

# 152 Unity

UFCW LOCAL 152  
a VOICE for working America

Winter 2012



**Happy  
New  
Year!**

**The officers and staff  
of UFCW Local 152  
wish you a happy  
and healthy 2012!**

Also inside: A&P workers ratify contract • Workers unionize at Teleflex • Eagles/Red Cross blood drive

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### UFCW Local 152 Unity

Official Publication of  
United Food and Commercial  
Workers Local 152

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Brian String

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The Local 152  
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# A&P workers ratify contract



A&P (Pathmark & SF) ratification meeting, Nov. 29, 2011 — The members voted overwhelmingly to accept the new contract with a vote of 454 to accept and 27 to reject.

**IT PAYS TO BE UNION!**

## Grievances filed or resolved:

4th Quarter 2011

2011 Total

**157**

**525**

## Back pay and benefits restored to members:

4th Quarter 2011

2011 Total

**\$140,297.05**

**\$299,499.67**





The UFCW Local 152 Women's Network "Giving Tree" is decorated with angels and elves in the lobby of the union office during the holiday season. Each angel or elf represents a child of a member in need who was nominated by a steward. Gifts were donated and delivered to the families along with wishes for a happy holiday.

## Holiday food basket distribution



On Dec. 20 and Dec. 22, UFCW Local 152, with help from ShopRite Supermarkets, distributed Christmas dinner baskets to union members.



## Holidays 2011: The spirit of giving



The UFCW Local 152 Women's Network thanks everyone who participated in the 2011 Teddy Bear Drive for the Arc Organization of Burlington County. More than 215 teddy bears were collected and distributed at the annual Arc's Christmas Party on Dec. 2, 2011.





## Retirees 'Club 56'

You are cordially invited to join Club 56. Meetings are held at 10 a.m. in the Yellow Room of the United Methodist Church, 3541 Pennsylvania Ave., Pennsauken, NJ.

Club meetings will be held on March 5, May 7 and Oct. 8, 2012.

For more information, please contact Chairman George Kerth at (856) 429-0237 or (856) 663-2864.

## President Obama fills NLRB board posts during Congress recess

**T**he Labor Movement won a victory in January when President Obama appointed three members to the National Labor Relations Board. The five-member panel oversees union elections and employer disputes.

For months, the NLRB operated with three members, while two of its positions remained vacant. After Craig Becker completed his term in early January, the NLRB would have effectively shut down because it cannot operate with only two members.

Pro-business advocates in the Senate had been blocking votes to confirm Obama's NLRB appointments.

The president finally broke the logjam by using his authority to make appointments unilaterally while Congress was in recess.



## Grocery industry news

By Jeff Metzger

## When icons expand

☐ In this column, analyst Jeff Metzger looks at developments in the supermarket industry around the country.

**T**wo of the supermarket industry's most iconic companies – Safeway and Ahold – have in recent years defined themselves, in part, by their expansion attempts.

Ahold, with a \$3 billion acquisition kitty on hand, has been aggressive in seeking to broaden its market share in the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast. Beginning with Laneco about a decade ago, and continuing with Clemens in 2006, Ukrop's in 2010 and last year with five Foodtown stores in central New Jersey and three King Kullen stores in Staten Island, Ahold's USA unit has done pretty well with "in-market" acquisitions and geographic expansions.

As for Safeway, as great a leader as CEO Steve Burd has been for more than 20 years (he's a certified first team Hall of Fame member by any account), acquisitions have never been his strong suit.

That seems obvious by the track record of major deals the retailer made during a three-year period from 1998 to 2001. Those less-than-successful results speak volumes about the Safeway's unwillingness to get in the acquisition game over the last 11 years.

The recently announced agreement in which Ahold USA's Giant/Carlisle unit would acquire 16 Genuardi's stores seems to capture the expansion mindset of each company in a nutshell.

And one of the reasons (at least from a historical perspective) that the two companies have had significantly different track records is the ability of Ahold to better assimilate itself into the culture of the acquired company while making the necessary improvements and changes that the retailer it acquired was unable to execute.

In Safeway's case, we've seen little of that. In fact, in all three key acquisitions that Safeway made in the aforementioned three-year period – Dominick's, Randall's and Genuardi's – its unwillingness to utilize the strengths of those successful retailers was a prime reason those chains lost market share and suffered from diminished employee morale shortly after they were purchased.

Clearly, Safeway has learned that the "one size fits all" modus operandi of running stores doesn't work anymore. Today's major markets are both overstored and filled with a multitude of diverse retailing styles.

☐ Jeff Metzger's "Taking Stock" column appears in *Food World* and *Food Trade News*.

# Use health care wisely

**A**s we move forward into the new year, it is a great time to make resolutions that will bring about a happier and healthier 2012.

One important resolution is to use our health care benefits wisely. This makes sense not just for our own physical, mental and financial well-being. It also helps preserve our benefits so we can keep using them in the future.

## Future contracts

No matter who the employer is, whenever we sit down at the bargaining table to hammer out a new contract, the most difficult and contentious issues relate to the constantly rising costs of health care services.

It's a simple matter of arithmetic. The more time and resources we allocate toward addressing these ballooning costs, the less remains available for achieving wage increases and other benefits.

Many factors contribute to these high costs, and not all of them are in our control. But we can make a significant impact simply by becoming more aware of where we go for health care and how much we pay for it.

## Do your part

For example, when a doctor fills out a prescription, do you ask him or her if you can have a generic drug instead of a more expensive brand-

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**'One important resolution is to use our health care benefits wisely.'**

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name product? Do you ever check to see how much your prescription costs the trust fund, above and beyond your co-payment?

Here are some more questions you can ask yourself when you use your health benefits:

- Are you an informed patient when you are referred for tests or procedures?
- Do you take your medicine exactly as it is prescribed? If you don't, what was the purpose of going to the doctor to seek medical advice in the first place?
- Do you seek preventive care to head off more serious — and costly — problems before they arise? You should have physicals regularly and undergo preventive procedures, such as prostate exams or mammograms, as recommended by your doctor. Many diseases and conditions are treatable if they are caught in their early stages.
- Are you aware of the situations when it's appropriate to use an emergency room or an urgent care facility? You should not go to an emergency



## **S**ecretary-Treasurer's Report

**By Anthony Benigno**

room unless it is a potentially life-threatening illness or injury, or it is after hours at your urgent care clinic and you need immediate care. Don't go to an emergency room for any condition that can wait until the next day for treatment.

If we all do our part to save money and pay attention to our health, we can help control health care costs and protect the standards of care provided by the medical plan for you and your family.

It will also enable us to allocate more resources toward your wages and benefits in future negotiations.



## **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**.





From left: Union Representative Dave Salera and President Brian String with workers from ShopRite 426's Meat Department.



From left: Union Representative Dave Salera, Brown's Super Store President and CEO Jeffrey Brown and UFCW Local 152 President Brian String.



From left: Brown's Super Store President and CEO Jeffrey Brown and Pennsylvania State Rep. Dwight Evans.



From left: Brown's Super Store President and CEO Jeffrey Brown; Pennsylvania State Rep. Dwight Evans; Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter; Local 152 President Brian String and State Rep. Cherelle Parker.

## ShopRite re-opening in Cheltenham

**I**t was a grand re-opening for the Cheltenham ShopRite on Dec. 14, 2011. The store is one of the first completed projects of the Partnership for a Healthy America and First Lady Michelle Obama's "Let's Move!" initiative.

This ShopRite will be home to an Einstein FastCare health clinic, which will provide customers with convenient, affordable, basic and preventive

health care. This innovative feature was developed using a supermarket model created by Brown's Super Store President and CEO Jeffrey Brown, Bellin Health and the Convenient Care Association.

During the ceremony, a plaque was unveiled dedicating the store to State Rep. Dwight Evans. President Brian String and other UFCW Local 152 representatives were on hand to participate.

# Organizing Teleflex

## How solidarity helped workers unionize for the first time

**S**ome readers may have seen a notice run in each issue of *Unity* about the union's organizing incentives. If you provide the union with an organizing lead that results in a union election (win or lose), you could earn \$275.

This is the story of the program's first success since it was launched two years ago.

In August 2011, the Organizing Department received a tip from UFCW Local 152 member Damian Martinez, who works at Super Fresh. His wife, Maria, told him about her experiences at Teleflex and her desire to become part of a union.

Teleflex is an international corporation that specializes in catheters and other medical supplies. Its Lumberton, NJ plant employs nearly 100 workers.

Following up on Maria Martinez's tip, UFCW Local 152 Organizing Director Chad Brooks, along with Organizers Hugh Giordano, Mike Thompson and Jose Echevarria, set up meetings with workers at the plant. The outline for a union election began taking shape.

"The employer obviously did not want the workers to unionize," Brooks said. "Management launched a campaign to convince the employees they didn't need a union.

"But the workers didn't listen and they ultimately prevailed."

In November 2011, the National Labor Relations Board supervised an election in which the Teleflex workers voted on inviting the union into their workplace. They voted "yes" by a 2-1 margin, 60-34.

"This was an overwhelming success for the union and for the workers," Brooks said. "I give a lot of credit to the people who stood up to their employer and demanded a union presence."

'Management launched a campaign to convince the employees they didn't need a union. But the workers didn't listen and they ultimately prevailed.'

"We hope to secure a union contract that these new members will be proud of," Brooks continued. "We won't stop until we do."

Brooks encourages more members take the initiative and provide the union with organizing leads.

**For more information, contact Chad Brooks at (888) 564-6152.**



The UFCW Local 152 Organizing Committee for Teleflex included, from left: Organizing Director Chad Brooks, Organizer Hugh Giordano, Pascale Covington, Janet Honsby, Patty Hoff, Jason Polito, Joe Rogers, Organizer Mike Thompson and Organizer Jose Echevarria. Not pictured: Elba Diaz.



The UFCW Local 152 Organizing Department presented Damian Martinez with a \$275 check from the Organizing Incentive Program. Damian was the member who gave the Organizing Department the lead that led to the organizing victory at Teleflex Medical. From left: Organizer Mike Thompson, Damian Martinez, Organizer Jose Echevarria and Organizer Hugh Giordano.



# UFCW Local 152 supports Philadelphia Eagles and American Red Cross blood drive

For a third consecutive year, members and staff supported the blood drive that collected more than 780 units of blood

By Arthur Manos

**F**or the fourth annual Philadelphia Eagles/Red Cross Blood Drive, UFCW Local 152 supported the drive for the third consecutive year. More than 800 volunteer blood donors came to Lincoln Financial Field on Saturday, Dec. 3, 2011.

Thanks to the overwhelming support of the Eagles, fans, volunteers, UFCW Local 152 and the media, the blood drive collected more than 780 units of blood. Ultimately, 2,340 lives can be saved because of the efforts of all involved.

The annual event plays a key role in building a stable blood supply and helping safeguard against a winter blood shortage throughout the holiday season. Members are urged to watch for union postings and notification in the *Unity* about next year's blood drive event.



From left: Red Cross Regional Communications Manager Anthony C. Tornetta and former Eagles all-pro receiver Mike Quick with Philadelphia Eagles cheerleaders



From left: Philadelphia Eagles Cheerleaders with Buddy the Blood Drop, UFCW Local 152 Union Representative Art Manos and former Eagles all-pro receiver Mike Quick.

## Puratos to create 40 jobs with new plant

**P**uratos broke ground in November 2011 for an expansion of its plant in Pennsauken, N.J. The plant will create 40 new jobs, for a total of 190 jobs in the area.

The \$42 million expansion has already begun.

Puratos is an international food company that supplies bakeries from corner stores to supermarket chains to restaurants with value-added ingredients such as cake mixes, bio-fermented sourdoughs, icings, glazes and decadent fillings made with fruit, crème and chocolates.



From left: Anthony Benigno, Secretary-Treasurer; Carl Zimmerman, President of Puratos Corporation; Chuck Clark, Union Representative; Brent Laurin, Puratos Vice President of Operations; Dan Ross, Jr., Union Representative, and Roy Washel, Chief Shop Steward.





From left: Meat cutters Tom Brown and Ralph Young at Bordentown Acme Meat Dept. #7961 discuss safety standards with Acme Markets Safety Manager Mike Willis and Occupational Safety and Health Representative Art Manos.

## Occupational Safety & Health News

### Meat Cutter & Clerk Safety at Acme Markets

By Arthur Manos

**F**or some time, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has advocated safety partnerships between management and labor.

In that spirit, UFCW Local 152 Occupational Safety and Health Representative Art Manos and Acme Markets Safety Manager Mike Willis visited Acme's of Yardville #7914 and Bordentown #7961.

Willis explained Acme's safety programs and procedures to Manos as they reviewed the shops together.

Among the key topics of discussion was the success of the cut-resistant safety glove program for meat cutters and meat clerks.

These gloves provide exceptional protection from cuts and abrasions, but we must be reminded that they are **not** cut-proof or point-puncture-resistant. In general, cut-resistant gloves prevent accidents for members when using a knife.

Another safety feature implemented by the Acme Markets safety manager is the new and improved anti-fatigue mats that are composed of anti-slip material with-microban feature.

Anti-fatigue mats provide more comfort to employees and promote ergonomic benefits.

These mats are a welcome addition to the work environment. UFCW Local 152 highly suggests that if you have them, use them!

As the work day goes on and years on the job add up, you will be glad you did!

**Remember: Safety rules are your best tools.**

## Behavioral health and the Employee Member Assistance Program (EMAP)

**P**ersonal problems are nothing to shrug off. While difficulties often arise as we try to adjust to our constantly changing world, we can't expect to be able to solve all of these problems in isolation.

Sometimes, we need to find help.

It is documented that the sooner one confronts a problem and takes action to solve it, the more likely it is that the problem can be solved.

An EMAP (Employee Member Assistance Program) is available to help members and their eligible dependents receive prompt, confidential and professional assistance.

The EMAP benefit provides up to three free assessment sessions prior to the start of your Behavioral Health Benefit. There is no cost or co-payment to the member to use the EMAP benefit.

Some problems, when identified early, can be remedied with only a few sessions. If services are required beyond the initial three sessions, they are continued under your behavioral health insurance.

The EMAP benefit does not change your behavioral health benefits — your plan benefits remain the same.

### Get in touch

To see if you or your dependents are eligible for EMAP, members of the UFCW Local 152 Health and Welfare Fund can contact either the Fund office at (800) 555-4959, prompt #1, or the Preferential Care Network (PCN) at (800) 366-0129.

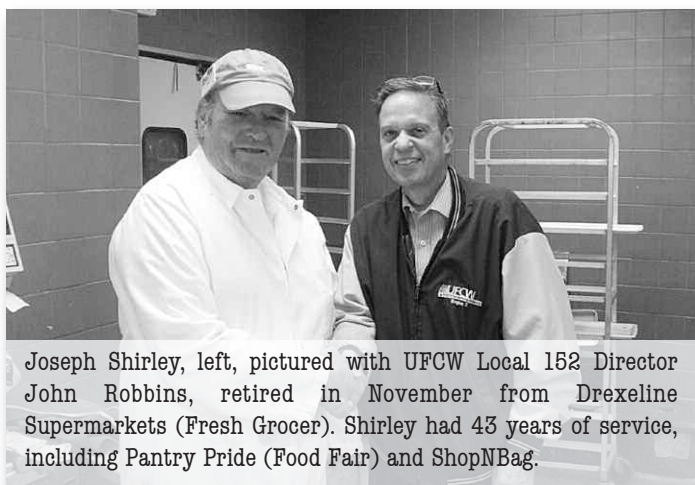
Members of the UFCW Tri-State Health & Welfare Fund or the UFCW Health and Welfare Fund should contact the Fund office at (800) 228-7484, prompt #5.

**Remember: EMAP is free and confidential!**

## Retirements

Name	Company	Date			
Willam D. Adams	Acme Markets	09/01/2011	Michael Lopez	Supermarkets General	11/01/2011
Linda Anderson	Supermarkets General	11/01/2011	Shirley A. Manzi	Pathmark Stores	09/01/2011
Diane L. Bacon	UFCW Local 152 Staff	11/01/2011	Barbara A. Marotta	Acme Markets	12/01/2011
Fred Barbagello	Acme Markets	01/01/2012	Beverly Mascio	Super Fresh	11/01/2011
Kathleen A. Bayne	Super Fresh	10/01/2011	Dennis Massa	Acme Markets	12/01/2011
Marth Maria Belson	Holiday Markets	12/01/2011	Martin J. McDonnell	Super Fresh	11/01/2011
Edwin V. Berg	Century Supermarkets	12/01/2011	Patricia C. McElfresh	Village ShopRite	01/01/2012
Kenneth C. Bonds	Laneco Inc./Food Lane Stores	10/01/2011	Thomas F. McGarrigle	Super Fresh	10/01/2011
Jean M. Buccafuri	Super Fresh	10/01/2011	Anne T. McHugh	Acme Markets	11/01/2011
Clifford A. Camp, Jr.	Kansas Beef Industries	10/01/2011	Robert R. Miller	Acme Markets	10/01/2011
Pat B. Caranci	Holiday Markets	10/01/2011	Gail D. Mlynarski	Holiday Markets	11/01/2011
Frank Cerbo	Super Fresh	01/01/2012	Dominick A. Molinaro, Jr.	Super Fresh	09/01/2011
E. Marie Chamberlain	Super Fresh	10/01/2011	Edward Morton	Murphy's at the Forge	12/01/2011
James D. Chapman	Super Fresh	11/01/2011	Lewis Murphy	S. Bonoccurso & Sons	10/01/2011
Ronald J. Clossin	Suburbia Village	09/01/2011	Linda L. Petrovich	Acme Markets	01/01/2012
Ann Coughlan	George L. Wells Meat Co.	01/01/2012	Deborah Price	Zallie's Supermarkets	09/01/2011
Howard J. Dean	Super Fresh	10/01/2011	Judith Reed	Acme Markets	12/01/2011
Frank M. DePrisco, IV	Acme Markets	10/01/2011	Stephan M. Reyes	Super Fresh	12/01/2011
Louis F. DiPietro	Food Fair/Pantry Pride	09/01/2011	Jean Richardson	UFCW Local 152 Staff	11/01/2011
Monica A. Doan	ShopRite of Bethlehem	10/01/2011	Rose Romano	Acme Markets	01/01/2012
Carl Edwards	Acme Markets	09/01/2011	Paula A. Romeo	Acme Markets	11/01/2011
Carol Ann Gillespie	Bottino's Supermarkets	01/01/2012	Joanne Rosenberger	Food Fair/Pantry Pride	10/01/2011
Christine A. Gordon	Pathmark Stores	11/01/2011	Charles Rucker, Sr.	Village ShopRite	10/01/2011
Virginia M. Guy	Super Fresh	12/01/2011	Bernadette Rush	Super Fresh	01/01/2012
Rosalie Haines	Super Fresh	09/01/2011	Elizabeth J. Sargent	Acme Markets	11/01/2011
Grace L. Hatton	Super Fresh	11/01/2011	Irwin Sazoff	R & R ShopRite, Inc.	12/01/2011
James B. Henry	Pathmark Stores	09/01/2011	Joseph L. Shirley	Drexeline Supermarkets	11/01/2011
Cathleen O. Holmes	Holiday Supermarkets	01/01/2012	Samuel Shive	Kunzler Packing Company	10/01/2011
Alfred Hudson, Jr.	Middletown Supermarket	09/01/2011	Dennis A. Silvasy	Brown's Superstores	09/01/2011
Octavia B. Johnson	Pathmark Stores	10/01/2011	Carol A. Sloss	Acme Markets	01/01/2012
Peter A. Kapusta	Zallie's Supermarkets	09/01/2011	Anna Speakman	Medford, Inc.	09/01/2011
Patricia A. Kirk	Acme Markets	10/01/2011	Daniel J. Storti	Acme Markets	12/01/2011
Francis Koback	Holiday Markets	10/01/2011	Robert N. Thomas, Jr.	Pathmark Stores	11/01/2011
Roger S. Kolb	Pathmark Stores	10/01/2011	Carol Walatt	Brown's Superstores	11/01/2011
Danuta Korpusinski	Saker ShopRite	12/01/2011	Kitty L. Waldron	Pathmark Stores	11/01/2011
Carol A. Krakowski	Saker ShopRite	10/01/2011	Kathleen Watts	Super Fresh	10/01/2011
Helen Kushner	A&P Tea Company	12/01/2011	Bobby R. Williams	Super Fresh	10/01/2011
Raymond J. Lambert	Acme Markets	12/01/2011	Carol L. Williamson	Laneco Inc./Food Lane Stores	10/01/2011
Ronald Lee	Kansas Beef Industries	11/01/2011	James Wnek	Village ShopRite	10/01/2011
			Raymond W. Wopatek	Holiday Markets	09/01/2011
			William Younger	Acme Markets	11/01/2011
			James Zoladkiewicz	Super Fresh	10/01/2011

## Happy retirements, Joseph and Marilyn!



Joseph Shirley, left, pictured with UFCW Local 152 Director John Robbins, retired in November from Drexeline Supermarkets (Fresh Grocer). Shirley had 43 years of service, including Pantry Pride (Food Fair) and ShopNBag.



Marilyn Smith, center, a 37-year member at Perlmart ShopRite in Bayville, retired on Sept. 30, 2011. She was a front-end department manager and shop steward.



## In Memoriam

Name	Deceased
Gertrude M. Adams	10/17/2011
Kathleen T. Beebe	12/25/2011
Marion K. Berg	11/18/2011
Rita Brodsky	10/17/2011
John A. Brown	10/15/2011
Elena Burgos	11/18/2011
Joseph Carozzoni	12/20/2011
Olga Civitarese	11/17/2011
Herbert Cherowitz	12/16/2011
James M. Chestnut	12/29/2011
Erika M. Chojnacki	10/18/2011
Louise Copeland	12/06/2011
John Coughlan	12/10/2011
Mary D'Antonio	12/01/2011
Michael DiFilippo	11/16/2011
Joseph Duffy	12/17/2011
Robert E. Gable	11/20/2011
Wanda A. Garrison	12/03/2011
Elizabeth L. Giger	11/20/2011
Adelene M. Gorga	10/23/2011
Frank J. Grossman	09/30/2011
William W. Hanna	10/18/2011
Malcolm D. Hepburn	11/25/2011
Dorothy Harris	10/27/2011
Thomas E. Hatton	10/20/2011
Dorothy Hilbert	12/30/2011
William P. Hillgen	10/20/2011
Seymour Holtzman	11/29/2011
Irving Hozier	10/20/2011
Dorothy P. Huhn	12/14/2011
Edward G. Husted	10/25/2011
Anna Kowalewski	09/27/2011
Max Kushner	11/07/2011
Nathan Kushner	11/01/2011
Anna LaGrossa	10/28/2011
Jack H. Langendorf	11/13/2011
Elsie R. Leto	12/28/2011
Marie Magee	09/23/2011
Rudolph G. Marusco	10/07/2011
Naomi A. McConnell	12/16/2011
Edward J. McMenamin	12/20/2011
Leora Moses	11/10/2011
Walter Myers	10/09/2011
Harvey L. Nichols	11/30/2011
Nora Paris	11/22/2011
Veronica Quinn	09/22/2011
Theresa Raymond	10/18/2011
Patrick Redmond	09/28/2011
Rainey Richmond	09/19/2011
George Riddick	12/27/2011
Carmella Sacca	11/04/2011
Paul D. Sargent	10/19/2011
Harry R. Saul	12/13/2011
Daniel S. Tannous	09/16/2011
Anna Thatcher	09/08/2011
Ruth M. Underwood	12/18/2011



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## Get your free heart screening today!

**A**ll eligible participants of the UFCW and the Tri-State Health and Welfare Funds are entitled to a free Heart Cam screening.

The Heart Cam, or Electron Beam Tomography (EBT), is an imaging system that is clinically proven to detect the buildup of coronary calcium by taking ultra-fast pictures of your beating heart. It is a simple, painless, fast and non-invasive test.

With early detection, heart disease can be effectively prevented with lifestyle changes and available medication.

Effective June 1, 2011, eligible spouses are also able to receive a free Heart Cam screening.

Find out your risk of coronary disease. Call the Fund office today for details.

## 2012 scholarships available

**UFCW International scholarship:** The union is about more than a paycheck and benefits. The UFCW is about workers coming together to build better lives.

It's about creating opportunity.

That's why each year the UFCW awards several scholarships to UFCW members or their dependents. The UFCW began accepting applications on **Jan. 16** and will continue accepting applications until **April 16**.

Visit [www.ufcw.org/scholarship](http://www.ufcw.org/scholarship) or contact [scholarship@ufcw.org](mailto:scholarship@ufcw.org) with questions.

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# Uncivil words cause civil wars

You're a socialist."

"You're anti-capitalist."

"You're anti-business."

"You don't want to see rich people succeed..."

"Are you CRAZY?"

... And this is just what my family says to me!

The tone of the venomous verbal attacks I read every day online — on Facebook and Twitter and in the "comments" section under articles published on news websites — is, in fact, far worse.

There is no limit to the abuse that passes for political commentary. It doesn't even have to be relevant to the topic at hand — you can read an article about medical care for kittens and someone will post a nasty comment about the president's ethnicity or a general slur against "liberals" who are, allegedly, ruining America.

Our nation has had to endure this kind of rhetoric before. During the presidential election of 1796, the Federalists called Thomas Jefferson's Democratic Republicans "cut-throats who walk in rags and sleep amidst filth and vermin."

Four years later, spokesmen for Jefferson's party called President John Adams a "repulsive pedant," a "gross hypocrite" and "a hideous hermaphroditical character which has neither the force and firmness of a man, nor the gentleness

and sensibility of a woman."

We might excuse such behavior by reminding ourselves of the youthfulness of our Republic. But history shows us the road where such vitriol can take us. Within a few decades, the uncivil violence of our rhetoric was transformed into the literal violence of the Civil War.

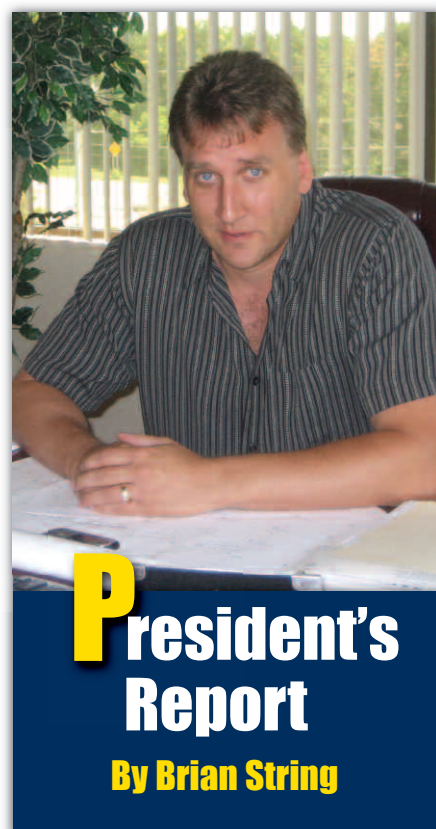
## Constructive criticism

I like to think we are capable of learning lessons from history. When I was young, our country was still nursing the wounds it suffered during the social conflicts of the 1960s. We had our big political battles, but the leading commentators of the day were thoughtful intellectuals like Eric Sevareid and William F. Buckley.

Today, their role has been taken over by angry culture warriors like Rush Limbaugh, Glenn Beck and Ann Coulter (on the Right) and Bill Maher and Keith Olbermann (on the Left).

Following the example of these "thought leaders," Americans are hiding behind their PCs and smart phones to toss verbal missiles at everybody who dares to disagree with them. Emboldened by anonymity, they feel free to say hurtful things they would never say to another person's face.

We blame our representatives in Congress for their failure to work together while addressing the nation's problems, but they are only reflecting the hyper-confrontational mood of their constituents.



We have the right to express ourselves, but we need to do it constructively. For the sake of our country, we need to reach inside of ourselves and rediscover our capacity for self-control.

Let's take the hate out of politics and let's be more careful about the things we say to each other. All right?

Handwritten signature of Brian String.