



Teamsters Local 117

# Teamster Talk



*Fighting for Workers' Rights Since 1936*

Teamsters Local 117: 14675 Interurban Ave. S, Suite 307 • Tukwila, WA 98168 (206) 441-4860 • [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org)

## UNFI STRIKE RESUMES AFTER RUTHLESS ACT

UNFI permanently replaces 72 workers just before holidays



UNFI workers take a stand.

**O**n December 13, the organic foods distributor United Natural Foods, Inc. (UNFI) announced that it would permanently replace 72 Local 117 warehouse workers who were prepared to return to work after a three-day strike.

UNFI had originally accepted the workers' good-faith unconditional offer to return to work, but subsequently rescinded that commitment.

### PICKET LINES GO BACK UP

In a courageous show of solidarity in support of the 72 workers, all 163 members at UNFI returned to the picket line after discussing the situation in a meet-

ing at the Teamsters building in Tukwila.

"UNFI misrepresented its position regarding its workers' good-faith offer to return to work. The company's action to replace its employees is retaliatory, unlawful and frankly despicable," said Tracey A. Thompson, Secretary-Treasurer of Teamsters Local 117.

Drivers and warehouse workers at UNFI went on an unfair labor practice strike on Monday, December 10. Under federal labor law, workers on an unfair labor practice strike cannot be permanently replaced by their employer.

### WHEN YOUR EMPLOYER STABS YOU IN THE BACK

When UNFI employees arrived at the company's facility in Auburn to report to work, however, some were told by security officers that "they were not on the list."

The Union later learned through UNFI's attorney of the company's intent to permanently replace the 72 employees.

"UNFI is refusing to uphold its side of the agreement. We committed to take down the picket lines and UNFI pledged to accept our offer to return to work. Now they are telling us that 72 workers are out of a job right before the holidays. It's a disgrace," said Robert Jurey, a 13-year warehouse worker with UNFI.

Local 117 filed new unfair labor practice charges with the NLRB over the permanent replacement issue.

The NLRB is investigating UNFI for 45 additional violations of federal labor law.

"UNFI is not the company it pretends to be. Instead of upholding its stated commitment to sustainable practices and social responsibility, UNFI is mistreating its workers and demonstrating a complete disregard of federal labor law," Thompson said.

*For information about how you can support Local 117 members on strike at UNFI, visit [www.UnfiDrivenByGreed.com](http://www.UnfiDrivenByGreed.com).*

## Stand with Striking Workers at UNFI

### TAKE ACTION NOW!

**H**ere's what you can do to show solidarity with your Brothers and Sisters on strike at UNFI:

1. Sign the online petition in support of Teamsters at UNFI at [www.UNFIDrivenByGreed.com](http://www.UNFIDrivenByGreed.com).
2. Call Hank Heatherly at (253) 333-6769. Tell him to return to the bargaining table immediately.
3. Come down to the strike line (22 30th St. NE Auburn, WA) and stand with picketing workers!

*For more information, visit [www.UNFIDrivenByGreed.com](http://www.UNFIDrivenByGreed.com).*

## A message from your Secretary-Treasurer



Brothers and Sisters:

With 2012 coming to a close I look back on our year, feeling both sorrow and hope.

I feel sorrow because we failed to educate so many working people that the middle class will cease to exist without Unions. One need only look to the Bureau of Labor Statistics ([www.bls.gov](http://www.bls.gov)), a Federal agency, to see that unionized workers—women and men of every race – earn more, have more job security and enjoy better benefits than unrepresented workers. In 2011, the weekly salary of unionized workers in transportation and warehousing was \$939, while for non-unionized workers it was \$726 per week. These are real numbers. They tell the real story. It saddens me that working people don't appear to be listening.

I feel sorrow because the rate at which corporate profits have grown bears no relationship to the wages earned by the workers who have made those profits possible. In the third quarter of 2012, corporate profits were up 18.6% from the year before while wages as a percentage of the economy were at an all-time low. It is unbearably sad that our country prioritizes a warped notion of the free market over the welfare of working people and their families.

I feel sorrow because we did not beat back corporate efforts to erode collective bargaining rights in what have always been strong working class states, like Wisconsin, Indiana and Michigan. We should have done more.

Yet, I am full of hope.

I have seen the power of workers standing together – for months - against their employer, seeking nothing more than basic dignity and respect. Our Davis Wire members epitomize hope.

I have seen workers willing to take on the biggest sanitation company in the world in an effort to achieve equal pay for equal work. Our Waste Management members embody hope.

I have seen correctional workers rise up to educate the state legislature about the essential role of corrections in public safety and to insist on fairness, equal rights, and worker safety for prison employees. Correctional workers are our public's hidden warriors. Our DOC members symbolize hope.

As I write this, I am witnessing our members at UNFI withhold their labor from a corporation that thinks it's above the law, a corporation that touts social and corporate responsibility yet thumbs its nose at the fundamental rights of its employees. Our UNFI members instill hope.

And on a personal note, this year I have looked cancer in the face, and said, "Hell, no! I am not done yet." You can't fight cancer unless you have hope.

I am fueled by the strength and courage of Local 117 members, and by the certainty that what we do as an organization really matters to working families. My hope far outweighs my sorrow.

So watch out corporate America. Unions aren't dead yet.

I am so ready for 2013. I hope you are, too.

In Solidarity,

Tracey A. Thompson  
Secretary-Treasurer

## HEARTBREAK AT Hostess:

### 82-year bakery liquidates assets

It's a tough times for thousands of Teamster members and their families as Hostess announced this November that it would cease operations and begin the liquidation process of its 82-year-old bakery business.

All 18,000 workers across the country, including 120 Teamsters in Washington State and 6,700 Teamsters nationwide, will lose their jobs.

The Teamsters Union worked hard to prevent the closure of Hostess and to preserve jobs. The IBT was in negotiations with Hostess for over 18 months in an effort to find a viable solution to the company's financial woes.

Earlier this year, Teamster members voted to accept an agreement that included concessions in wages, pension, and health and welfare in order to protect jobs and keep the company afloat.

But in the end, Hostess was unable to achieve a deal with all of its stakeholders.

### CORPORATE LOOTING & CROOKED MISMANAGEMENT

Nearly a decade of mismanagement, corporate looting, and a failure to innovate and reinvent itself ultimately led to the company's demise. Teamsters and the other Hostess employees, many of whom dedicated a lifetime to the company, are left to suffer the consequences.

"Our hearts and prayers go out to Teamster Hostess members and all Hostess workers who will lose their jobs. The timing of the closure could not be worse as we enter the holiday season. We will work with our Teamster Local Unions to inform Hostess Teamsters of their rights to receive unemployment," said Teamsters General Secretary-Treasurer Ken Hall. ●

# LOCAL 117 GEARS UP FOR ACTION

## DOC Rally Planned for January 10, 2013 in Olympia



DOC Teamsters - Day of Action 2010

In December 2010, over 300 Teamster correctional employees and their supporters surrounded the State Capitol in Olympia.

Draped in yellow ponchos, the officers, sergeants, cooks, nurses, and maintenance and office workers who staff our State's prisons, chanted in unison: "Who are we? DOC!" and "What do we want? Safety! When do we want it? Now!"

DOC staff was joined at the rally by dozens of Local 117 members from other industries.

Together, the Teamster voices echoed through the legislative halls and chambers, and representatives took note.

After cutting over \$220 million from the Corrections budget and closing three prisons, the Legislature passed a prison safety bill (SB5907) in 2010.

The bill mandated statewide safety committees and put OC pepper spray

into the hands of some line staff.

It was a step in the right direction.

Unfortunately, the bill did not go nearly far enough to protect prison staff.

Correctional employees are still routinely assaulted at work. Officers still work single-person posts. Violent offenders' custody levels are still overridden to justify a reduction in staffing levels.

"Too many of us have been hurt," says Eric Smith, a 16-year Shop Steward with the Washington Corrections Center in Shelton.

The stress of the job takes an immeasurable toll on correctional workers and their families.

- Correctional officers have one of the highest rates of nonfatal on-the-job injuries.
- Suicide rates among corrections employees are 39% higher than any other occupation.
- The average life expectancy of a corrections officer is 58 years old.

Despite the well-documented stress and dangers of the job, the State demonstrated once again during this year's collective bargaining process that it does not respect its employees.

"By refusing to recognize the unique work that correctional employees perform and by ignoring safety issues in

bargaining, the State is not only showing disrespect, it is breaking the law," said Tracey A. Thompson, Local 117 Secretary-Treasurer.

### THE PUSH FOR INTEREST ARBITRATION

Thompson maintains that the only way substantive change can occur at the DOC is if the Legislature passes interest arbitration legislation for correctional workers.

With interest arbitration, the State cannot simply refuse to bargain over wages, hours, or working conditions without consequence. If the State and the Union cannot reach agreement through contract negotiations on mandatory subjects of bargaining, then your Union would have the right to bring its proposals to a neutral arbitrator.

The State Patrol, firefighters, County Corrections and other public safety professionals have been granted broad interest arbitration rights. It's time for our State's correctional employees to be afforded that right as well.

### JOIN US ON JANUARY 10 IN OLYMPIA!

In their fight for interest arbitration rights, correctional employees are poised to march on the State Capitol again, and they are calling on all Local 117 members for their support. Local 117 members can:

- Attend the Correctional Employees Day of Action! in Olympia on January 10, 2013.
- Go to [www.DOCProtectsWa.gov](http://www.DOCProtectsWa.gov) and sign the online petition.
- Call the legislative hotline at 1-800-562-6000 and urge their representatives to support interest arbitration for Correctional Employees.
- Text DOC to 313131 to receive text message alerts and campaign updates.

**Get involved! For more info., contact Local 117 Political Action Coordinator Lily Wilson-Codega at 206-794-2606 immediately. ●**

# WIN-WIN FOR UNIONS AND KING COUNTY

Local 117 helps preserve benefits for hundreds of members at King County

**W**hen public officials are a little less adversarial and are willing to work in a spirit of cooperation, together with Unions, good things are bound to happen, both for working people and for taxpayers.

Case in point: King County.

Instead of bashing its labor partners, County officials signed on to an agreement with a coalition of King County Unions that will preserve Teamster health benefits without the risk of premium share through 2014 and likely beyond.

## \$25 MILLION RESERVE FUND

The deal provides for a "Protected Fund Reserve" of at least \$25 million to be set aside for employee health care increases.

The County has also agreed to provide an additional 4% increase per year to cover rising health care expenses.

Local 117's General Counsel Spencer Thal headed up the negotiations for the Union.

## PARTNERS PRESERVE SERVICES & JOBS

But the County wasn't the only one willing to compromise. The agreement would not have been possible without a willingness by union

members to make sacrifices to help the County through its fiscal crisis in 2008-2009.

## UNIONS SAVE COUNTY \$75 MILLION

In the end, public employees helped saved King County as much as \$75 million, which ultimately put the County on stable economic footing.

In addition, Unions worked with the County to preserve 200 jobs, maintain public services, and cap County health care increases at a manageable 4% when the market is expecting increases of 6-7% annually.

"At King County, public employees and their unions can be proud of their accomplishments," said Secretary-Treasurer Thompson.

"Not only did we step up and help the County successfully navigate its financial crisis, we have now protected the health benefits of thousands of working families by pooling all of the cost savings into a dedicated reserve fund."

*To view a copy of the JLMIC agreement between King County and the Coalition of Unions, visit your Local Union's website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org).*

Let the boss know...

## THE TEAMSTERS ARE IN THE HOUSE!



Local 117 Office Staff, Jeannie Hoyt

**B**oss got you down? Put it back in his face with a **Teamsters 'Til I Die** T-Shirt!

Your Local Union offers an assortment of Teamsters' apparel that you can

wear at work, home, membership meetings, Local 117 events, and during contract campaigns.

## LOCAL 117 ONLINE STORE

With your Local Union's new online store at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org), ordering your Teamster gear is now easier than ever. You can find:

- ✓ *Beanies*
- ✓ *Baseball caps*
- ✓ *Assorted T-Shirts*
- ✓ *Canvas jackets*
- ✓ *Vests*
- ✓ *Sweatshirts*
- ✓ *Do rags*
- ✓ *Lapel pins*
- ✓ *More!*

## FIRST-CLASS DELIVERY SERVICE!

Once you make an order, your Business Rep. will deliver the item(s) to you in person at your shop!

So show your Union colors and let the boss know: *The Teamsters are in the house!*

## MLK Jr. March and Rally

January 21, 2013

@11am Garfield High School,  
400 23rd Ave Seattle, WA 98122

Join your fellow **Teamsters Local 117** Brothers and Sisters in honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Local 117 members will meet at the Teamsters Building in Tukwila at on Monday, January 21 at 10 A.M. to carpool to the event. For more information, call 206-441-4860 or visit your Local Union's website at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org).

## LOCAL 117 EVENTS - MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Dec. 20, 2012 - Holiday Membership Meeting

Jan. 10, 2013 - DOC Day of Action!

Jan. 21, 2013 - MLK Jr. March and Rally

## FOLLOW YOUR LOCAL UNION ON THE WEB!



Join your Union's Facebook page, follow us on Twitter at @teamsters117 and watch Local 117 videos on YouTube!

Sign up online to receive an electronic copy of Teamster Talk at [www.teamsters117.org](http://www.teamsters117.org).