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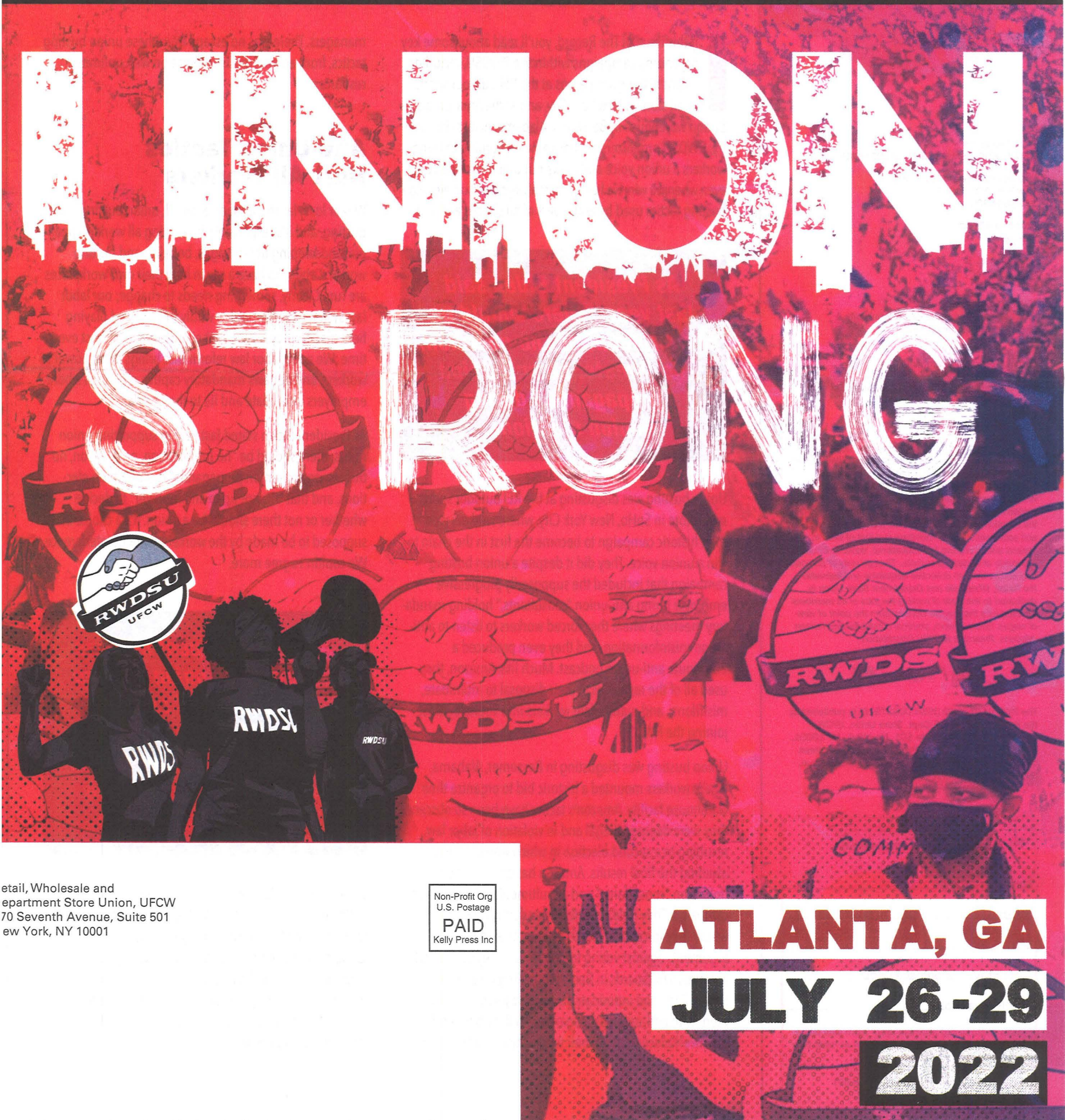
RECORD

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CALL TO THE 24TH QUADRENNIAL CONVENTION

UNION

IS STRONG



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INSIDE THE RECORD

- Workers Win RWDSU Voice3
- Stronger Contracts Across America 4-5
- Farm Workers Join RWDSU 6
- Call to the RWDSU Convention.....7
- Amazon Campaign Inspires
a Movement 8-9
- RWDSU Heroes Stood Strong
During Pandemic 10-11
- Around our Union 12-14
- Stronger Contracts Across America 15
- Health and Safety16

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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.*



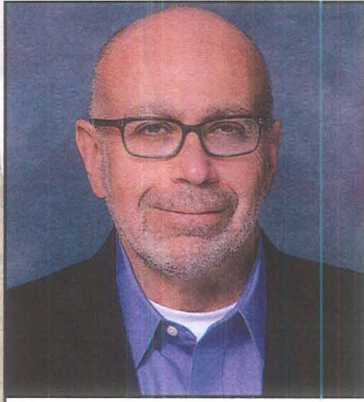
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MESSAGE FROM YOUR OFFICERS

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Union Busting is Disgusting

In this issue of The Record, you'll read about some key organizing campaigns within the RWDSU, including recent historic campaigns at the REI outdoor sports retail store in New York City, and at the Amazon distribution warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama. Across the country, RWDSU organizers are hard at work fighting to bring workers a union voice and make our union stronger, but even when we win, we have almost always faced unfair union busting tactics used by employers of all shapes and sizes.

As President Biden said last year, "there should be no intimidation, no coercion, no threats, no anti-union propaganda" during union elections.

Union busting was disgusting at the REI outdoor sports retail store in SoHo, New York City, where workers won their historic campaign to become the first in the chain to win a union voice. They did it despite a union busting campaign that included the supposedly progressive employer hiring anti-union "consultants," holding mandatory meetings where they forced workers to listen to anti-union misinformation, and they even produced a 25-minute anti-union podcast. Much like Amazon, they used all of the resources at their disposal to intimidate, misinform, and manipulate workers into voting against joining the RWDSU.

Union busting was disgusting in Bessemer, Alabama, where workers mounted a historic bid to organize their warehouse facility. Amazon's tactics have been so obscene, they were deemed illegal and in violation of labor law, resulting in a second election in which workers are still awaiting the final results. Amazon has spent millions of dollars on "consultants" and a multimedia misinformation campaign. They held countless mandatory meetings where they forced workers to listen to their one-sided arguments against voting for the union. They purchased anti-union billboards in Bessemer telling Amazon workers to vote "no," and intimidated workers by surrounding them with anti-union propaganda; on their phones, in their workplaces, and at their workstations through their

managers. There was no escape from these union busting tactics, from an enormous corporation with unlimited resources.

Anti-Union Tactics Hurt All Workers

Win or lose, large company or small, union busting is disgusting, and it's responsible for hurting all working people, and keeping down wages, benefits, and hurting workers' ability to have a say in how their own workplaces are run. Clearly, something needs to change; our labor law system is unfair, with a wildly unbalanced playing field that employers use to their advantage, almost every time. We need labor law reform that brings more power to workers, and outlaws mandatory captive meetings where employers intimidate and lie to their workers.

As President Biden stated last year in supporting union rights, there should be "no intimidation, no coercion, no threats, no anti-union propaganda" during union elections, and that "it's not up to an employer" to decide whether or not there should be a union. It's a choice that's supposed to be made by the workers, without interference. We couldn't agree more.

Amazon has spent millions of dollars on union-busting "consultants," and held countless mandatory meetings where they forced workers to listen to their anti-union propaganda.

Workers in America are waking up to the fact they deserve better. And unions like the RWDSU are fighting to help their voices be heard. But as long as employers feel comfortable lying to employees and intimidating them, it's going to be an uphill battle for too many workers. We all need to speak out against union-busting dirty tricks, and we need to support these workers as they fight for better jobs and better lives. ■

REI Retail Workers “Proud” to Join RWDSU in NYC

Workers at the REI Outdoor Sports store in SoHo, New York City, embrace the philosophy their employer advertises, “that a life outdoors is well lived,” and tend to be adventurous and progressive people. They work there because they believe in the company’s products and the outdoor lifestyle the company endorses, and because of REI’s supposed “progressive” values. As the company itself says on its website, REI is an organization that “puts people over profits,” and it touts its investment in outdoors organizations and the fact that it closes its stores on Black Friday.

The workers’ progressive values, and belief that their company shared them, is why they sought to organize with the RWDSU and join the labor movement; and it’s why they were shocked and disappointed when the company not only fought their efforts to unionize, they responded with the same type of union-busting campaign that we’ve seen from the likes of corporate behemoths such as Amazon.

When the 116 REI employees at the SoHo store began their organizing campaign, their employer responded with mandatory anti-union meetings, a halt on promotional

opportunities, and even a bizarre 25-minute union busting podcast, which even seasoned RWDSU organizers said was “a first.” It was a campaign of misinformation and intimidation that was meant to scare workers, but it never had a chance of succeeding. Once they got over their surprise of their “progressive” employer’s anti-union campaign, they voted overwhelmingly to join the RWDSU. In so doing, they made history as the first workers in the nationwide REI chain to become union members, voting yes by an overwhelming margin of 88-14.

“I am proud to be here in this moment with my coworkers at REI SoHo as a part of this new wave of unionization efforts that is sweeping the nation. As members of the RWDSU, we know we will be able to harness our collective strength to advocate for a more equitable, safe, and enriching work environment. A union is necessary for many of us to achieve more stability and security in our lives,” said REI worker Claire Chang.



REI Outdoor Sports workers stood up to a union-busting campaign and won with the RWDSU.

The workers in the bargaining unit include all full- and part-time sales specialists, technical specialists, visual presentation specialists, shipping and receiving specialists, certified technicians, operations leads, sales leads, and shipping and receiving leads. ■

The SoHo, NYC, store becomes the first in the entire retail chain to become represented by a union.



Boston, NYC Guitar Center Workers Rock With RWDSU

More Guitar Center workers have joined the RWDSU, at a store in Queens, New York, and at the store in the shadow of Boston’s famous landmark Fenway Park. While New York and Boston may share a sports rivalry, for Guitar Center workers, it’s all about solidarity and strength. There are now a total of six Guitar Center musical instrument superstores represented by the RWDSU, including others in New York, Boston, Las Vegas and Chicago.



Most Guitar Center workers are also musicians, and they saw that RWDSU representatives understand the unique issues they face on the job selling instruments and gear.

“Management just doesn’t understand a lot of the issues surrounding selling musical instruments and equipment. For example, forcing employees to do a hard sell for extended warranties on products such as microphones that never break just doesn’t make any sense for salespeople or their customers, and now these workers will have a say in policies that affect them,” said RWDSU Retail Organizing Project Director Adam Obernauer.

The new RWDSU members also saw the RWDSU difference at other Guitar Center stores, where workers were getting bigger annual raises and benefit improvements than those who didn’t have RWDSU representation. ■

Over 200 workers who are employed at Flying Food Group in Honolulu, Kailua-Kona and Lihue, Hawaii, have joined RWDSU Local 1102. More Flying Food Group employees are being added every day to the Hawaii unit, which could grow to 650 workers.

These new members help restock commercial airplanes’ galleys with food, feeding passengers who travel all around the globe. Flying Food Group is a privately owned provider of meals for the world’s premier airlines, including Hawaiian Airlines, and also sells their products at Starbucks stores. The workers chose to join Local 1102 because they wanted the same wages and benefits as their unionized colleagues at John F. Kennedy International Airport in New York City and Newark Liberty International Airport nearby in New Jersey, who are also represented by Local 1102. A majority of the new members are Filipino, and union members fluent in Tagalog, the native language of the Philippines, were present to answer questions during the organizing meetings.



Local 1102 Representative Mayra Valladares and Secretary-Treasurer Ryan Brunet talk with new Flying Foods members in Hawaii.

“More union contracts and more union members within the airline catering industry helps raise standards throughout the entire industry,” said Local 1102 President Alvin Ramnarain. ■

RWDSU STRONG CONTRACTS ACROSS AMERICA

Strong New Contracts for Local 108 Members in NJ, PA

Local 108

Members in Secaucus, New Jersey, ratified a new three-year contract with their employer, **Mutual Trading Warehouse**. The facility provides Japanese food and restaurant supplies for Japanese restaurants. The new contract provides annual hourly wage increases as well as a \$500 "appreciation bonus" for members, and also contains a provision which will implement compounded wage increases on top of any state or federal minimum wage increases; members currently earn above the minimum wage, and this provision means that will always continue even if the minimum wage increases. The contract also provides for the establishment of a member health and safety committee, a \$1 per hour pay increase for certification on forklifts and other equipment and covers 100 percent of cost increases in medical coverage.

Union City Parking Authority officers who enforce parking regulations won a new

Local 108 members at Mutual Trading Warehouse are union strong.

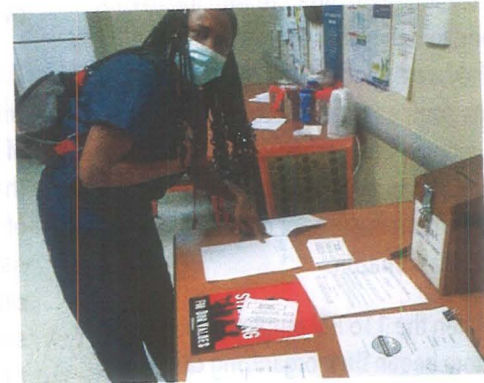


Union City workers will see strong wage increases.

A Hopkins Center worker reviews and votes on her new contract.

contract that brings strong wage increases that are guaranteed to receive compounded increases if the state minimum wage rises, and also gives senior workers a longevity increase. The Local 108 members in Union City, New Jersey, will also see increased vacation time and an increase in night shift pay.

At **Hopkins Center** nursing home in Pennsylvania, a new contract brings wage increases, increased starting rates, longevity bonus increases, and maintains members' affordable quality medical coverage. ■



Up to \$3 Hourly Wage Increases at Pepsi in Massachusetts

Local 513

Over 100 RWDSU Local 513 members at **Pepsi** in Canton, Massachusetts, will see significant wage increases – up to \$3 per hour for some classifications – over the course of their four-year agreement. The New England Joint Board members, who serve as warehouse workers and route drivers/merchandisers throughout the Boston area, will also see their health care protected at no cost to themselves. The health care benefits have also expanded, with a new telehealth/virtual visit benefit being added to the plan. ■



Local 513 members are already enjoying the benefits of their new contract.

Iowa Cold Storage Workers Protect Health Care, Win Improvements

Local 110

RWDSU Local 110 members who produce frozen bread products for retail at **Cole's Quality Foods** in North Liberty, Iowa, will see annual pay increases, their health care program protected, and double time pay for all work on Sunday thanks to their newly-ratified three-year contract. There are 50 RWDSU members at the facility.

The contract also expands vacation policy to give all workers the ability to take half-day vacation allotments, changes the vacation schedule enhancement to three weeks' pay at five years, and four weeks' pay at 12 years, and will make pay weekly rather than bi-weekly. In addition, the double-time pay policy has been improved, and short-term disability payments have been increased. The contract also sees improvements to the 401k plan, and an additional \$1 per hour for Shipping and Receiving personnel. The contract also adds an additional Utility Person position to both the first and second shift. ■

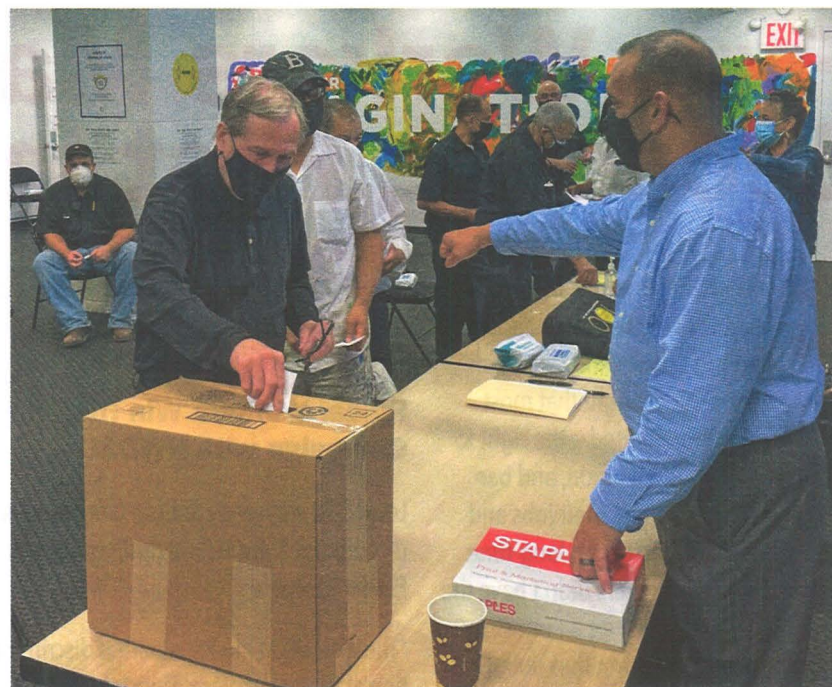
Safety the Priority for 1,200 at Bloomingdale's Local 3

A new contract for workers at **Bloomingdale's** iconic flagship 59th street store in midtown Manhattan includes safety measures and protections to ensure the safety of both associates and customers both during the ongoing COVID pandemic, and any future similar public health crisis.

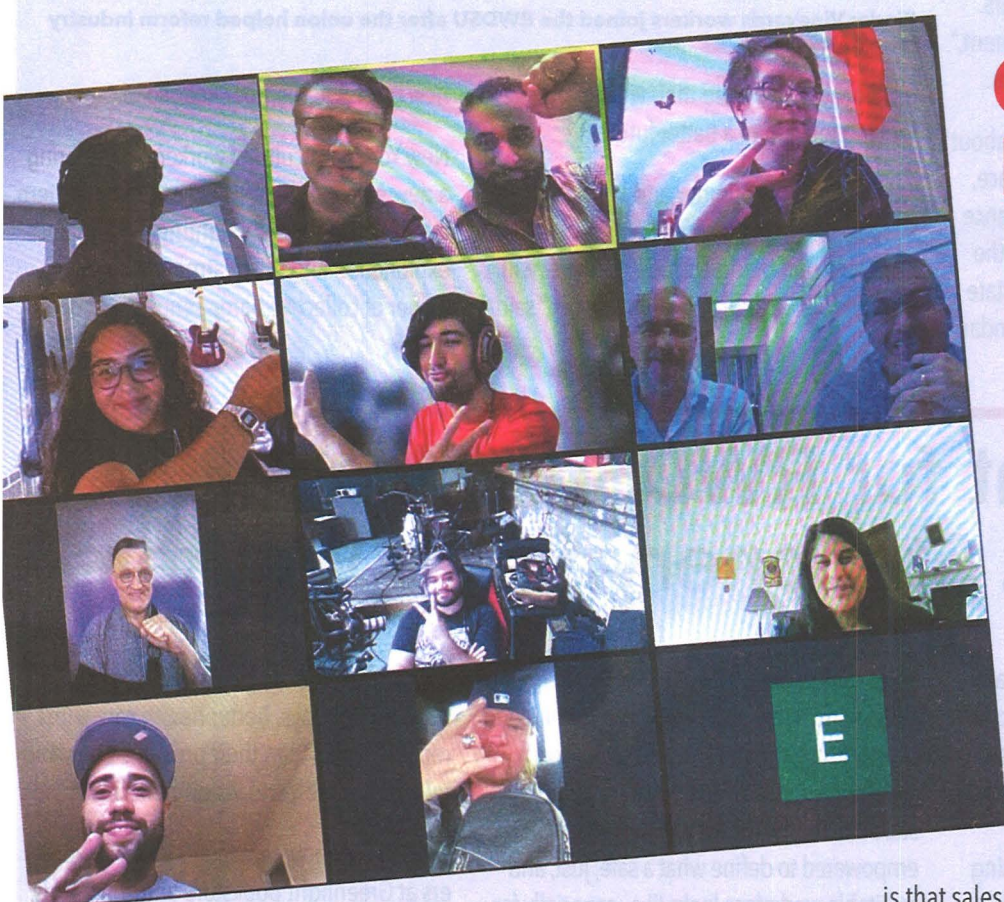
"There is nothing more important to us than the safety of RWDSU members and customers at Bloomingdale's, and the new contract ensures that will always be a priority at 59th street," said Local 3 President Shaun Kavanagh.

The contract also includes hourly wage increases, and eligible sales employees will receive deficit wipe offs that could result in commission earnings.

The contract maintains an annuity fund for all skilled trades employees, and most importantly, protects member health benefits without any increase in member premiums. ■



Local 3 members – 1,200 of whom serve as the face of Bloomingdale's 59th St. flagship store – vote during the ratification of the new agreement.



Guitar Center members negotiated a strong new contract.

Guitar Center Members' Contract Improves Wages, Efficiency

A new **Guitar Center** contract at six instrument superstores in Chicago, Boston, Las Vegas and New York, brings 150 RWDSU members three percent wage increases in year one, and 2.75 percent increases in the second and third years of the agreement. The health insurance coverage is protected for the life of the agreement, with the company taking on the bulk of increased health care costs. The members at the newly-organized stores in New York and Boston will be added into the health insurance plan. And, the contract eliminates a policy that made workers spend an hour of their shifts cleaning stores, which was taking them off the sales floor and hurting their commission earnings.

The contract also eliminates the so-called "store lead" position, which had consolidated the position of sales lead and operations lead. The problem is that sales leads – who manage sales, and operations leads – who managed stocking operations – generally possess two very different skill sets. By combining these roles, the company was making these employees far less effective and disrupting both sales and operations efficiency. Now, these unionized stores are the only ones in the entire Guitar Center chain where the "store leads" will not exist, improving efficiency and helping workers do their jobs better. ■

Workers at Three Babeland Stores Win New Contract

RWDSU members at three **Babeland** adult toy stores in New York City have won a new three-year contract that brings significant wage increases. While these are difficult times in

retail, Babeland workers secured a strong new agreement.

The contract will immediately bring the average hourly wage for these retail workers up to \$18.25 per hour. Overall, members

employed at the time of ratification will see an average hourly increase of over 18 percent by the end of the contract.

For new employees, hourly pay will now start at \$17, an increase in the wage floor



of 10 percent. In addition, the contract protects the health insurance plan over the life of the agreement, with the employer taking on the majority of health care cost increases. ■

RWDSU WORKERS WIN VOICE

Farm Workers Make History, Becoming First in NY to Unionize

For years, agricultural and farm workers like those at Pindar Vineyards on Long Island, New York, were denied a right that most New Yorkers take for granted – the right to join together and form a union, and bargain collectively to change their jobs and their lives for the better. Under long-time New York law, these workers didn't have the legal right to organize. It was an injustice that has helped the multimillion-dollar agricultural industry exploit and mistreat these workers for decades.

But now, thanks to the RWDSU's efforts to reform the law in New York, and the determination of Pindar Vineyards workers to win a union voice, Pindar Vineyards have won membership in RWDSU Local 338.

RWDSU Spearheads Efforts to Reform Laws and Industry

Farm workers in New York have long reported being subjected to discrimination, abuse, and exploitation. They've described enduring 70-hour, seven-day work weeks without overtime pay. They toil in extreme heat in the summer months, but are cruelly denied adequate bathroom breaks or enough access to water. Workers often didn't receive adequate treatment for injuries, and had no disability benefits, forcing many to work while injured,

These workers – largely immigrants – have suffered while toiling in a multimillion-dollar industry that often uses their documentation status as a tool to exploit and intimidate them. And without their right to join a union, they had no way to fix their dire conditions.

For New York farm workers, this began to change in 2019, when the RWDSU and a coalition including the New York State AFL-CIO and others fought hard to win a campaign to empower them with the passage of the Farm Laborers Fair Labor Practices Act. This landmark legislation finally gave countless farm and agricultural workers the right to join a union and bargain collectively. It also grants all farmworkers overtime pay, a day of rest each week, disability and paid family leave coverage, and unemployment benefits.

The RWDSU helped change the industry's treatment of New York's farmworkers, and

then, Pindar Vineyards farmworkers used their new labor rights to organize.

Pindar Workers Win Historic Campaign with RWDSU

Local 338 was ready to help farmworkers throughout New York, including those at Pindar Vineyards.

"The workers at Pindar reported discrimination at their workplace. They told us they weren't treated as well as the 'tasting staff' – the retail workers who are employed inside the building and interact with customers. They demanded change and fair treatment," said Local 338 Organizer Noemi Barrera.

Pindar Vineyards workers were excited about the opportunity to change their workplace, and signed their union cards. In accordance with the new law, their membership in the RWDSU was certified by the New York State Public Employment Relations Board. Pindar



Pindar Vineyards workers joined the RWDSU after the union helped reform industry laws in New York.

employees celebrated their victory, and are looking forward to a better future.

"My coworkers at Pindar and I joined the RWDSU because we want dignity and respect. We know that being a union member will help ensure we are valued for our work," said

new Local 338 member Rodolfo M.

New York's agricultural workers are entering a new era, and the RWDSU will be with them every step of the way. Fighting back against exploitation and mistreatment with the power of collective bargaining starts now. ■

Green Light for RWDSU Voice for Bookstore, Stationery Store Workers

With union activists making news across the country, Greenlight Bookstore and Yours Truly stationery stores workers took note. They quickly opened the book on their own organizing campaign, choosing to join the RWDSU, and have ratified their first union contract.

"I'm excited to be an RWDSU member, especially during this wave of unionization efforts

happening across the country! I'm proud to work alongside people who are committed to supporting each other and our collective well-being. It's time that Greenlight Bookstore and Yours Truly Brooklyn workers are empowered to define what a safe, just, and equitable workplace looks like—especially for the most marginalized among us," said Greenlight employee Ienna Fernandez.

The workers' first three-year contract

contains annual wage increases, paid time off, paid holidays, better health care with reduced costs than their previous plan, and telecare, dental, and vision benefits.

The RWDSU now represents over 40 workers at Greenlight Bookstore and Yours Truly locations in Brooklyn, New York. The workers in the bargaining unit handle sales, stocking and information services in the stores. ■



Workers at Greenlight Bookstore celebrate joining the RWDSU in August.

CALL TO THE RWDSU 24TH QUADRENNIAL CONVENTION



Hundreds of RWDSU delegates, alternates, and guests will join together on July 26-29 in Atlanta, Georgia, to participate in the RWDSU 24th Quadrennial Convention. At the convention, the union will look back at the last four years of accomplishments and challenges, and we will plan for our future as we stand for our values and make our union stronger. Together, we will create better workplaces and better lives for ourselves and our families.

On July 26-29, 2022, we will come together in Atlanta, Georgia for our 24th Convention to chart our course for the future. The RWDSU Convention is the most important decision-making authority for our union. It is the time when members gather to elect leadership and set a course for the union for the next four years, and we encourage all locals to participate fully.

Since we met four years ago, the world has changed dramatically and our union has confronted challenges no one could have foreseen. The country is divided and deeply in need of healing. Corporate America continues to grow in power and wealth while too many workers are being left behind. And for two of those years, we have dealt with the fallout from the pandemic.

The pandemic led to unprecedented job loss for many members employed in retail and service work. Members who worked in supermarkets, pharmacies, and food processing were often forced to take significant risks to their health to continue to serve the public. And throughout the union, we had to take on employers to protect our health and secure fair compensation for the risks so many members were facing.

But the pandemic also meant that the public finally started to understand just how valuable – how essential – is the

work of RWDSU members. RWDSU members are heroes who have helped the entire world cope with these unprecedented times. When our communities needed us most, RWDSU members were there.

Despite these challenges, the RWDSU has continued fighting for better jobs, safer workplaces, and a union voice for working people. We've won strong contracts. We've fought for and secured legislation that protects members' rights. We've organized. We've stood up for social and economic justice for each and every working person, for safe communities and greater tolerance.

We have taken some punches. But we have stood up and fought back and we should all be proud of what we have accomplished.

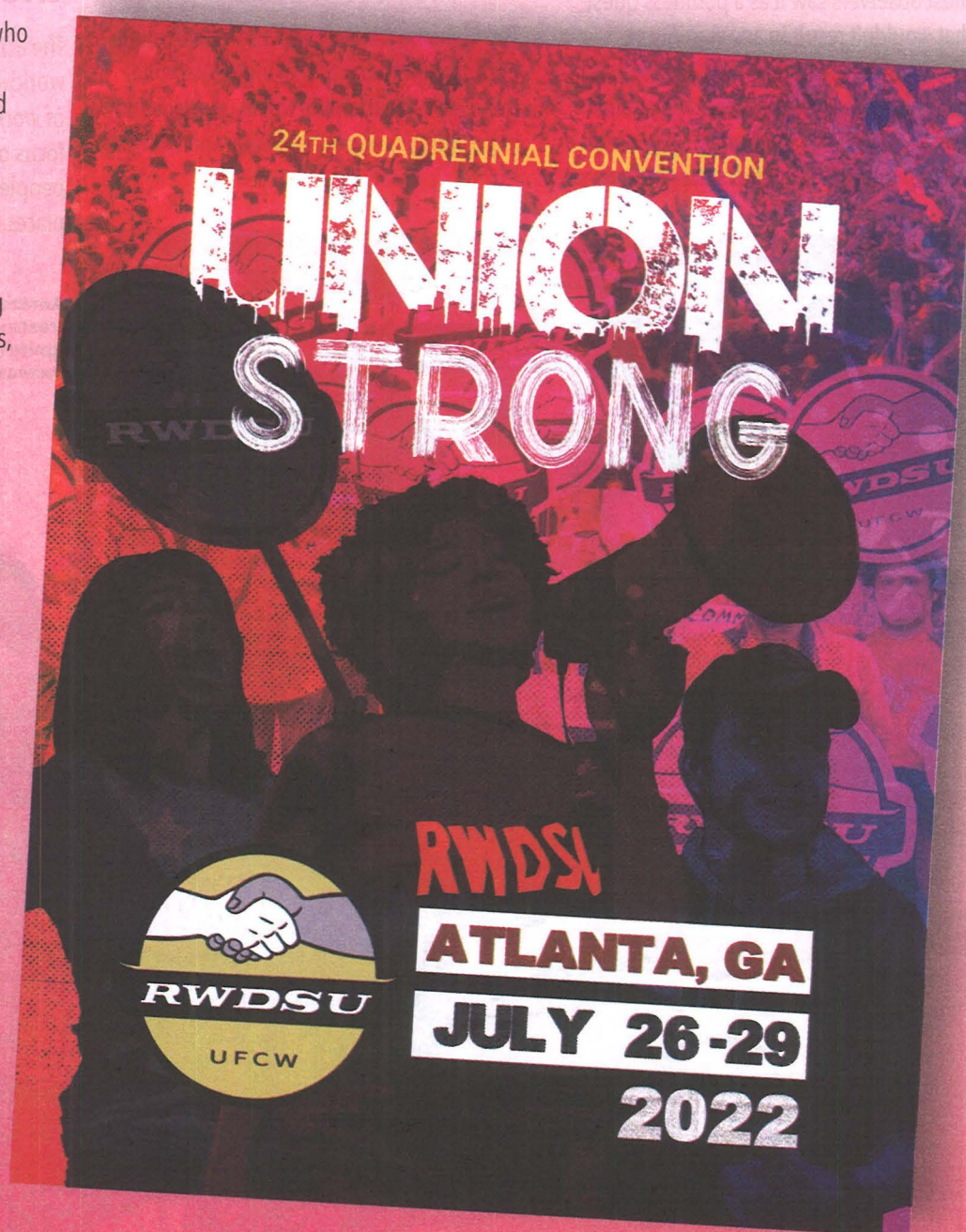
The RWDSU has never shied from the tough fights. And whether it is taking on our own employers or leading the charge to change Amazon, we know employers must be held accountable. Much of the

labor movement has come to look at what we do as central to the survival and growth of unions in the future. We are seen as innovative and aggressive.

But the work we do is not easy. There are no shortcuts. There can be setbacks and we may not always win the first time around. But we never give up. We never walk away. And we keep at it until we have made a difference.

We know we still have much work to do as we work to make our union stronger.

But together, just like the generations of RWDSU members who came before us, we are and will continue to be union strong. ■





FLASHPOINT OF A MOVEMENT

RWDSU Amazon Campaign

When thousands of workers at the Amazon warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama, demanded change at their jobs and started their organizing drive with the RWDSU last year, it was more than just the beginning of a campaign; it created something bigger. Their campaign drew the attention of workers, activists and media across the world. It even drew the attention of President Biden, who saw it as a springboard to make the loudest pro-union statement we've ever seen from an American President. And, it had a resounding, lasting effect that helped create the flashpoint for a reinvigorated American labor movement.

When these workers began their campaign demanding better from one of the world's most powerful and wealthiest companies, most observers saw it as a pointless quest that wouldn't result in any significant change. Now, that perception is completely changed; we've seen workers win against Amazon, Starbucks, and more. We've seen a movement grow as workers everywhere

realize they don't need to accept the poor treatment they've become accustomed to.

Standing up to a Corporate Behemoth

This sprawling Amazon distribution facility in Bessemer opened in March, 2020, just as the world was coming to grips with COVID-19. And workers there had the same health and safety concerns of all frontline workers, which were exacerbated by Amazon's workplace conditions and grueling productivity quotas. Workers perform their jobs close together, and short and infrequent breaks often don't allow for adequate handwashing and sanitizing. Workers are subjected to hidden quotas, and say Amazon monitors their productivity so closely that they are afraid to take bathroom breaks.

The Alabama Amazon workers saw the difference the RWDSU was making in Alabama, bringing swift attention to the unsafe working conditions at poultry plants and winning

numerous improvements and protections for frontline workers. By December, 2020, thousands of Amazon workers had signed union cards and were organizing with the RWDSU.

Workers, however, endured an intensive anti-union campaign designed by Amazon to intimidate and interfere with their choice on whether or not to form a union. The results of their first election for union representation over a year ago were thrown out by the National Labor Relations Board because of the company's improper and illegal behavior. Those Bessemer workers are now waiting for the final results of their government-mandated rerun election.

Bessemer Amazon Workers Inspire the Nation

The activists in Bessemer not only brought worldwide attention to the poor treatment of workers at Amazon, they also brought the focus onto the greatest solution working people have toward changing their workplaces for the better: union membership.

In the immediate wake of the Bessemer elections, we've seen victories for workers that were once deemed impossible. In April, workers at an Amazon warehouse in Staten Island became the first Amazon warehouse workers anywhere in the U.S. to form a union, with the Amazon Labor Union led by Chris Smalls. And, since the Bessemer workers began their campaign, baristas at over 100 Starbucks stores in 17 states have voted to join a union, while workers at over 175 more Starbucks stores have petitioned for a union election.

In fact, newly-unionized workers at Starbucks have said they took their inspiration from Bessemer Amazon workers, who proved no matter how large the employer, workers can join together and make their voices heard.

In the Fall of 2021, we saw the "Strike to Wave" movement, where over 100,000 American workers

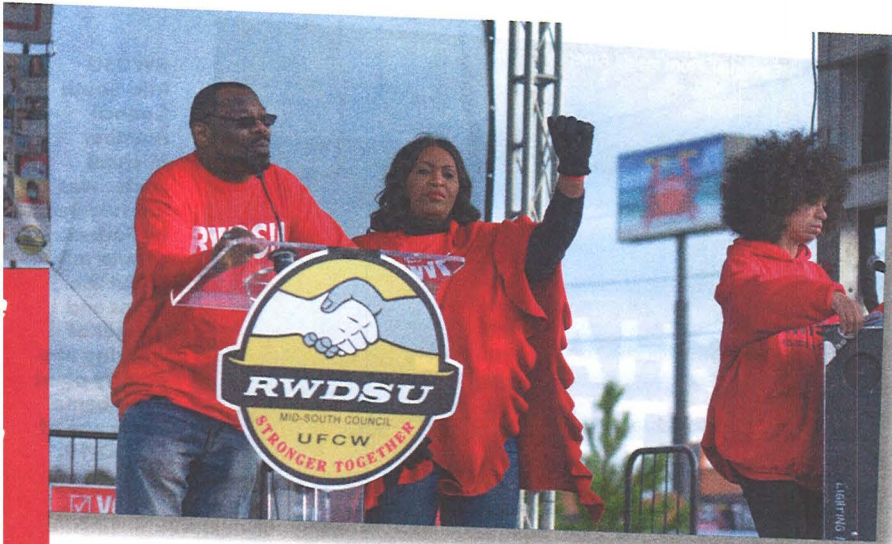
In the wake of the Bessemer election, workers everywhere were inspired to demand better.



Amazon workers, fighting for better treatment at their workplace, helped ignite a nationwide movement of increased labor activism.



EMENT aign



Amazon workers and organizing campaign leaders Darryl Richardson and Jennifer Bates fired up the crowd at a rally in Bessemer, Alabama, in February.

icipated in or prepared for strikes as
ers' leverage increased during the ongo-
andemic. At the RWDSU, we've seen the
successful organizing drive at the REI outdoor
s retail store in SoHo, NYC. Across the
workers are increasing their activism and
anding that their employers recognize
worth and their humanity.

amazon organizing drive in Bessemer is
than just about one campaign; it
ed create this moment working people
eizing to demand change, and to be

treated as human beings, not as disposable
commodities. Amazon workers in Bessemer,
Alabama, have already made history. They've
brought renewed attention to the labor prac-
tices of the world's largest retailer, and shown
that when workers stand together, they can
stand up against any employer in the world.
Their inspiring campaign has already changed
the landscape, and is resonating with working
people everywhere who now know they can
demand safer workplaces and the dignity
and respect of union membership. ■



Workers, activists, and community members supported Amazon workers' campaign to organize in Bessemer.

At Amazon, **Union-Busting** is a Prime Practice

In April, Ezra Hudson was getting ready to head to his job of a year, at the loading dock at the Amazon distribution warehouse in Bessemer, Alabama, when he noticed he had an email from his employer; Amazon was letting him know via email that he was being fired. Hudson, who was a proud and outspoken supporter of the drive to unionize at the facility, had received no warnings, and in subsequent conversations with management, was given vague and conflicting reasons for his termination. Hudson, however, had his own suspicions as to why Amazon cut him loose.

"I asked my supervisor, Is it because I'm a union supporter? She said 'I don't know what you're talking about.' I think the real reason I got terminated is because I did a bunch of union activities. I passed out flyers, passed out t-shirts, things like that."

Hudson is not alone. Two other Amazon employees who supported joining the RWDSU at Bessemer have also been fired without explanation or warning. And, these Bessemer employees aren't unique when it comes to Amazon either. It's just another page out of Amazon's union-busting playbook, one of many tactics that one of the world's largest corporations uses when its employees seek to change their lives for the better by winning a union voice.

Union busting is dirty, unfair, and quite often illegal; we need a level playing field in the workplace.

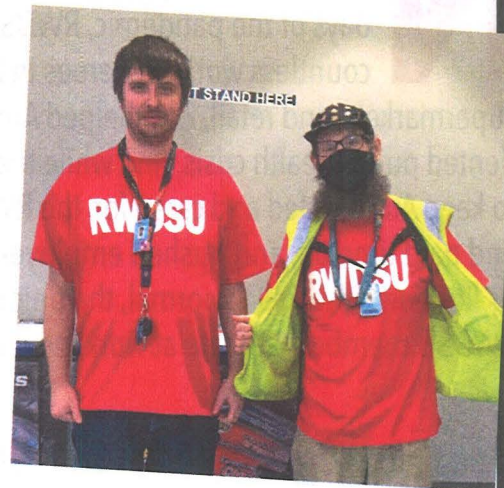
In the wake of the RWDSU's historic campaign at Amazon in Bessemer, Amazon workers in Staten Island made history of their own when they voted to join the new ALU union. Soon after the workers' victory, some pro-union workers at the JFK8 facility in Staten Island found themselves fired for flimsy reasons, attributed to hidden "productivity" quotas or other vague explanations. One terminated worker, Alicia Johnson from the Bronx, was told she had been "written up" numerous times, which came as complete news to her.

At least five other outspoken union supporters have been fired at the Staten Island facility. And, Amazon has so far refused to recognize the workers' win. There are also reports of workers being punished and fired without just cause at other facilities where workers have spoken out or taken actions in protest of poor treatment. Just as we saw in Bessemer, Amazon will do whatever it can, regardless of labor law, to keep their facilities union-free. They refuse to play by the rules, and they refuse to treat their workers with the dignity and respect that they deserve and that they are demanding.

Union busting is dirty, unfair, and quite often illegal. We need a level playing field in the workplace. We need stronger enforcement of labor laws, such as those Amazon broke in Bessemer, which caused the NLRB to order a new election. And, we need legislation that once and for all outlaws all forms of harassment, intimidation, and persecution that companies like Amazon use to violate workers' right to join a union.

Union-busting doesn't just hurt workers; it hurts companies who are casting aside some of their most passionate employees just to deny them their rights.

"I loved working at Amazon, and I busted my butt on that shipping dock," Hudson said. "They made the biggest mistake in letting me go." ■



Ezra Hudson, left, with fellow Amazon worker and activist Otis Inman, was unjustly fired by Amazon following the Workers' organizing campaign.

WHEN COVID-19 STRUCK, RWDSU Fought for Members and Safer Workplaces

Nobody will ever forget early 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic changed the world and our lives. In those early days of the pandemic, RWDSU members were among the countless working heroes in health care, food processing, supermarkets, and retail, who helped Americans survive an unprecedented public health crisis. And while these essential workers stood up to keep America fed and cared for, the RWDSU fought for pay increases and paid time off, and pushed employers to make workplaces safer. As life slowly returns to normal, the union is continuing to ensure that RWDSU members are safe at work, now and in the future.

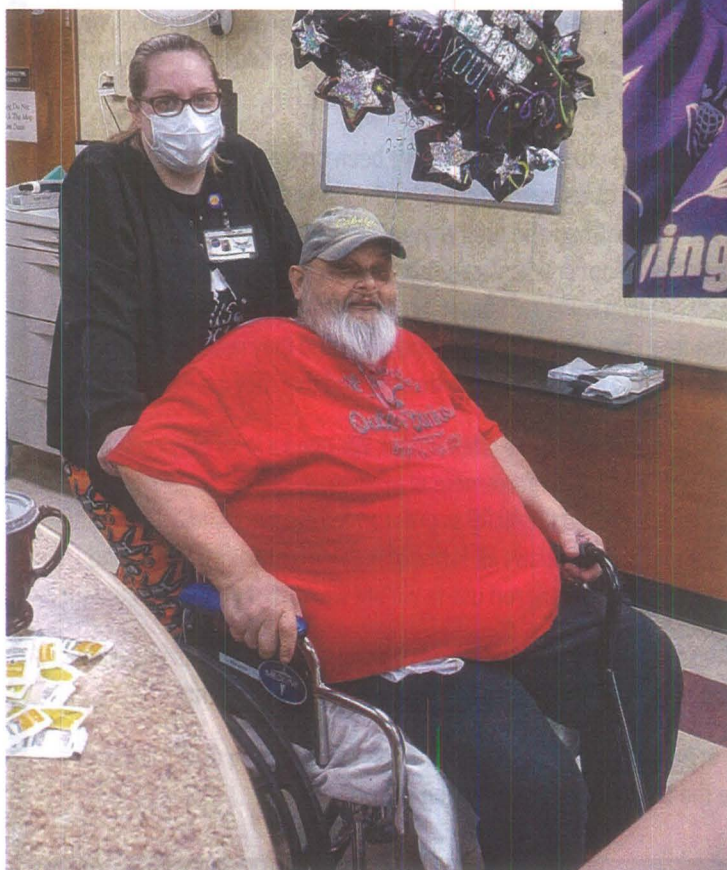
Protecting Health Care Workers and Residents

Nursing homes and rehabilitation centers were hit early and hard by COVID-19. That's why it was so important that RWDSU members at these facilities in the Northeast, Midwest, and the South, stayed at their jobs, caring for some of those who were most vulnerable, including the elderly and ill. It was a scary time for residents and health care workers, but RWDSU members courageously rose to the challenge, and their union was there to fight for measures to protect them.

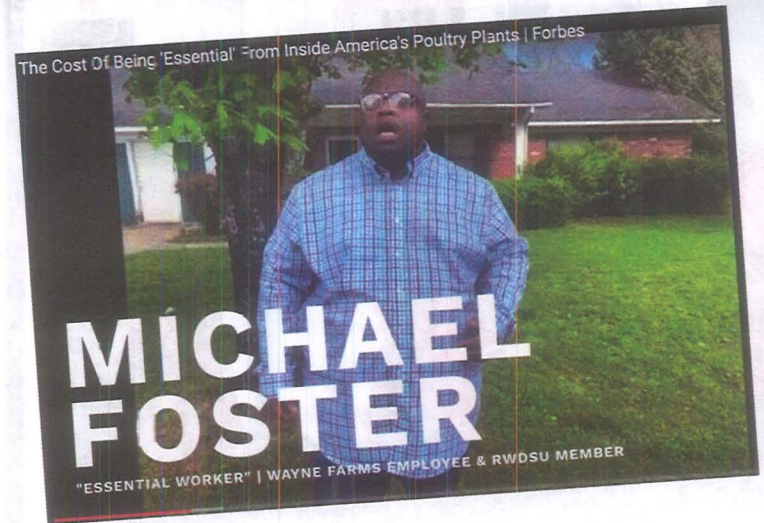
The RWDSU made the case to the public, through the media and elected officials,

that health care workers needed protection, pushing for measures that often went well beyond the state and local recommendations and safety requirements. The RWDSU made sure workers had the proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), stepping up to supply N95 masks, face shields, and other equipment when employers dropped the ball. RWDSU representatives distributed safety literature and even negotiated extra pay for members, who were literally risking

Local 108 members at Veree Road nursing home near Philadelphia were on the front lines early in the pandemic.



RWDSU heroes, like those employed at Valley View Manor in New York, never stopped caring for their residents.



RWDSU Mid-South Council member Michael Foster was interviewed by Forbes.com to talk about the stress and danger of working at a poultry plant in Alabama in the age of COVID-19.

their lives – and possibly putting their own family members at risk – by staying on their important jobs.

Standing Up for Food Processing Members

America shut down for the pandemic, but America still had to eat. Once again, at great

risk to themselves and their families, RWDSU members in the food processing industry proved that they are essential and up to the task. And the RWDSU was with them every step of the way.

In the poultry industry, it was a particularly daunting challenge; poultry plants are inherently danger-

ous places, even without a global pandemic raging. Slippery floors, working in close quarters with sharp cutting tools, extreme temperatures; poultry workers see it all. And in the early days of COVID, when RWDSU members were standing up to feed America, they were being let down by an industry that acted too slowly to protect them.

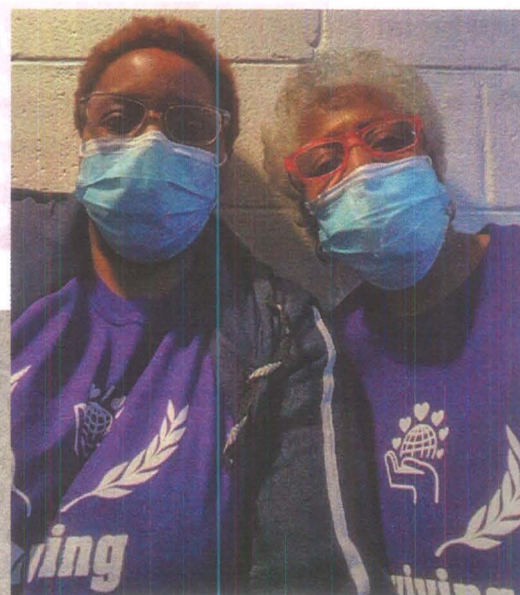
The RWDSU acted quickly, demanding action from employers and telling the world about the dangers workers faced every day. The union and RWDSU members were regular fixtures on network evening news and

in a number of high-profile media outlets. Mid-South Council member Michael Foster, who works at Wayne Farms poultry in Alabama, spoke with Forbes.com about the dangers poultry workers face.

"Nobody is recognizing or appreciating us for what we're doing," Foster, 40, said. "I never experienced anything of this sort before, and I'm pretty sure a lot of us haven't. Employees are panicking," Foster told Forbes.

After that initial set of demands on the industry was made by the RWDSU, and poultry workers' struggles were publicized, some companies began to arrange regular calls with RWDSU representatives and provide PPE, while installing plastic barriers and implementing social distancing measures. The RWDSU supplied its own signature "RWDSU Heroes" facemasks. The union kept the pressure on management to prevent increases in line speeds, and continues to fight for safer poultry plants and better treatment for workers.

At Quaker Oats and General Mills in Iowa, Local 110 negotiated daily bonuses and extended paid leave for 14 days if quarantined or if family became quarantined. The union worked with Iowa food processing employers to stagger entry times, ensure proper PPE and sanitizer was available, and to reconfigure workplaces to promote social distancing. If areas experienced positive outbreaks, they were quickly shut down, thoroughly sanitized and employees properly quarantined, and temperature checks were conducted at employee entrances. Similar bonuses were also negotiated and safety protocol implemented at Pepsi and Coca-Cola in St. Joseph, Missouri, and at Kellogg's in Kansas City.





RWDSU members at supermarkets, like Local 338 members in New York, stayed safe with the help of the union.

At Peco Foods, a poultry plant in Tuscaloosa, Alabama, Sharon Blanchard, Sonya Kemp, Deborah Lewis, Larry McCallum, Kevin Washington, and Calvin Washington were proud to feed America during the crisis.

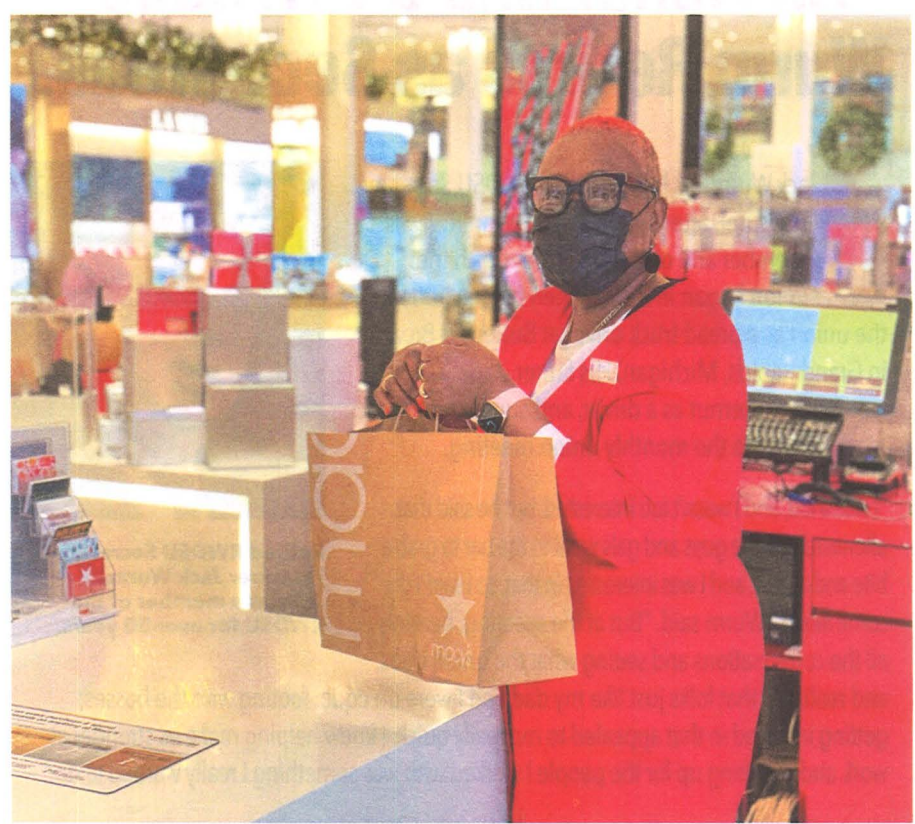


employees mandatory in supermarkets. RWDSU Local 338 in New York and Local 108 in New Jersey pushed for implementation of proper barriers, and provided sanitizer and gloves for RWDSU members early on when supplies were hard to come by. As these essential workers heroically stayed on the job to put food on their communities' dinner tables, the RWDSU did everything possible to keep them safe.

When retail stores began to reopen as America learned to live with an ongoing pandemic, the RWDSU was there to ensure they opened safely to protect RWDSU members and customers. In New York, at an early epicenter of the crisis, the RWDSU was able to help get a statewide mask mandate passed, which protected all retail and supermarket workers, as well as customers. At H&M and Zara stores, Local 1102 ensured that proper PPE was supplied and that social distancing signs and measures were installed on shop floors. Testing was made a priority to keep workplaces a safe environment.

Union Fought for Safer Supermarkets and Retail

The RWDSU played a key role in making supermarkets safer during the pandemic. In New York, the RWDSU worked with the Governor's office to push for the strongest possible protections for workers and to make mask-wearing by customers and



Local 1-5 members at Macy's helped show retail stores in New York City could reopen safely during the pandemic.

RWDSU: Prioritizing Safety Going Forward

It's not just about what the union and RWDSU members did, it's what we are doing: prioritizing safety and ensuring that future contracts protect workers during the current pandemic and any we might face in the future.

In new contracts – such as the ratified agreements with Macy's and Bloomingdale's – RWDSU Negotiating Committees brought in language that protects workers. RWDSU employers were obligated to provide proper PPE, follow CDC guidelines and keep the stores clean and workers and customers safe. The RWDSU

negotiated safety, testing, and cleaning protocols, and established worker health and safety committees to work with management on keeping workers safe. Workplaces and worker issues are all different, and the RWDSU insists on being involved whenever pandemic and health and safety protocols are decided and implemented.

RWDSU members were there for America when America needed them, heroically providing essential work and services. And the RWDSU will always be there to ensure that employers understand that the health and safety of RWDSU members is the top priority; especially during a public health crisis like the ongoing pandemic. ■

RWDSU AROUND OUR UNION

Robert Layng, Jr., Elected RWDSU Secretary-Treasurer

Earlier this year, after 26 years of service to the RWDSU, Robert Layng, Jr., was elected Secretary-Treasurer of the union by the RWDSU Executive Board. Layng joined the RWDSU as an intern in 1996 and was hired full time as Assistant Comptroller and Operations Manager in 1997. Layng

held that position until 2003 when he was promoted to Comptroller, the union's third person to hold that position in its then 66-year history. In 2015, Layng, was asked to serve as Executive Assistant to the President, a position he held until his recent election as Secretary-Treasurer.

He succeeds Jack Wurm, Jr., in the office, who retired late last year after 19 years of service in the position.

"I could not be more honored and humbled to have been elected to fill the role of Secretary-Treasurer of the RWDSU. RWDSU members are facing some of the most extraordinary challenges they've ever seen as many continue to fulfill essential and frontline positions in the COVID-19 pandemic. Now more than ever our union is supporting and ensuring workers have the critical support they need both at work and at home. I am proud of the tireless work of



Secretary-Treasurer Layng addressed the RWDSU 23rd Quadrennial Convention in 2018.

the RWDSU and the example Jack Wurm Jr. set, and I look forward to continuing to propel the worker-driven mission of the RWDSU," Layng said. ■

"An Honor and a Privilege:" Wurm Retires as Sec.-Treas.

Jack Wurm, Jr., has retired as RWDSU Secretary-Treasurer, after over 50 years as an RWDSU member and officer. His career with the union began in 1969, when he first joined the union as a bread truck driver at Butternut Bread in Grand Rapids, Michigan. His father, Jack Sr., also worked at Butternut as a driver, and suggested that his son come to the monthly union meeting.



Retired RWDSU Secretary-Treasurer Jack Wurm, Jr., was a member of the RWDSU for over 50 years.

"I was a kid, and I wasn't too interested, but he said that afterwards, all the guys and gals went to the bar to grab a bite and a beer, and I was interested in that, so I said I'd come along," Wurm said. "But at the meeting, hearing all the conversations and seeing what the union does, and realizing that folks just like my dad and I were on equal footing with the bosses; getting involved in that appealed to me really quick. I knew helping make us stronger at work and speaking up for the people I worked with was something I really wanted to do."

Over the next 10 years he served as steward, chief steward and secretary-treasurer of RWDSU Local 386 in Grand Rapids, and in 1980 he became a business agent for the local. In 1989 he was appointed an RWDSU Representative and in 1994 he was first elected as an RWDSU vice president. Jack Wurm became the RWDSU secretary-treasurer in 2003, and was re-elected in 2006, 2010, 2014, and 2018. Over his career he negotiated hundreds of contracts for RWDSU members.

"For 19 years, Jack Wurm, Jr., was an ideal partner in steering the course of our union, and he served RWDSU members across the country with his lifetime of experience and knowledge. Whenever the union called, he was there to answer. His retirement is well-earned, and I know he will always be available when we need his advice and counsel," said RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum.

Jack is already enjoying his retirement, splitting his time between Texas and his home state of Michigan with his wife Pat, and creating new memories with his grandchildren and the rest of his family.

"I loved the work that I did, and when I went to that first RWDSU meeting, I never dreamed I'd be able to serve so many people one day. I loved being able to help people, and do right by my co-workers and later the 100,000 members of the RWDSU. It's been an honor and privilege to work with President Appelbaum, and the members, reps, and staff across the entire RWDSU," Wurm said. ■

New England Members Retirements Well-Earned

The New England Joint Board is celebrating the retirements of two long-time members.

Pepsi Cranston Transport Driver David Anania has retired after 43 years working at the company, and years of service to RWDSU members as a shop steward and contract negotiating committee member.

Another 43-year RWDSU veteran, Al Lopes, who for decades has helped produce venerable board games including Monopoly and Sorry! at Cartamundi in East Longmeadow, Massachusetts, is also retiring.

And, at Fostatek, in Leominster, Massachusetts, Local 60 member Ed Gelinias has retired after a whopping 61 years working at the optical plastics manufacturer. Enjoy your retirement Ed, and all New England Joint Board retirees. You've earned it. ■



David Anania is presented with his gold watch by NEJB President Tina Buonaugurio and Local 513 President Dennis Beaulieu.



(l to r) Blanca Santos, Ed Gelinias, Frantz Sizol, Kristina Spinelli-William (shop steward), Kenneth McKinney, Leslie Magoon (Local 60 President) and Esbon Murwa celebrate Gelinias' retirement after 61 years.



Al Lopes (center) with Local 224 President Scott Trudell (left) and Local 224 Secretary-Treasurer John McCaffrey.

RWDSU Marches for Strength on May Day

RWDSU members stood up for their fellow workers and union members at the May Day March on International Workers' Day in New York City's Washington Square Park. The RWDSU members joined dozens of other unions, community groups, and organizations dedicated to advocating for working people.

Hundreds of marchers, hoisting signs with slogans like "United Against Union Busting," came together to call for stronger worker protections and immigration reform on the gorgeous Sunday afternoon. ■

Activists called for better protection for all workers at the May Day March.



Union Stands Up for Georgia Poultry Worker, Wins Back Job and Pay

The RWDSU saved Kaa Kimmons' job and got her several months of back pay that she deserved after being unfairly terminated by her employer, Tyson in Camilla, Georgia. That's the difference the union made when Kimmons was fired due to supposedly violating the company's attendance policy.

The problem with the company's decision? It was based upon miscalculations; mistakes that management had made led to an unjust termination. And the RWDSU wasn't going to stand for it.

The RWDSU Southeast Council fought back, despite the company's insistence that they had made the right decision. Determined to bring the case all the way to arbitration if necessary, Southeast Council Business Representative James Shackelford kept up the pressure, until the company was forced to admit its mistake, rehire Kimmons, and pay her for all the time she was out of work.

"If it weren't for the RWDSU, Kaa would be out of a job and out of several month's pay. We are proud we were able to make a difference for her," Shackelford said. ■

RWDSU Members in Iowa are Feeding America

These new banners – showcasing products RWDSU Local 110 members in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, produce – are now displayed at the Local 110 union hall and the Quaker Oats and General Mills facilities. Local 110 is feeding America; you probably have some of these products in your cupboard as you read this! Remember to shop union, and enjoy the great products made by RWDSU members. ■



Local 578 Members in Illinois Elect Officers

Elected to new three-year terms at Local 578 in New Rochelle, Illinois, are: President Daniel Williams, Secretary-Treasurer Rick McBride, Recorder Ryan Williams, Vice President Joe Williams, Vice President Bob Eckhardt, 2 year Trustee Jake Hammond, and 3 year Trustee Mike Williams.

At the Del Monte Distribution Center in Rochelle, Chief Steward, 1st Shift Mathew Eckhardt, Stewards 1st shift Hank Johnson and Dan Morse, Steward, 3rd shift (floating shift) Hector Torres, and Steward, 3rd shift (floating shift) Steve Peterson were elected.

At two Americold Distribution Center locations in Rochelle, Americold Drive Chief Steward (days) Chad Simms, Stewards Mike Ellis, Doug Carlson and Brian Stone, Americold Drive Chief Steward (nights) Bob Swearingen, Stewards Laura Stroud and Shaina Jones, and Caron Road Chief Steward (days) Chris Frank were elected. ■

RWDSU AROUND OUR UNION

Macy's Worker Reinstated With Big Back Pay Win

When Local 1-S member Laurent Olivia was fired from her Cosmetics sales position at Macy's Herald Square in New York City, she was crushed. Not only did she love her job at Macy's, but she knew her firing was unfair, a result of her doing work her manager asked her to do that ran afoul of company policies.

She knew she hadn't done anything wrong, and so did RWDSU Local 1-S Representatives. Now, Olivia is celebrating not only her reinstatement on the job, but retroactive pay approaching \$100,000.

Olivia says she never lost faith that the dispute would lead to a positive outcome, and she became deeply involved in her case, providing all the evidence that was asked of her, and staying on top of the ongoing arbitration. That perseverance was rewarded when the arbitrator agreed that her firing was unjust and ordered the back pay and reinstatement to the job.

Olivia says she's happy not just about returning to work, but also how winning her arbitration will help other Macy's workers in the future by making it clear that they shouldn't be disciplined for confusing policies and poor management communication. And she's thankful for the support she received from the RWDSU.

"Everything falls into place eventually. Stick to your values, keep growing, create your support circle to protect yourself and you will come out of your challenges even stronger. A union helps you do that," Olivia said. "Thank you to everybody at Local 1-S for staying by my side in every step. And at the end of the day, they helped me get back not only my job, but my dignity, and that's the most important thing!" ■



Secretary Treasurer Ron Chencinski (right) and Business Agent Alan Subervi congratulate Local 1-S member Laurent Olivia upon her reinstatement and winning of back pay.

Local 513 Scholarships Awarded

RWDSU Local 513 has continued its commitment to helping further the education of RWDSU members and their families, awarding the 2022 Anthony M. Cacciola scholarship to students Isabel Desisto and Hailey Baker. The winners will all receive \$1,000 toward their collegiate education. The scholarship celebrates the memory of former Local 513 Business Agent Anthony M. Cacciola, and were awarded at a dinner held in Boston.

Pictured at the awards dinner are: (l to r) RWDSU Sec.-Treas. Robert Layng, Jr., NEJB Sec.-Treas. Philip D'Arcangelo, NEJB Pres. Tina Buonaugurio, winner Isabel Desisto (daughter of Craig Desisto from Canteen Refreshments), RWDSU Pres. Stuart Appelbaum, winner Hailey Baker, Hailey's father Chris Baker of Coca-Cola Northeast, and Local 513 President Dennis Beaulieu. ■



Sodus Rehab Worker Shows No Signs of Slowing Down After 46 Years

While she's older than almost all of the residents she cares for, 86-year old Edna DeGelleke, a Licensed Practical Nurse at Sodus Rehab Nursing Home in Sodus, New York, has no plans to retire.

"For me, giving patients love and affection is the greatest part of this job. It's fulfilling taking care of people, and also helping keep residents connected with their families," DeGelleke said.

DeGelleke began working at Sodus in September, 1975, when she began working there full-time after beginning as a volunteer at the then-new facility. And now, despite the fact that most of her co-workers are decades younger than she is, DeGelleke shows no signs of slowing down. The RWDSU Local 220 union shop steward works 12-hour shifts, six days a week, and has no plans to retire.

"I'm in no rush, this job does my heart good and keeps me busy. I think it helps residents here to have someone their age to relate to, and I still love coming to work," DeGelleke said. ■



RWDSU Local 220 Shop Steward Edna DeGelleke (seated) with co-workers Connie Grant (right) and Jolie Hughes.

Historic Wage Increases at Kellogg's in Kansas

Local 184-L



The Negotiating Committee brought in a contract that brings the best wage increases ever for Kellogg's workers.

A new contract containing unprecedented wage increases – covering approximately 570 Kellogg's workers represented by RWDSU Local 184-L – has been overwhelmingly ratified in Kansas City, Kansas, on March 28. The new contract will bring workers – who make Cheez-It crackers – a 15.5 percent increase in wages over the course of the three-year agreement, with an additional \$500 bonus for workers in the third year. These are the highest wage increases ever in Local 184-L history.

Wages will increase for Kellogg's workers six percent in the first year, five percent in the second, and 4.5 percent in the third. In addition, workers won increases in pension benefits and shift differential pay, along with improved dental, voluntary life insurance, and vision benefits with no increase in premiums; and, workers' low premiums have been secured for the life of the contract. The agreement also creates one-time pay adjustment increases for certain classifications of workers, and will create a new apprenticeship program in the Maintenance Department. ■

Week of Vacation Added for 450 at Fresh Mark in Ohio

Mid-South Council

RWDSU members at the **Fresh Mark** food processing plant in Massillon, Ohio, and at **Fresh Mark** cold storage ratified a new three-year contract for 450 RWDSU members employed in food processing and cold storage at the facilities. The new agreement, which was overwhelmingly ratified, adds a fifth week of paid vacation, and also includes significant annual wage increases including six percent the first year.

Maintenance workers will earn an additional 60 cents an hour with approved classes on top of their normal wage improvements. The contract also changes paychecks to weekly from bi-weekly, increases sick and accident benefits, increases the company's 401K match, and increases the night shift differential from 25 cents all the way to \$1.50 an hour.

Serving on the Negotiating Committee were James Danzy, Juan Moscoso, Kristina Hoffner, Andrew Borntreger, J.P. Munford, and RWDSU Representative Fred Jimenez. RWDSU members at Fresh Mark produce bacon, ham, dry sausage, hot dogs and lunch meats. ■

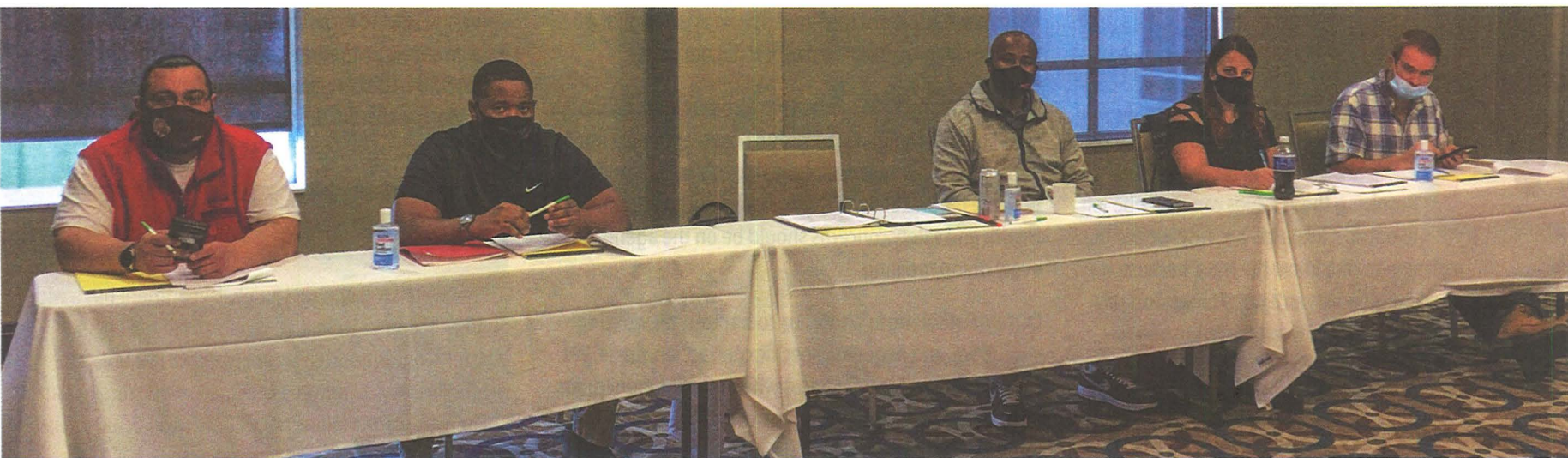
Illinois Health Care Workers Win New Holidays

Local 578

A new three-year contract at **Aperion Health Care** in New Rochelle, Illinois, brings the Local 578 members there four percent annual wage increases and increases the starting minimum wage for new hires to \$15 per hour, which is \$3 above the state minimum wage. Two new paid holidays – members' birthdays and a personal day – have been implemented. And there were numerous language improvements, including discrimination protection, reduced probation period from 90 to 60 days, Paid Time Off eligibility from the first year of employment, improvements in grievance procedure and funeral leave pay, higher uniform allowance and improved successorship language.

In addition, all members received a \$250 signing bonus upon ratification of the new contract.

Members of the Negotiating Committee for Local 578 included Local 578 President Daniel Williams, Recorder Ryan Williams, Stewards Johnette Dorsey and Taneika Sanders, RWDSU Representative Roger Grobstich, and Sr. Business Representative for the Central States Council Dennis Williams, Sr. ■



(l to r) Juan Moscoso, James Danzy, J.P. Munford, Kristina Hoffner, and Andrew Borntreger during contract negotiations.

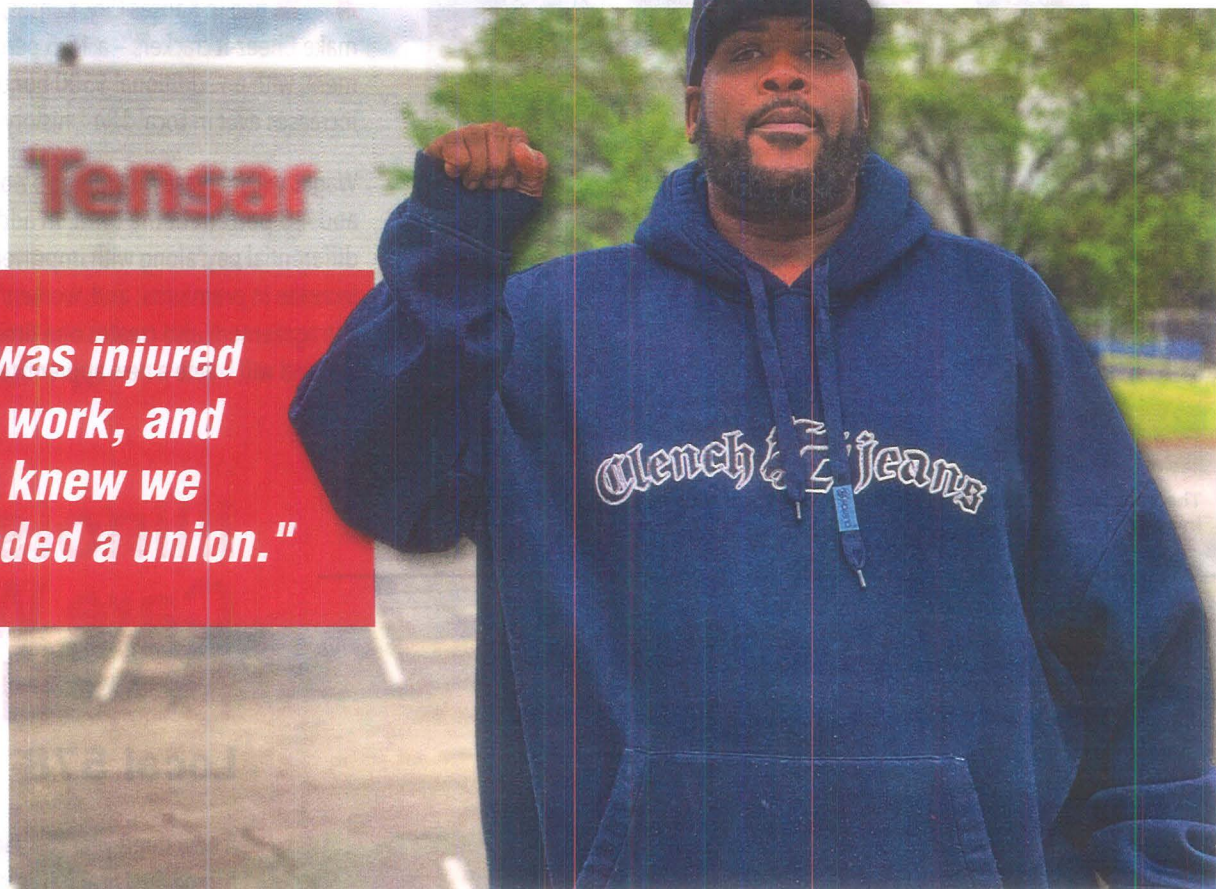


You and the RWDSU Can Make Your Workplace Safer

When Jabbar Thomas' hand was crushed at work, the 15-year employee at Tensar, a pavement and rail reinforcement material manufacturer outside of Atlanta, Georgia, had an epiphany; something had to change to make workers safer.

"I was injured at work, and I knew we needed a union," Thomas said. Before long, they had one: the RWDSU. When the Tensar workers' first contract was negotiated this year, health and safety was a priority so that accidents like those that crushed Thomas' hand would not happen again, and Thomas, healed up and back on the job, was feeling safer.

Our commitment to improving health and safety at our workplaces is one of the greatest strengths we have as a union. We all go to work expecting to return to our families safely and in good health. It is our right as workers. But we know that all too often employers want to take shortcuts concerning our safety. As RWDSU members we have lots of resources that non-unionized workers don't have to maximize our power to improve our workplace conditions.



"I was injured at work, and I knew we needed a union."



What is Health and Safety?

Spotting health and safety issues isn't just for inspectors; we as workers are as qualified as anyone to spot them. Health and safety hazards are everything we encounter, because of the work we do, that can cause injuries or physical or psychological illness. That could include dust in the air, solvents and other chemicals we work with, noise, slippery walking surfaces etc. But it also includes unreasonable work production quotas, poor work organization, inadequate staffing, unpredictable work schedules, bullying and harassment from managers and lots of other issues.



Who are the Experts?

Resolving these issues can never be left to outside "experts" because we are the real experts who know the most because we do the work every day. And we can't just sit back and rely on the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to take care of things. OSHA can be helpful in some situations but it is terribly underfunded and understaffed, and subject to political pressures. And OSHA does not have standards on many important hazards like lifting, production line speeds, indoor air quality, heat, workplace

violence and infectious diseases. Many OSHA standards are also out of date and do not provide adequate protection for us.

It doesn't matter if an exposure or work condition we face does not violate an OSHA standard. If it is causing us harm it is a hazard we need to reduce or eliminate if we can.



Exercising our Union Muscle

So to get positive things done we need to be active. We need to be communicating with each other about workplace hazards we see and experience. It is most likely that a problem for one of us is a problem for others.

There are many ways to promote communication through social media, workplace message boxes, and most importantly our daily conversations with coworkers. Whenever possible hazards should be photographed and documented. Health and safety concerns should be on the agenda at every union meeting.

Our union strength allows us to bargain on working conditions and negotiate specific contract language. We can and should file grievances when management drags its heels on addressing these issues. This is especially vital for hazards not covered by OSHA or where action from OSHA would take too much time.

We can negotiate the establishment of a joint labor management health and safety committee. This can be useful but only if it meets regularly and seriously addresses the identified hazards in a timely manner. All identified problems which are resolved should be communicated to our members so that they know what the union's activism is accomplishing in terms of reducing hazards.

Whether there is a joint committee in our workplace or not we need to have effective means within our union to quickly identify and address any workplace hazard. We need to remind our employers that they have a legal obligation to maintain a safe and healthy workplace. Their Safety Programs should clearly indicate that safety performance is at least as important as production, and that company safe work protocols must be supported and implemented by production line supervisors. Together, we as RWDSU members can win the safety, health and work conditions which we deserve! ■

Information & Assistance

The RWDSU Health and Safety Department has a wide array of informational materials about health and safety committees, common worksite hazards, and effective ways to reduce exposure to workplace hazards. For more information contact (212) 684-5300 or visit www.rwdsu.org