



## **BAY AREA GENERAL MEMBERSHIP BRANCH – IWW**

**PO Box 11412 • Berkeley, CA 94712**

**Phone (415) 863-9627 • Fax (510) 845-0520 • [www.iww.org](http://www.iww.org)**

### **SFGMB Reports for March 2007**

#### **Delegates:**

**Adam-** The only thing I have to report is that the Training for Trainers session this year will be held in Madison, WI on the weekend of May 19-20. As always we are looking for folks who are leaders in their shops or campaigns, those speaking languages other than English, women and people of color. We are still preparing for Fall session to develop a second level training. All those interested in attending or wanting to recommend someone, please drop me a line at [sjiww@yahoo.com](mailto:sjiww@yahoo.com)

**Dean-** no written report

**Heather-** Haven't been very active taking dues this month. That responsibility has been passed on to one of my fellow workers at Stonemountain so I am pretty much only taking dues for people who mail in their dues to the branch. I have been participating in the Education committee, audit committee, budget committee. I also attended a rally at curbside and at Shattuck cinema and have been working on curtains for the meeting room during flagmaking.

**Jefferson-** no report submitted

**Oliver-** I am beginning to talk to my co-workers about the union. A lot of prep-work with them has been done and they seem like they will all be positive or neutral. Hopefully by the next meeting I will be able to report that we have an active organizing committee.

**Dirtyface-** no report submitted

**Steve-** In addition to iww.org and ioc670 work, I signed up new members at the Anarchist Bookfair, and tabled at the antiwar demonstration the following day. The office committee has not met since December.

**Bruce-** Shattuck union held a rally on March 16<sup>th</sup> in front of cinema. About 80 people participated. Workers spoke and there was a march. Contract talks are by phone conf. every two weeks. It's been 9 months since we were certified.

We will get mediation (per the contract) at Buy Back in the case of Silvia. Matt Wather from Buy Back paid 4 months hardship for a broken hand and jail time.

**Slava-** no written report

**Brendan-** Participating in the San Francisco sub-regional group, the Education/Outreach committee, fund raising for the locked out NYC foodstuff workers, tabling, flag making and helping Fellow Workers in Santa Cruz start the nucleus a functioning branch. My participation in the barista organizing committee has almost stopped because of personal time constraints.

Signed up FW Mara Williams who is a long time wobbly enthusiast. She runs a radio program and is wishing to publicize the union via the program. FW Mara lives in the city of Davis and I can provide contact information for her after the meeting. I also took some dues.

**Hannah-** Several people gave notice, took leaves of absence or cut down their days this month. Mahnee is going on a 6 month leave of absence and Cherlene has taken leave for April. Holly is working 2 days a week for the rest of April at which point she and Suzan will review, due to her new job/residence in San Francisco, she will likely quit. Maggie got another job and cut down to 3 days a week. Pamela (a new employee) quit before her 1<sup>st</sup> shift by leaving a message that she had found a job that paid better. Elva is back from sick leave. We are discussing whether or not to submit our self-evaluation forms. Many employees have been bringing in healthy communal snacks which we had discussed at our last meeting. I have been moving throughout the month. I am sorry I don't have more to report.

**Harjit-** no report submitted

**Pavl-** Santa Cruz Wobs are holding informal social and work events and continue to hold monthly meetings. Santa Cruz Wobs will be submitting their proposal to become a sub-committee of this branch by our next branch meeting. They are interested in having an Organizer training down there and so is the Chair of the Organizer Training Committee.

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### **Shops/IOCs:**

**IOC410- Heather-** We have not met this month as I have been focusing on tying up loose ends at Stonemountain and have been very busy with other work and being sick a lot. I have been talking to many people about organizing in the garment and textile industry and we have been planning to start doing outreach to immigrant organizations in order to develop relations similar to the one between the NY wobs and Make the Road by Walking.

**Stonemountain and Daughter-** Hannah- Several people gave notice, took leaves of absence or cut down their days this month. Mahnee is going on a 6 month leave of absence and Cherlene has taken leave for April. Holly is working 2 days a week for the rest of April at which point she and Suzan will review, due to her new job/residence in San Francisco, she will likely quit. Maggie got another job and cut down to 3 days a week. Pamela (a new employee) quit before her 1<sup>st</sup> shift by leaving a message that she had found a job that paid better. Elva is back from sick leave. We are discussing whether or not to submit our self-evaluation forms. Many employees have been bringing in healthy communal snacks which we had discussed at our last meeting. I have been moving throughout the month. I am sorry I don't have more to report.

**Heather-** We have developed a shop committee and assigned different workers different rolls in the union. Hopefully this will increase participation while keeping burn-out at a low. We brought an informal grievance to the owners about a workers failure to receive a scheduled raise and we also took it upon ourselves to raise one of the counters for those of us who are taller to cut at. This should be good for many FWs backs.

**IOC610- Bruce-** Interpreters- Main organizer is out with new born and the rest are waiting for her return to begin meeting again. This via email from new mom. Note: This committee has been abolished.

**IOC670- Steve –** The Bay Area 670 IOC is developing a proactive, multi-shop, industry wide campaign. We are currently developing an industry map and discussing goals and strategy. Minutes from the IOC meetings will be submitted to branch email list and the Branch Secretary for inclusion in her written report.

**Curbside-** Steve – We held an awesome and raucous stop work meeting at the Curbside Recycling yard in Berkeley early morning on March 15 to protest harassment of shop steward, Mike Hudgins. The rally included speeches by workers in the shop and a march on the operations supervisor where the IWW demonstrated its willingness to fight for justice in the shop. The following week, the workers and management held several grievance meetings. Thanks to the steadfastness of FWs Abel Bruno and Salvador Salerno, the union prevailed and Mike Hudgins eleven day suspension was reduced to a written warning. One remaining unresolved issues involves the dispatching of trucks by seniority. The union agreed to negotiate this issue with management, but so far no meetings have been organized for this purpose.



**Buyback-** the grievance filed by Silvia has gone to the 3<sup>rd</sup> step. This step is a meeting with mediation service. It will cost \$100. Management has dug in on this one. There was a meeting to try and settle outside of mediation. Nothing new regarding Silvia's statement regarding management/labor relations and communication. The statement is attached.

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**Shattuck Cinema-** Steve C-The shop currently has three new hires. Also, two former employees that were supporters of the union have been re-hired. Negotiations for the contract are still trudging along. We found certain issues that the lawyer said the company will absolutely not budge on but we also found certain issues that we can make some leeway on. We are trying to find a mid-ground for seniority. We believe we have a good proposal to put a health care system in the contract.

The organizing committee is putting together a newsletter that we hope to pass out bi-weekly to workers on the floor. We're also planning some more informational picketing and may also include petitions. The on-going work of inviting and organizing new hires and other theaters are also still a priority.



## **Committees:**

**Education-** Oliver- There was an Organizer Training the weekend of the 31<sup>st</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup>. It was a bit small, but it was the first that the Bay has had in awhile, so we were able to work out any kinks that might occur in planning future OTs (such as in SF or Santa Cruz). Despite the small size it was a good event, many of the attendees said they felt more confident about banding together with co-workers and even those who had been through an OT before felt that it was useful to brush up on their skills.

The Education Committee has not set a regular meeting date. I will be discussing a possible regular meeting date with other members of the committee and interested parties.

**Tabling-** No report submitted

**Office-** Steve O- The Bay Area IWW Office Committee is currently not functioning as such. I have suggested several meeting times and nobody who has participated in the committee in the past (other than FW Heather Gardner) has responded to any of these suggestions. While this is not cause for alarm as far as branch democracy is concerned (the Bay Area GMB functioned for years without an office committee), it does mean that unless the committee can meet regularly and consistently, budgetary decisions that involve the office fall to the Branch Secretary and Branch Treasurer. I have no problem with that personally, however, if rank & file members want more oversight on the management of the Bay Area IWW office, it behooves them to begin holding office committee meetings.



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**SF Working Group-** Lindsay- SFWG has decided to focus on four main areas of interest: baristas, sex workers, taxi drivers and messengers.

8 Days of agitation for baristas

We raised \$146 of which we are giving half to Maxine and half to Ted [the branch treasurer] for sex worker organizing efforts in the future.

Next Meeting Sunday April 15 at Dolores Park. Bring food.

Brendan's IU 460 Brooklyn foodstuff worker benefit.

**General Defense Committee-** No report submitted

**Flagmaking Working Group-** Brian- The Flag Making Working Group has been continuing to make flags and now that the Bay Area Branch has 40 flags, we are going to begin trying to distribute them more widely. We sold a few at the IWW table at the Anarchist Bookfair and made contacts with people interested in sewing and propaganda.

We need help to have as many flags and banners as possible ready for this year's Gran Paro Americano on May Day in solidarity with the struggles of the millions of undocumented workers who the IWW needs to be reaching out to.

We are selling them for \$20.00 for members and \$25.00 for non-members. We sew on Wednesdays at 7:00p at 2022 Blake St. and welcome all who like to sew and make propaganda that is fun to use. If you have questions about helping or purchasing, please email [brianhelmle@yahoo.com](mailto:brianhelmle@yahoo.com) or contact the IWW Bay Area Branch directly.

**Audit Committee-** Ted

The committee convened on March 3, 2007.

In attendance were FWs: Heather, Steve and Ted.

The committee verified some (not all) invoices from the previous years and branch reports to verify that the bookkeeping from the 2006 calendar year was proper.

Findings:

The committee found the previous treasurer did an excellent job of paying bills and receiving funds. However what was lacking was a direct paper trail for many of the invoices and expenditures. We were able to verify all of the phone, internet and most of our merchandise purchases. Lacking was invoices for reimbursements to members. This administration has already resolved this issue by requiring either a receipt or a motion at a business meeting to explain such expenditures.

There are no indications of any embezzlement, fraud or mis-management of Union funds.

We will be reorganizing the financial records to ensure this process is much easier for future audits.

Recommendations:

Since the potential for abuse does exist it is important that the GMB take steps to prevent or at least minimize the chance of fraud or mismanagement in the future. Therefore, we recommend forming an Audit Committee every year. Further, we recommend the audit committee include non-officers from either the current or previous administration.

The Treasurer will implement a filing system which coordinates with the bookkeeping so future audits can run smoother and be more thorough.

Notes:

Twice in the past two years, the Bay Area GMB has fallen just short of bringing in \$25,000 in revenue for the fiscal years. If the Bay Area IWW—which has its own Tax EIN—should bring in more than \$25,000 in a fiscal year, we are required to file detailed reports with the IRS. Failure to do so can result in steep and expensive penalties, and legal hassles for our members. Nobody likes reporting to the government, but they will come after us whether we like it or not and they have the legal force to do so.

Failure to adequately account for our expenses is a violation of the fair and open reporting requirements set by the Landrum Griffith act. Individual members could conceivably sue the union for failure to report thoroughly and adequately. While such an occurrence is currently unlikely, it could become likely in the future as the union grows /if/ we don't set minimal reporting standards now as our membership grows.

The branch is growing and as our activities become more numerous and complex it is less and less possible to accept unaccounted expenses on faith as has been done in the past.

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### **Other Reports:**

#### **IWW.ORG- Steve**

(1) I have reorganized the information on our branch webpage which can be viewed at <http://www.iww.org/branches/US/CA/bayarea/> or the shortcut subdomain <http://bayarea.iww.org/>. It's a work in progress. Currently we have subpages for the iu410 and iu670 iocs. We also have subpages for campaigns (such as baristas, Shattuck Cinema, Quicksilver, all of which we hope will become part of their relevant IOCs if formed); Committees (including Education and Outreach, Flag Making, GDC, Office, SF Working Group, and Tabling); and miscellaneous information.

(2) I encourage members of each committee to review the information on the Bay Area GMB pages and contact me with the most up-to-date contact data, including mailing address, phone number(s), fax number, email address, meeting time, committee chair, a description of your committee, and any other relevant information you would like to see added to the current listing.

#### **Grassroots House- Steve**

(1) Repairs - John S. from the Alameda County Green Party gave me the contact information for Joe Decker, a contractor who performed some previous work on GRH, but that number is no longer valid. We do not currently have a new number for Joe Decker or any alternative contractor. Suggestions are welcome.

(2) Tenant Action Project continues to neglect their GRH duties or to send representatives to meetings. I will compose a letter in response to their letter to GRH dated [fill in date here].

(3) Steve will email out a recommendation for a meeting room renovation that will be proposed at grassroots house meeting. Members are encouraged to offer their suggestions and/or feedback.

#### **Organizing Department Board- Brendan**

##### **Fundraising:**

Balazo has been shut down by the city due to lack of permits and will be re-opening hopefully in may. This means the benefit show is canceled for now. There will be a Balazo support protest some time in may and I will keep the branch informed of this.

##### **The Organizing Dept.:**

Todd, our ODB rep. Says there are many things in the work but has nothing of officially report on. There should be a complete report from the ODB by next Branch meeting.

#### **Myspace.com- Brendan**

We now have 219 "friends" of the Bay Area GMB on our Myspace Page. Our top 8 friends section includes the Myspace profiles "The Labor Movement", "Wobblies" the un-official general union Myspace, "IWW Starbucks Workers Union", "Twin Cities IWW", "Providence IWW", "Gainesville IWW", "Phoenix IWW" and the "Bicycle Mechanics Union" of the Chicago GMB.

There have been solidarity state ments sent to the branch via the Myspace page from a fellow worker in the mid west, another FW in the UK and radical student from Greece.

I continue to publish all of the stories from iww.org in our blog section. I also continue to publish rallies, pickets, and events in our bulletin and blog section. If people would like me to post news stories, call outs, post flyers, put up pictures of events etc. please contact me at [brendan@iww.org](mailto:brendan@iww.org).

**Alameda Central Labor Council- Harry- No report submitted**

**NO-BAWC- Ocean- No report submitted**

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### **Officers**

#### **SysAdmin- Steve**

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#### **Communications Officer- Sam**

I passed on an organizing lead from a starbucks worker to Dean Dempsy. This person spoke with us at the anti-war rally.

I met with Maria Brooks again from Waterfront Soundings productions. She is going forward with her film on the IWW and the free speech fights. She attended the Shattuck Rally and shot some footage, she is interested in interviewing members from organized shops. I will update more on this when she is ready to begin interviewing people.

She also interviewed myself and Archie Green (The Big Red Songbook) for the ILWU dispatcher. It was a review and interview about Archie's book including a conversation between myself as a young wob and IBU member with Archie about wobbly songs and their relevance to young workers, unionists and activists.

Thats about it. I also picked up a bunch of junk mail for Steve from the PO Box :)

#### **Treasurer- Ted**

##### **Financial Picture:**

Income exceeded expenses by \$870.84. The largest sums came from Dues, which accounted for \$811 (net); followed by Tabling accounted for 609.33 (net). Our largest expenses were (aside from dues-share (\$633) and tabling (\$1443.67) our NoBAWC (\$150) membership followed by Rent (\$116). The Solidarity Donations to NYC-IU460/640 are added registered under "dues and initiation" and "tabling" with no way of knowing at this time what percentage of which. None-the-less we mailed \$146 off to NYC.

Our checking account has \$2703.10 in it. The Money Market account has just \$1007.10.

All bills are paid in full at this time and all deposits are made as of 4/4/07.

\$762.10 of the tabling expenditures were from past-due bills that the literature committee failed to collect. One invoice dated back to 2004. There was some confusion on whether or not we paid these invoices, however our records agreed with the literature department's that we in fact did not pay them.

##### **Banking:**

I closed the savings account named "reserve fund". Monies were put into a higher yielding money market account. I hope to deposit most of our funds in said account assuming passage of the budget.

\$3000 670-IOC funds was placed into a 6 month CD, earning well over 3 times the interest it was making in its savings account. That money will become available on September 17<sup>th</sup> long before we make any final decisions regarding our next contract. Should monies be needed for hardship, the reserve budget should suffice. The savings account remains to accrue funds from the 670 dues share.

I have not yet opened a 410-IOC account; however we are keeping careful track of the number.

We opened up a home-banking account with the Credit Union, which will allow the Treasurer better access to transfer funds and maintain our account.

Small accounting errors are being found and hammered out in due time.

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**Secretary- Heather**

We did a lot of good work this month as a branch. From rallies at Curbside and Shattuck to the Anarchist Bookfair tabling to the budget and audit committees to an Organizer Training, I think our branch is on its way to being prosperous and efficient and really ready to invest time and resources into helping workers to organize.

I have started receiving reports in advance of the meeting from a majority of committee chairs and officers and this has made my job much easier. I hope that everyone likes having the reports in a written format to take home and read from the meetings and also in this more complete pdf format. I know meetings are still long so I think we can work to have even more reports written in advance but I have gotten positive feedback on the efficiency of meetings by using written reports. Please, if you are giving a report, remember to get it to me ahead of time and in the form of an email that I can cut and paste. If you print it out and hand it in to me I have to re-type it and this can take a LONG TIME.

I have also been experimenting with the meeting agenda a bit. I decided to include a revisiting of past decisions under old business so that we can make sure things get done that we say we want done. The FWs who I spoke with about this change told me that they liked it very much.

I intend to work on a Recording Secretary's Form for the next meeting that will basically create a standard for meeting minutes. I know I have been afraid of being the Recording Secretary in the past just because I wouldn't have known what all to include in the minutes and what was not necessary. Plus there are so many different styles of minute taking so I thought I'd try to create a template. I'll send it out to the sfgmb list in advance so that people can critique it and suggest changes and improvements.

We have raised a total of \$529 for the NYC Foodstuff workers so far. Our goal had been to get to \$1000 by MayDay but since we aren't going to be having a fundraiser on the 28<sup>th</sup> perhaps we will have to extend our goal posts a little further back. But good work and keep selling stamps. We are pretty much out of buttons for the time being, but there are still more assessment stamps in the drawer with delegate supplies.

I have also posted a list of branch contacts on the bulletin board inside the door to the office. If you need to get in touch with a committee chair or Officer, phone numbers and email addresses can be found there.

I am also concerned that in the future neither Ted nor I will be present at Monthly Branch Business meetings. I know that many members are opposed to changing the night of the meeting, but I worry that the branch does not have the opportunity to hold its officers accountable if they cannot attend. How can you ask questions about things that I have done if I am not there? How can you direct me to do things a certain way if I'm not there to have a dialogue with? I think that it has created some confusion already and will probably create even more now that Ted will also not be present. I would like to seriously urge the branch to consider changing the meeting night to Wednesday or another night that most FWs can be present.

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