



Lou Yacovelli: 50 years of making a difference

Life lessons from five
decades in the industry

Recently retired Local 152 member Lou Yacovelli looks back with satisfaction on his 50 years of service to his union, his customers and his employers.

When he began his career in the early 1970s at Acme Markets in Vineland, N.J., it was with simple intentions.

"I was 17 and I was just looking for a job to get some money," he remembered. "My mom always shopped there and one day she told the manager I was looking for work. I interviewed and I was hired."

"If you could get a job working for Acme, you were lucky," he said.

He started part time in a variety of roles, from working the check stand to gathering shopping carts to stocking shelves.

"It wasn't until a few years later that I started learning more about the union and attending meetings,"

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Members at Old Fashioned Kitchen celebrate their new union contract.

Members ratify new contracts and welcome new workers to union

On Sept. 19, members at Old Fashioned Kitchen in Lakewood, N.J. ratified a new union contract.

Local 152 represents more than 70 workers at Old Fashioned Kitchen, a company specializing in the production of blintzes, potato pancakes and pierogies. Members work in positions including production, maintenance and more.

The three-year agreement solidified many improvements. First, all members will receive across-the-board wage increases in addition to yearly raises. On top of that, second- and third-shift differentials have doubled to further compensate workers on less desirable shifts.

The agreement also solidified classifications and added a new "Group Leader" classification that carries a premium of an additional \$2.50 per hour above their regular rate.

In addition to these monetary improvements, everyone in the bargaining unit will receive a ratification bonus. Finally, the contract maintained members' affordable health care and substantially increased the employer-sponsored pension contributions.

The Negotiating Committee included Director of Collective Bargaining Daniel Ross, Assistant Director of Collective Bargaining Lisa Sanders, Union Representative Jose Echevarria,

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STAY CONNECTED!



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100% Union

Nomination of delegates to the UFCW International convention

Dear UFCW Local 152 Member:

UFCW Local 152 has received notice that the UFCW International will be conducting its Regular Convention ("Convention") pursuant to the UFCW International Constitution ("Constitution"). The Convention is scheduled for April 24, 2023 through April 28, 2023 and will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada. Pursuant to Article 15 of the Constitution, UFCW Local 152 is authorized to send up to 17 delegates to the Convention. Article 15 of the Constitution also sets forth a procedure for the nomination and election of delegates to the Convention.

In accordance with Article 15(F) of the Constitution, please accept this as Notice of Nomination of Delegates to the Convention. In this regard, nominations for delegates to the Convention shall be held on Friday, January 6, 2023, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Union Hall located at 3120 Fire Rd., Suite 201, Egg Harbor Twp, NJ 08234.

Article 15(H)1 of the Constitution sets forth the criteria to be eligible to be a delegate to the Convention as follows:

Any active member of the International Union, as defined in Article 4(B) of this Constitution, who has been an active member of the International Union, or who had been a member of another organization merged with or chartered by the International Union or merged into a Local Union of the

United Food and Commercial Workers International Union, for a continuous aggregate of at least 12 months preceding the month in which the Convention call is issued, shall be eligible to be a delegate to the Convention from the Local Union through which he or she holds his or her membership at the time of nominations, provided that said member maintains continuous active membership in said Local Union during the interval between his or her election and the commencement of the Convention.

Lastly, Article 15(M) of the Constitution provides that the UFCW International shall pay for the reasonable and necessary cost of transportation of the duly elected delegates to and from the Convention. This section also provides that local unions may pay for other expenses associated with attendance at the convention. In accordance with this provision, the Executive Board of UFCW Local 152 has determined to not pay or reimburse any portion of the Local 152 delegates' other expenses connected with attendance at the Convention.

Please contact the undersigned with any questions regarding the nomination of delegates to the upcoming UFCW International Convention.

Sincerely,

Daniel F. Konczyk
Election Chairperson

IT PAYS TO BE UNION!

Grievances filed or resolved:

3rd Quarter 2022

68

Back pay and benefits restored to members:

3rd Quarter 2022

\$75,000

New contracts and welcoming new members

Continued from front page

Shop Steward Orlando Figueroa and members Jose Diaz and Tinuben Patel.

Members at Autumn Lake Healthcare ratify new contract

Members at Autumn Lake Healthcare in Ocean View, N.J. came together and ratified a new union contract in September.

Local 152 proudly represents about 50 workers at Autumn Lake Healthcare, a premier nursing center in Cape May County, where members work as nursing aides and in food service, maintenance, housekeeping and more.

The new three-year agreement provides all members with immediate wage increases as well as annual wage increases. Additionally, some classifications will receive a shift differential of up to \$3 per hour. These members also gained Juneteenth as an additional paid holiday.

The Negotiating Committee included Director of Field Services Peggy Kelly, Union Representative Chad Brooks and Shop Stewards Delilah Warner and Bobbi Ajisola.

LPNs and RNs at Eagleview Rehabilitation vote 'Union Yes'

Local 152 is pleased to announce an organizing win! In August, the LPNs and RNs at Eagleview Health and Rehabilitation in Elmer, N.J., chose our union to be their voice on the job.

In 2011, Local 152 organized the CNAs, dietary workers, housekeepers, maintenance employees, activity aides and receptionists at Eagleview Health and Rehabilitation. However, licensed practical nurses and registered nurses (LPNs and RNs, respectively) were not included in the unit at that time.

In early spring 2022, Eagleview was sold. Because they had a union contract, our current union members were protected and able to keep or bargain over any changes the new owners wanted.

The LPNs and RNs at Eagleview were not so lucky. Seeing the difference



in treatment, the group of united workers decided it was time for a change — it was time for union representation!

With the help of their union coworkers, Lead Organizer Pete White and Union Representative Chad Brooks, we are delighted to say that this group of 20 LPNs and RNs has decided to join UFCW Local 152!

In addition, we would also like to recognize the rest of the organizers for helping to guide these workers through the process of organizing: Director of Organizing Mike Thompson, Alley Snow, Bryan String and Will Pitts.

From here, Local 152 will help these workers negotiate their first union contract.

More paid holidays and other improvements at Meadow Lakes Senior Living

More than 100 Meadow Lakes Senior Living workers came together to ratify a strong new union contract this summer.

Local 152 represents more than 100 workers at Meadow Lakes Senior Living. Our members work in dietary, housekeeping and maintenance; additionally, we represent drivers, CMAs and many more. Meadow Lakes is a Springpoint community offering both independent and assisted living across 100 acres in beautiful East Windsor, N.J.

The three-year agreement includes wage increases each year for the life of the contract. All members will receive a



ratification bonus; furthermore, members with more than five years of employment will receive a “longevity increase,” which is additional compensation on top of their typical hourly wage. This increase was put in place to reward senior members’ loyalty and dedication. Finally, the shift differential for the second and third shifts was increased.

Through hard bargaining, all members will now have six paid holidays. Previously, the members at Meadow Lakes were required to use their ETO bank for unworked holiday pay. This change essentially gives all members more paid days off per year, which is a great improvement for our members.

Finally, all members will now have a higher annual shoe allowance, giving workers a wider range of approved footwear to choose from.

Please see page 9

Amazon Fresh stores stumble

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

When analyzing the brick and mortar scorecard for the Amazon Fresh retail stores, the results continue to be underwhelming. Certainly, there's time to flip the script, but that's much harder in retail food where the competition is fierce, overcrowded and loaded with players that have a lot more experience than Amazon has.

While Amazon has the resources to continue to throw the kitchen sink into its fledgling grocery operation, I just don't think it will continue to happen.

After visiting most of the 12 Amazon Fresh stores in the Mid-Atlantic, I'd say underperformance is a pretty good description of their current state. Even if you buy into the theory that their disappointing front end (invisible) "rings" are offset by the amount of digital business it is doing at each location, it's still not enough to make the stores (or concept) viable in the long-term.

The stores, which range in size from about 25,000 square feet to nearly 50,000 square feet, make for an uncomfortable shop. The merchandising is just plain awful — no flow, limited selection and a private label program that's mediocre at best. Other than the produce department, which is OK, other fresh departments remind me of a kiosk at a state fair. That's not what consumers want from their bakery, meat and deli departments.

I've also found store operations to be weak — the associates in the stores seem to have little training and overall store management is far from crisp.

At this point, unlike in the U.K., Amazon isn't slowing the pace of store openings. By our count, in the states of Connecticut, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and in Washington, DC, there are at least 34 more stores slated to open.

If it is objective like Lidl (which drastically reduced the number of new stores it planned to open after it evaluated its poor start), not all of those stores will celebrate a ribbon cutting.

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



Educating a new generation of workers about unions

Local 152 staff visited Stockton University in November to attend the 2022 New Jersey Cannabis Career Fair & Business Expo.

Representatives from the union helped attendees learn more about unionization and how organizing can help all workers in this growing industry earn respect on the job.



Keep your union up to date!



To continue to receive important news and updates from Local 152, visit ufcwlocal152.org and complete the "Change of Address" form if you move.

From the Local 152 website, you can also update your address with the Health and Welfare Office and renew your voter registration.

Scan this QR code with your smartphone to update your information right now:



The basics: What your union does for you

Your membership in UFCW Local 152 is the most effective way of upholding your dignity and worth as a worker.

When you and your co-workers act as one in a union, you are able to achieve more than you ever could alone.

Local 152 works on your behalf to improve members' lives on and off the job and acts as a positive force in our communities. We do this in part by negotiating the best possible employment contracts on your behalf and then enforcing them for your benefit.

Negotiating contracts

Your contract is the cornerstone of your union membership. Representatives from Local 152, with your input, negotiate a contract with your employer that determines everything from your wages to health benefits, from vacation time to your retirement security.

Once you vote to ratify this contract, it becomes a legally binding document and your employer must adhere to its rules.

Because of the union-negotiated language in your contract, your employer cannot:

- Fire you from your job at will
- Force you to work in an unsafe environment
- Fail to pay you the agreed-upon wage rate for your hours worked
- Fail to contribute money to the funds that provide for your health and retirement benefits

These are just some of the commitments by your employment that are outlined in your contract. Your contract is a long, detailed document that covers every aspect of your time on the job, but the most meaningful part of your union membership can be conveyed in one word: respect.

Just as you respect your work by giving it your time, effort and professionalism, your contract clearly defines for your employer how you expect to be treated and compensated for that hard work.

Policing contracts

While your contract clearly states what your employer can and cannot do, the day-to-day reality on the job may be different. That's where your union representatives come in.

They are on the front lines of policing your contract to ensure the rules are being followed.

Whether it is addressing a safety hazard at your workplace or using the grievance procedure to restore your job and back wages in the event of an unjust firing, your union representative has your back.

Negotiating and policing contracts are two of the great benefits of your union membership, but they are only the beginning. In future issues we will look at all of the other ways Local 152 works on your behalf.

In the meantime, stay up to date on news from your union at ufcwlocal152.org and follow us at:

Facebook

facebook.com/UFCWLocal152/



Secretary-Treasurer's Report

By Dan Konczyk

Twitter

twitter.com/ufcwlocal152

Instagram

instagram.com/ufcwlocal152/

Would you like to earn some extra cash? Provide an organizing lead to Local 152 that results in a union election. Some involvement will be required. By getting involved, you are helping to make your union stronger and you have an opportunity to earn \$1,000!

For additional information, contact Local 152 Director of Organizing Mike Thompson at (888) 564-6152 or via email at organizing@ufcwlocal152.org.



MEMBERS AT WORK





LABOR DAY PARADE 2022



Sept. 27, 2022

Thousands of dollars were raised to benefit the Bryan D. Ross Foundation, the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society of America and various other charities.



Health care industry update

Cape Regional Physicians Associates vote 'Union Yes!'

Nurses, medical assistants, receptionists and clerical workers at Cape Regional Physicians Associates have voted “union yes,” agreeing to representation by Local 152.

The 82 new union members work at 13 locations operated by the medical group in Cape May County. Approximately 500 other members of Local 152 are employed at Cape Regional Medical Center, the county’s only hospital, which has had collective bargaining agreements with the UFCW for more than 40 years.

The counting of mail-in votes on Sept. 7 concluded a 71-day unionizing process that began on June 30.

“We’re extremely happy with these results, as are the workers at these facilities,” said Brian String, president of Local 152, which represents workers in a wide variety of industries in New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware and eastern Pennsylvania. “Our staff did a great job in helping them through the process of organizing their workplaces.”



“Our next step will be to reach out to Cape Regional to begin work on negotiating a contract,” String said. “Our goal will be to bring these new members to a level playing field with dignity and respect at work.”

From left: Union Representative Tom Hartle, worker Kellianne Muller, Union Representative/Organizer Will Pitts, workers Ashleigh Hargis, Kerry Owens, and Zina Beth Thompson, Director of Organizing Mike Thompson, and Union Representative/Organizer Alley Snow.

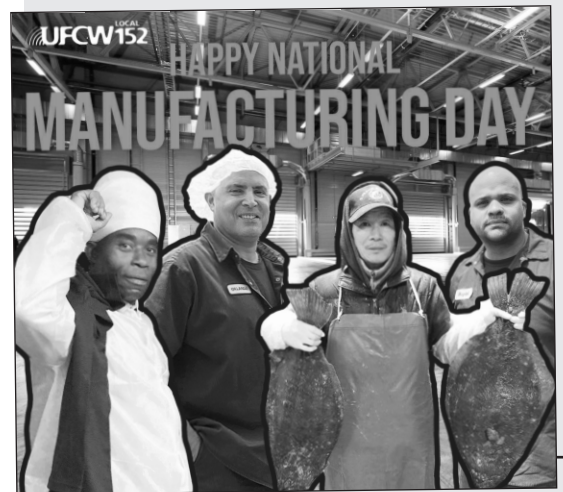
Manufacturing industry update

UFCW seeks justice for workers

The UFCW has responded to news that the Department of Justice filed suit against multiple non-union poultry industry employers regarding their decades-long illegal collusion to suppress wages. Local 152 President Brian String released the following statement:

“The Department of Justice is finally shining a light on decades of illegal collusion by some of the poultry industry’s largest employers. For far too long, these companies have been using every tool at their disposal to engage in what the DOJ itself calls a ‘brazen scheme’ to increase profits off the backs of hard-working Americans by intentionally keeping wages low. These companies treated their employees as if they were merely an expendable budget line item, not essential, hard-working people deserving of dignity. As the largest union in the nation representing food processing, packing and manufacturing workers, we fight to ensure our members, and every worker that keeps American families fed, is paid fairly and protected in their workplace. These companies desperately need to be held accountable for their crimes.

“It is imperative that workers and their representatives are part of the process and can share what really goes on inside these plants. Proposing an \$85 million penalty is a start, so long as the workers who were denied the salary they rightfully deserve actually see the restitution.”



On Oct. 7, Local 152 joined the rest of the country in celebrating National Manufacturing Day. Thank you to all of the manufacturing members across our union for your hard work.

Lou Yacovelli: 50 years of making a difference

Continued from front page

he said. “Then we went on strike, and being on the picket line made me really glad I was union. You knew that someone had your back and they were fighting for you.”

Because of his union activism, he was asked to be a steward for Local 1358 (which merged with Local 56 in 2006 to form Local 152). He held the role for a total of 16 years across several stores, including the new Vineland Acme Markets where he worked until his retirement earlier this year.

“Helping out the young workers, helping them make the right decisions — that’s your job,” he said of his time as a steward. “I try to help them appreciate their health benefits. Until you need them, you don’t know what you’ve got.

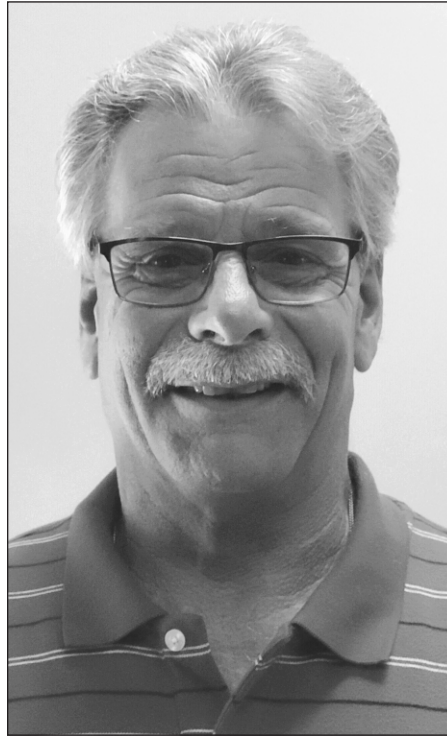
“We’ve got the Cadillac of benefit plans,” he continued. “When you’re young, you don’t think about them, but once you get married and have kids, you realize how great they are.”

Yacovelli also served for 12 years on Local 152’s Executive Board, helping the union navigate several rounds of contract negotiations and shape its plans for the future.

“I really found it rewarding,” he said. “You learn firsthand what is going on, weigh the options and then make the best decision for the members.”

Yacovelli praised the leadership of Local 152 and the responsiveness of the union staff.

“Any time you have a question or a concern, if you ask the union there is always someone available to help you with your problem,” he said.



Lou Yacovelli

As for President Brian String, Yacovelli said: “He’s done nothing but good things — he really knows what’s going on.”

Starting on a new path

For most of his career, Yacovelli worked as a receiver at Acme Markets in Vineland and also helped out in the early days leading up to his store’s opening in 1996.

“I was there setting the store up, alongside the construction guys,” he said. “I was the longest-tenured person there when I retired.”

He said he loved working in the back of the store, overseeing the products

being delivered and making use of his detail-oriented personality.

“I was taught to always do a job to the best of your ability,” he said. “That’s the way my parents raised me. I kept it neat, organized and running efficiently.

“And when we used to drive the forklift, I could get that lift in and out of areas that no one else could!”

Yacovelli began thinking of retirement a few years ago in order to spend more time with his family, and he and his wife, Barbara, decided this was the year to move forward with their plan.

“This way, I have the freedom to spend more time with my children and grandson,” he said, adding his first granddaughter is due to be born before the end of the year.

“I’ll have the freedom to do what I want when I want to do it, and if I don’t want to do anything, I won’t,” he said.

The Yacovellis plan to travel around the country, visiting family and exploring new places, and they might take a trip to Italy in the future.

“We should do it sooner than later, while we can still get around,” he said.

The couple also enjoys playing with their grandson in the park and indulging his love of dinosaurs.

Yacovelli admits retired life has taken a little getting used to, since his spirit of connecting with his fellow members and being of service continues.

“It’s a good getting used to, but I miss my interaction with the people I worked with,” he said.

“I told everyone, if you need anything, just give me a call and I’ll try to help.”

New contracts and welcoming new members

Continued from page 3

The Negotiating Committee that helped create this monumental win included Director of Collective Bargaining Dan Ross, Director of Field Services Peggy Kelly,

Union Representative Chad Brooks, Union Representative Peter White and Shop Stewards Rich Bell, Treena West, Stacie Chew, Irma Lamadrid and committee member Rachel White.

Happy retirement!

Angela Aronson	08/01/22	Various supermarkets
Beverly Bartleson	10/27/22	Cape Regional Medical Center
Edward Bixby	09/01/22	Acme Markets
Tyrone Bond	08/01/22	Ball Park Brands
Margaret A. Brandhorst	10/01/22	Acme Markets
Kim E. Brobst	08/01/22	Acme Markets
Denise C. Browne	10/01/22	Acme Markets
Teresa A. Calabrese	10/01/22	Bottino's supermarkets
Linda Castellano	10/01/22	Acme Markets
John DiGregorio	10/01/22	Pathmark Stores/Local 198
Vincent Dovico	09/01/22	Super Fresh
Patricia A. Fish	08/01/22	Acme Markets
Duane A. Galey	09/01/22	Acme Markets
Robin L. Gehrmann	09/01/22	Super Fresh
Joy S. Gillin	10/01/22	Acme Markets
Sabrina C. Golden	10/01/22	Brown's Superstore
Susan Hamran	09/01/22	Saker ShopRite
Mary Anne Harrow	10/01/22	Zallie's Supermarkets
Theresa M. Hatala	09/01/22	Pathmark Stores/Local 152
Janet A. Heidel	09/01/22	Colligas Family Market
Lois Lawryniewicz	10/01/22	Acme Markets
Linda Ligon Cook	10/01/22	Pathmark Stores/Local 152
Daniel J. Magazu	08/01/22	Acme Markets
Denise L. Maynard-Mccauley	09/01/22	Acme Markets
Dennis Mazzagatti	08/01/22	Various supermarkets
Kevin J. McCormack	08/01/22	Various supermarkets
Carol D. McCrosson	08/01/22	Acme Markets
Frances M. McElhenney	09/01/22	Acme Markets
James C. McGroarty	09/01/22	Acme Markets
Daniel McKeone	08/01/22	Acme Markets
Stephanie L. Moore	09/01/22	Acme Markets
Donna L. Munson	10/01/22	Village ShopRite
Dawn M. Noel	08/01/22	Acme Markets
Kenneth G. Northam	08/01/22	Various supermarkets
Diane M. Nugent	09/01/22	Acme Markets
Hasumatiben Patel	08/01/22	Old Fashioned Kitchen, Inc.
Dolores Petro	10/01/22	Acme Markets
Kathleen A. Pittman	08/01/22	Murphy's At The Lakes
Aloysius M. Reagan	09/01/22	Acme Markets
Billie M. Rice	10/01/22	Acme Markets
Marian F. Riefner	09/01/22	Berks Packing Co
Richard A. Romejko	10/01/22	Pathmark Stores/Local 152
John N. Salerno	08/01/22	Acme Markets
Esther D. Santiago	09/01/22	Local 152 H&W Benefits
Grace A. Saul	08/01/22	Holiday Markets
John Savit	08/01/22	Shorday's
Letitia A. Slutter	09/01/22	Acme Markets
Thomas A. Smith	09/01/22	Acme Markets

RETIRE WITH DIGNITY

Local 152 members have peace of mind
in retirement with health benefits
and a pension that provides guaranteed
monthly income for life.

Cletus J. Spaeder, Jr.	08/01/22	Acme Markets
Sharon L. Steiner	09/01/22	Acme Markets
Peggy L. Thomas	10/01/22	Incollingo's Iga
John A. Vrana	09/01/22	Super Fresh
Sheila D. Wilson	09/01/22	Acme Markets
Linda J. Wortmann	09/01/22	ShopRite
Lawrence L. Zeitz	09/01/22	Acme Markets

In memoriam

Norman G. Bailey, Jr.	10/14/22	Collins Family Markets
Edward Bailey	09/30/22	Sheinman Provision Co.
Reginald L. Baker	09/20/22	Super Fresh
Meryl V. Bixel	10/09/22	Acme Markets
Gerald Boice	10/08/22	Super Fresh
Marilyn A. Bowman	09/20/22	Super Fresh
Larry H. Boylan	10/28/22	Acme Markets
Charles Breitzman	10/08/22	A&P Tea Company
Biddle M. Caliman	09/08/22	Twin Brothers Meat Inc.
Ruth B. Charles	09/03/22	Pathmark Stores/Local 198
Dolores J. Derrickson	08/17/22	L.A.R.R.K. Supermarkets, Inc.
Thomas Dunlevy	10/09/22	Acme Markets
Joseph M. Elliott	09/27/22	Food Fair/Pantry Pride
Perrin N. Farrar	10/04/22	Food Fair/Pantry Pride
Rudolph Fedele	10/13/22	Glenside Thriftway
Mary K. Finnegan	08/25/22	Shorday's
Mildred R. Fry	09/01/22	Acme Markets
Nelson E. Garcia	10/31/22	Lawrence Shop N Bag
Morgan J. Gill	08/28/22	Incollingo's Iga
Barbara A. Kinney	08/29/22	Shop Rite Of Bethlehem
Dorothy M. Malampy	10/04/22	Thriftway-Penn Mart
Anthony J. Marinello	08/09/22	Super Fresh
Lawrence Niedzialek	10/06/22	Acme Markets
Mario Pompei	09/01/22	Pathmark Stores/Local 152
John J. Raffa	09/27/22	South Philly ShopRite
James J. Rowan	08/21/22	Acme Markets
Richard Shepherd	10/21/22	Pathmark Stores/Local 196
Linda A. Sherwood	10/04/22	Acme Markets
Charles A. Stocker	10/09/22	Acme Markets

Please see next page

Happy retirement!



Tish Slaughter

(Center, with coworkers Melissa (left) and Theresa)
Acme Markets



Ramona Figueroa

Bishop McCarthy Center for
Rehabilitation & Healthcare

In memoriam

Continued from previous page

Edward W. Taylor	09/19/22	Village ShopRite
John Tobias	10/05/22	Food Fair/Pantry Pride
Carmen Tomasetti	08/04/22	Super Fresh
Dolores F. Uysase	10/09/22	M&E #2384
Richard Wenzke	10/17/22	Thriftway-Penn Mart
Charles Zurlo	09/13/22	Shorday's

BARGAINING UPDATE

New contract at Total Maintenance Management

Local 152 members at Total Maintenance Management, the third-party cleaning service for the Cherry Hill Mall, ratified a new union contract on Oct. 6.

The union proudly represents about 15 housekeepers in the bargaining unit.

The new agreement provides members with yearly wage increases and gives them an option to participate in voluntary supplemental benefits offered by the union, including life insurance, disability insurance, accident insurance and more.

Additionally, language was added to comply with New Jersey's Paid Sick Leave law. Members now have access to five paid days per calendar year to use in any manner consistent with the law.

The new contract also gives members the opportunity to donate voluntarily to the Bryan D. Ross Foundation, Local 152's charity, directly from their pay. The foundation assists union members undergoing financial hardship due to catastrophic illness or injuries.

The Negotiating Committee included Assistant Director of Collective Bargaining Lisa Sanders, Union Representative Tom Hartle, Union Representative Jose Echevarria and Shop Steward Pedro Correa.

Exclusive discounts for Local 152 members!

UFCW Lifemart

- Auto
- Child care
- Electronics

TicketsAtWork

- Hotels
- Movies
- Theme Parks

Union Plus

- Personal loans
- Supplemental Insurance
- Theme Parks

Jersey Shore

- Morey's Piers
- Casino Pier
- Fantasy Island

Entertainment

- Adventure Aquarium
- Big Kahuna's
- Clementon Park & Splash World
- Philadelphia Zoo

...and more!

Visit ufcwlocal152.org for details

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Looking back and charting a path forward

At the end of each year, it's a good time to look back on what we've been able to accomplish as a union. Before the calendar flips over to 2023, we can take a moment to step back from the day-to-day challenges we all face and consider the big picture.

First of all, I'm thankful. Thankful for the active, engaged and united membership we have at Local 152.

Because you stood together, we were able to negotiate and ratify industry-leading contracts this year. No contract will ever be able to express our true appreciation for the hard work and sacrifice you have endured since the start of the pandemic, but the wage increases and benefit improvements in the latest round of contracts are a good place to start.

These successes are only the beginning. It's up to you how far we can go with this newfound momentum. And when we help others succeed, we succeed.

Not all workers enjoy the benefits of union membership — from higher wages and benefits to job protection to financial security in retirement. We spread the

word about the union both to emerging industries, like the cannabis market, and existing ones, and in the process we strengthen Local 152 with new members and new voices.

Failure to organize new members doesn't mean we get to continue with the status quo. If we sit still, non-union employers with lower wages and inferior benefits will continue to cut into the business of union stores and hurt our ability to negotiate at the bargaining table.

The road ahead

All of our members can do their part to keep our union strong by attending our quarterly union meetings and staying up to date by reading this *Unity* newsletter and following us on social media. Young members, especially, are often on the cusp of new technologies and social platforms, and adding your pro-union voice in these spaces can have a positive effect going forward.

All this and more is possible because of worker solidarity, the idea that that we are stronger together than when we stand alone.



In a time when millions of people of all ages are feeling isolated and fearful of forces beyond their control, unions are the antidote. We deliver the message that no worker should ever have to struggle alone.

A handwritten signature of Brian String in black ink.