

Local 152



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UFCW Local 152 Unity

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United Food and Commercial
Workers Local 152

EDITOR

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UNION HEADQUARTERS

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Local 152 meets with A&P members to discuss the future

Meatcutters and retail clerks from Pathmark and Super Fresh supermarkets (both owned by A&P) met with union officials on Aug. 14 to ask questions and discuss changes related to A&P's ongoing bankruptcy reorganization.

IT PAYS TO BE UNION!

Grievances filed or resolved:

3rd Quarter 2012

98

2012 Total

326

Back pay and benefits restored to members:

3rd Quarter 2012

\$11,246.91

2012 Total

\$100,748.20

Steward Jorge Mulero gives workers a union education

Even before Shipping Team Leader Jorge Mulero became the chief shop steward at Johanna Foods, he was already acting as an on-the-job ambassador for the union.

“We have a mostly Hispanic work force at Johanna,” Mulero said. “I speak both English and Spanish, so people were asking me questions about the union before I became a steward.”

Mulero was hired at Johanna in 2005 and became a steward following the ratification of the company’s contract last year.

“It was a great learning tool for me to be part of the negotiating committee,” he said.

“Johanna Foods is my first union job,” Mulero continued. “It makes a huge difference having job security.”

On learning to become a steward, Mulero said:

“I would follow the previous steward and ask a lot of questions to become knowledgeable,” he said. “Whoever comes after me I expect will do the same thing — just listen and learn.”

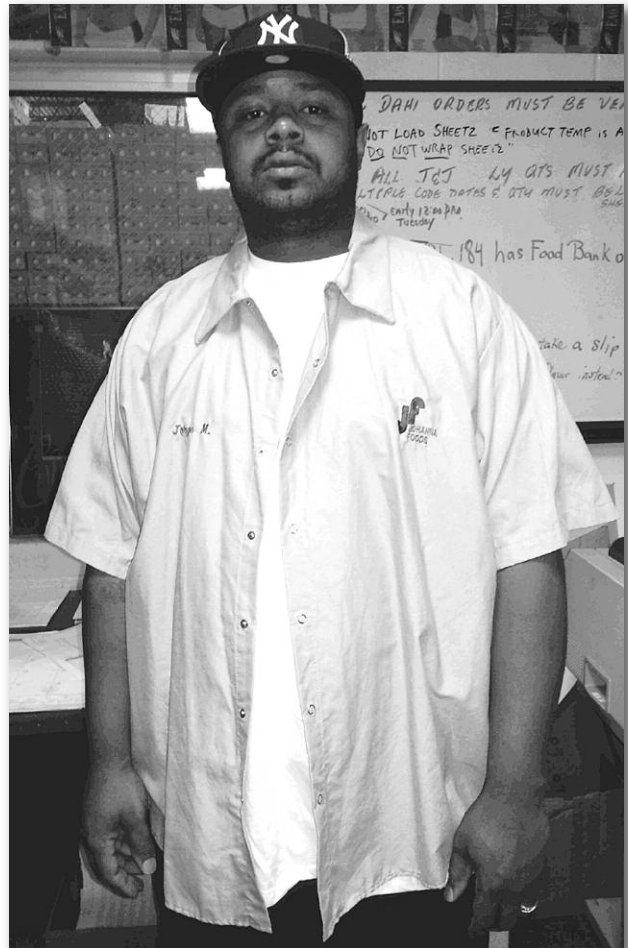
The life of a steward

Mulero said his primary job as a steward is to handle write-ups, assist with grievances and “make sure everyone on the job is OK with their health care.”

“I helped two guys win their arbitration on pay,” he said. “I was really happy I could help those guys get something out of the grievance process.”

“A lot of people really don’t know what the union has done for us until they see the process themselves,” he continued. “They don’t have faith in the system until they have to go through something that shows how important the union is.”

“Now that I have participated in the grievance process, I am better prepared to explain to my coworkers what the union really does for its members.”



Jorge Mulero

When he’s not on the job, Mulero enjoys working on cars and spending time with his family. Married since 2001, he has two sons and one daughter between the ages of 14 and 18 years old.

“I’m also working on remodeling the house I bought in 2007,” he said.

‘Johanna Foods is my first union job,’ Mulero said. ‘It makes a huge difference having job security.’

Supervalu thoughts

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

I've got to give new Supervalu CEO Wayne Sales credit. In five short weeks on the job, he's already made more decisive moves that his predecessor Craig Herkert made in three years at the helm.

Shaking up his staff was a necessary move. No offense to Janel Haugarth, but her former role as EVP (executive vice president) for supply chain was not a great fit for her or the company. Janel's a great team player (which will help her in her new role as EVP for business transformation) who knows the wholesale business inside out, but really wasn't qualified to be Supervalu's primary merchandising and procurement executive.

If you don't believe me, ask Supervalu's key suppliers and brokers and they'll reaffirm that the merchandising position at Supervalu needed upgrading. However, to be fair, improving SVU's merchandising and vendor relations would have been difficult for anyone given the company's financial results over the past several years.

New EVP for merchandising Tim Lowe, whose most recent job at Supervalu was as president of Shoppers Food & Pharmacy, also will face a sharp learning curve, but his diverse retail experience should be a plus. In fact, working for anybody other than Herkert should be regarded as a positive.

And as for Kevin Holt being named president of Supervalu's entire retail operation, I think that also sends a strong signal of empowerment. Of course, in my book, virtually any choice to head retail ops would be an improvement over the recently departed Pete Van Helden, who, despite his gregarious and outgoing manner (as viewed by the associates), didn't seem to accomplish much in his tenure at Supervalu.

Holt has a huge task in front of him, but his field experience with a winning organization (Meijer, Inc.) and a losing one (Sears/Kmart) should have at least left him adequately battle tested.

As for the recent round of store closings (the first under Sales' watch), this move should be regarded as basic housekeeping. There'll be more painful news to come over the next year.

Sales really has no choice. Herkert, and his predecessor Jeff Noddle, damaged the company so severely that closing stores and selling divisions (if not all of Supervalu) is the former tire salesman's best strategy going forward.

And while Save-A-Lot and Jewel appear to be the most saleable assets (along with several of the original Supervalu regional chains), the rest of the retailer/wholesaler's properties are going to be more difficult to sell.

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



Bradley Beach workers vote to ratify contract

At a meeting in August, public-sector workers in Bradley Beach, N.J., voted unanimously to ratify their first contract as members of Local 152. **Photo at left:** Bargaining committee, from left: Shop Steward Pat Allen, Shop Steward Kelly Barrett, Union Representative Tom Hartle, Shop Steward Gail Krzyzczuk and Director of Collective Bargaining Mike McWilliams. **Photo at right:** Members of the Bradley Beach Public Works Department with McWilliams and Hartle.

Vote for a stronger middle class on Nov. 6

You have a right to vote. For the sake of our endangered middle class, please use that right wisely on Nov. 6. Vote for candidates who support causes that are important to the economic survival of people who work for a living.

But before you vote, be sure to educate yourself about all of the political races on the ballot — from the presidency to local city councils and school boards. Take the time to research who has the best interests of your family, your coworkers and your community in mind.

Some of us may default to voting along party lines, but as we consistently discuss at Local 152, party affiliation is not the only factor to consider when deciding whether a candidate deserves your vote.

The issues that matter

The most important factor by far is the candidate's commitment to support the goals of working people.

While friends of labor usually gravitate toward the Democratic Party, this is not always the case. It's not common these days, but I remember a time when many Republican candidates supported unions and received their endorsements in turn.

'If we stop fighting for workers' rights a single minute, the guys on the other side will swoop in and try to take them all away.'

It is our job as informed union voters to ensure that, regardless of their political affiliations, politicians who support us are rewarded and those who oppose us are punished. That is the American way.

Unfortunately, there is no downtime in the fight to preserve our middle class. If we stop fighting for workers' rights a single minute, the guys on the other side will swoop in and try to take them all away.

In this edition of *Unity* is a point-by-point comparison of President Barack Obama and his challenger, Mitt Romney, on issues that affect working families. The choice between them is absolutely clear: President Obama stands with us while Romney stands against us.



Secretary-Treasurer's Report

By Anthony Benigno

When union members speak, everyone listens. Be sure to speak loudly on Nov. 6!

Don't forget to vote!

Election Day is Nov. 6, 2012. To find the location of your nearest polling location, visit the U.S. Election Assistance Commission at www.eac.gov, select "Resources for Voters" and choose "Contact Your State" to bring up an interactive map.



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**.

Happy retirement!



Joe Posimo

34-year union member Joe Posimo, center, has retired from R&R ShopRite. Pictured with him are Director John Robbins, left, and Shop Steward Ed Nescio.



New shop steward Ray Gellock

24-year union member Ray Gellock, center, has taken on the new responsibility of shop steward at Johanna Foods. Pictured with him are Chief Steward Jorge Mulero, left and Director John Robbins.

UFCW Local 152's 7th Annual Charity Golf Tournament





Member Maureen Larsen making a return trip to the Special Olympics

Local 152 member Maureen Larsen is one of only three New Jersey-ites who will represent their state in the Special Olympics next January in South Korea.

A competitor in alpine skiing, Larsen also excels at other sports. She received a silver medal for the 3,000-meter run during the 2003 Special Olympics in Ireland.

Larsen, who has Down syndrome, has worked at Acme 7835 in Seaville, N.J., since 2007. When she was a senior in high school, she participated in a work-study program at the Acme location in Sea Isle City. She enjoyed the experience so much that she applied for full-time work at the Seaville store, where she bags gro-

ceries, organizes shopping carts and cleans the shelves.

"She's doing exactly what she wants to do," Larsen's mother Jeanie said. "She loves her job."

"Acme has been cooperative and supportive," Jeanie said. "I talk to her on her break and tell her, 'If I don't hear from you, I assume it's going right.' Maureen just figures out how to make it work, and it works."

Maureen learned how to ski from her father, Keith, while visiting her brothers and sisters at colleges across the country. She has tested the slopes in Vermont, Colorado, Utah and elsewhere.

After participating in team sports in high school, Larsen competed in

cross-country and track events for the Special Olympics, leading up to her triumph in Ireland. She then put her skiing skills to the test, leading to her selection for the 2013 games, in a group of only 150 Americans.

"You have to be the whole package to compete in the Special Olympics," Jeanie said. In addition to sporting ability, competitors must be able to take care of themselves and be willing to travel.

Looking ahead

In addition to her parents, two of Maureen's four brothers and sisters will make the trip to South Korea next year to watch her compete. The other two siblings will visit Lake Placid, N.Y., in December, where she will train for a week.

"She purchased an iPad with the money she has earned from Acme," Jeanie said, "so we'll be doing a lot of FaceTime conversations during the trip."

To celebrate her accomplishment, the family is throwing Maureen a party this month at their marina in Ocean City.

"We're pulling the whole community out to wish her well," Jeanie said. "It's an incredible achievement."

Get aware!

October is National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM). It is a national campaign that raises awareness about disability employment issues and celebrates the many and varied contributions of America's workers with disabilities.

To learn more about the campaign, visit www.dol.gov/odep/topics/ndeam

Winners of the Local 152 and The Bryan D. Ross Foundation 'Phillies Ticket Raffle'



Left photo: First place winner Lori Hentges, at right. **Right photo:** A special thank you to Patricia Milburn of Acme #7824 in Ocean City, N.J., the top ticket seller.



Second place winner Bill Clark, at right.



Third place winner Jennifer Hogan, center.

Union representative REPORT

The grievance process

□ In this column, Local 152 Union Representatives share their thoughts on contract issues, safety and what's going on at the workplace.

The grievance and arbitration procedure provision of the contract is an important benefit of union membership.

A grievance is a complaint filed by the Union on behalf of a member in response to an alleged violation of the union contract by management. An independent judge — an arbitrator — ultimately decides if the contract has been violated and what steps, if any, must be taken to correct the situation.

The grievance and arbitration procedure is key to enforcing the contract and protecting you and your job. It's like "job insurance." You hope it will never be needed, but when it is, it's there for you.

Timing is key

Over the years, we've used the procedure often to get members' jobs back after they've been unfairly terminated. We've also been able to get members hundreds of thousands of dollars in back pay.

If you see a violation that affects you or anyone else, call your Union Representative immediately. Filing a grievance in a timely manner is important because the col-



By Danette Montes-Palmore

lective bargaining agreements contain filing deadlines that vary from contract to contract.

Filing deadlines also may vary in the same contract regarding cases of termination as compared to other alleged contractual violations.

If a grievance is filed after the allotted time, the company has the right to deny the grievance, ending any possibility of resolving the matter through the grievance procedure.

Unfortunately, in many cases members do not request a grievance until they are several steps into the employer's progressive disciplinary procedure, at the point where suspension or termination notices are issued.

If you believe you are being treated unfairly, it is important to contact your Union Representative when that first verbal or written warning is issued.



Issue after issue, **President Obama** stands with working families while **Mitt Romney** stands with the top 1 percent

President Obama

Jobs: President Obama's American Recovery and Reinvestment Act saved or created 3.6 million jobs and kept us from falling into a depression. His policies have helped add more than 4.3 million private sector jobs and he saved the auto industry from collapse.

Workers' Rights: President Obama moved aggressively to protect workers' rights, pay and workplace health and safety. He appointed strong labor advocates to the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), which issued regulations making union representation elections more fair.

Health Care: President Obama signed the Affordable Care Act that will provide health insurance for 33 million Americans, stop insurance companies from denying coverage due to pre-existing conditions and prevent millions of people from going bankrupt due to medical costs. Already, 54 million Americans have received preventive coverage with no out-of-pocket costs and 2.5 million more young adults have health insurance.

Federal Budget: President Obama is working to balance the budget over the long term through a combination of spending cuts and tax increases on the wealthiest Americans.

Social Security and Medicare: President Obama is working to strengthen these pillars of senior citizens' retirement and health security.

Wall Street Reform: President Obama led the charge for and signed the most comprehensive reform of the financial industry since the 1930s to prevent the risk-taking and abuses that caused the crash of 2008.



Mitt Romney

Jobs: Romney called for letting the auto industry go bankrupt, he's for job-killing spending cuts and he wants to retain tax breaks for companies that move jobs offshore.

Workers' Rights: Romney wants to enact a national "right-to-work-for-less" law that would drive down wages and benefits, and he called the president's NLRB appointees "labor stooges."

Health Care: Romney would repeal the Affordable Care Act — even though it was modeled on his own statewide health care reform bill in Massachusetts — undoing all of its benefits and protections for tens of millions of Americans. This action would also increase the budget deficit by \$1.5 trillion over the next two decades.

Federal Budget: Romney would add \$10.7 trillion to the debt over the next decade by cutting taxes for millionaires — he would cut his own already-low taxes in half — and by increasing defense spending. At the same time, he wants to slash investments in education, homeland security, food inspection, health research, transportation, food aid, veterans' health care, Medicare, Medicaid and Social Security.

Social Security and Medicare: Romney wants to end Medicare as we know it by converting it into a voucher program that will end the guarantee of benefits and force senior citizens to pay far more out of pocket. His budget would likely result in a 40 percent cut in Social Security benefits.

Wall Street Reform: Romney wants to repeal the financial industry reform law and let Wall Street run amok again.

Retirements

Name	Company	Date			
Lamotte Allen	Acme Markets	06/01/2012	Linda McNamara	Super Fresh	07/01/2012
Michael J. Amalfitano, Jr.	Pathmark Stores	06/01/2012	Regina A. Miller	UFCW Local 152 Staff	07/01/2012
Geraldine Anderson	Wilson's	06/01/2012	George W. Mink	Acme Markets	07/01/2012
Glenn M. Ashman	Murphy's Marketplace	07/01/2012	Harry D. Moore	Acme Markets	06/01/2012
Robyn Bagby	Acme Markets	06/01/2012	Carmen Morales	General Mills	05/01/2012
Ellen Benson	Kraft Foods	03/01/2012	Diane J. Moser	Super Fresh	06/01/2012
John J. Blasucci, Jr.	Pathmark Stores	06/01/2012	Victoria A. Mowery	Acme Markets	07/01/2012
James V. Boffa	Super Fresh	05/01/2012	Dennis J. Nardo	Acme Markets	05/01/2012
Patricia A. Brock	Super Fresh	05/01/2012	Walter Newman, Jr.	Village ShopRite	07/01/2012
John J. Brown	Acme Markets	05/01/2012	Deborah Patterson	Kraft Foods	06/01/2012
Willie Brown	Kansas Beef Industries	07/01/2012	Sharon Paynter	Food Fair/Pantry Pride	05/01/2012
Laura A. Burke	Pathmark Stores	05/01/2012	Kathleen A. Per	Super Fresh	06/01/2012
Jeremiah Carrol	Kraft Foods	02/01/2012	Marlene Perkins	Riverdel Thriftway	06/01/2012
Mary L. Chadwick	Acme Markets	07/01/2012	Suzanne D. Perkins	Pathmark Stores	05/01/2012
Kaj L. Cheesman	Super Fresh	08/01/2012	Jacqueline McAndrew-Pinto	Pathmark Stores	07/01/2012
Teresa Coleman	Kraft Foods	04/01/2012	Albert H. Price, III	Acme Markets	05/01/2012
Benjamin Czyzewski	Super Fresh	05/01/2012	Sylvia E. Pye	Acme Markets	08/01/2012
Diana Decaro	Acme Markets	05/01/2012	Jo-Ann M. Rech	UFCW Local 152 H&W Benefits	07/01/2012
Barbara Delinski	Acme Markets	05/01/2012	Mary Regler	Quay Meats & Provisions	07/01/2012
Joseph K. Dengler	Super Fresh	05/01/2012	Faye Richardson	Kraft Foods	02/01/2012
Joyce Dick	Pathmark Stores	05/01/2012	Pauline G. Rogers	Super Fresh	05/01/2012
Richard A. DiDomenico	Pathmark Stores	05/01/2012	Thomas Sachs	Pathmark Stores	05/01/2012
Mark A. DiDonato	Super Fresh	07/01/2012	Arthur Schulman	Pathmark Stores	05/01/2012
John L. Donaghue	Pathmark Stores	05/01/2012	John Seals	Kraft Foods	03/01/2012
William J. Donahue	Acme Markets	05/01/2012	Charolenne Shehorn	Kraft Foods	07/01/2012
Teresa Drummond	Kraft Foods	06/01/2012	Michael J. Shellenberger	Berks Packing Company	06/01/2012
Wallace Fearn	Village ShopRite	05/01/2012	Theresa A. Shenkar	Pathmark Stores	05/01/2012
Geraldine M. Fidler	Super Fresh	09/01/2012	Sherian I. Slatten	Pathmark Stores	05/01/2012
Irene Fischer	Murphy's Market	05/01/2012	Rufus A. Steele	Newark ShopRite/Consol'd	07/01/2012
Paul A. Flanders	Eickhoff Supermarkets	07/01/2012	Thomas Q. Steenberg	Acme Markets	07/01/2012
Herman Fuller	Kraft Foods	07/01/2012	Ernestine Royster-Stewart	M&E Cedarbrook	05/01/2012
Kathleen L. Graf	Acme Markets	05/01/2012	Beverly Sturm	Kraft Foods	06/01/2012
Raymond P. Hackendorn	Delaware Supermarkets	07/01/2012	Thomas F. Taylor, Sr.	Pathmark Stores	05/01/2012
George Heesh	Kraft Foods	07/01/2012	Lourenda Thomas	Kraft Foods	04/01/2012
Alfred T. Herman, Jr.	Pathmark Stores	05/01/2012	John A. Tillman	Pathmark Stores	05/01/2012
Denise Hewitt	Somerset Stores, LLC	07/01/2012	Robert R. Tingle	Milden & White	07/01/2012
Shirley Mae Holiday	Pathmark Stores	06/01/2012	Robert Trout	Drexeline Supermarkets	07/01/2012
Maryann Hoover	Village ShopRite	06/01/2012	Jose Velez, Sr.	General Mills	05/03/2012
Beverly Hughes	Supermarkets General	09/01/2012	John Versace	George Wollman Wholesale	05/01/2012
James Hurd	Kraft Foods	03/01/2012	Larry E. Wagstaff	George L. Wells Meat Co.	05/01/2012
Johnny Hurd	Kraft Foods	07/01/2012	James P. Watson	Super Fresh	09/01/2012
John N. Iovannicci	Super Fresh	06/01/2012	Loretta Wehmeyer	Village ShopRite	05/01/2012
Virginia Jacobs	Brown's Superstores	07/01/2012	Vincent W. Wilkerson, Jr.	Pathmark Stores	05/01/2012
Hilda Jones	Kraft Foods	07/01/2012	Noreen Williams	Super Fresh	07/01/2012
Gertrude Jarkowsky	GMS Zallie Holdings, Inc.	05/01/2012	Raymond Wojnar	Super Fresh	06/01/2012
Daniel Kasprzyk	Pathmark Stores	06/01/2012	Joanne Yodis	Trevoze ShopNBag	05/01/2012
Arlene H. Katzer	UFCW Local 152 H&W Benefits	06/01/2012			
Mary Ann Koenig	Pathmark Stores	05/01/2012			
Edward R. Krystofolski	Pathmark Stores	07/01/2012			
Clarice A. LaCroix	Food Fair/Pantry Pride	07/01/2012			
Cynthia Larimore	Kraft Foods	06/01/2012			
Olivia Laudenslager	Acme Markets	07/01/2012			
Gloria Lebesco	Acme Markets	07/01/2012			
Georgene M. Lerch	ShopRite of Bethlehem	06/01/2012			
Donna L. Lewis	Zallie's Supermarkets	05/01/2012			
John Lockerman	Kraft Foods	06/01/2012			
Jeannette D. Lowry	Acme Markets	07/01/2012			
Carmen Matos	General Mills	03/09/2012			
James T. McCalla	Zallie's Supermarkets	06/01/2012			
John C. McDevitt, Sr.	Super Fresh	06/01/2012			
Brenda McGinnis	Kraft Foods	06/01/2012			

In Memoriam

Anna Appleby	07/13/2012
Gregory D. Bailey	07/17/2012
Dorothy A. Baran	07/12/2012
Edwin V. Berg	05/27/2012
William J. Carver	07/02/2012
Frank E. Casile	05/06/2012
Kathleen Connolly	07/31/2012
Kathleen Denver	05/19/2012
Joseph M. DiMarco	06/10/2012
John D. Fesko	07/12/2012
(continued)	

Mobile flu shot van schedule 2012

New Jersey (all dates 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

- 10/22** ShopRite of Brooklawn, Route 130 and Browning Road, (856) 742-8700
10/23 ShopRite of West Deptford, Route 45 and Parkville Station Road, (856) 468-8700
10/24 ACME Markets, 631 Mantua Ave., Woodbury, (856) 848-0224
10/25 ShopRite of Mullica Hill, 143 Bridgeton Pike, (856) 357-9301
10/29 ShopRite of Williamstown, 100 South Black Horse Pike, (856) 728-5600
10/30 ACME Markets, 515 Berlin Cross-Keys Road, Sicklerville, (856) 728-3674
10/31 ACME Markets, 731 North Delsea Dr., Glassboro, (856) 582-0305

Pennsylvania

- 11/1** ShopRite of West Chester, 1115 West Chester Pike, (610) 696-4066, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Delaware

- 11/2** ShopRite Brandywine Commons, 1300 Rocky Run Parkway, Wilmington, (302) 477-3270, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
11/3 ShopRite of Christiana, 501 South Walnut St., Wilmington, (302) 225-6900, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
11/9 Super Fresh, 401 New London Road, Newark, (302) 368-4222, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
11/10 ShopRite of First State Plaza, 1600 Newport Pike, Stanton, (302) 999-1227, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.
11/14 ShopRite of Governor's Square, 1101 Governor's Place, Bear, (302) 392-2900, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
11/17 ShopRite of Newark, 37 Chestnut Hill Plaza, Newark, (302) 292-1220, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m.



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

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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.

(continued)

Barbara C. Flynn	05/19/2012
Charles H. Fowler	07/29/2012
Bertha M. France	07/05/2012
Yolanda French	05/28/2012
Thomas J. Fronckowiak	06/18/2012
Nathan Gecht	07/23/2012
Lawrence Grassi	05/16/2012
Elizabeth K. Grassia	05/27/2012
Marjorie A. Greenberg	07/15/2012
Inez Hammer	07/21/2012
Elizabeth M. Hanna	07/11/2012
James C. Harley	05/09/2012
Jane H. Hayes	07/30/2012
Donald Hoover	05/18/2012
Edmund F. Iacobucci	05/27/2012
Camillus C. Kirk	05/30/2012
Mary C. Knapp	07/29/2012
Irene R. Kovacs	05/08/2012
Sarah Krumenacker	07/18/2012
Bernard P. LaCroix	06/06/2012

Verona Lozada	05/28/2012
Charles F. McCann, Jr.	05/15/2012
John Massa	07/25/2012
Herbert J. Maxvitat	07/02/2012
Edward B. O'Neil, Jr.	07/02/2012
Dolores A. Olson	07/13/2012
Frank M. Pagel	07/27/2012
Eva A. Parsons	06/08/2012
Gordon H. Perkins	05/21/2012
Salvatore Ranieri	07/05/2012
Benjamin H. Read	07/10/2012
Robert Regler	06/08/2012
Leslie A. Richardson	06/24/2012
Altha Roundtree	05/27/2012
Betty J. Sniffin	06/29/2012
Ellen Stafford	07/16/2012
Joanne Thal	05/04/2012
Francis Thompson, Jr.	07/04/2012
Ida A. Van Hart	05/29/2012
Clary L. Wade	07/02/2012
Sandra Whitaker	07/08/2012
Frank V. Zitko	05/21/2012

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Walmart workers protest exploitation with series of historic actions

For decades, Walmart has been the Labor Movement's biggest obstacle to organizing the retail industry and restoring stability to workers' wages and benefits.

As long as Walmart remains anti-union and keeps expanding into new areas, the UFCW and our allies are forced to confront challenges to union market share and our ability to negotiate stronger contracts for union members.

So far, Walmart has succeeded in pushing back our organizing efforts through a sophisticated program of anti-union propaganda and intimidation against its employees.

In some cases, the company has even illegally closed profitable stores to keep unions out.

Lately, however, a series of events indicate that Walmart's formidable wall against union organizing is beginning to crack.

In a historic development, more than 100 workers at 28 stores in 12 states have walked off the job in recent weeks and are picketing in front of Walmart stores.

Workers at a Walmart-contracted warehouse near Chicago struck for 21 days and won full back-pay and a review of their unsafe working conditions. And in Southern California's Inland Empire, employees at another Walmart-contracted warehouse walked out and marched 50 miles to Los Angeles, where they rallied for a living wage and affordable benefits.

Now, hundreds of Walmart workers across North America are talking about

another walkout on Black Friday, the day after Thanksgiving when shoppers traditionally flood retail stores looking for holiday bargains.

While Walmart associates do not officially have a union, they have the support of the UFCW and other unions in their quest for dignity and respect.

With assistance from the UFCW, many current and former Walmart workers have enlisted in OUR Walmart, which has presented a list of demands to the company's corporate offices in Bentonville, Ark.

Meanwhile, workers at Walmart's contracted warehouses have formed an unofficial union, Warehouse Workers United.

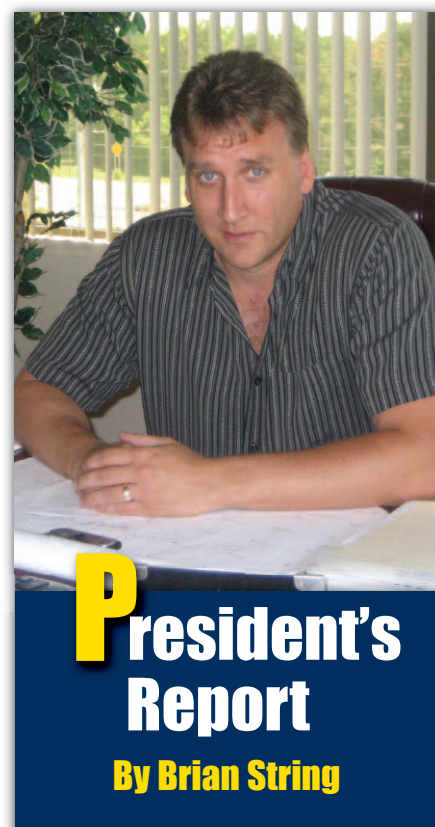
Standing up for what is right

The recent labor actions hitting Walmart are adding to a chain of public-relations nightmares for the company that began in April, when senior Walmart executives were linked to a major bribery scandal in Mexico.

More recently, Walmart suffered more bad press when it started building one of its Neighborhood Markets in Los Angeles' Chinatown. Walmart's agents obtained the building permits hours before a citywide ban on such chain retail stores was to take effect.

In response, thousands of protesters took to the streets in the largest anti-Walmart rally in U.S. history.

A similar march occurred in San Diego



a few weeks later, when Walmart demolished a landmark historical building without notice to make way for another Neighborhood Market.

Walmart workers took prominent roles in both of these actions.

As president of an important local union of the UFCW, I am proud to see workers in the retail industry stand up for their rights. These brave souls deserve our support.

Brian String