Hotel, S.F.

Pre-Primary COPE Convention: April 13, Cathedral Hill Hotel, S.F.

Joint Legislative Conference: May 23-25, Radisson Hotel, Sacramento.

Executive Council pre-convention meeting: July 22-24, Radisson Hotel, Sacramento.

Biennial Convention of the California Labor Federation: July 25-29, Radisson Hotel, Sacramento.

Publisher's Notice

The California AFL-CIO News (ISSN: 0008-0802) is published weekly except during the weeks of Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's holidays by the California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, 417 Montgomery St., Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94104. Second class postage paid at San Francisco, Calif.—Individual subscription, $10 a year; corporate rate, $20. USPS Publication Number 083-400. John F. Henning, executive secretary-treasurer; Floyd Tucker, editor. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to: California AFL-CIO News, 417 Montgomery St., Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94104. Phone, (415) 986-3585. FAX, (415) 392-8505.

Chiapas Protest Brings Results

California labor leaders who last month asked the U.S. State Department to intervene on behalf of rebel peasants in the Mexican state of Chiapas were elated over two developments yesterday.

First there was the news from Mexico that the government and rebel leaders had reached tentative accord on many of the social, political and economic reforms urged in a letter sent Feb. 8 to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher over the signatures of Jack Henning, executive secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation, and 21 trade unionists who are leaders of the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement (LCLAA).

Then there was acknowledgment from the State Department of the importance of reforms the labor leaders asked and assurance that the U.S. was pressing the Mexican government to achieve them. Specific reference was made by the State Department to the military abuses that followed the uprising.

"It is clear that our petition to the state department had a significant impact," Henning declared yesterday. The State Department says it agrees with us, and it appears that the regime in Mexico has favorably answered our protests."

The response to the labor leaders' letter, which was written by Anthony Freeman, deputy assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs, is reproduced on this page.

Rebel bands took over several towns on New Year's Day, just as the North American Free Trade Agreement went into effect, in armed protest against the ruinous impact NAFTA ascertains to have upon their already meager rural economy.

Their warnings echoed AFL-CIO arguments that were dismissed by the Clinton Administration, largely ignored by the U.S. news media, and suppressed by the PRI — in English the Institutional Revolutionary Party — that has controlled Mexico for more than 60 years.

Henning and the LCLAA leaders petitioned the State Department as the Mexican Army was pursuing rebels amid reports of torture, mass arrests, and armed attacks against villages suspected of supporting the peasant uprising.

The tentative agreement was reached in sessions held in the cathedral at San Cristobal de las Casas with Bishop Samuel Ruiz Garcia serving as mediator. The terms must be ratified by communities that support the rebels.

The government agrees to call a special session of the national congress to ratify ballot reforms assuring that the national elections in August will not be controlled by the ruling party.

To protect the rural subsistence corn farmers from being overwhelmed by corporate agriculture under NAFTA, vast holdings of rich landowners are to be broken up and distributed.

There are guarantees of civil rights and representation for Indians, more schools, roads and other public works.

Also among the provisions is amnesty for the rebels.

State Department's Reply

Here is the text of the State Department letter to Jack Henning referred to in the accompanying story:

Washington, D.C. 20520

February 24, 1994

Mr. John F. Henning
Executive Secretary-Treasurer
California Labor Federation, AFL-CIO
417 Montgomery Street, Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94104

Dear Mr. Henning:

Secretary Christopher has asked me to respond to your letter of February 8 concerning the events in Chiapas, Mexico.

President Salinas has taken very significant steps to achieve peace and reconciliation in Chiapas and to bring about the necessary social, political and economic changes there. The peace talks which began on Feburary 21 are of paramount importance and we are hopeful they will allow for the peaceful resolution of the myriad problems which Chiapas faces. We are following the talks closely but we do not see that direct intervention by the U.S. into the talks would be productive, nor has any party requested our participation.

In the wake of Chiapas, our discussions with the Mexican Government on human rights have been increasingly important. Before the media began to report on human rights violations, our Embassy in Mexico City conveyed to a range of top Mexican leaders our concerns over the potential for abuse as the Mexican military responded to the rebellion. We have received assurances from the Mexican government that all allegations of rights violations will be investigated fully, charges will be brought against those suspected of carrying out abuses and those found guilty will be punished. We expect the Mexican Government to carry through with those assurances, and are encouraged by the cooperation it has extended to domestic and international human rights groups.

Thank you for your letter. If you have any further thoughts, please do not hesitate to share them with me.

Sincerely,

Anthony Freeman
Deputy Assistant Secretary
Bureau of Human Rights and
Humanitarian Affairs

By Ray Crowell/Page One Photography, Inc.

Lane Kirkland tells news reporters about the Diamond Walnut strike as he and other labor leaders are arrested at an Entenmann's bakery in Miami. From left are Frank Hurt, president of the Bakery, Confectionery and Tobacco Workers; Neil Alioto, Seafarers International Union; Kirkland, and Teamsters President Ron Carey.

Diamond Boycott Busts

California, Florida Demonstrators Face Arrest

The Diamond Walnut boycott escalated this week and last with protests that resulted in arrests of trade unionists on both coasts.

Both demonstrations targeted Entenmann's Bakery, the corporation that is the biggest buyer of walnuts processed by scabs hired to permanently replace the 550 members of Teamsters Local 601 on strike against the Stockton-based Diamond.

In Florida last week. President Lane Kirkland led a contingent including national union presidents who marched on an Entenmann's plant at Miami during a break in the Executive Council meeting held at nearby Bal Harbor. Kirkland and others, including Teamster President Ron Carey, were arrested for trespassing after Entenmann's managers called police.

In California on Wednesday, a score of trade unionists were hauled off in handcuffs for obstructing traffic by chaining themselves to the gates of an Entenmann's plant at Montebello.

They were among about 200 union members and who turned out at the call of the Los Angeles and Orange Counties Organizing Committee to back up a contingent of Diamond Strikers.

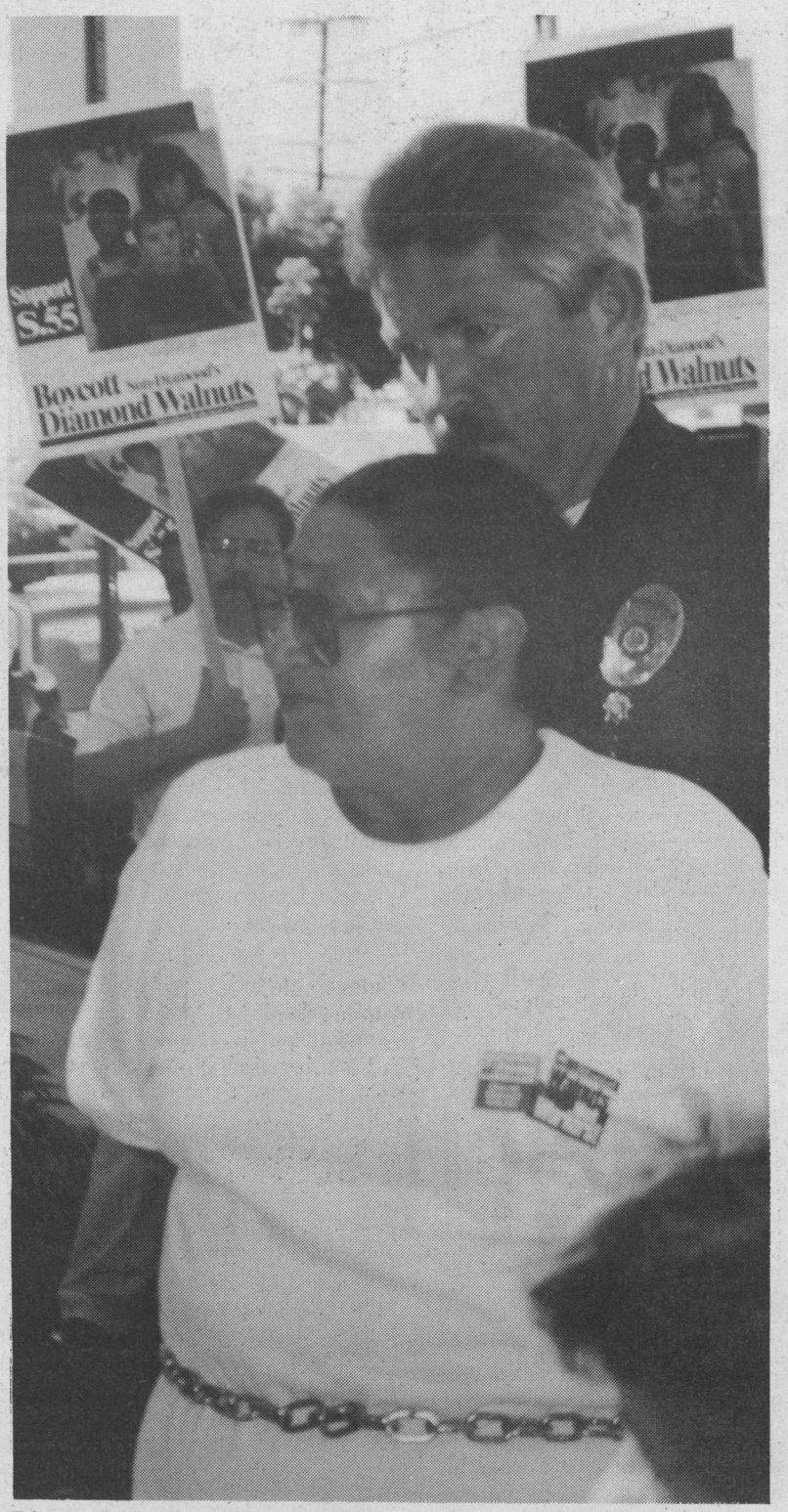
Police waded in with bolt-cutters and bundles of plastic handcuffs after the strikers and many of their supporters chained themselves to each other and to the bakery's gates on South Vail in Montebello.

Ruben Diaz, LAOCOC coordinator said Entenmann's patronage is one of the main reasons the Diamond Walnut strike is dragging out.

The two actions, thousands of miles apart, kept the Diamond Walnut strike before the public as a nationwide symbol of the need for passage of the Workplace Fairness Act to prevent permanent replacement of workers who withhold labor in collective bargaining disputes.

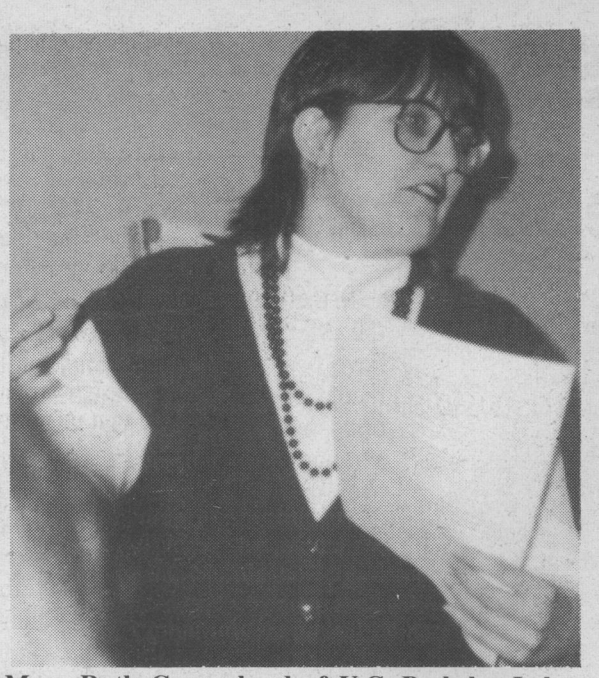
Diamond workers struck more than two years ago when the company attempted to impose a third round of rollbacks in wages, benefits and on top of two contracts in which they had voluntarily accepted cuts the company said were necessary to keep Diamond from going broke.

With Diamond healthy enough to gain a spot on the Forbes list of 500 most profitable American corporations, the workers asked for partial restoration of what they'd received. Diamond management answered with a demand for even deeper cuts, and then swiftly hired permanent replacements when the workers struck.

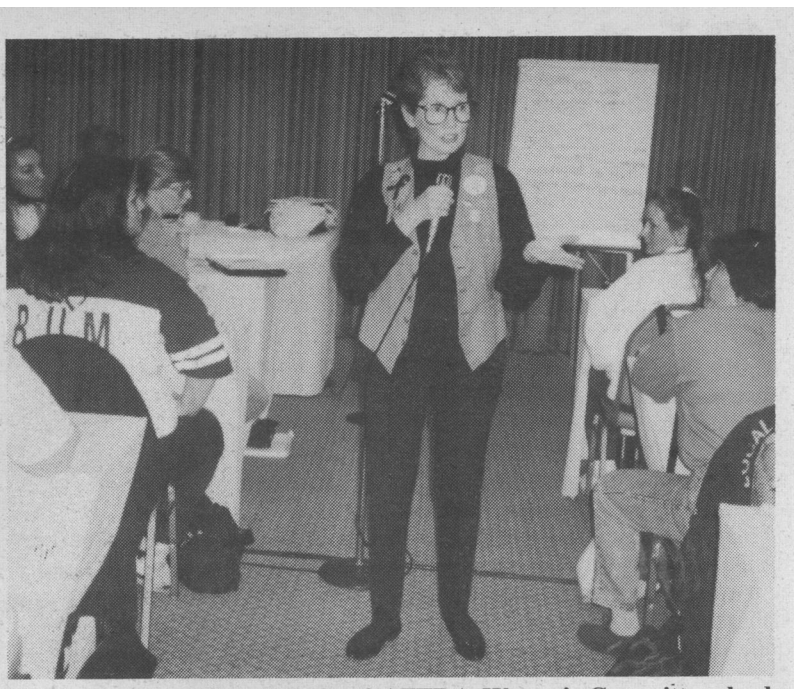


Diamond Walnut striker Vera Ricois marched off under arrest during Wednesday's demonstration at an Entenmann's Bakery in Montebello.

Mary Bergan, CFT president, left, with Marilyn Wollard, executive secretary-treasurer of Tri-Counties Council, at podium.



Mary Ruth Gross, head of U.C.-Berkeley Labor Center, leads workshop on sexual harassment in the workplace.



Jackie Joseph, national chair of AFTRA Women's Committee, leads workshop on development of communications skills.

Women's Conference...

(Continued from Page 1)

Assembly Member Gwen Moore, D-L.A., was the luncheon speaker.

A Friday workshop on bargaining and health benefits was conducted by June McMahon of the UCLA Labor Center.

A workshop on sexual harassment in the workplace, also drew heavy participation. It was led by Mary Ruth Gross, director of the U.C.-Berkeley Labor Center.

Both workshops were held in the morning and in the afternoon.

The Friday program concluded with a dramatization of "The Crossing" performed by Dorene Ludwig, a member of AFTRA and Screen Actors Guild.

A Saturday morning workshop on stress and ergonomic hazards in the workplace was led by Marianne Parker Brown of the Labor Occupational Safety and Health project at UCLA.

Jackie Joseph, national chair of the Women's Committee of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, led a Saturday workshop on improving communications skills.

A panel discussion on women in trade union leadership was moderated by Mary Bergan, president of the California Federation of Teachers and vice president of the California Labor Federation.

Panelists were Margaret Segura of the Health Care Department of SEIU Local 399, and Marilyn Wollard, executive secretary-treasurer of the Tri-Counties Central Labor Council.

The final event of the conference was an address on health reform by McMahon of the UCLA Labor Center.

McMahon, expanding upon her Friday health care bargaining workshop, pointed out that the Clinton Administration's Health Security Act is the only proposal currently before congress—with the exception of the apparently doomed single-payer plan—that meets AFL-CIO criteria for meaningful reform, including universal coverage, cost containment and quality care, including choice of doctors.

Furthermore, McMahon pointed out, the Health Security Act provides the states with an option for establishing single-payer plans patterned after the Canadian system along the lines of the California single-payer initiative that has the support of some AFL-CIO unions.

The conference closed with remarks by President Albin J. Gruhn of the California Labor Federation.

A portion of the crowd of Women's Conference participants packs meeting room at Los Angeles Biltmore for luncheon session.

Roberti Gets Boost From Feinstein

U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein is urging support throughout California for State Senator David Roberti, who has been forced into an April 12 recall election by anti-gun control extremists seeking to punish him for writing the 1989 law banning automatic assault weapons in this state.

"David Roberti should be honored for his foresight and courage in leading the fight in the Legislature to ban these weapons of war," Feinstein declared in letters sent this week to California residents.

"Instead, the retiring president pro tem of the State Senate is subjected to a costly recall brought on by the opponents of any limitation on the firearms that bloody the streets and make neighborhoods unsafe."

Feinstein added:

"Please join me in supporting David Roberti by contributing when his campaign calls."

Feinstein joins law enforcement leaders, local elected officials, human rights advocates, community activists, organized labor, and virtually every newspaper editorial board in the state in supporting Roberti and denouncing his gun extremist attackers.

Even the National Rifle Association has distanced itself from the recall movement, although it is known that NRA money helped set up the organization that hired professional signature-gatherers to pass recall petitions.

The recall group admits that in addition to getting revenge upon Roberti, it aims at intimidating legislators by demonstrating that support of gun control laws can be financially and politically disastrous.

The group tried to get Roberti last year in a special election in his current Van Nuys district, to which most of his long-time constituents were assigned through reapportionment. The attempt failed, but it demonstrated what well-financed extremists can accomplish with barrages of advertising and a deluge of letters containing false accusations. Roberti, with nearly 30 years of distinguished service in the Legislature, had to campaign all-out to defeat the gun advocates' candidate, an unknown Republican with no prior public service.

Beating back the recall attempt will cost Roberti at least $750,000, political observers at Sacramento agreed. Feinstein's appeal is for donations to finance the fight and make certain Roberti does not suffer the ignominy of defeat only months before he retires from the Senate because of the new term limitations.

Feinstein points out in her letter that Roberti's 1989 bill was submitted after a man armed with an automatic assault rifle opened fire in a school yard at Stockton, slaughtering five children and wounding 29.

"Since then there have been repeated examples of weapons intended for use in a distant battlefield being turned against children, coworkers, and family members and passersby here in our own communities," Feinstein writes. "In a San Francisco high-rise last year, eight persons died in a hail of automatic weapons fire.

"Recall for no purpose other than to get revenge against a political figure abuses the democratic system," her letter continues. It costs the taxpayers a huge sum to hold a needless special election.

"It is rank intimidation aimed at getting others in government to surrender to the powerful gun lobby and allow semi-automatic weapons to multiply on our streets. This recall is all the more abusive of public funds and public trust because it comes just eight months before David Roberti retires from the State Senate."

Feinstein noted that the U.S. Senate recently passed legislation to halt manufacture and sale of assault weapons.

"Clearly the American people are fed up with the violence in our communities and, I believe, equally fed up with special interests that use the power of their money to disrupt government, intimidate courageous public servants, and force expenditure of scarce tax dollars on a costly special election."

Vuksich...

(Continued from Page 1)

Relations Lloyd Aubry, promised to supply details but then never did. Questions faxed to Duncan drew no response.

The stone-walling continued as of last night.

Vuksich, 71, is a long-time Republican Party stalwart who headed a GOP campaign fund conduit organization when Ronald Reagan was president and served as an assistant secretary of education during the Bush Administration.

Still unknown is whether Vuksich plans to remain on the Industrial Welfare Commission, to which she was appointed by Wilson last June. She was named as the IWC's public member, supposedly aligned with neither labor nor management, but has voted solidly with the management representatives from her first day, when her initial action was to ballot against a 25-cent raise in the minimum wage.

At an IWC meeting on Feb. 18, Vuksich and James Rude, a management member, advocated having the commission use special reports from the Division of Labor Statistics to "track the economy." They spoke with enthusiasm that was lost upon observers who weren't privy to the information that Vuksich herself would be taking over the labor statistics office within days.

That same day Vuksich and Rude came up with a new interpretation of the law requiring the IWC to review the adequacy of the minimum wage every second year and to order a raise if it isn't sufficient to "supply the proper standard of living."

They contended the statutory two years should not start until after the previous minimum wage review is completed, no matter how long the review is dragged out.

Tom Rankin, research director of the California Labor Federation, pointed out that this would enable anti-worker members of the IWC to delay any action on the wage until 1996, nine years after the last raise was approved.

Vuksich also jolted observers at the Feb. 18 meeting by suggesting the IWC spend less time on minimum wage matters and more time stripping eight-hour-day protections out of industry wage orders covering workers who so far have been spared the 12-hour, no overtime day favored by the commission's anti-worker majority.