

RWDSU

UFCW

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RECORD

Vol. 61, No. 1

RWDSU Members Making Things Happen



WILLIAMSON, NEW YORK:
Solidarity brings strong
new contract at Mott's.

PAGE 3



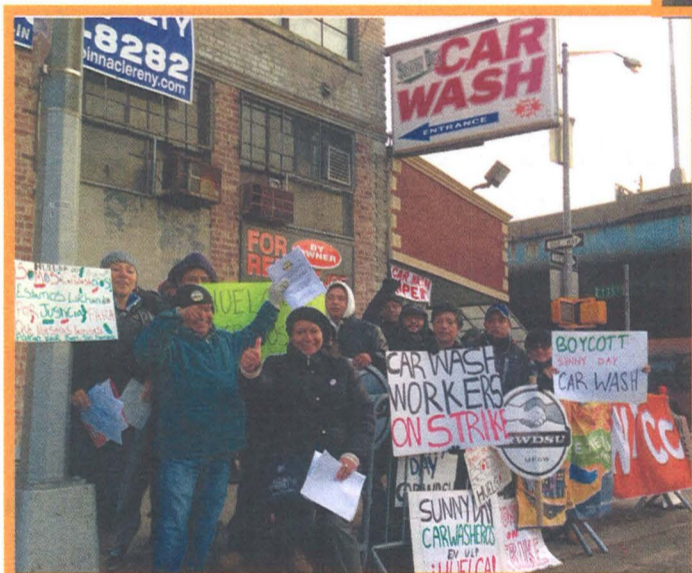
PAGE 4

NEW BRUNSWICK, NEW JERSEY:
DeStefano warehouse workers
win union voice.



**ALABAMA, FLORIDA, AND
MISSISSIPPI:**
2,000 join Mid-South Council.

PAGE 4



THE BRONX, NEW YORK:
Sunny Day car wash
workers win back jobs.

PAGE 6



FORT WAYNE, INDIANA:
Strong new contracts throughout U.S.,
including Holsum Bakery.

PAGE 13

INSIDE THE RECORD

- Mott's Workers Win Strong New Contract 3
- New Members in Mid-South and NJ 4
- More Join at H&M 5
- Car Wash Campaign Rolls On 6
- Political and Legislative Update 7
- Retail Workers Facing Challenges 8-9
- Ohio Hosts Six-State Conference 10
- RWDSU Scholarship Winners 11
- Rebuilding After Sandy 12
- Contract News 13
- Election News 14
- Health and Safety 16

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The objectives of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union are to unite into this organization all workers employed in its jurisdiction in order to advance and safeguard their economic and social welfare...The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union will strive to preserve democratic processes, protect civil liberties, aid in the adoption of legislation which will promote the economic and social welfare of its members and that of labor in general and to improve the educational, social and cultural standards of society as a whole. *Through unity of purpose and action, through collective bargaining and legislation, the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union is dedicated to the ideal of making the jobs of its members the best jobs that can be devised from the point of view of wages, hours of work, physical conditions and human relations. Preamble RWDSU Constitution.*



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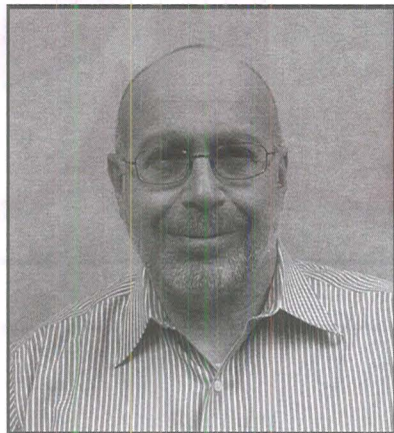
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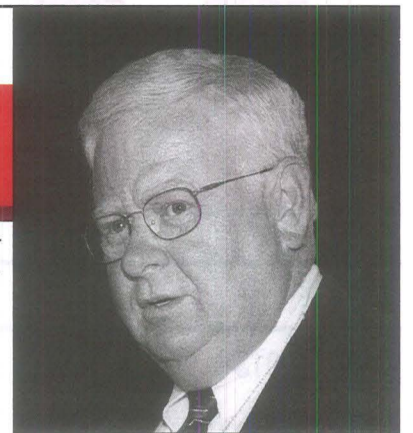
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MESSAGE FROM YOUR OFFICERS

The Union Difference

Working men and women are finding it harder than ever to make ends meet. Far too many are struggling just to survive. Companies are reporting record profits, yet workers are facing inadequate pay while their benefits are under attack.

In this issue of the Record, you'll read about some of the challenges that are being faced by non-union retail workers, including the abusive sched-

uling practice of "on-call shifts," where workers face uncertainty about when they are even going to work and are forced to put their lives on hold.

workers from a number of industries in Alabama, Florida, and Mississippi who have merged into the Mid-South Council. And over 1,100 people have joined RWDSU Local 338 since 2012.

With unions, workers get better benefits and higher pay and more say about what happens at their workplace. Union workers also earn on average \$201 more a week than their non-union counterparts.

Companies are reporting record profits, yet workers are facing inadequate pay while their benefits are under attack.

The union difference is why union members have protections from scheduling abuses. Recent RWDSU contracts at retailers including Macy's, Bloomingdale's, and H&M guarantee workers adequate notice on their schedules so they have more control over their own lives.

But you'll also read about how workers are taking control of their own lives by winning a union voice.

Car wash workers, some of the most mistreated and exploited workers in New York City, have joined the RWDSU and achieved historic wins. Where once they had little power, if any, to improve their jobs, now, they have the strength to demand and win change.

Warehouse workers in New Jersey and retail employees at H&M in Manhattan have also joined the RWDSU in recent months, along with 2,000

The union difference is why car wash workers, Guitar Center employees, and people across the spectrum of industries are demanding their right for a union voice. When workers stand to-

With unions, workers get better benefits and higher pay and more say about what happens at their workplace.

gether to create a strong, powerful union voice, they can stand up to even the biggest corporation and demand fairness on the job. ■



Amelia Tucker

On page 10 you'll read about the retirement of the RWDSU's first Recorder, our sister Amelia Tucker. As an immigrant worker herself, she brought a special sensitivity to the issues and needs of so many

RWDSU members. She provided leadership in Chicago and throughout the union.

We thank her for her years of service to the members of the RWDSU.

WORKERS WINNING A UNION VOICE

RWDSU Mott's Workers Ratify New Contract with Stronger Benefits

When RWDSU Local 220 members employed at the Mott's plant in Williamson, New York, went on strike in 2010, they walked the picket lines to defend their pay, their benefits, and their livelihoods.

For several months, the RWDSU members went on strike to stand up for a belief: that workers deserve to be treated with fairness on the job, and that when workers join together with a union, they create a powerful voice that can't be ignored.

Because of that fight and the members' solidarity three years ago, Mott's workers have signed a new contract that is stronger than ever. The new contract contains wage improvements of \$1.60, signing bonuses of over \$3,000, secures health care coverage for over 300 employees at the plant, and contains numerous language improvements that will help workers with scheduling and overtime issues.

"This group stood together through thick and thin three years ago to fight for what was rightfully theirs. They brought that strength and resolve to the negotiating table this year, and the result was a good contract that recognizes their contributions to making this a successful, profitable facility," said RWDSU Representative Michael Flanery, who assisted in contract negotiations and was on the front lines during the 2010 strike.

"Local 220 members have shown that they emerged from that fight stronger than ever," Flanery added. ■

"Mott's workers have shown they are stronger than ever."



Serving on the negotiating committee, and pictured from left to right, were Al Joslyn, Local 220 President Michael LeBerth, Joanne Lane, Chris Hermanet, Lisa Lester, Chief Steward Jerome Camp, Secretary Treasurer Jeff Thomas. They were assisted by RWDSU Representative Mike Flanery.



In 2010, Mott's workers spoke out for better jobs by going on strike.

Over 1,100 Join RWDSU Local 338



Since the start of 2012, 1,116 working men and women in New York City and on Long Island, New York, have won the power of an RWDSU voice by joining Local 338. The workers are employed at 16 different workplaces, including Duane Reade drug stores, and supermarkets including Decicco's, Key Food, Met Foods, Shoprite, and Farm Country.

For new Local 338 members, joining the union means winning strength on the job. "We organized because we were tired of so much injustice. All of the brothers and sisters united to make change. I feel happy we have won in the struggle to have our labor rights respected," said Miguel Garcia, who along with his co-workers at Farm Country supermarket in East New York joined Local 338 last May. Before joining the union, Farm Country employees worked long hours for less than minimum wage and received no overtime pay, sick pay or benefits.

"We welcome the new members who are helping make Local 338 stronger, and sending a clear message to any worker who is being taken advantage of - You do not have to sit back and allow your employer to continue to mistreat you. When workers organize for change they can achieve gains and make their jobs better," said RWDSU Local 338 President John Durso. ■

Supermarket workers in Brooklyn are among the new members who have joined Local 338.

WORKERS WINNING A UNION VOICE

Thousands Join Mid-South Council

Approximately 2,000 supermarket and nursing home workers from throughout Alabama, the Florida panhandle region, and parts of Mississippi have become members of the RWDSU Mid-South Council. It's the latest big win for the Mid-South Council, which also recently brought in 1,200 new members at the Pilgrim's Pride poultry plant in Russellville, Alabama.

The 2,000 new RWDSU members were part of UFCW Local 1657, headquartered in Birmingham, Alabama, which has merged into the RWDSU. They work at Belle Foods, Colonial Haven Healthcare and Rehab Center, Golden Living, Sea Breeze Healthcare Center, M&M Marketplace, United Roofing Manufacturing and other employers throughout the region. The RWDSU Mid-South Council, which represents workers at poultry plants, food retail, manufacturing facilities and dairy, milk and ice cream factories, now has over 10,000 members.



The merger brings an RWDSU voice to these employees at Belle Foods.



Health care service workers at Meadowood nursing home in Alabama.



Golden Living employees in Trussville, Alabama.

"This opens the door for many new opportunities including the potential to organize retail workers in the South and continue to grow," said John Whitaker, president of the Mid-South Council.

Momentum Growing for RWDSU in the South

The merger agreement comes in the heels of the 2012 organizing campaign which brought in the 1,200 new members at Pil-

grim's Pride. It was the largest organizing victory for workers in Alabama in decades, and it cemented the RWDSU's reputation as a growing union in the south. Together with the new merger agreement, these wins have made the RWDSU Mid-South Council one of the largest unions in the region.

"As we continue to gain members, we continue to gain strength at the bargaining table for all Mid-South Council members," Whitaker added. ■



With the merger agreement, 2,000 new members join the RWDSU Mid-South Council.

The RWDSU Mid-South Council is now one of the largest unions in the region.

NJ Food Warehouse Workers Join Local 108, Ratify First Contract



DeStefano employees won raises, paid sick days, and respect in the workplace.

DeStefano Foods employees who work at a food warehouse facility located in New Brunswick, New Jersey, have joined the RWDSU, and voted overwhelmingly to ratify their first union contract. The Local 108 members voted for a three-year contract that raises wages 5 to 13 percent in the first year of the contract, and 5 percent in the second and third years of the pact.

Workers at the warehouse wanted to join because they were fed up with mistreatment and unfair and unjust working conditions. They reported working 10 to 12 hour days, and did not have paid sick days, a medical plan, or annual raises. They also reported unfair working conditions did not have a medical plan.

"We needed a voice on the job," said DeStefano driver Alex Figueroa.

The new contract also brings workers three personal days and three sick days, addressing another of the concerns workers had that never would have been addressed without a union voice.

Employees will also receive more vacation time than before, including a full week's vacation after six months of employment, and two weeks after two years of employment. Workers will now be given uniforms and a work belt, and language has been instituted in the contract which defines the workweek, ending the employer's previous practice of arbitrarily sending workers home to avoid overtime.

DeStefano Foods serves the food industry in New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania, distributing over 3,000 quality food products. ■

WORKERS WINNING A UNION VOICE

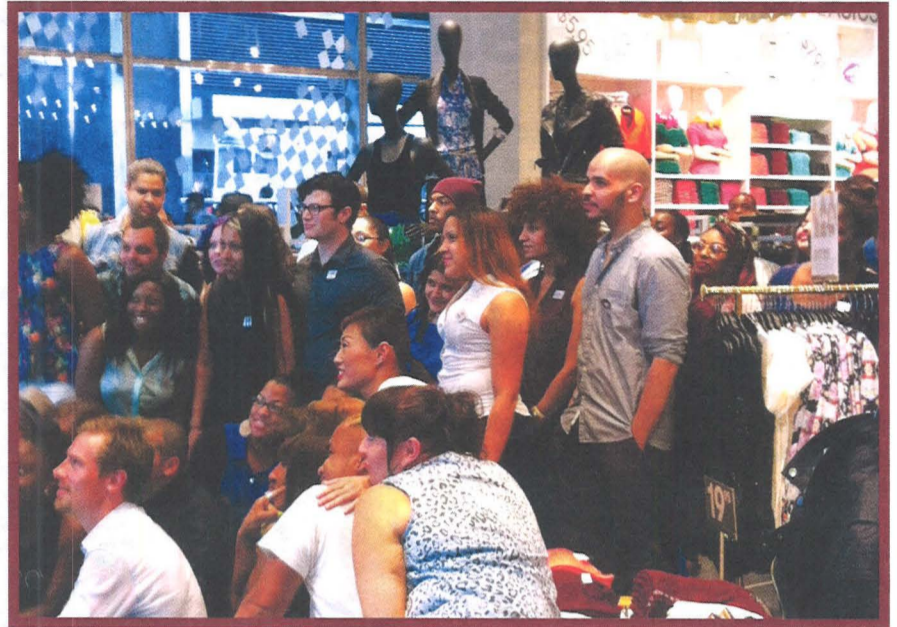
More H&M Workers Join Local 1102

About 80 H&M workers at the Columbus Circle store in New York City have become part of RWDSU Local 1102, joining over 1,000 RWDSU members at 11 Manhattan H&M stores. The workers chose to join the RWDSU after hearing from H&M members about the benefits of standing together in solidarity and having a voice on the job.

“As a steward, I want all my H&M co-workers to have the same benefits and protection that I have. When I spoke to the new workers, I shared how having a union voice helped me and others in my store,” said H&M steward Charlie Truitt.

H&M worker Alicia Williams-Timo said, “When it was time for me to come speak to the new workers, I was happy to share my own story and how being part of a union helped me to stay with the company and develop within my job.” ■

H&M Columbus Circle members are the latest at the retail chain to join RWDSU Local 1102.



AROUND THE RWDSU

Guitar Center Workers Demand Respect



Workers at Guitar Center stores in New York City, including the massive chain’s flagship east coast store on 14th street, have announced their intentions to win a union voice by joining the RWDSU. The retailer – the largest chain of musical instrument stores in the world, with 243 locations – was bought by Bain Capital in 2007, the infamous private equity firm co-founded by former Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney.

“Guitar Center has been my favorite place to work for, but since Bain Capital entered the picture we have seen cuts in commission, salaries, and health benefits. The workers know that the situation won’t change without joining the RWDSU. Now,

more than ever, is the time to stand up for the working class,” said Dmitry Yankelevych.

In addition to pay and benefit cuts, Guitar Center workers report ever increasing mandatory sales requirements, while at the same time being forced to do more non-sales work that makes it harder to reach those requirements.

They are asking the company to recognize the union and negotiate for a fair contract, and have won the support of a growing coalition of community allies, elected officials, and professional musicians including Tom Morello, Steve Earle, Kathleen Hanna, Ted Leo and members of The Deftones, Quicksand, Against Me! and Ke\$ha’s band.

Guitar Center workers have created a petition calling for fairness and their right to organize. Visit www.rwdsu.org to sign their petition. ■

RWDSUers Wallop Wal-Mart Hypocrisy

In January, Walmart U.S. President & Darden Restaurants Board member Bill Simon delivered the keynote address at the National Retail Federation’s BIG Show on the need for retail industry leadership on issues like the economy and job creation while using Walmart’s business model as an example.

Activists, including RWDSU members, were on hand to ridicule the hypocrisy of Simon lecturing attendees on retail leadership and economic growth while his companies’ actions have led to low-wage jobs, unpredictable work schedules, underemployment, and cuts to benefits that force many workers to rely on public assistance to provide for their families. The average U.S. Walmart associate makes \$8.81 an hour, while corporate pay continues to rise. ■



Cat Comes to Monopoly

RWDSU Local 224 members at the Hasbro/Milton Bradley plant in Longmeadow, MA, produce popular board games including Monopoly. And now, one of the famous game tokens — which dates back to the 1930s — is being replaced after an online vote.



The new piece — the cat — replaces the iron, voted the least popular game token. ■

WORKERS WINNING A UNION VOICE

Car Wash Campaign Rolls Up Big Wins

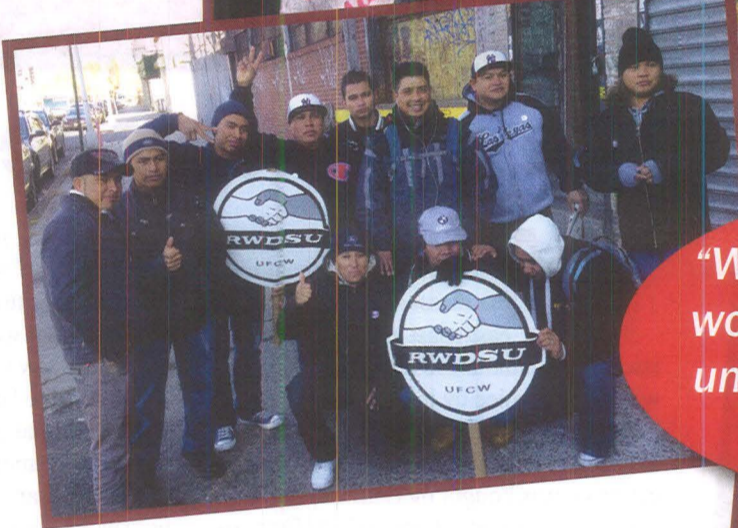
It's been a little over a year since the RWDSU launched a campaign to organize car wash workers. And what a year it has been. Workers have won five organizing campaigns and one strike, gotten behind first of its kind legislation that would bring much needed regulation to the industry, protected the jobs of workers whose car wash was being demolished, and galvanized elected officials, faith leaders and countless New Yorkers to support the campaign.

The WASH NY campaign, a joint effort between community groups Make the Road New York and New York Communities for Change and supported by the RWDSU, was created to raise community concerns about widespread mistreatment in the car wash industry, and help build better lives for car wash workers throughout New York City. The campaign has had a substantial impact on the industry, and in the lives of the city's car wash workers – or carwasheros, as they have come to call themselves.

Winning and Using a Union Voice

The campaign has helped workers at five New York City car washes achieve historic wins. Workers at the Astoria Car Wash & Hi-Tek Lube, Webster, Sutphin, Lage, and Sunny Day Car Wash have become the first car wash workers on the east coast to win a union voice. And with their union voice has come a new wave of progressive activism among the city's car wash workers.

At Sunny Day Car Wash in the Bronx, workers went on strike last November, when 12 of the workers refused to report to the job after having not been paid for nearly three weeks. When they did this, they were fired. Workers struck and picketed in front of the facility, demanding their



Workers at a car wash in Soho forced owner John Lage to rehire them at other locations after closing the facility.

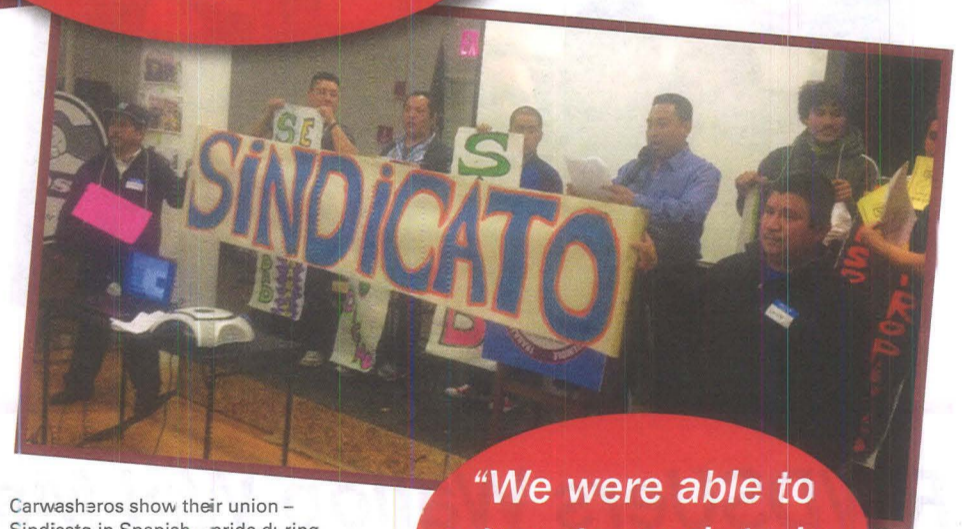
"We are happy to have won our jobs back. The union was always here to support us."

Carwasheros at Sunny Day went on strike and won their jobs back.

jobs back. There were many cold days of protests and picketing, and physical threats were made against employees, but workers stuck together and didn't falter.

The result was a decisive victory in February as the carwasheros at Sunny Day forced the company to respect their rights and reinstate their jobs.

As he entered the facility to go back to work, Juan Camp's, one of the Sunny Day workers said "What we showed today is that there is strength through unity. My



Carwasheros show their union – Sindicato in Spanish – pride during a skit performed at the car wash assembly.

"We were able to return to work today with dignity."

colleagues showed courage and with the support of the organizations we got organized and were able to return to work today with dignity."

Carwasheros won another huge victory in February when workers won the right to be hired at other car washes when theirs was being shut down. Led by the RWDSU, New York Communities for Change and Make the Road New York, the workers demonstrated and struck twice to demand that they be hired at other car wash locations in the city owned by NYC Carwash Kingpin John Lage. An agreement was reached with Lage promising to hire the employees at his other locations and not

to discriminate against them for having voted to unionize.

"We are happy to have won our jobs back, and feel very relieved. I think the fact that we won a union election and the union was always here to support us, made us fearless to confront management," said Hector Gomez, who has worked for the company for six years.

Carwasheros Show Strength, Celebrate Advances at Historic Assembly

In March, WASH NY hosted a car wash worker conference, a three-day program that saw car wash workers from around New York City joining together to take part in workshops designed to strengthen the movement and empower the city's car wash workforce. Car wash workers learned about their legal rights, health and safety protections they are entitled to in the workplace, and how to bring themselves and other car wash employees a union voice.

Wrapping up the event was a Car Wash Assembly, where hundreds of carwasheros were joined by labor and community leaders and elected officials. At the assembly, car wash

workers told their stories, and celebrated the strides they have made over the last year.

"Tonight we come together – united in spirit and strength – to celebrate the one year anniversary of this amazing campaign. These workers are New York heroes!" said RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum.

"Their courage in standing up for themselves sends a powerful message to other car wash and low wage workers: You can fight back against poor wages and working conditions, and you can win!" Appelbaum added. ■



Hundreds of carwasheros joined together for a car wash assembly in March.

RWDSU POLITICAL & LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

U.S. Senate Introduces Immigration Reform Bill

In April, a bipartisan group of senators known as the “Gang of Eight” unveiled their immigration reform bill. The bill provides many of the things immigrant groups and unions have been calling for, but comes up short in some areas.

The bill would provide a path to citizenship for 11 million undocumented immigrants who are currently living and working in the U.S. It also includes an expedited path to citizenship for “DREAMers,” young immigrants who came to this country at age 15 or younger.

In addition, the bill would create a new program called the W Visa, which would provide work visas for low skilled

workers. Previously, most worker visas were intended for workers in science, tech, engineering and math. The W Visa program would protect low wage workers by preventing immigrants from being tied to a single employer – leaving them at risk of deportation if they lose their job – and would protect wages and working conditions in low wage industries by discouraging exploitation of immigrant workers.

The W visa will also allow immigrants to petition for their families to be reunited when they have been separated due to detention or deportation. Immigrant advocates are also praising the fact that the bill would create and fund a bureau that

would revisit visa caps to help clear out the current 24-year backlog, and ensure that immigrant workers are paid prevailing wage when applicable and no less than non-immigrant workers when there is no prevailing wage.

As President Obama pointed out, the bill is a compromise. While young immigrants would have an expedited path to citizenship, it is still estimated that it will take

10-15 years for most currently undocumented immigrants. And, LGBT families continue to be left behind. All immigrant families deserve to stay together regardless of sexual orientation.

The RWDSU has long supported the rights of immigrant workers, and feels that it’s long past due that the government acts on immigration reform. ■



RWDSU Local 108 members were among those calling for immigration reform at a rally in Liberty State Park, New Jersey, in April.

Right to Work in Michigan: Don't be Fooled

At the end of March, Right to Work legislation went into effect in Michigan. It was a sad day for the great union state, as Gov. Snyder signed into law a bill passed with no committee hearings or public input over a period of two legislative session days, at the behest of his Tea Party and wealthy campaign backers.

While proponents of the law claim it will help the state’s workers and economy, a look at the facts shows that this anti-worker legislation will do nothing to help the middle class or create jobs. It will instead hurt wages, benefits and safety for all working families in Michigan.

“There is absolutely no evidence that right to work for less causes compa-

nies to hire more workers, or will bring employers into the state. In fact, eight of the 12 states with the highest unemployment are RTW states. This is just a favor to corporate special interests, and the real aim of this law is to weaken unions,” said RWDSU Regional Director Randy Belliel.

Studies show that workers living in right-to-work states earn about \$1,500 less per year than workers in states without these laws. The wage gap is even worse for women and minorities. Workers in right to work states are over 50 percent more likely to be injured on the job.

“We are going to fight back at the polls, and push hard for candidates who support fully restoring the freedom for workers to join unions,” Belliel added. ■

RWDSU Endorses Christine Quinn for New York City Mayor

The RWDSU has endorsed Christine Quinn for Mayor of New York City. Quinn has served as City Council speaker, the second most powerful elected official in New York City, since 2006. Throughout her career, Quinn has fought to make life better for vulnerable and marginalized residents in New York City, including low-wage workers, immigrants, minorities, the undocumented, the homeless, the unemployed, and LGBT New Yorkers. She has worked side by side with the RWDSU on important causes like establishing a living wage law in New York City, keeping the city Wal-Mart free, and the current WASH NY campaign to build better lives for car wash workers.

“The biggest challenge our city faces is the growing number of people struggling to survive. Chris Quinn’s progressive record of results and leadership shows that she is best prepared to address this challenge as mayor, and that’s why we are endorsing her,” said RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum.

“She has made city government more responsive and attuned to underserved communities and to people who feel invisible and forgotten. She will continue to do that as mayor. She will fight hard to reduce income inequality and slow the alarming growth of the working poor. Chris Quinn will be a transformative mayor.” Appelbaum added. ■



RWDSU local presidents and leaders join RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum and Secretary-Treasurer Jack Wurm, Jr., in welcoming City Council Speaker Christine Quinn to the RWDSU Headquarters.

Retail Workers Facing Challenge

With more than 15 million Americans working in private-sector retail, the industry is one of the fastest-growing employment sectors in the country. Over the next decade, retail will become the second-largest source of new jobs in the U.S. Some retailers are enjoying record profits, but retail workers are facing uncertainty and pressure as their employers try to cut labor costs to the bone.

For Tamara, a sales associate at a non-union New York City retail store, supporting her two children with her low pay can be a daunting task.

"I work six to seven days a week, and work late on the holidays. And, I work another part-time job in addition to my retail job just to make ends meet. How am I supposed to take care of my children when I earn so little, despite working two jobs?"

Tamara isn't alone in struggling to balance her work and family life with a retail job. Working in retail in the 21st century comes with a host of challenges that can make daily life a struggle.

"Corporations are getting more and more creative as they try to squeeze every ounce of profit out of their stores. And it's their workers who are feeling the pinch," said RWDSU Retail Organizing Project Director Phil Andrews.

Scheduling Unpredictability

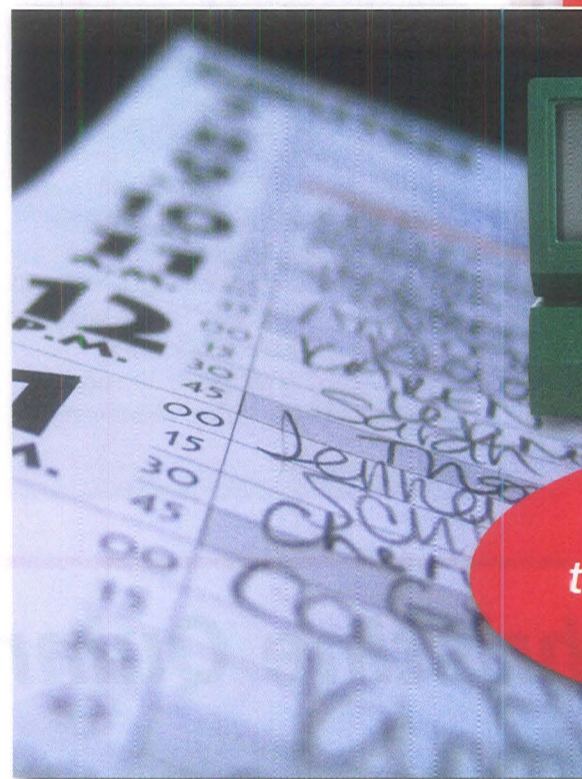
Retail workers today routinely suffer unfair and abusive practices including the use of "on-call" shifts, where workers are required to be ready to come in, and are called upon for work at the discretion of management. That means whether or not an employee ends up working, they need to put their life on hold and be ready to work.

A worker won't know which days they'll need to arrange for child care, and they'll be unable to sign up for a class schedule if they want additional schooling. And retail workers with "on-call" shifts can't arrange to work a second job since they don't know their schedules and always need to be available.

In a recent survey of more than 400 non-union New York City retail workers, only 17 percent said they had a set, predictable weekly schedule; 70 percent said they were apprised of their schedules no more than a week ahead of time.

"Irregular schedules are a big problem for me. I'm given my schedule just a day or two ahead of time. Everyone's hours fluctuate – I have been scheduled for as few as six hours a week, and as many as 40. How is anyone – a student or a parent – supposed to plan their budget with such an erratic schedule?" asked Allan, a sales associate at Uniqlo, a trendy retail chain that is expanding in New York.

Union protections create predictable scheduling, which makes a huge difference for retail workers as they balance their



"How am I supposed to take care of my children when I earn so little?"

home and work lives. A union contract can put retail workers back in control of their schedule, and their life.

Dwindling Commissions

Commissions were once the lifeblood of many retail jobs, and still are when they are protected by union contracts. They encourage good customer service, and help employers' bottom line by moving product out the door. But retail workers are hurting as employers have found new ways to cut back commissions that are supposed to supplement low base pay. They are cutting commission rates, and increasing waiting

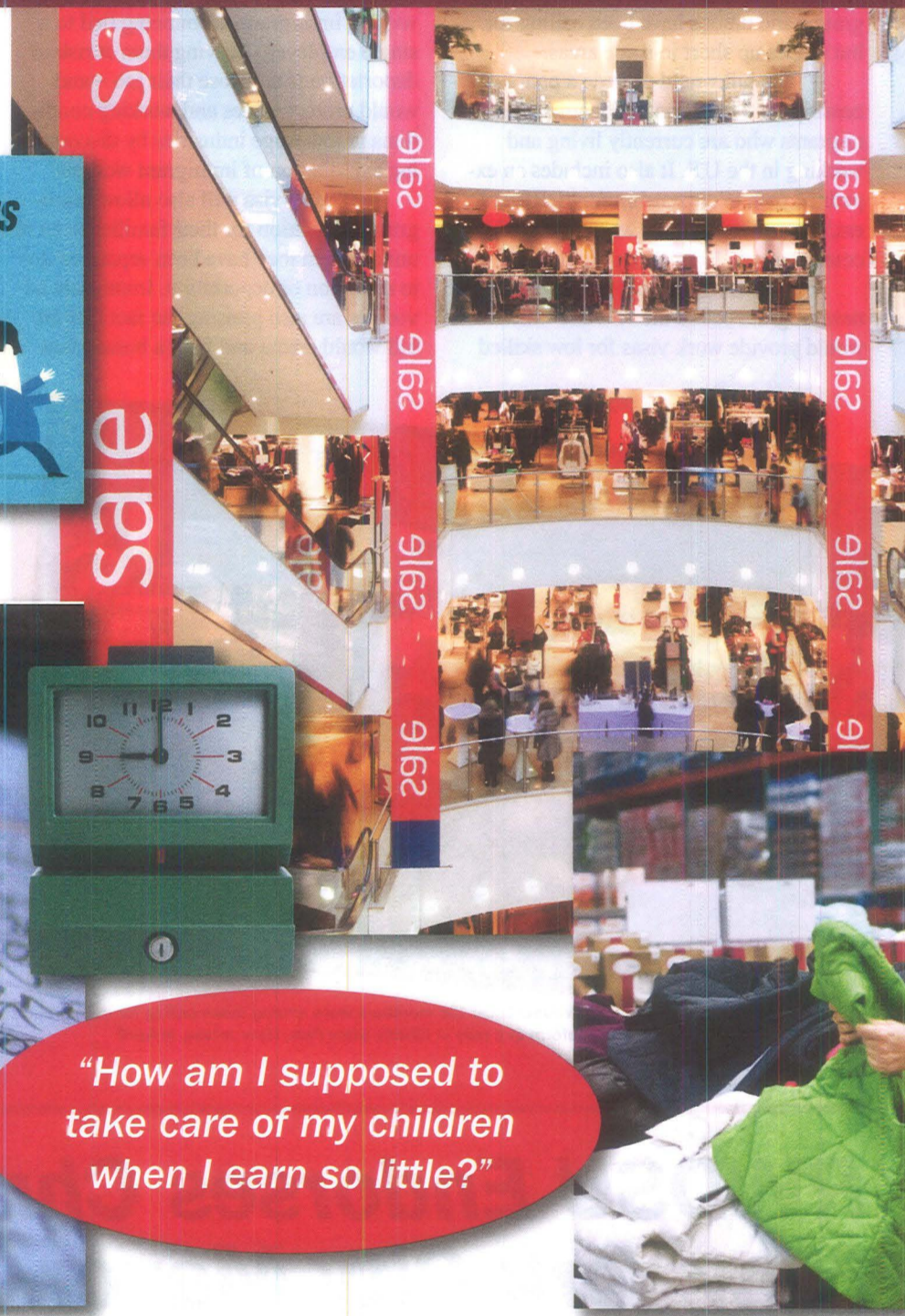
periods required before receiving commission pay, and allowing customers unreasonable amounts of time to return merchandise and cancel out commissions.

Stores have also created tiered commission systems, where employees are paid a smaller commission on a first level of sales, with increased commission pay on a second level. For example, an employee may be paid one percent commission on their first \$1,000 worth of sales, with an increase to three percent on sales after that. But employers are purposefully overstaffing their sales floors to keep workers from reaching those higher tiers. In addition, the overstaffing creates competition between employees, making it more difficult for all workers to earn commission pay.

Dead End Jobs

Work hard and you can get ahead, says the old adage. Unfortunately, it's not true in retail. Survey results showed that retail workers generally received small raises in their first couple of years of employment, but little to nothing after that. Workers who had been at their job for over five years actually earned slightly less than workers with only 3-5 years on the job.

Rather than offer good workers opportunities for advancement, retail employers have embraced a high-turnover workforce as a means to keep labor costs lower. Without a union contract mandating raises, many retail workers are stuck in



Workers as Employers Pinch for Profits

Thousands of RWDSU members have negotiated contracts that protect workers from abusive scheduling practices.



Macy's workers vote to ratify their 2011 contract, which contains protections against scheduling abuses.



Unionized retail workers, like this RWDSU member at Bloomingdale's, have their pay and benefits in writing. Bloomingdale's workers in New York City ratified a new contract last year.



low-wage, go-nowhere jobs until they find a better opportunity elsewhere.

Fighting Back With a Union Voice

Retail workers are facing more pressure than ever, but it doesn't mean they can't fight back against a corporate culture that views them as little more than an expense. Thanks to strong union contracts, and organizing campaigns that bring them a union voice, retail workers are fighting back.

Union contracts can guarantee workers predictable scheduling, and prevent things like on-call shifts from disrupting

and dominating their lives. Thousands of RWDSU members at Macy's, Bloomingdale's and H&M stores have negotiated contracts that protect workers from abusive scheduling practices, proving that employers can both respect workers' lives and be enormously profitable at the same time.

And, union contracts put pay raises, sick and vacation days, and other benefits in writing, preventing the kinds of issues like favoritism and discrimination that can run rampant at non-union retail stores.

Retail workers are facing more challenges in the workplace than ever before. But when they stand together, they can push back against abusive practices and make retail jobs good jobs that build better lives. ■

Unionized retail workers have more *predictability, stability* and *voice* in scheduling.

The RWDSU Fights for Scheduling Protections:

- Right to request time off
- Adequate scheduling notice
- Scheduling changes only with mutual consent
- Minimum hours for part-time workers (15-20 hours/week)
- Guaranteed hours for full-time workers
- Shift swapping
- Scheduling preferences without reduced hours
- Voluntary overtime before mandatory overtime

AROUND THE RWDSU

Ohio Hosts Six-State Conference

RWDSU Local 379 hosted the annual Six-State Conference in Toledo, Ohio, where RWDSU members from Michigan, New York, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia met for health and safety and steward training workshops, and to discuss the importance of political involvement and organizing to keep the RWDSU and the labor movement strong.

“This union has the same purpose as it did when it was created over 75 years ago,” said RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum. “We fight for fair wages and benefits, and for better lives for working people. And we do that by building this union by bringing in new members, negotiating good contracts, and by maintaining and advancing our rights through politics. We have a lot at stake – our livelihoods and our future. It’s the focus of all we do.”

U.S. Congresswoman, Marcy Kaptur (Ohio 9th District) spoke with RWDSU members about growing up in a union household, and how unions and strong worker protections can help rebuild the middle class in the U.S.

RWDSU members also hit the road after meetings to go door-to-door in local neighborhoods to get out the union vote, since this was the last weekend before the successful re-election of President Obama. ■

U.S. Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur (center) with RWDSU members from Ohio.



These Indiana RWDSUers caught up with the union by checking out the RWDSU Record.

RWDSU Recorder Tucker Retires

RWDSU Recorder and Chicago Joint Board President Amelia Tucker retired at the end of last year. Tucker came to the United States as a young immigrant from Mexico and saw first-hand the difference a union makes when she became involved in an organizing drive at the lamp factory where she worked, where favoritism and discrimination were rampant. She later worked as a translator for the Steelworkers union, and an organizer for the Textile workers before joining the RWDSU Chicago Joint Board in 1981. Tucker became Chicago Joint Board President in 1993, and in 1998, she became the first Recorder of the RWDSU.



“The union changed my life, and the lives of many people like me. When I started working in the factory, I felt like I had no hope. Well, the RWDSU gave me hope, and it helped me and others like me build better lives,” Tucker said. ■

Honing Stewards Skills in New England

RWDSU New England Joint Board shop stewards took in a training session in March, sponsored by the New England Joint Board Women’s Network.

“The training was great. We had a lot of new stewards attending as well as more experienced veterans, who were great mentors for the newcomers,” said New England Joint Board Recorder Jennifer Cormier.

Stewards learned about important issues such as handling grievances and workplace health and safety. ■



(left to right) NEJB Secretary-Treasurer Melvin Drungo, Local 60 North Middlesex Shop Steward Tammy Chartier, and NEJB President Tina Buongiorno celebrate Chartier's completion of the class.

RWDSU SCHOLARSHIP

RWDSU Scholarship Winners Know Union Difference

Five young men and women – four children of RWDSU members, and one a member herself – have won the annual RWDSU Alvin E. Heaps Scholarship. The scholarship, named after former RWDSU President Al Heaps (1919-1986), promotes higher education for RWDSU families and recognizes scholastic performance and an understanding of the difference union membership has made in their lives.



(l to r) RWDSU Rep. Roger Grobstich, Local 110 Officer Mike Hughes, Shanna Forbes and her Father and Local 110 Chief Steward, Shane Forbes.

“Unions help workers stand up to corporate greed, and they advocate for all working Americans.”

Shanna Forbes is the daughter of Shane Forbes, a Local 110 member employed at Quaker Oats in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She is beginning her collegiate career at Clarke University in Dubuque, Iowa. Forbes sees unions as a balancing force against corporate greed and income inequality:

CEO pay has skyrocketed and corporations are tallying record profits, while many working Americans struggle to survive payday to payday. If it was not for organized labor, corporations would have total control over our country and workplaces. Unions help workers stand up to corporate greed, and they advocate for all working Americans. My father is fortunate to work at Quaker Oats, which is represented by RWDSU Local 110. In the midst of the recession, he and his co-workers were protected from layoffs, and saw their benefits and even wage increases protected, thanks to their union contract.

Jacob A. Guyton is the son of Jake Guyton, an RWDSU member employed at Berman Bros. in Birmingham, Alabama. Jacob is attending University of Montevallo in Montevallo, Alabama, and is majoring in business marketing.

Unions are a voice for workers that have been treated unfairly and need an organization with the power to defend them. Unions hold the belief that everyone should be treated

equally. In many workplaces, favoritism from a supervisor or a manager can cause some employees to be shut out from promotions or raises. A union contract keeps this from happening, and ensures fair treatment for everyone.

Christina M. Mayes is an employee and RWDSU member at a Rite Aid store in West Virginia, and is also full-time student at Kanawha Valley Community and Technical College in Institute, West Virginia, majoring in accounting. She comes from a union family.

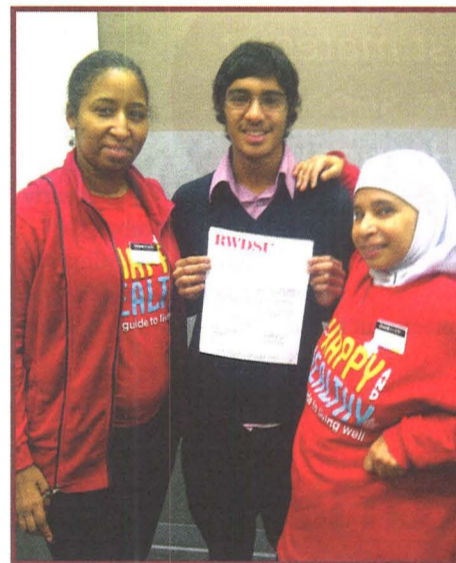
Over a month ago I was informed that my health benefits were being dropped due to a calculation error at the corporate level regarding my hours. Speaking with supervisors and managers got me nowhere. That’s when I called my union rep-



RWDSU Local 21 President Dennis Look with Christina M. Mayes.

resentative, Dennis. He was very communicative and listened to my issue, and quickly got back to me. Thanks to my union representative, my insurance problem is solved, and I know I have someone who can help when I have issues at work. In today’s world of department outsourcing, it’s good to have someone local on your side who will speak for you.

Mohammad Radiyat is the son of Homayra Samad, who works at Duane Reade in Queens, New York. He is attending Cornell University in Ithaca, New York, as a major in chemical engineering.



(l to r) Duane Reade store Shop Steward Maria Manderson, Mohammad Radiyat, and his mother Homayra Samad.

Without unions, employers would have no reason to treat their employees well, and nobody to stand up for workers. Unions will never back down because they are doing what is right. Several times, the union swiftly stepped in and made sure my mother, who has been a Local 338 member for 20 years, was able to use her benefits. It makes a big difference. I would not be where I am without my mother, and she wouldn’t be where she is without the help of the RWDSU.



(l to r) Michele Redden, Chanel Redden, and RWDSU Local 374 President Edward Feld.

Chanel J. Redden is the daughter of Michele Redden, who works at Post Cereals in Battle Creek, Michigan. Chanel is attending Michigan State University and is majoring in genomics and molecular genetics.

The RWDSU has helped my family by ensuring that we have had good health care for the entire time my mother has been employed at Post. My mother suffers from Fibromyal-

“I would not be where I am without my mother, and she wouldn’t be where she is without the help of the RWDSU.”



(l to r) RWDSU Rep. Randy Hadley, Jake Guyton, Jacob Guyton, and Mid-South Council President John Whitaker.

gia, a condition that causes her to have painful muscle spasms. Medication helps, but it is very expensive. Thanks to the union, the company provides her with health insurance, and also sick days for when the pain becomes too much for her to even get out of bed. This same insurance has also provided me with glasses that have helped me see – and study – throughout my scholastic career. Unions are lifesaving organizations. ■

RWDSU HELPING OUR COMMUNITIES

RWDSU Helps Rebuild in Wake of Hurricane Sandy

For many RWDSU members – and millions of Americans – life was turned upside down last October, when the northeast was rocked by Hurricane Sandy. The superstorm came as a total shock to millions of people in the region, many of whom had never in their lifetimes experienced a natural disaster of that magnitude. Families were uprooted, lives were disrupted, and homes and businesses were destroyed. And while the storm itself dissipated quickly, the lasting effects of the storm – economically, and emotionally – will take years to repair.

In areas in New York and New Jersey, where disasters like Hurricane Katrina were once seen as disturbing events that happened in far away places, life will never be same. The preliminary damage estimates of \$75 billion – \$71 billion in the U.S. – are second only to Hurricane Katrina, which devastated the Gulf Coast in 2005. Americans in 24 states, including the entire eastern seaboard from Florida to Maine, were affected.

Tens of thousands of RWDSU members live in those states. Some experienced loss of life. Others saw their homes and everything they owned completely destroyed. Many were left homeless until their homes underwent drastic repairs. And to make things worse, many places of employment had to be closed because of the storm, causing workers to lose their income at the worst possible time.

Raising Money, Rebuilding Communities

A Sandy Relief Fund was established to help RWDSU and UFCW members whose lives were impacted by the superstorm. Over half a million dollars was contributed to the fund, and the money was distributed to help members rebuild in the wake of Sandy.

The fund distributed 724 checks, ranging in amount from \$200 to \$5,000. And where people in the community

needed a warm meal, a helping hand, and most importantly, support during trying times, RWDSU members were there.

In early December, the RWDSU coordinated efforts to send busloads of volunteers out to the Rockaway beach commu-



These Local 1102 members, employed at Nathan's famous in Oceanside, which closed due to the storm, received checks to help offset loss of income. (l to r) Maria Ventura, Joseph Parisi, Romona Rodriguez, Ysaac Medina, Santa Duran and Andrea Wilson.



Secretary/Treasurer Gail Rogers (left) and Local 1-S President Ken Bordieri (second from right) present checks from the RWDSU UFCW Sandy Relief fund to Local 1-S members Angelito Monfero (right) and Salim Solomon to help them recover in wake of Sandy.

“Communities are pulling together and are determined to get through this.”



Local 338 set up a tent in Long Beach to help feed community members and first responders.



RWDSU members helped rebuild homes in the Rockaways.

The preliminary damage estimates of Sandy are second only to Hurricane Katrina.

nities in Queens in New York City to help rebuild homes damaged by the superstorm. The volunteers helped distribute living and rebuilding supplies for Rockaway Beach residents, and helped clean flood damage in homes, and tear down and rebuild drywall.

Local 338 Runs For the Warriors

Over 2,000 runners and walkers participated in the Fifth Annual Run for the Warriors races late last year. The day's events included a 10k race, a 5k race, and a 1 mile walk, all of which began at the Town Hall of Babylon in Lindenhurst, New York.

RWDSU Local 338 was again a proud sponsor and participant of the event, which raised over \$115,000 to benefit the many programs of Hope for the Warriors, an organization that provides special services to veterans of the Afghanistan and Iraq wars and their families. ■



Local 338 members and staff volunteered to help make the day a success, with some also participating in the walk and races.

In November, in the immediate aftermath of the storm, RWDSU Local 338 members traveled to Long Beach, New York, to help. The dire situation was quickly apparent.

“The smell of gasoline was in the air, and almost all of the restaurants along the boulevard were destroyed by flooding. It was difficult to believe that such a massive natural disaster had occurred so close to the places we call home,” said Local 338 Political and Communications Director Joe Fontano.

“Amidst the destruction, however, we found a resilient community, and like other responders, we were inspired by their strength and dedication to rebuilding. Communities are pulling together and are determined to get through this,” Fontano added.

The Local 338 team prepared hot meals for residents and first responders, and helped unload trucks full of disaster relief supplies. ■

RWDSU CONTRACT NEWS

Heinz Local 705 Michigan

A new five-year contract at the Heinz plant in Holland, Michigan, raises wages for the 255 RWDSU Local 705 members who work there. Members at the plant, who produce mustard, Jack Daniel's barbecue sauce, relish and other sauces, and package pickles for Heinz, will see two percent annual wage increases in the first four years of the contract, with a three percent increase in year five.

Holsum Bakery Local 835 Indiana

Transport Drivers at Holsum Bakery, in Fort Wayne, Indiana, overwhelmingly approved a three-year contract that provides increases in each category by which the drivers' pay is calculated. It increases the Company's weekly contribution per employee to the RWDSU Pension Fund to \$135.92 and maintains the employees' union health insurance and increases the hourly rate of pay for delay time when a driver has to set idle. The union's bargaining committee was Ron Sheron and Randy Lane, Jr. with assistance from IJB President Dave Altman.



Chief Steward Ron Sheron (left) and Executive Secretary Randy Lane, Jr., served on the negotiating committee.

Reed and Barton Local 593 Massachusetts

A new four-year agreement has been overwhelmingly ratified by the RWDSU Local 593 members employed at Reed & Barton Silversmiths, a silver goods distribution center in Taunton, Massachusetts.

In addition to 2.5 percent wage increases per year, the health care plan was preserved and life insurance benefits were increased by \$1,000.

Reed & Barton employees also received a signing bonus after they voted to ratify the contract. In addition to distributing silverware and other silver goods, Reed & Barton employees also handle engraving for the company.

Serving on the negotiating were NEJB President Tina Buonaugurio, Melvin Drungo, Local 593 President Natalie Reilly, Local 593 Vice President Dan Karol, and Rich Neville.



(l to r) Local 593 V.P. Dan Karol, President Natalie Reilly, and NEJB President Tina Buonaugurio.

Coles Quality Foods Local 110 Iowa

RWDSU members employed at Coles Quality Foods in North Liberty, Iowa, have ratified a new three-year agreement. The new contract is the second for the Local 110 members at Coles, who joined the RWDSU in 2009.

The new contract establishes wage increases across the board, and includes a new attendance bonus, trainer pay, new personal and vacation days.

Members at Coles Quality Foods produce frozen breadsticks for stores and restaurants.

Indiana Joint Board Local 512 Indiana

Members who work at the Solid Waste Transfer Station in Connersville, Indiana, unanimously approved a new three-year Agreement with the City of Connersville. The new Agreement maintains the employees' union health insurance coverage, increases their life insurance benefit and secures all other economic benefits and rights and working conditions for the life of the Agreement. The Union's bargaining committee was Chief Steward Steve Stalker and Indiana Joint Board President Dave Altman.

The paramedics and advanced life support personnel in the EMS unit at Connersville-Fayette County overwhelmingly approved a new four-year contract with the City of Connersville that prohibits the City from privatizing its EMS and EMS services. It establishes a provision for which the Board of Public Works can approve up to 30 work days off, with pay, for someone on leave of absence due to personal illness or injury. It increases the life insurance benefit and maintains the employees' union health insurance coverage, improves funeral leave and holiday language and

clarifies vacation language. The union's bargaining committee was Jesse Sorrell, Charles Mitchem and Joey Steinar. They were assisted by Indiana Joint Board President Dave Altman.

Members who work at the Connersville Street and Park Department unanimously approved a new four-year Contract with the City of Connersville. The new Agreement establishes a Maintenance Department and guarantees 40 hours per week for all full-time employees. The Agreement will now provide employees with a one-half hour paid lunch break and increases the employees life insurance benefit to \$50,000, while securing health care coverage and all benefits. The union's bargaining committee was Melvin Merz, Cathy Pfeiffer and Brian Politt with assistance from IJB President Dave Altman.

Decatur Cold Storage Mid-South Council Alabama

By ratifying their second RWDSU contract after joining the Mid-South Council in 2010, workers at Decatur Cold Storage in Decatur, Alabama, will see three percent annual wage increases during the three-year contract. Members also protected and maintained their health care benefits, with no premium increases over the life of the contract.

The Decatur Cold Storage facility stores poultry products for Wayne Farms poultry.

Tyson Mid-South Council Tennessee

Workers at the Tyson poultry plant in Shelbyville, Tennessee, ratified a new three-year contract that brings them two percent annual wage increases, and bonuses for each year of the contract. The contract also maintains such benefits as time-and-a-half after eight hours.

There are 1,200 poultry workers at the Tyson plant.

Niagara Fiberboard Members Win Wage Increases New York

RWDSU Local 139 members at Niagara Fiberboard have ratified a new three-year contract that brings members 7 percent in wage increases over the life of the contract, and restores company matches on the 401K program.

Members at the Lockport, New York facility manufacture many products including silhouette targets for the Canadian army.

AROUND THE RWDSU

Election News

Local 3 Executive Board Sworn In New York

RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum administered the oath of office to the Local 3 Executive Board. Pictured are (left to right) Joe Szarka, Diane Bazemore, Nina Razza-Callender, Kathleen Houser, Chandler Taylor, Frank Guzzone, Local 3 President Cassandra Berrocal, Local 3 Secretary-Treasurer Shaun Kavanaugh, Brenda Moses, Local 3 Recorder Costello Dash, and RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum. Not pictured are Murat Sokmen, John Mancuso, Jack Rojas, and James Eisenburg. ■



Indiana Joint Board Indiana

Local 810 members who work at Prairie Farms Dairy, in Fort Wayne and Misawaka, Indiana, elected: President Tim Brunson, Secretary-Treasurer Scott Rushing, Recorder Rex Moore, 1st Vice-President Kevin Wilson, 2nd Vice-President John Webb, and 3rd Vice-President Chris McCombs.


The production and maintenance employees at Holsum Bakery in Fort Wayne, Indiana held their election for Unit officers. The unit is part of Local 835. Elected to a new two year terms were Chairman Lloyd Schaper Sr., Vice-Chairman Kevin Degitz, Chief Steward Lloyd Schaper Jr. ■

(left to right) Lloyd Schaper Sr., Lloyd Schaper Jr., and Kevin Degitz.

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Local 1102 Salutes ESL Grads

The ongoing Local 1102 English as a Second Language (ESL) program has graduated a new class of members from Flying Food Group. These members are employed by Flying Foods, an airline catering company at JFK airport in New York City. They are already using their new skills and work, at home, and in their communities. Graduates are pictured with Local 1102 Executive Vice President Alvin Ramnarin and Local 1102 Representative Mayra Valladares (far left). There are 500 Local 1102 members working for Flying Foods at JFK. ■



UNION PLUS BENEFITS

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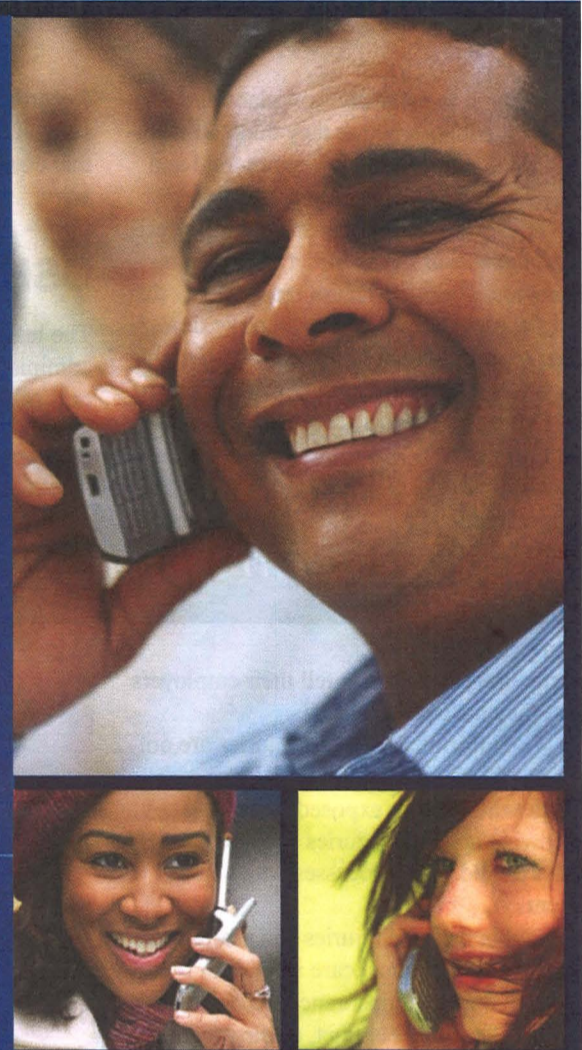
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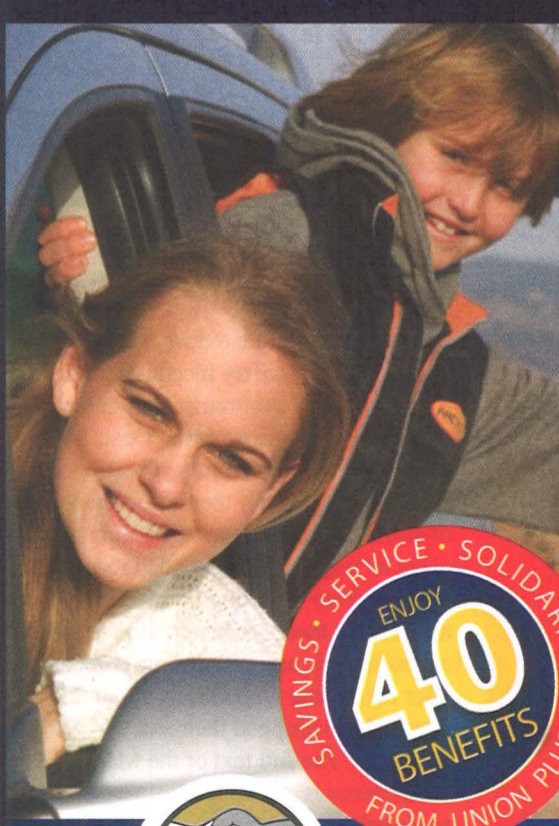
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WEB



Underreporting Injuries Puts Lives at Risk

Go to most any workplace and ask folks whether they think all work-related injuries are reported and you're not likely to hear a yes.

Several prominent studies have verified significant injury underreporting nationwide. There are lots of reasons why this is true, especially in hard economic times. Fear of intimidation or retaliation is commonly cited. Not wanting to stand out or to be seen as injury prone is another reason workers stay quiet. And workers with documentation issues are particularly reluctant to tell their employers that they have been injured.

Unfortunately when injuries are not reported, we put our lives at risk. Injuries occur when we are exposed to hazards. Knowing about all injuries helps us identify hazards and work processes which need our attention.

Unrecorded injuries can also hurt us financially if medical care is paid for through the health insurance we have to bargain for every contract, or directly out of our pockets. Workers' compensation can provide wage replacement while we are unable to work, and full coverage of related medical costs as long as the case is open.

Employer Policies

Common employer policies contribute heavily to injury underreporting. Many employers threaten disciplinary action against workers who report injuries. Others set up obstacles to reporting, particularly with regard to musculoskeletal injuries, by telling workers that their symptoms are not work-related or by interfering with access to medical evaluation and treatment. Mandatory drug testing, regardless of symptoms or injury circumstances, is another reporting disincentive.

At the same time most all employers have established rules that require injuries be reported immediately or within 24 hours. So many workers are in a real bind. They are subject to discipline if they don't report an injury and vulnerable for discipline or retaliation if they do.

Many employers have also established behavior based safety programs which offer rewards if a certain number of work hours or days pass without an OSHA

Recordable injury. This can put lots of pressure on a worker to not report an injury so that coworkers are still eligible for the reward.

OSHA Takes Action

The leadership of OSHA under the Obama administration has understood the seriousness of the injury reporting problem from

day one. They established an initiative to document the extent

and causes of underreporting. They have expanded staffing for a Whistleblowers' office to investigate cases in which workers feel they have been retaliated against for health and safety activity. Through the Federal Railroad Safety Act, OSHA levied fines against two railroads which were found guilty of fining a worker who was injured and another who complained about safety hazards.

A 2012 OSHA memorandum reinforced existing OSHA policy that employers are required to accurately record injuries and that automatic discipline for reporting injuries violates Section 11(c)1904.36 of the OSHA act. The memo also stated that cases where workers are disciplined because of alleged violation of a company's rule on the time or manner of reporting "deserve careful scrutiny." The memo stated, "The

rules cannot penalize workers who do not realize immediately that their injuries are serious enough to report."

Discipline related to a violation of an employer safety rule may also be a pretext for discrimination. Critical to determining this is how the safety rule is enforced and how specific it is. Does the employer consistently impose equivalent discipline against employees who violate the work rule in the absence of an injury? Similarly if the safety rule is very general (i.e.: work carefully) how does the employer apply the rule

OSHA is working to end underreporting of injuries.

What We Can Do

While OSHA is doing good work on injury reporting, its resources are very limited. We need to be committed to work hard at our workplaces in order to make a real difference. Here are some suggestions for RWDSU workplace health and safety activities:

- **Talk up health and safety issues on a regular basis. Document members' concerns and management's response.**
- **Establish a health and safety committee if you don't have one. The RWDSU Health and Safety Department has a guide to setting up and maintaining effective committees. Call the RWDSU Health and Safety Department at (212) 684-5300.**
- **Inspect your workplace on a regular basis and record your findings. This can increase your bargaining power with the employer about changes that need to be made.**
- **Encourage members to report all injuries and support injured workers through the Workers' Compensation process.**
- **Review injury logs for information and for their accuracy.**
- **Challenge employer behavior based "safety programs" which reward members if injuries are not reported. Push for programs which reward the identification and reduction of safety and health hazards at your workplace.**

Knowing about all injuries helps us identify hazards.

when there is not an injury?

And while the memo does not declare that safety incentive reward programs are inherently

discriminatory, the potential exists because they can discourage injury reporting. This is particularly true if the reward involved is of sufficient magnitude that failure to receive it "might have dissuaded reasonable workers from reporting injuries." OSHA indicates that there are better ways to encourage safe work practices. Many companies, after consulting with OSHA about this memo, have dropped their safety reward programs. The full text of the March 12, 2012 memo is available at www.osha.gov/as/opa/whistleblowermemo.html. ■

