

ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL



T.M. PEPPERDAY, Publisher 1926-1956
C. THOMPSON LANG, Publisher 1956-1971

T.H. LANG, Publisher
Kent Walz, Editor
An Independent Newspaper

Published at Journal Center, 7777 Jefferson NE
Albuquerque, NM 87109-4343, by the Journal Publishing Co.
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Thursday, April 16, 2009

EDITORIALS

Union-Hired Protesters Of the World, Unite!

"Shame on ..." First Baptist Church, Sunflower Market and the School of Law at the University of New Mexico, declared the signs carried by protesters.

The shame apparently stems from a dispute with the Carpenters Local 1319 that the local's officers didn't want to talk about. They kicked questions up to the Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters' office in Los Angeles. But beyond saying it had something to do with "area standard wages," the chief of staff for the 65,000-member union couldn't explain why the church, market, law school and other sites were being picketed. He referred questions to an assistant who had traveled from LA to Albuquerque and might know. The assistant didn't respond to several calls from the Journal. Shame on the Carpenters.

One of the protesters at the old church site at Central and Broadway, Marcelo Vargas, couldn't provide much more information — and it turns out he probably shouldn't have. He said the dispute that led to his being hired as a protester involved construction of a church on the West Side. First Baptist is relocating to a new church off Paseo del Norte west of Coors NW. Vargas also said he didn't know much more and that he was protesting for \$10 an hour.

The union clarified his job description Monday after ascertaining he had talked to a reporter. His boss said all protesters had been told to carry signs, hand fliers to the curious and keep quiet. Vargas said nobody told him that, but he was fired anyway. Not being a union member, he can't file a grievance.

Maybe somebody ought to organize the nonunion labor on the picket lines. Protesters of the world, unite.