

## Media Articles on Law Firm

### **Union Members Spend Labor Day Picketing/ Nearly 200 arrested in S.F., Palo Alto protests**

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Glen Martin, Chronicle Staff Writer*

Labor Day may have evolved into an excuse to bloat on hot dogs and beer in most of the country, but it lived up to its populist roots yesterday in San Francisco and Palo Alto, where nearly 200 union members were arrested while protesting working conditions.

San Francisco police arrested 147 members of Local 2 of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Union after union demonstrators blocked traffic on Powell Street in front of the St. Francis Hotel.

About 1,000 members attended the rally, which was designed to notify managers of some large San Francisco hotels that union members were about to "drop the hammer" and strike unless a contract is signed soon, said union President Michael Casey.

In Palo Alto, about 40 hospital workers were arrested as they protested the lack of a contract at Lucile Salter Packard Children's Hospital. About 250 demonstrators marched from the hospital to the corner of Embarcadero and El Camino Real, where they blocked traffic until police made arrests.

The demonstration was nonviolent, police said, and those arrested were cited and released.

The hotel union's 8,000 room cleaners, dishwashers and restaurant workers had a five-year pact with 50 San Francisco hotels and motels. The contract expired August 14.

"We didn't spend our Labor Day at picnics," Casey said. "This was the biggest arrest action in the country (yesterday), and we planned it to show management that we're on a collision course. We've been without a contract for three weeks, and negotiations are doing way too slow."

San Francisco Police Sgt. Ron Parenti said the gathering was a nonviolent exercise in civil disobedience.

"They gathered about 11 a.m. in Union Square and left the square for the street at 11:30," Parenti said. "They refused our order to disperse, and we were finished arresting them at about 12:30."

Parenti said the arrestees were taken to a detention center, cited for obstructing a public roadway and released.

St. Francis managers were not available for comment.

Teresa McKinney, the manager of a Victoria's Secret outlet next to the hotel, characterized the protest as "kind of scary. It was really loud and nerve-racking. I had to come in a side door, because police weren't letting anyone in the front."

McKinney said that the demonstration disrupted her business and that sales remained sluggish for several hours after the last union members left.

"I really wouldn't want to see a repeat of that," she said.

Casey said the union is concentrating on pressuring the Multi-Employer Group, which represents some of San Francisco's largest hotels, including the St. Francis, the Palace, the Hilton, four Holiday Inns, the Hyatt Regency, the Grand Hyatt and the Argent.

"After we get a contract with them, we'll use that to secure similar agreements with the remaining 39 hotels," he said.

Casey said there are four main points up for negotiations: health and welfare benefits, wages, job security and work reduction.

"The main hang-ups are over wages and work reduction," he said.

The union wants to boost employees' hourly wages to \$13.50 an hour, from \$12. Union officials say hotel managers have not made a counteroffer on wages.

As for work reduction, said Casey, room cleaners are so overworked "that they can't get everything done by the end of their shifts."