



Local 152 leaders, staff, friends and family gather in Dennis Township to support public workers.



8th Annual

Local 152

Charity Golf Tournament

see page 6

Fighting for fairness

Union activists rally for public employees in Dennis Township

Union activists from UFCW Local 152, along with friends, family and community supporters, rallied in support of public workers in Dennis Township, N.J., on Oct. 8.

Wearing blue union shirts, the activists made their presence felt at a meeting of the township's governing committee. They urged the committee to engage in fair bargaining with Local 152 to reach an agreement for 13 township workers.

Union leaders have been negotiating a contract for these employees, who include clerical staff, supervisors and recreation department workers, since April.

Seeking respect

The workers sought representation from the union after being denied raises over the past three years. Some of the workers had their wages reduced.

The township's non-union employees — almost all of them women — sought representation by Local 152 after they realized that they were sin-

(Please see page 2)

Also inside: Members at Work • Irv R. String Scholarship information

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UFCW Local 152 Unity

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Union activists from Local 152 filled the room at the Oct. 8 Dennis Township committee meeting. **Below:** Local 152 Executive Assistant to the President Dan Konczyk (second from left) and other representatives from the union meet with workers.

Fighting for fairness

(Continued from front page)
gled out for the wage cuts.

After the township meeting, union leadership met with the workers to further discuss their priorities, including restoring the reduced wages. In addition to seeking raises, the township

workers want a commitment to protect their health benefits.

“We are working to secure a fair and equitable agreement for these workers,” President Brian String said. “They deserve respect for their contributions to Dennis Township.”



The UFCW Local 152 Women's Network will host a “Teddy Bear Drive” for The Arc, benefitting people with intellectual and developmental disabilities. New teddy bears and stuffed animals can be dropped off at the UFCW Local 152 headquarters at 701 Route 50 in Mays Landing, N.J. The deadline for drop-offs is Monday, Dec. 2. If you have any questions, please contact Danette Montes-Palmore at (888) 564-6152, ext. 3920.



General Membership meetings

Maple Shade, N.J.

Somerspoint, N.J.

Philadelphia, Penn.



From left: ShopRite members Susan Hamran and John Moyer, and Union Representative Edna Inge.



From left: Melitta Coffee member Joe Beck, Director of Collective Bargaining Mike McWilliams, Union Representative Edna Inge and Melitta Coffee member Mike Benson.

UFCW Local 152 Retirees' Club 2014 meetings

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

The club meets at social get-togethers throughout the year to greet former coworkers, enjoy coffee and donuts and make plans for the future.

Meetings are held on Mondays. The meeting dates for 2014 are:

March 3 (Yellow Room)

May 5 (Yellow Room)

July 7 (Luncheon)

Oct. 6 (Yellow Room)

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.

IT PAYS TO BE UNION!

Grievances filed or resolved:

4th Quarter 2013

84

2013 to date

427

Back pay and benefits restored to members:

4th Quarter 2013

\$59,536.20

2013 to date

\$185,138.34

'Round the trade

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

Safeway has announced that it plans to exit the Chicago market early next year. The company operates 72 Dominick's stores in the city.

Much like the company's withdrawal from the Delaware Valley market 18 months ago when it sold what stores remained from its failed Genuardi's purchase (mainly to Ahold USA's Giant/Carlisle unit), the real question that should be asked is: Why did either of these decisions take more than 10 years to make?

Part of the answer could lie in the fact that new Safeway CEO Robert Edwards' signature was on neither deal (both deals were made by former chief executive Steve Burd) and, based on the declining numbers, Edwards was more than ready to cut bait. The Pleasanton, Calif.-based retailer originally acquired 116 Dominick's stores in 1998 for \$1.2 billion, plus debt.

Yucaipa looks to acquire Fresh & Easy

An update on the proposed acquisition of most of Tesco's

Fresh & Easy stores by private equity firm Yucaipa: While Yucaipa remains the clear frontrunner, F&E filed for bankruptcy protection, which certainly will delay the proposed acquisition while, among other things, giving the West Coast retailer some relief from its store leases. (A&P also sought the Chapter 11 route prior to completing its deal with Yucaipa in 2012.)

If Yucaipa gains control of the majority of the F&E units, we continue to believe that managing partner Ron Burkle will convert those 150 F&E units to the banner of Wild Oats, a company in which he was heavily invested until the natural and organics retailer was sold to Whole Foods in 2007.

Unrealistic expectations

Here's an example of why I believe the view of many Wall Street analysts who cover the grocery industry is misguided.

Costco recently released its fourth quarter and year-end financials. For its fourth quarter (ended Sept. 1), the retailer posted an overall sales increase of 0.8 percent, a comp store gain of 5 percent (in the U.S.), and its earnings rose 1.3 percent to \$617 million.

I'd say those were pretty strong numbers, especially given the state of the economy and the ferocity of the competitive landscape. Apparently, I must be reading from a different hymnal, because the view of many financial analysts was that Costco's numbers were "disappointing," "soft," or "struggling." You gotta wonder if many of these Wall Street residents have recently visited a Costco store.

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

Organizing report



Handbilling outside the Ready Pac plant in Florence, N.J. **From left:** Union Representative Joe Stathius, Director of Organizing Chad Brooks and Union Representatives Cary Lawson, Hugh Giordano, Mike Thompson and Jose Echevarria. **Inset:** Handbilling at Pitman Manor senior living.

Union issues are issues that affect all workers

Coverage of labor issues is rare enough in the mainstream media, but even when news programs or newspapers turn their attention to the Labor Movement, many non-union workers simply tune out the information.

Why is this? I suspect that many workers who don't have union representation see any issue involving the Labor Movement as "a union issue" and assume it's something that doesn't affect them.

Of course, that attitude is wrong at best. At worst, it's destructive to the progress of all workers.

Far-reaching effects

Issues affecting unions eventually affect all workers. The Labor Movement is on the cutting edge of advances in

workers' rights, whether through legislation or negotiated contract language. These advances may only affect union members in the beginning, but their effects can become far-reaching.

When we negotiate a strong contract with one of our employers, its impact is felt throughout the industry. Other employers look to what we have accomplished as a model, and soon enough other workers in the industry are looking to enjoy the same benefits we do.

And those other workers looking to emulate our contracts can be in other local unions or even non-union locations.

Non-union workers inevitably look to the details of a strong labor agreement and say "Why not me?" when they decide to start union campaigns in their own workplaces.

We can't, however, assume that non-union workers who don't pay attention to the Labor Movement are lazy or uninformed.

It's our job to educate all workers about the issues that affect them, and if they're not getting involved, it means that it's time to revise our strategies and redouble our efforts.



Secretary-Treasurer's Report

By Anthony Benigno

A better future

The key is to inform non-union workers about how these issues affect their daily lives. Sometimes it's as simple as reminding workers that good union contracts raise the overall compensation for all workers in that industry.

When our fellow workers are educated about the Labor Movement and the cynical games that corporations play with our livelihoods, they support our causes. They recognize that working people are all on the same team and want the same shot at a better life.

'When we negotiate a strong contract with one of our employers, its impact is felt throughout the industry.'



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**.

8th Annual Local 152 Charity Golf Tournament



The Eighth Annual UFCW Local 152 Charity Golf Tournament was held on Sept. 3 at the Avalon Golf Club on the New Jersey shore. In keeping with tradition, there was a fantastic turnout and many generous contributions were made to the charity raffle. All proceeds benefit the Leukemia Society of America, the Bryan D. Ross Foundation and other charities.



From left: Local 152 Office Manager Denise Ortiz, Union Representative Danette Montes-Palmore, Retired Union Representative Daniel Ross, Accounting Assistant/Secretary Crystal Yankasky and Controller Denise De Maio.





Members at Work: Ginsburg Bakery

From left: Oven Operator Fernando Pasion, Oven Helpers Vladimir Bergara and Luis Sanchez, and Guadalupe Moreno from the Sanitation Department. **Inset:** Michael Lee from the Quality Assurance Department.



From left: Shop Steward Roy Washel and Union Representative Chuck Clark at the Puratos Bakery Supply Company.



Happy retirement to member Janet Calloway, center, who worked at Cape Regional Medical Center for 27 years. She worked as an operating room nurse and was also a Local 152 steward. **From left:** RN and Chief Steward MaryAnna Long, Calloway and Union Representative Peggy Kelly.



Local 152 Vice President and New Jersey Assemblyman Nelson Albano, right, and Local 152 Vice President Andy Rappattoni participate in the "Help Bag for Hunger" fundraiser for Southern New Jersey food banks.

Protect yourself and others against flu

□ In this column, union representatives share their thoughts on contract issues, safety and what's going on at the workplace.

If you haven't done so already, take the necessary precautions to protect your family, your co-workers and yourself from illness during this flu season.

The most important step is to get a flu shot. If you didn't take advantage of the Mobile Wellness Van at your workplace during the past few months, contact your doctor to set up an appointment to receive your shot.

It is important to get a vaccination as soon as possible. Flu season can last into the spring months. The most common flu types tend to change, so a new flu shot is necessary every year.



By Peggy Kelly

Myths debunked

You may experience some mild side effects after receiving a flu shot, but these rarely last more than one or two days. Also, because inactivated flu vaccines do not contain live flu virus, it is not possible to get the flu from a flu shot.

Another common myth is that receiving a flu shot is all that is needed for flu prevention. While a flu vaccine is the best way to prevent getting the flu, it needs to be complemented by a full prevention plan that includes washing hands frequently and avoiding contact with those who may be sick.

The flu weakens your immune system, leaving you susceptible to more serious infections. Taking the necessary steps to prevent the flu can help you not only avoid illness, but also prevent the spread of illness to children who will need to miss school or your loved ones or co-workers who will be forced to take days off from work.

Prevention

Take these precautions to limit the spread of germs that cause illnesses:

- Cover coughs and sneezes. If a tissue is not available and the hands cannot be washed immediately, cough or sneeze into the bend of your elbow.
- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand rub solution. Clean hands after using the restroom, shaking hands or having other close contact with people, before eating or preparing food, and before touching the eyes, nose or mouth.

The flu virus can last up to 72 hours on surfaces such as desks, phone receivers, light switches, remote controls, faucets, refrigerator handles, keyboards and doorknobs.



Local 152 contract successes!

Incollingo's Markets

- New one-year agreement covers 55 members
- Wage increase of \$0.30 per hour across the board
- Health benefits maintained with no employee contributions
- Excellent work by negotiating committee members Tammy Washington and Richard Wilkes, as well as Union Representative Greg Torian

Ginsburg Bakery

- Members overwhelmingly approved new 10-month agreement
- New agreement covers members until decisions are made regarding merging the work forces of two facilities in 2014
- Highlights include improved health benefits, bonuses and the creation of a committee to address scheduling issues
- Agreement covers 150 members

Keystone Foods

- Members voted unanimously to accept the new agreement
- Three-year agreement
- Wage increase of \$0.45 per hour for each year of the agreement
- Health benefits maintained and improved

Jim McDonough looks back on four decades in the industry

Newly retired member worked at Pathmark since 1969, coached others as a union steward

After nearly 45 years in the grocery industry, Local 152 member Jim McDonough made the decision to retire in September.

He plans to head out to his new home in Florida with his wife, Saverina, to start the next chapter of his life.

Having watched the industry evolve since the late 1960s, McDonough — a meat manager who concluded his career at a Pathmark store in Camden, N.J. — looks back on his work and union membership with pride.

He points specifically to the value of union-negotiated health benefits, which members can often take for granted until they have to find their own coverage elsewhere.

“Some people don’t realize how expensive health care is,” he said. “It was sticker shock for me when I started to look into it.

“The union does a lot and those benefits are key,” he added. “Members need to remember that, although you may have to pay a little bit now, in the long run those benefits are important.”

A changing industry

McDonough started as an apprentice meat cutter in Lawnside, N.J., in 1969 after returning home from two years of Army service in Vietnam.

Having worked in a deli before joining the military, he felt this would be a logical choice for a career. It turned out he was right.

He remembers the two-year apprenticeship program in which he learned all aspects of the craft, from working

with hanging slabs of meat to breaking down different cuts.

As the years went on, however, “everything started arriving at the store in boxes” and training someone in the meat department took much less time. “It all comes already broken down now,” he said.

McDonough helped open several Pathmark locations across New Jersey and he became a meat manager in 1990. In that position, the greatest challenge was keeping up with the work when other workers would leave and their jobs would not be filled quickly, if at all.

Looking to the future

When Pathmark’s parent company made the decision to close its Camden store earlier this year, the timing worked out for him. “It was a good time to retire,” McDonough said.

He can count on his severance pay and benefits until the end of the year, when he and Saverina will move into a newly-built house outside of Orlando.

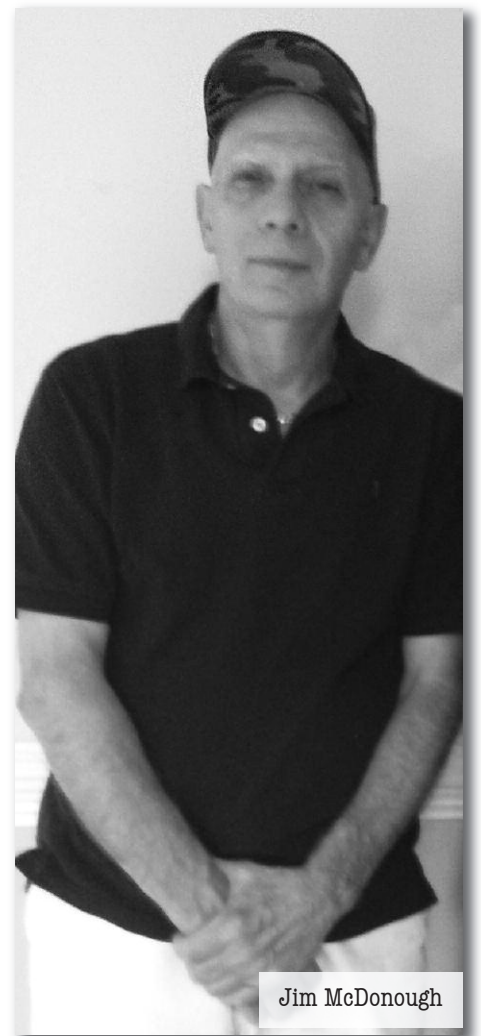
The couple grew fond of the area after visiting family there.

“We figured we’d take a chance and put a deposit down,” McDonough said.

They appreciate that their new home is a smaller, more manageable size and is near two golf courses.

In the eight years leading up to his retirement, McDonough was a union steward, and he worked to help his fellow members with questions regarding their hours, wages and other issues.

He also used the opportunity to talk to younger members about the union



McDonough talked to younger members about why the union is an important part of their lives.

and why it is an important part of their lives.

“A lot of times, the new guys want changes right now,” he said. “But I tell them that times are changing and it’s more of a give and take nowadays.

“You have to explain to them everything that the union does, and how all of the things that they have now are because of what the union has done.”

Retirements

Pat Anderson	Cape Regional Medical Center	08/05/2013
Peter Arch, Jr.	Perlmart ShopRite	07/01/2013
Linda Armanini	Pathmark Stores	10/01/2013
Kathy Armstrong	Cape Regional Medical Center	08/31/2013
Roberta Babich	Pathmark Stores	08/01/2013
Jules Bauer	Acme Markets	06/01/2013
Edith Baylor	Quaker City Meats	07/01/2013
Dianne M. Berryman	Acme Markets	08/01/2013
Robert G. Bodine	Zallies Supermarkets	09/01/2013
Mary Jo Bosman	Penn Mart Thriftway	10/01/2013
Dawn Joan Brandt	Acme Markets	09/01/2013
Edgar Brittingham, Jr.	Zallies ShopRite	06/01/2013
John R. Burke	Pathmark Stores	09/01/2013
Janet Calloway	Cape Regional Medical Center	08/31/2013
Elizabeth L. Cantando	Pathmark Stores	08/01/2013
Judith A. Carano	Village Supermarkets	09/01/2013
Bob Carrero	Bacharach	12/28/2012
Sarah A. Connaghan	Acme Markets	07/01/2013
Evelyn Coyle	Victoria Commons	10/09/2013
Harry M. Coyle	Supermarkets Of Cherry Hill	08/01/2013
James J. Culbertson	ShopRite Of Pennington	06/01/2013
Barbara D'Ambrosio	Perlmart ShopRite	06/01/2013
Joan E. Dare	Bottinos Supermarkets	07/01/2013
Raymond M. Dichino	Pathmark Stores	08/01/2013
Joan A. Dinunno	Acme Markets	10/01/2013
Anthony V. Diorio	Brookhaven Thriftway	10/01/2013
Robert Drury	Pathmark Stores	06/01/2013
June Erman	Pathmark Stores	08/01/2013
Catharine Fagan	Millville Thriftway	08/01/2013
Carrie Fernandez	Cross Brothers Meat Packers	08/01/2013
Patricia A. Golin	Golin	09/01/2013
Joseph P. Gornetski	Incollingo's Iga	09/01/2013
Barbara A. Grotz	Acme Markets	07/01/2013
Margarita Guzman	Envirochem	09/01/2013
Rose M. Harris	Acme Markets	10/01/2013
Linda J. Hasher	Pathmark Stores	06/01/2013
Kathleen Helmes	Pathmark Stores	10/01/2013
Dolores V. Highet	Pathmark Stores	09/01/2013
John A. Holm, Jr.	Acme Markets	08/01/2013
Nancy Lee Horst	Acme Markets	09/01/2013
Joanne Infantado	Thrift Grocery Corp	08/01/2013
Barbara A. Klein	Acme Markets	06/01/2013
Ardith R. Kurdilla	Acme Markets	09/01/2013
Diane Lanatto	Acme Markets	10/01/2013
Wally Lebentritt	Crothall	07/01/2013
Gary Lewis	Shorday's	09/01/2013
Linda M. Lewis	Stop & Shop Supermarkets	09/01/2013
Adele Litwinczuk	Frede Corporation	07/01/2013
Deborahann C. Long	Acme Markets	08/01/2013
Samuel J. Manfredi, Jr.	Ewing Shop n Bag	08/01/2013
Catherine Martino	Pathmark Stores	08/01/2013
Anne N. McShane	Holiday Markets	07/01/2013
Liduvina Melendez	Envirochem	08/01/2013
John Mellor	Pathmark Stores	08/01/2013
Josephine R. Mina	Pathmark Stores	07/01/2013
Jennifer E. Monk	Acme Markets	07/01/2013
Carol L. Mullen	Super Fresh	10/01/2013
Thomas J. Murphy, Sr.	Super Fresh	06/01/2013
Marlene J. Musser	Berks Packing	08/01/2013
Tina Nudding	Cape Regional Medical Center	07/15/2013
Mary Ann O'Connell	Westtown Shop n Bag	08/01/2013
Marina Orlando	Bacharach	08/15/2013

Alan E. Papp	Delaware Supermarkets	07/01/2013
Kathleen Per	Pathmark Stores	09/01/2013
Sharon L. Peters	Acme Markets	07/01/2013
Carol Peterson	Super Fresh	10/01/2013
Thomas V. Phillips	Village Supermarkets	07/01/2013
Lena Pierce	Pathmark Stores	04/01/2013
Shirley A. Pirrone	Pathmark Stores	07/01/2013
William A. Powell	Acme Markets	07/01/2013
Lorraine Richards	Super Fresh	08/01/2013
Shirley A. Riggins-Smith	Milden & White	06/01/2013
Linda Ringo	Acme Markets	07/01/2013
Sadie Robinson	Vornado	08/01/2013
Samatha Robinson	Vornado	08/01/2013
Marjorie Rotondo	Acme Markets	08/01/2013
Henry E. Salkowski	Pathmark Stores	10/01/2013
Winnifred Sanders	Acme Markets	08/01/2013
Louise J. Schott	Village Supermarkets	07/01/2013
Mildred M. Scott	Acme Markets	09/01/2013
Barbara A. Shappell	Acme Markets	07/01/2013
James E. Showers, Sr.	Pickwell - SHS Enterprises	06/01/2013
Joanne Smith	Pathmark Stores	08/01/2013
Wayne A. Snyder	Acme Markets	07/01/2013
Kenneth Stawarz	Pathmark Stores	09/01/2013
Suzanne Strang	Acme Markets	08/01/2013
James T. Sulpizio	Acme Markets	06/01/2013
Jeanette Todd-Bolling	Super Fresh	08/01/2013
Sharon R. Trotto	Eickhoff Supermarkets	08/01/2013
Maria N. Velasquez	Acme Markets	08/01/2013
Jean P. Wagner-Huey	Berks Packing	06/01/2013
Carol E. Walker	Top Shelf Foodery	08/01/2013
Rose M. Watson	Acme Markets	06/01/2013
Karen A. Webb	Brown's Superstores	07/01/2013
Judith Wilson	Bottino's Supermarkets	07/01/2013
Mary Beth Wood	Acme Markets	07/01/2013
Sandra L. Yannatell	Super Fresh	08/01/2013
Carla M. Zampino	Pathmark Stores	08/01/2013
Joan P. Zavrel	Acme Markets	07/01/2013

Obituaries

Herbert Barrett	08/15/2013
Albert V. Basile	08/08/2013
Raymond Baylor	06/11/2013
Frank R. Beauchamp	08/29/2013
Virginia B. Blyler	06/10/2013
Frederick Bratz	08/17/2013
Molly Brown	09/11/2013
Karola Campi	07/02/2013
Ralph Canning	09/15/2013
Richard F. Capone	09/13/2013
Ronny Carano	08/25/2013
James Colbert	07/01/2013
Ida M. Coyle	07/17/2013
Aldo D'Angelo	09/01/2013
Anthony Darpino	08/02/2013
Margaret Dilliard	07/12/2013
Rose N. Dixon	08/04/2013
Frances Elliot	08/16/2013

Obituaries (continued)

Ebenezer Fernandez, Jr.	07/27/2013
Richard B. Foster	06/13/2013
Janet L. Frank	06/14/2013
Arthur Frankovic	07/25/2013
Margaret M. Gallelli	07/02/2013
Helen A. Genzel	06/30/2013
Joel Golin	08/27/2013
Williams Graff	10/04/2013
Anna May S. Hoffman	07/19/2013
Eileen M. Holm	07/01/2013
Earl Horst	08/27/2013
Mary Lynn Jeffers	08/25/2013
Ernest Jones	06/29/2013
William R. Keckler	09/08/2013
John J. Kelly	09/06/2013
Mary Kozar	06/11/2013
Daniel Kurdilla	08/11/2013
Margaret S. Lander	06/17/2013
Miro Litwinczuk	06/12/2013
Theresa McBride	07/17/2013
Raymond E. McCabe	09/24/2013
Herbert D. McCarty	06/22/2013
Mary L. Metzger	09/07/2013
Joseph Mina	06/25/2013
James E. Murphy	07/18/2013
Earl Musser	07/01/2013
Joyce Nelson	08/08/2013
Joseph P. Nowlen	06/06/2013
Charles J. O'Neill	07/18/2013
Dorothea Oesterreich	08/08/2013
Woodrow Parker	07/06/2013
Grace R. Pontecorvo	09/07/2013
Sandra J. Powell	06/03/2013
William F. Rhoads	06/09/2013
John D. Richards	06/03/2013
Arthur Rotondo	07/23/2013
Cheryl J. Saia	07/22/2013
Dolores A. Salerno	07/20/2013
Patricia A. Schwar	07/21/2013
Ellis Scott	08/02/2013
Raymond Slobodjian	07/11/2013
Maryrose Smith	06/26/2013
Robert E. Speace	09/24/2013
William C. Stahley	07/12/2013
Elizabeth Swartz	08/21/2013
Barbara Thomas	09/03/2013
Edward Titus	10/01/2013
Dorothy Thros	10/07/2013
Sophia A. Vankan	08/28/2013
Margaret Walker	06/22/2013
Arlene S. Wheatley	06/05/2013
James N. Williams	09/30/2013

General Membership Meetings for all Local 152 members Tuesday, Dec. 3, 2013

Southern New Jersey (10 a.m. and 7 p.m.)

VFW Post 2445, 914 E. Main St.
Maple Shade, NJ 08052

Shore area (10 a.m. and 7 p.m.)

VFW Post 2189, 500 Bethel Road
Somers Point, NJ 08244

Pennsylvania area (10 a.m. and 7 p.m.)

Ramada - Philadelphia/Northeast, 11580 Roosevelt Blvd.
Philadelphia, PA 19116

New location! Delaware area (10 a.m. and 7 p.m.)

Embassy Suites Newark-Wilmington/South,
654 S. College Ave.
Newark, DE 19713

Delaware County - Pennsylvania (7 p.m. only)

Springfield Country Club, 400 West Sproul Road
Springfield, PA 19064

Irv R. String Local 152 Scholarship Fund

The Scholarship Fund will award \$1,000 cash grants to eligible members or dependents of members who will be attending college full time this fall.

Determination of winners will be made based upon school records, SAT scores, personal activities and need. Selection will be made on the recommendation of an outside independent committee.

Applications will be available beginning on Monday, Jan. 6, 2014 and are to be returned by March 31, 2014. No exceptions.

Please call (888) 564-6152 on or after Monday, Jan. 6, 2014 with any questions or to request an application.

UFCW Local 152
701 Route 50
Mays Landing, NJ 08330

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Don't take your health benefits for granted

It's the first issue that comes up at the bargaining table and it's the last one to be resolved — health benefits.

With medical costs continuing to rise unchecked, it's no surprise that employers are looking for ways to control those costs, although it's disheartening when their proposed solution is to simply cut or reduce our members' benefits. Our union has fought too hard over the years to secure and maintain those benefits, even taking less in wages to do so.

That doesn't mean we're opposed to new ways to reduce costs by keeping our members healthy. This is why we're always exploring new options and educating workers on how to make the best use of their health plans.

It's important that we all appreciate what we have in our union-negotiated health benefits, which are the envy of other workers in all of the industries we serve.

Those benefits offer incredible peace of mind to members, who can go about their work knowing that an accident or illness won't drive their families into bankruptcy.

The health benefits landscape will

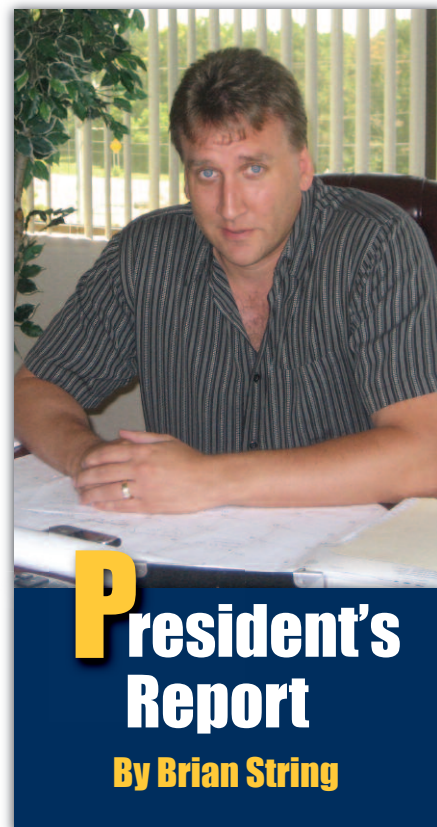
experience tremendous changes in the coming years with implementation of the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Many people who have never had medical coverage will now be able to afford and elect care, assuming that the implementation of Obamacare gets on track. That's a good thing. The bad thing is that, while President Obama promised us we could keep our current coverage, that doesn't seem to be a true statement!

However, our union has problems with several aspects of the law that have potentially negative effects on our negotiated health plans.

Staying active

On page 9 of this issue of *Unity*, recently retired member Jim McDonough talks about the "sticker shock" he experienced when he realized he will no longer be covered by his union benefits and will have to purchase his own health care. Many members don't think about what health coverage costs because they've taken for granted that their benefits will always be there.

The fight to maintain our platinum-standard benefits will only become more



intense in the coming years. The ACA is already looming large over negotiations, and as the law continues to roll out we all need to be active in letting lawmakers know that the law needs to be changed to protect our union plans.