

# CONDUITS FOR CHANGE

IBEW Local 332 News | Spring 2021 | [WWW.IBEW332.ORG](http://WWW.IBEW332.ORG)



**THIS ISSUE:** Commercial Contract Bargaining | Retiree Stories | COVID Policies | JATC Building Update



Photo by SEMYON SOLOMON  
Circa 2001 in Santa Clara. Taken with  
one of the first digital cameras

# ANNOUNCEMENTS



## Fallen Members

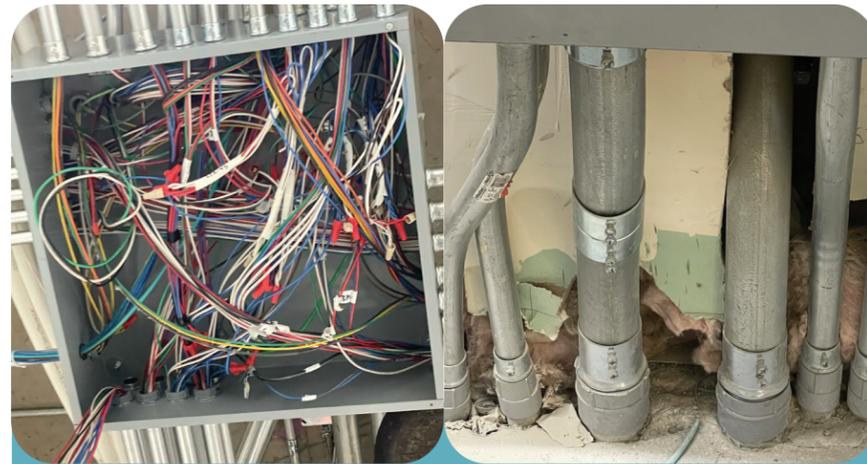
Local 332 honors our members who have recently passed away. Our hearts go out to their loved ones, especially during these challenging times.

- ♦ Fred Schults: 2/19/19
- ♦ Don F. Pritchett: 1/30/20
- ♦ Vincent L. Robinson: 3/9/20
- ♦ John Patrick Walters: 3/21/20
- ♦ Robert E. Olsen: 4/7/20
- ♦ Tommy Harrington: 4/29/20
- ♦ Rodney Honig: 5/10/19
- ♦ James Illges: 6/4/20
- ♦ Leland C. Dyer: 9/2/20
- ♦ Ronald R. Marier: 10/5/20
- ♦ Howard D. Walters Jr.: 10/7/20
- ♦ David Mariscal: 10/15/20
- ♦ Billy Gene Weber: 10/21/20
- ♦ Gordon S. Mason: 10/30/20
- ♦ Arthur Hammond Jr.: 11/30/20
- ♦ James Kramer: 12/8/20
- ♦ Allison Rae Harrison: 12/11/20
- ♦ John M. Gale: 12/28/20
- ♦ Paul D. Martin: 1/1/21
- ♦ Terre Stewart: 1/17/21
- ♦ Joel Saldana: 1/22/21

## Union Meetings Have Been Cancelled Due to Covid

Stay connected to Local 332 on our website and social media pages:

- ♦ website: [ibew332.org](http://ibew332.org)
- ♦ [instagram.com/ibewlocalunion332](https://www.instagram.com/ibewlocalunion332)
- ♦ [twitter.com/332ibew](https://twitter.com/332ibew)
- ♦ [facebook.com/Local332](https://facebook.com/Local332)



**You gonna leave it like that!?**  
**When you go non-union, you get what you pay for!**



**Hats off to the union members who are delivering our packages and risking exposure during the pandemic.**  
**Pictured clockwise: the American Postal Workers Union, the Teamsters, and the Air Line Pilots Association**

# FROM OUR BUSINESS MANAGER

## Greetings Brothers & Sisters:

Right now, almost all of our members are back to work. We are all tired of sheltering in place; however being considered essential workers has allowed us to continue to work and provide for our families. I am hoping everyone can stay safe until we can return to normalcy. We lost our first member to the virus: Brother Joel Saldana. It hit us all extremely hard. It was heartbreaking and an eye opener to how devastating Covid can be, and a reminder that any one of us can succumb to this deadly disease.

Losing someone brings home the reality that we really need to follow the mask, social distancing, and hygiene protocols. In the past if you got hurt on the job, it only affected you. But with Covid, if you or someone next to you is negligent, the lives of your whole family and everyone you love may be put at risk.

Our union contractors are doing a good job adhering to health and safety protocols, but we've been hearing reports of employers from other trades becoming lax and putting our members at risk. If that is the case, contact your 332 representative. We will do our best to support you in ensuring a safe worksite.

In other news, I want to thank our members for turning out strong for our fall political program. We elected 57 out of 61 labor-friendly candidates and passed over \$100 million in bond measures. This will create numerous work opportunities for our members. The more Local 332 is seen as a political force, the more receptive our leaders become. We are now working with many of these newly elected leaders on expanding and protecting our work. Our future looks brighter because of your political participation. Thank you, and let's keep up this trend.

Finally, we are starting contract negotiations for inside electricians and material handlers, which you can read about in the following pages.

***As this crisis continues, I encourage you to stay engaged in the union. We are a local that like to gather, but until it's safe to do so, I hope you can connect online and via phone.***

In Solidarity,

  
Dan Rodriguez  
Business Manager



**Dan Rodriguez**  
**Business Manager**  
**Financial Secretary**

## **\*\* Contract Negotiations \*\***

Local 332 shall begin contract negotiations for our inside commercial electricians as well as material handlers this spring.

Because of Covid, we will not be able to meet in person. However, our bargaining survey, contract vote, and wage allocation vote will all be conducted securely online with your union card numbers. We did this in 2020 with our residential contract and actually had nearly twice the participation we normally do.

Links go out via email. If you are not receiving them, please call the union hall immediately to ensure we have your correct email address: (408) 269-4332

# INSIDE COMMERCIAL CONTRACT NEGOTIATIONS

## Bargaining Survey & Contract Votes Will Be Online: Ensure We Have Your Email Address

This spring, Local 322 will tackle contract negotiations for our inside commercial electricians. Our material handler negotiations will start later this year. Like our residential contract last year, our bargaining survey, contract vote, and allocation vote will all be done online due to Covid. We'll do this securely with your union card number.

- Thank you to those who submitted your bargaining suggestions via email.
- If you are not receiving our emails, call the union hall (408) 269-4332 to provide your email address.

## Meet Your Local 322 Bargaining Team: Experience and Vision

We have an experienced bargaining team: Dan Rodriguez, Javier Casillas, Dan Romero, Pete Seaberg, Sergio Rosa, and Dan Sullivan. Collectively, we have bargained many contracts over the years. In addition to the negotiators, Ryan Serene is our recording secretary. Together, we will get the job done right for our members during these tough times. Please email us if you have any questions or concerns in the coming months.



**Dan Rodriguez:** "Right now, almost all our members are working, along with about 1,000 travelers. Although this may not reflect the future economic outlook, it puts us in a positive bargaining position to fight for better wages and working conditions. All voting will be online in the pandemic as we did with our residential and S&C contracts, which doubled our member participation. You can read all the materials and vote when it's convenient for you."

**Javier Casillas:** "I believe firmly that if our work remains consistent, we'll have the conditions to win the best raise that the market can absorb. We have billions of dollars in prevailing wage projects, and we are working at the same levels as pre-Covid. However, that could change with the pandemic, and many employers might not send people back to work. So always expect the best, prepare for the worst, and save your money."

**Dan Romero:** "I won't make any predictions about negotiations. Our strength at the table comes from all our PLAs made possible by electing labor-friendly candidates to school boards, college districts, city councils, and county boards. So the participation of our members in political work is really appreciated. During negotiations, if you have questions or just want to talk, reach out. I'll spend some time to get to know you so you can get more involved."

# GETTING THE JOB DONE AT THE TABLE

Pete Seaberg



"I've been with the union for about 18 years, and I'm in my second term on the executive board. I was on the residential bargaining team in the heart of Covid, and it forced us to do everything online. The silver lining was that doors opened for more people to participate who live far away or have busy families."

"I've been through several rounds of Inside negotiations just as your average joe member, and I know the importance of communicating what's going on. I'll be bringing a focus on transparency with the membership and communicating what is transpiring since we can't have our regular in-person union meetings."

"Right now, we are busy, but things may change due to Covid. Our market is adapting and evolving, so we must also. We have to be smart, aggressive, and bargain for what is best for our local now and into the future."

Sergio Rosa



"I've been with the local since 2009 as an inside apprentice, and wireman as of 2014. This will be my first time in the bargaining team. I'm hoping to bring the perspective of small shop journeymen and foremen who take pride in the quality and efficiency of union labor."

"When the contractors have work, we have work. The flip side is, our skilled labor is what allows them to take that work. The negotiations to me are about striking a balance between the needs of both the local and the contractors. After all, their work allows ours to shine."

"That being said, I feel we're bargaining from a positive standpoint. Job sites seem to be back in full swing, and the local is and will always be here to answer the call."

Dan Sullivan



"I was accepted in the Inside apprenticeship in 1999 and graduated in 2004. I enjoy working with my hands, the camaraderie, and the sense of accomplishment on a project, big or small, from a school to Levi's Stadium."

"In contract negotiations, I want to increase wages, but I'd also like to clean up any gray language, and improve working conditions as well as our quality of life."

"Our members have a lot of employment, and I believe we are negotiating from a position of strength. However, with a lot of businesses working at home, it's uncertain how much office space is needed. At bargaining, I will represent the membership the best I can, be a good union brother, get members' input, and help achieve our goals."

# FORMER LOCAL 332 PRESIDENT: SEM SOLOMON

# RETIREE STORY FROM THE VAULT



Sem Solomon



Circa 1977 at the Union Hall



Sem with His Family

## Silicon Valley: From Agriculture to Tech & Recession to Boom

Semyon Solomon has been a member of Local 332 since 1963, and was the president for three terms from 1984-1993. Sem was part of the generation that built Silicon Valley as we know it, and has seen our industry from the depths of the 1980s recession to the peak of the 1990s dotcom boom.

"Silicon Valley keeps changing and has gone from agricultural to high-tech. When my parents bought their house in 1950, only 46,000 people lived in Santa Clara County. It's just a 'little' larger now, and so many of the jobs I worked on have been torn down, and newer, larger buildings have taken their place.

"Of course the trades have changed, and 332 has kept pace with technology. Probably the biggest change is how we communicate with each other. In the 60s, it was in person or by letter. There were no phones on the jobsites, and you had to rely on your training if there was a challenge to figure out. Nowadays, we have email, smart phones, and texting. You can get the word out about something. And if you have a problem on a job, you can take a picture and get instant troubleshooting from a buddy.

"Our union has also changed dramatically. When I first started, there was no health care and no pension. But today, at \$110 per hour, it's one of the highest paid crafts in the world. There's just not that many workers who make that kind of living and can retire comfortably.

"I retired from the field in 2004 and started teaching CAD at our JATC. I'm still very active in the union and like to keep busy. I love working out, riding my bike, or taking photographs, and I get to spend more time with my wife, two daughters, and two grandkids.

"My advice for the younger guys coming up is to really focus on training, asking questions, and learning everything you can. Finally, always make a point of getting to know the other people on a job. I find the best way to work is to know who you're working with and appreciate the camaraderie of the trades."

## The Union Difference by Sem Solomon

So many things in the trades have changed over the years, but there's one thing that always stay the same: the value of our union training.

In 1984, I was working for Wanderer Electric, driving a service van, and I got called to a Sunnyvale house that had a fire the night before. When I arrived, I met the homeowners: a medical intern at Stanford hospital and his wife, who was nursing their one-month-old son.

The doctor explained that he had come into the kitchen to get a drink of water in the middle of the night, smelled smoke, and noticed that the ceiling around the light fixture was bulging down. He called the Fire Department. They came out, turned off the power, broke open the ceiling, and hosed everything down. The homeowners asked me to do what I could to get their house up and running again.

First I checked the junction box above where the fixture had been. The wire insulation was completely melted off, and the wires had arced across the back of the box, like someone had been using an arc welder. I then checked out the panel and noticed that none of the branch circuit breakers were tripped off. The breakers were Zinsco brand, which were notoriously defective and had been involved in many fires, because they almost never tripped on a short circuit.

I removed the junction box in the ceiling above the light, cut the lighting circuit NM cable off to a spot about five feet away, and put the cable into a new junction box. There were two burned conduits above where the original light box had been: a 3/4" and a 1". I cut both pipes open, and removed enough to where the wire inside them was not burned. I installed a junction box on each conduit, put covers on, and then set aside the burned pipe, wire, and old junction box for the

homeowner's insurance company. I made sure everything was safe before testing.

I turned all of the breakers off, turned on the main breaker, and one by one turned each breaker back on, except the breakers that were connected to the circuits in the conduits.

Everything stayed on, and there was no buzzing or humming from the breakers. I then went into the house, and started checking everything out. The house lighting was on, the furnace was running, and the rest of the receptacles were all on.

I then screened the kitchen and dinette area off from the rest of the house with a plastic sheet to contain the smoke odor, and keep the heat in the rest of the house.

Back in the kitchen, I opened up each appliance and saw they were completely flooded with the water used to put out the fire. Everything in the kitchen, including the cabinets, was damaged. When the insurance representative came by, I showed him what caused the fire, and why the entire kitchen had to be rebuilt.

Later that day, the young doctor came home, checked on his wife and son, and then came out to see me. He said something that has reverberated with me till this day 37 years later.

He said, "Now I know the difference between union and non-union. I had two non-union contractors come to my house before you. They didn't have a clue what to do, but in one hour, you had my house powered back up and running again so my wife, son and I don't have to move out. I'll appreciate your service forever."

And that's the union difference. Our training is world class, and whether it's a small residential job or an enormous tech campus with cutting edge technology,



332 Apprentices Class of 1966



# NEW JATC BUILDING UPDATE

# FEATURED MEMBERS



**Dan Romero**  
332 Vice President &  
Asst. Business Manager

## Construction is Moving Forward to Renovate the JATC

Our JATC construction project is now underway, and we are hoping to have in-person classes by October if county Covid restrictions are lifted. Members have been investing in the renovation as part of your \$1.50 per hour allocation. When construction is complete, it will be a building you can be proud of.

According to Local 332 Business Manager Dan Rodrigez, the goal is to have a building that is both state of the art and conducive to learning. "It will allow us to both better train apprentices and have an industry showpiece to get a leg up on the competition," he said.

Assistant Business Manager Dan Romero has been heading up the project. He described the open floor plan with high ceilings, polished concrete floors, two underground electrical vaults, and an auditorium for large scale recruitment meetings. "We're going to be able to bring in 200 young people from the community at a time," said Dan. "The concept is to create a functional training space to last for current and future members.

## JATC Re-Opening Update

Keep an eye on the JATC website [www.ejatc332.org](http://www.ejatc332.org) for information on how the renovations are going and when we will be able to open while adhering to Santa Clara County's guidelines.

"Classes start in September, and according to construction schedule, we might have a few weeks of classes on Zoom before in-person labs are available. However, with Covid, we've come to expect the unexpected, so October in-person classes are our hope, but things could change."

"Thank you to the full membership for your confidence and investment in the JATC during the pandemic. We look forward to the grand opening this fall!"



**Artist rendition of what the newly renovated JATC lobby will look like**

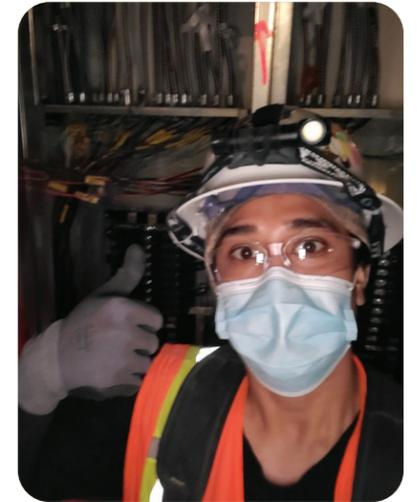
## Nick Nguyen: 3rd Year Residential Apprentice

I was 18 when the trades first sparked my interest. I was working at a grocery store, and we had our own electrician. It looked really cool and interesting to me. I had never done anything except customer service and retail, so I was excited and nervous when I started my apprenticeship in 2018.

Since then, I've loved getting started on a real career. I like it all, but my biggest thing is troubleshooting. I enjoy the challenge, having the satisfaction of figuring it out on my own, and I love how every day something new arises. No day is the same, and you never know what's going to be thrown your way.

I love being a part of the union. It's a collective, and you're never on your own. Sometimes I can't believe how well I'm taken care of, and I never knew these kinds of benefits existed. I came from minimum wage jobs where I couldn't even get 40 hours. Now, I'm full time with health care and a pension.

My free time is limited, but when I get the chance, I watch comedies on Netflix, hang out with my girlfriend, and try new foods. In the pandemic, we've been doing a lot of takeout and picnicking at different parks. But my focus is really on my work. I'm studying every day, learning the codes, and doing practice tests, because after I turn out from the residential program in June, I want to head into the commercial program. I feel like I have so many opportunities, and being a part of the union was the best decision I ever made.



## Brent Jones: Journeyman Inside Electrician & 2020 Graduate

Before I got into the apprenticeship, I was working for an oil company. I talked to the electricians out there, watched them work, and it looked so cool. They were the ones who pushed me to apply in 2014.

I loved the apprenticeship. I got to work for different contractors and see the differences between shops and different aspects of the trade. There's so many avenues to take. I've been doing underground for the last two years, but I haven't developed a specific niche. However, one of the reasons why I like this work so much is that you can do so many things. It's impossible to get bored.

Turning out is like winning the lottery. Wow—life begins, and it's cool knowing you've accomplished something and are now part of this group. I've been on this job from start to finish, putting in the utilities for an elementary, middle, and high school. In fact, we just turned the lights on today, and it's a great feeling.

I love being a part of the union. It's life changing, and I went from barely scraping by to owning a house. I moved around a lot as a kid, and now I'm able to give my kids something I never had: stability. My wife deserves some credit. She supported me through the apprenticeship with all the late nights and absent weekends. We are high school sweethearts, and she's my rock.



# COVID-19 LAWS & PROTOCOLS



**Brett McClure**  
Executive Board  
Safety Committee Chair

## Local 332 Health Resources

Santa Clara County Vaccine Info  
website: [bit.ly/3v6KypC](https://bit.ly/3v6KypC)

Anthem Blue Cross  
408 288-4400 or 800 541-8059  
Group #277786M001  
[www.anthem.com/ca](https://www.anthem.com/ca)

Kaiser  
800 464-4000  
Group #780 (Inside)  
Group #919 (all others)  
[www.kaiserpermanente.org](https://www.kaiserpermanente.org)

Optum Health  
877 225-2267

Beat It (Substance Abuse Help)  
877 225-2267

Mental Health in the Pandemic  
website: [bit.ly/verywell-covid](https://bit.ly/verywell-covid)  
website: [bit.ly/cdc-stress](https://bit.ly/cdc-stress)

## Protecting Ourselves & Our Families Has Become the New Normal

The year 2020 will go down for many of us as the worst year of our lives, in good part due to the pandemic. 2021 has brought hope that by the end of the summer, we will be vaccinated and may start to get back to normal. However, Covid has been unpredictable, so we should all expect the unexpected. More importantly, we need to keep up our good work protecting ourselves and each other until restrictions are lifted and the virus is no longer spreading and threatening people's safety.

Masks, social distancing, and extra sanitation on the job have become as standard as wearing safety glasses and a hard hat. However, we've all seen contractors who don't provide proper PPE, ignore training, and generally neglect safety. They're the same ones who just want the work done quickly and as cheaply as possible.

We've been hearing that other trades and non-union employers aren't adhering to health and safety protocols set by Santa Clara County and OSHA. If you are being exposed, call your union representative, so we can help ensure that all of our members are safe on the job.

Nobody is stoked that we are in a global pandemic, nor for all of the inconveniences that go with it, especially on the job. But until everyone is vaccinated, keep yourself, your family, and your fellow workers and their families safe. Our health and our lives depend on the person next to us and the person next to them. And it's the law.

- For OSHA regulations, go to [bit.ly/3bu9Mq6](https://bit.ly/3bu9Mq6)
- For San Clara County Covid regulations, go to [bit.ly/3cbMh4g](https://bit.ly/3cbMh4g)



People waiting in line to be vaccinated in San Jose

# COVID HITS ONE OF OUR OWN

## The Passing of Brother Joel Saldana

Brother Joel Saldana, inside wireman apprentice, died of Covid on January 22, 2021. He leaves behind a wife and toddler. Joel was a hard worker, a good natured colleague, and a union brother. His passing really hit the local hard: He was our first member to die from this deadly disease plaguing our communities, our country, and the world. Our hearts go out to his family, friends, and co-workers who knew and loved him. Let's come together to stop Covid in its tracks by continuing to practice health and safety precautions in Joel's honor. One union brother lost to the pandemic is one too many.



Joel Saldana, Inside Wireman Apprentice

## Pandemic PPE Works

At the beginning of March 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) released a study that confirmed that our practice of wearing masks on the job is helping to slow the virus. The study analyzed state/county data from March-December 2020 and provided strong evidence that mask mandates reduced coronavirus transmission and deaths. PPE isn't glamorous, and masks can make our work uncomfortable, but there's no question they work. Until we're all vaccinated, let's keep up our good work slowing the virus. Our lives and the lives of our families and co-workers are worth it.



RJ Delander wearing a KN95 mask under his paintball/vader mask



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Business Manager  
Dan Rodriguez

President  
Javier Casillas

VP/Assistant Business Manager  
Dan Romero

Recording Secretary  
Ryan Serene

Treasurer  
Craig Tomasello

**Union Electricians Get the Job Done Right!**

# CONDUITS FOR CHANGE



Dear Local 332 Member,

I think the theme for 2021 for our membership should be, "never let your guard down." That goes for staying safe in the pandemic and staying current in your craft. We need to double down and focus even harder on protecting ourselves, our families, and our coworkers from Covid. Same with work. Never relax, and always strive for better.

Outside contractors from Sacramento, Modesto, and Stockton are horning in on our turf to bid at lower rates. Those guys are willing to drive two to three hours to get that work. They are hungry, and they can undercut us on cost. So we need to up our level on skill and be on the cutting edge of technology and lead the industry.

So dust off your books, work a few calculations, check out the new benders, and even go down to Home Depot and walk the electrical aisle just to see if there's new stuff out.

When you're on the job, it's easy to get into a rut and have horseblinders on when it comes to the latest techniques. Take a minute to look around and see if maybe the guy next to you is doing it better and constantly evaluate your install. We beat the competition when we up our quality and produce the cleanest and most efficient work.

**Javier Casillas, Local 332 President & Member Development Representative**