Member’s tragedy turns positive with help from union

Imagine being on vacation and receiving a phone call informing you your house has burned down.

This tragic experience happened to Armando Colon, a meat processor at Simmons Pet Foods in Pennsauken, N.J. He was on vacation with his wife Evelyn in July when his stepson Francisco called to deliver the bad news.

“My wife and I wanted to come back immediately, but we couldn’t find a flight back,” Colon recalled.

Protecting wages and benefits

Strong new contracts with several employers bring stability, hourly increases

FCW Local 152 recently negotiated a series of collective bargaining agreements covering hundreds of members. All of the agreements were ratified by large majorities of the affected union members.

“Our members count on our union’s negotiating teams to protect their wages and health benefits,” UFCW Local 152 President Brian String said.

“We with the contracts we secured over this summer, we did exactly that.”

Below are the highlights of some of the contracts:

Aunt Kitty’s Foods: Negotiations with Aunt Kitty’s began in March and concluded in August with a three-year agreement that covers 92 members. The contract includes a signing bonus of $1,200 per member, improved vacation pay and contract language that favors members when a grievance is filed. The company proposed a rise in health care contributions that Local 152 successfully defeated.
Dear Sisters and Brothers:

When we were called to lead our newly-created local union nine years ago, “unity” was more of a goal than a reality.

Our identity was forged by the combination of two UFCW locals with separate histories and cultures. But the leadership, staff and membership of Local 152 forged ahead, delving into the challenges of building a strong union in every sense of the word.

Today, we still must confront the day-to-day challenges of any union that is dedicated to improving the lives of its members. But we take on our duties with a united spirit that would have surprised many observers along the way.

UFCW Local 152 is one union, proud and strong. As your president, it gives me great personal joy to be a part of that.

On behalf of our entire leadership team, thank you for your support and solidarity. Together, let’s build upon our accomplishments and keep our eyes on a brighter future.

Brian String

Local 152 members at Shop Rite applauded for their service

Readers of The Press of Atlantic City voted ShopRite “Best Supermarket” in a recent poll. Members of Local 152 provide excellent service to shoppers at each of the eight Southern New Jersey locations (listed below) that are recognized by this award.

Landis Hammonton
English Creek Rio Grande
Somers Point Galloway
Absecon Marmora
Notice to Employees Subject to Union Security Clauses

As employees working under UFCW contracts containing security clauses you are required, as a condition of employment, to pay dues or fees to the union. This is the only obligation under such union security clauses. Individuals who are members pay dues while individuals who are nonmembers pay an equivalent fee. This fee, which is authorized by law, is your fair share of sustaining your union’s broad range of programs in support of you and your co-workers, but nonmembers may file objections to funding expenditures that are nongermaine to the collective bargaining process and thereby only be obligated to pay fees representing expenditures germane to the collective bargaining process. Individuals who choose to file such objections should advise their local union or other collective bargaining representative in writing at its business address and request a description of the procedures which must be followed and to obtain further information as to how these fees are calculated.

In considering these matters, though, you should be aware that choosing to be a nonmember fee payer means you would not have the right to vote on the terms of your contract; the right to participate in the development of contract proposals; the right to nominate and vote for officers of the local union; the right to attend the International Convention as a delegate; the right to participate in strike votes; and the right to numerous other benefits and discounts available to members only.

The most important job right you have is the right to collective bargaining. Because all employees negotiate together through the union, those represented by the union receive higher wages and better benefits than those in non-union facilities doing similar jobs. Strength in numbers makes this possible. The stronger your union, the better your contract.

Do not take yourself out of the most important process and weaken your union.

Individuals who nevertheless elect to be nonmember fee payers may object to funding expenditures nongermaine to the collective bargaining process. Examples of expenditures nongermaine to the collective bargaining process are those made for political purposes; for general community service; for organizing in non-competitive markets; for lobbying activities, for members only benefits; and for certain affiliation costs.

Grievances filed or resolved:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd Quarter 2014</th>
<th>2014 to date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>108</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Back pay and benefits restored to members:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3rd Quarter 2014</th>
<th>2014 to date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$44,314.98</td>
<td>$105,970.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Breast Cancer Awareness Pins are now available at $5 each from the UFCW Local 152 Women’s Network. Contact your Union Representative or call the Union Office at (888) 564-6152 for more information.

A portion of the proceeds will benefit The American Cancer Society.

UFCW Local 152 Retirees’ Club 2014 meetings

All retirees from Local 152, as well as former members of Local 1358 and Local 56, are cordially invited to join the Retirees’ Club.

The club meets on Monday for social get-togethers throughout the year to greet former co-workers, enjoy coffee and donuts and make plans for the future.

The remaining meeting dates for 2014 are:

Dec. 1 (Luncheon)

Yellow Room meetings are at the United Methodist Church, 3541 Pennsylvania Ave., Pennsauken, N.J.

Luncheons are at the Coastline Restaurant, 1240 Brace Road, Cherry Hill, N.J.

Members of the Retirees’ Club are welcome to bring their spouses and friends.

For more information, contact Chairman George Kerth at (856) 429-0237.
In this column, analyst Jeff Metzger looks at developments in the supermarket industry around the country.

Food retailer Delhaize Group still has a long way to go to make a substantial impact with U.S. consumers, but give new CEO Frans Muller credit. He’s conducting business in a straight ahead and no-nonsense manner (unlike his predecessor, the inert Pierre-Olivier Beckers) and sales in the U.S. continue to modestly improve.

Regarding its decision to potentially sell its struggling Bottom Dollar Foods unit, I believe Muller is also cutting his losses while he can.

Judging by the data that we received about BDF’s stores in eastern Pennsylvania and southern New Jersey, sales were not justifying basic overhead costs, especially the large initial investment that Delhaize made in real estate.

Most of the leases at its 66 stores run until about 2030 with average rents in the $10-12 per square foot range.

While Muller noted that Bottom Dollar was inching closer to break-even status, the realistic possibility of its small format discount division ever sustaining consistent growth and profitability in markets as competitive as the Delaware and Lehigh Valley regions was a long shot at best.

In recent months, I’ve frequently written about the pressures and impact of over-storing ultimately forcing a “thinning of the herd” market correction.

With a potential sale of BDF, nearly one million square feet of space will become available in a 100 mile radius ranging from East Windsor, N.J. to Reading, PA.

Challenging times at Walmart

It was another challenging quarter for Walmart as the planet’s largest retailer reported flat U.S. comparable store sales and a 2.4 percent decline in U.S. operating income during the fiscal second quarter ended July 31. Overall net income was up marginally.

The Bentonville, Ark.-based merchant also noted that higher health care costs and further investments to drive e-commerce initiatives would adversely impact earnings during the second half of the year.

Jeff Metzger’s “Taking Stock” column appears in Food World and Food Trade News.
‘Koch Sisters’ serve up an antidote for anti-unionism

The people who oppose labor unions have deep pockets. Many of us are aware of David and Charles Koch, the billionaire brothers who are bankrolling anti-worker campaigns across the country. They are financing the advocates of so-called “right to work” laws designed to sap the energy and strength out of the Labor Movement. They are also behind other efforts to silence workers by denying unions the ability to raise money for political efforts.

Unfortunately, the Koch brothers aren’t the only rich players in the anti-union game. Through a vast network of front groups, they have unleashed an unprecedented attack on the idea of unions, deploying lobbyists, websites and advertisements to portray organized labor as something unwholesome and un-American.

The idea is to keep working people weak and divided so they’ll quietly accept whatever terms that are forced on them.

It’s ironic that the Koch brothers present themselves as “libertarians” even as they work so hard — and spend so much — to take away the liberty of working people to stand up for themselves and their families.

Now the Labor Movement is striking back with an innovative project that employs wit and personality on behalf of fairness and justice.

In September, right after Labor Day, the AFL-CIO unveiled “The Koch Sisters,” a nationwide campaign featuring two women named Karen and Joyce who share the same last name, but not the same values, as the Koch brothers.

According to the AFL-CIO, the Koch Sisters will speak candidly with the American people about issues they care about, from wages to Social Security, from family leave to health care.

Through a variety of media outlets, they’ll explain how union values are American values.

Unlike their namesakes, the Koch Sisters won’t have billions at their disposal to get their message across, but they will have the strongest political force in America on their side: the truth.

Sisters won’t have billions at their disposal to get their message across, but they will have the strongest political force in America on their side: the truth.

You, too, can help restore the standing of labor unions in the national debate.

When you hear people mouthing the Koch brothers’ brand of anti-worker nonsense, don’t endure it in silence. Set the record straight. Tell them how grateful you are to have a union to fight for your rights and dignity.

Take a cue from the Koch Sisters!

Secretary-Treasurer’s Report

By Anthony Benigno

Earn money and keep your union strong!

Would you like to earn some extra cash? Provide an organizing lead to UFCW Local 152 that results in a union election. Member participation will be required. By getting involved, you are helping to make your union stronger and you have an opportunity to earn $275! For additional information, please contact Chad Brooks, Director of Organizing, at (888) 564-6152.
The Ninth Annual UFCW Local 152 Charity Golf Tournament was held on Sept. 2 at the Avalon Golf Club on the New Jersey shore. The staff and leadership of Local 152 thanks everyone who attended and those who made generous contributions to the charity raffle. All proceeds benefited The Leukemia & Lymphoma Society, The Bryan D. Ross Foundation and other charities.
Members at Work
ShopRite Fresh Grocer
Contracts protect wages and benefits

(Continued from front page)

**Beef International Inc.** Members who work at Beef International Inc. ratified a three-year contract that protects health care and includes signing bonus of $1,500 for each member. The company had attempted to eliminate its health plan and force its employees to find their own insurance through health care exchanges. The new contract covers 65 members.

**Collingswood Manor**: Collingswood Manor is a part of the United Methodist Homes of New Jersey. The three-year contract covers 110 members of UFCW Local 152 and guarantees a three percent raise for 2014, retroactive to May, for a total of seven percent in pay increases over the life of the contract. Members also received a signing bonus. The new contract language benefits members who require a leave of absence and bereavement. The contract also includes access to affordable health care and increased allowances to pay for safety shoes.

**Victoria Manor**: A new three-year contract for 106 union members was ratified in the summer. The agreement protects members’ access to health care and includes a guaranteed raise of 75 cents over the life of the contract.

**Other contracts**: Members at Omni Baking recently ratified a new medical plan. Also, negotiations for a new contract continue with Ginsburg Bakery. A one-year extension of the previous contract is still in effect.

The Collingswood Manor Negotiating Committee. From left: Member Beth Salerno, Union Representative Dan Ross, Member Bonnie Futia and Local 152 Legal Counsel Mark Belland.

Members from Victoria Manor gather at their ratification meeting.

The Omni Baking Negotiating Committee. From left: Member Marta Rodriguez, Local 152 Director John Robbins, Member Maday Ramos and Union Representative Jose Echevarria.
Armando Colon thanks the union for helping remodel his house

(Continued from front page)

“It took some convincing, but we eventually stayed in Florida until our vacation was over.”

Firefighters said an electrical problem was the likely cause of the fire, which originated in the basement and burned through most of the kitchen. What the flames didn’t destroy, smoke did.

“Smoke damaged the whole house,” Colon said. “There wasn’t much we could save.”

To make matters worse, the Colons were in the midst of remodeling. They had spent seven months renovating the porch and living room.

They even discussed remodeling the kitchen after their vacation.

“It made us sad all of our hard work was destroyed,” Colon said.

A fresh start

For two and a half months, the family — which also includes Colon’s daughter Amanda and twin stepdaughters Jazmin and Jessica Jimenez — lived in a nearby hotel. They made the best out of their cramped living situation.

“It was tough, but I have the mentality that if I can’t do anything about it, I try not to worry,” Colon said.

It was during their hotel stay that Colon received another phone call, this time from Union Representative Chuck Clark.

“I was stunned that Chuck found out about my situation and that he wanted to help,” Colon said. “I thank God for everything the union has done for my family.”

Through The Bryan D. Ross Foundation, the Colon family received $500 to help with the remodeling of their house.

Recently, the family moved into Evelyn’s aunt’s house and the insurance company estimates that remodeling should be completed by January 2015, when the family can enjoy its home once again.

“The people in our union make you feel like you’re not alone,” Colon said, “and I’ll always appreciate them for caring.”

The entire plant shut down and all of the workers were invited to Cumberland County Community College to focus on how they could work together as a team to develop an injury-free workplace. Although the plant holds monthly safety meetings and smaller events throughout the year, it was the first time the plant shut down entirely for an off-site safety seminar.

The theme throughout the day was “Believe in Zero,” which is grounded in the belief that all injuries are preventable, and as such, an injury-free workplace is possible and something we should work together to achieve. Plant Manager Becky Crane kicked off the event by sharing insights around why she believes that an injury-free workplace is possible and how it will take 100% employee involvement to achieve our goal. She introduced Jim Porter, a retired Chief Engineer and Vice President of Engineering and Operations at DuPont.

Porter, who worked 42 years at DuPont, shared the story of DuPont’s journey toward zero injuries and offered his views on safety leadership. He spoke to the importance of having operational discipline, total employee involvement, and a strong safety culture when it comes to achieving world-class safety performance.

During the final portion of the seminar, employees had discussions in smaller teams and focused on providing feedback around the top safety opportunities at the plant. As a part of this activity, each team developed a commitment statement of what action the team would take to ensure the safety of their fellow co-workers. These statements and feedback from the session were then posted throughout the plant to help keep these commitments made around safety alive each day.

Speakers at the seminar also encouraged “near miss” reporting. They said research shows that near misses help employees learn about the risks they face and address those risks to prevent injuries in the future.

Near misses include experiences with physical hazards such as sharp edges or a hose on the ground that someone could trip over. They also include employee behaviors such as forgetting to wear safety glasses in a production area.

General Mills has an electronic database for near-miss reporting, but not all employees have computer access in their work area or strong computer skills. Because of this, the Vineland plant built off of this database by developing a paper-based system to increase the employees’ ability to report near-misses as they observe them on the floor. The plant has seen tremendous results from this effort including 225 near-miss reports just three months into the new fiscal year, which have resulted in safety improvements throughout the plant in addition to increasing awareness around safety risks.
Obituaries

Lawrence J. Adams 07/24/14  Daniel Little 06/03/14
Charles Addeo 06/05/14  Thomas Loag 06/24/14
Eleanor Beatty 06/12/14  Rita Masusock 05/23/14
Jane C. Birney 05/03/14  Margaret M. McHugh 05/13/14
Florence Bluestein 06/13/14  Grace J. McKale 06/17/14
Chappell Brown, Sr. 07/18/14  Marjorie MoMenamin 07/17/14
Charles Brown 06/09/14  Stanley R. Merton 07/09/14
Walter Brown 05/09/14  Helen Mitchell 06/17/14
Jean Butler 06/11/14  Joan Molish 06/05/14
Josephine A. Caramanno 06/21/14  Carol M. Neubert 05/12/14
Anthony V. Carlini 07/22/14  Rufostinica Nikolic 06/18/14
Elinor K. Corrigan 05/29/14  Richard P. Pivias 06/20/14
Primo Dinisio 05/08/14  Catherine H. Picone 06/12/14
Richard Dupell 06/15/14  Leona J. Powderly 06/10/14
Lois R. Dziiminski 05/09/14  Agnes Repinoz 07/08/14
Lois J. Euchus 07/05/14  Eileen Resci 06/09/14
Stanley A. Ferris 05/09/14  Arthur Reynolds 06/25/14
Eva Flynn 05/17/14  Janet M. Ruyak 06/08/14
Carol Frampton 07/10/14  Joseph W. Sabbi 07/03/14
Rafael Garcia 07/13/14  Enrico Salvadori 06/10/14
Joseph Giannarre 06/06/14  Helen T. Taslo 07/21/14
Martin Gusoff 07/17/14  Betty Serafini 06/11/14
Marguerite Heln 05/23/14  Andrew Sims 05/21/14
Denise A. Holly 05/21/14  James S. Smith 07/22/14
Eddie Holtzman 07/02/14  Theodore Smutekm 05/29/14
Ruth Howard 06/21/14  Henry F. Snyder 07/02/14
John A. Imhoff, Sr. 06/08/14  Madeline J. Sprague 07/31/14
William H. Johnson 08/15/14  George A. Sticht 06/18/14
William Karr 08/09/14  Ralph L. Stoudt 06/14/14
David J. Knight 06/07/14  Marie Thompson 06/09/14
Helen Kushner 06/27/14  Judith Vignali 07/19/14
Diane Lanatto 06/18/14  Maria Woznyj 06/08/14
What does healthy living have to do with our contracts?

Anyone who reads this publication knows that the Labor Movement is confronting tremendous challenges. Every contract we ratify is the result of hard work, sometimes in hostile circumstances.

An uphill battle

Frequently, our most complicated and difficult challenge is protecting the excellent health benefits our members enjoy. The cost for these benefits grows each year and some employers regularly call for our members to absorb some of these increases through premiums and higher co-pays and deductibles. Sometimes, an employer may seek a reduction of services.

Fortunately, members of UFCW Local 152 can help control health care costs by using their benefits in an efficient manner.

It starts with regular checkups. Getting your annual physical — a 100 percent covered benefit with no cost to you — helps identify what you need to do to stay healthy.

Don’t brush off the suggestions your doctor makes. Losing weight, quitting smoking, joining an exercise program or trying a new medication are among the steps you can take to improve your well-being and prevent potentially damaging (and costly) diseases such as heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes down the road.

Taking these steps will help ensure that your benefits will be there when you and your family really need them.

The more we ignore our health, the more we contribute to the rising health care costs that can dominate our discussions at the bargaining table.

The employers we bargain with don’t have unlimited resources. The increased funding we need to sustain our members’ health benefits takes away from resources available for other priorities like pay raises.

Little changes make a big difference

You’ll be amazed how some of the smallest suggestions from your doctor can make a big difference to your health. I learned this firsthand following a recent checkup. I incorporated some easy changes into my everyday schedule and have had great results.

These days, the rapid pace of living might make it seem impractical for us to achieve maximum fitness. But that doesn’t mean we can’t strive to do better. Carve out some time from your busy schedule to improve your health. You’ll not only feel better, you’ll be strengthening our union as well.