

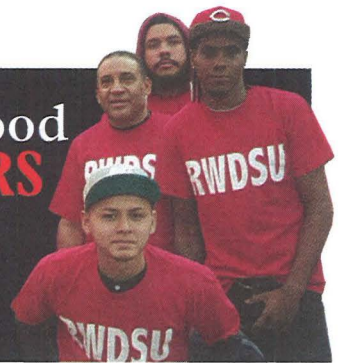
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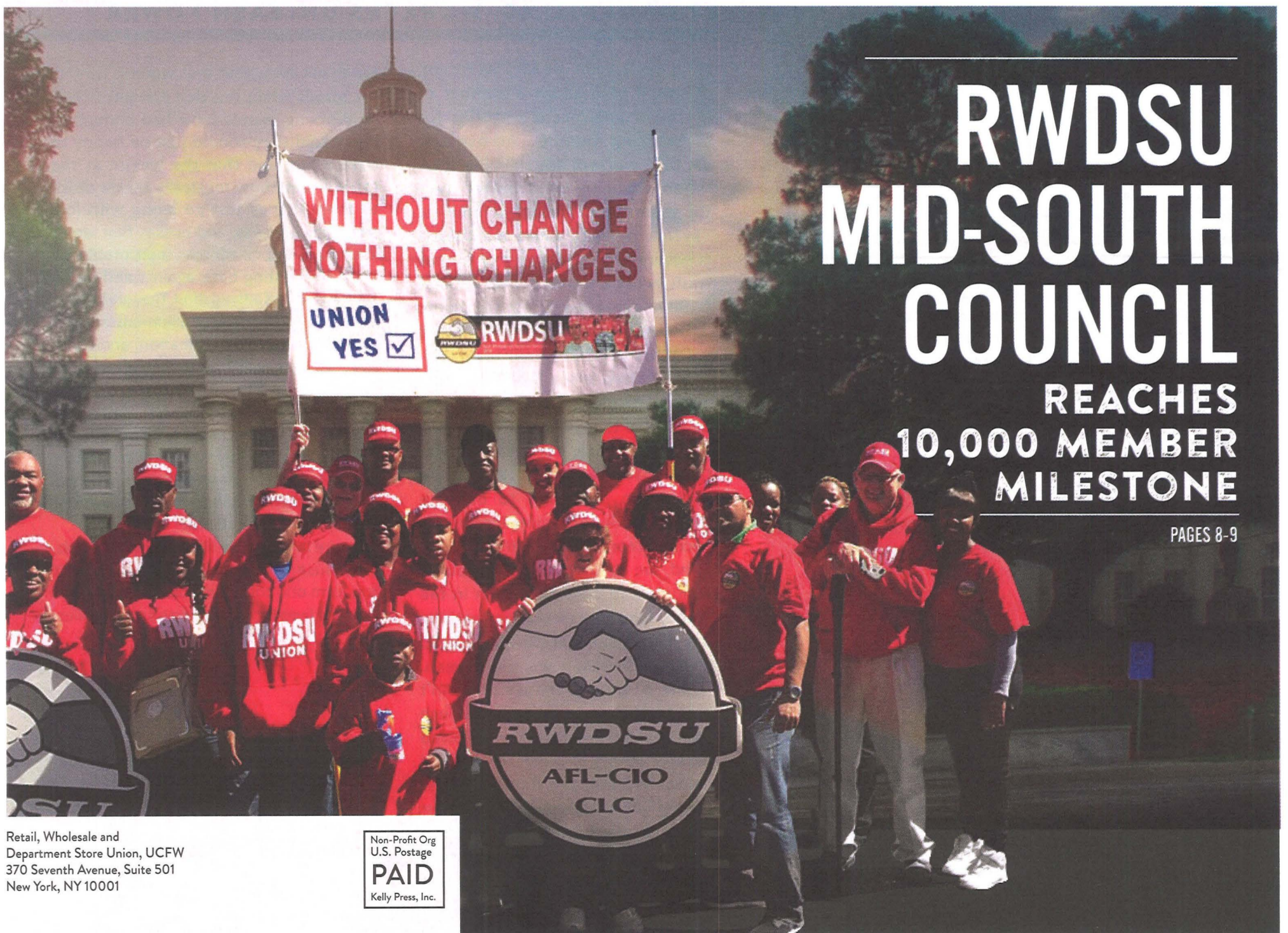
RWDSU

UFCW

SPRING 2016

RECORD

VOLUME 64, NO. 1



RWDSU
MID-SOUTH
COUNCIL
REACHES
10,000 MEMBER
MILESTONE

PAGES 8-9

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Department Store Union, UFCW
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The objectives of the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union are to unite into this organization all workers employed in its jurisdiction in order to advance and safeguard their economic and social welfare...The Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union will strive to preserve democratic processes, protect civil liberties, aid in the adoption of legislation which will promote the economic and social welfare of its members and that of labor in general and to improve the educational, social and cultural standards of society as a whole. Through unity of purpose and action, through collective bargaining and legislation, the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Union is dedicated to the ideal of making the jobs of its members the best jobs that can be devised from the point of view of wages, hours of work, physical conditions and human relations. Preamble RWDSU Constitution.

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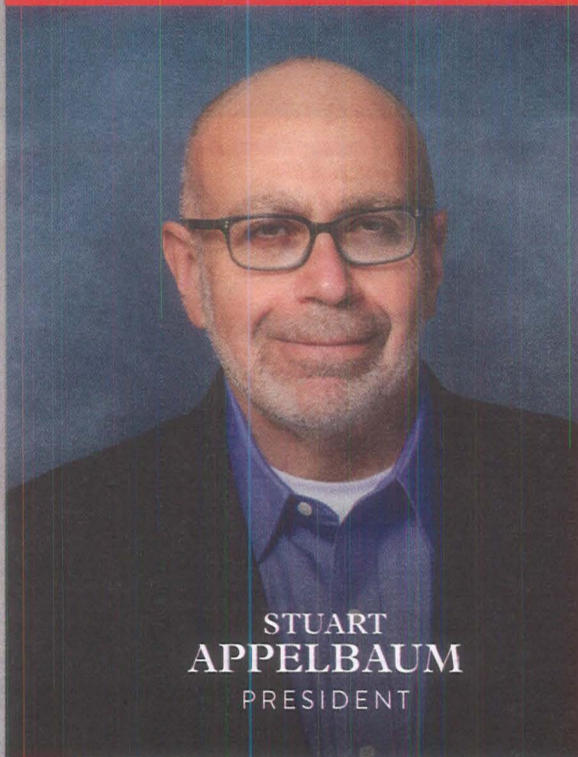
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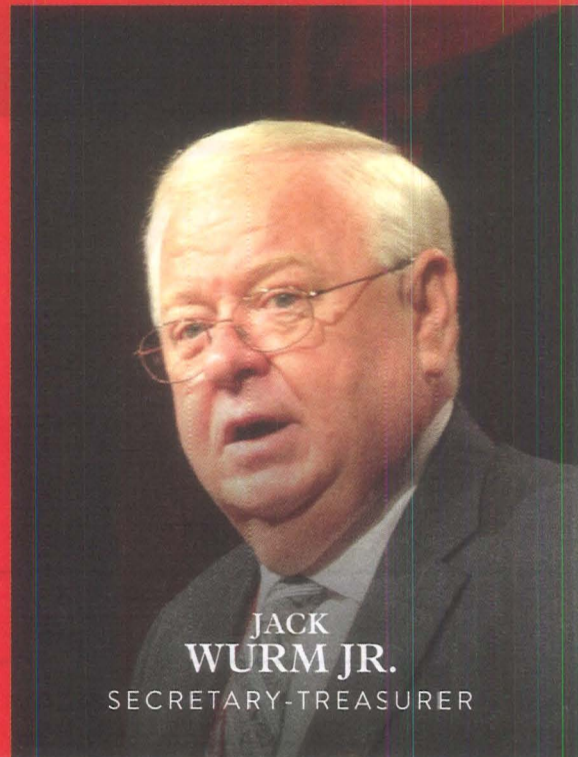
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MESSAGE FROM YOUR OFFICERS



STUART APPELBAUM
 PRESIDENT



JACK WURM JR.
 SECRETARY-TREASURER

BY ORGANIZING, WORKERS UNLEASH POWER

In this issue of the RWDSU Record, you'll read about a number of important recent victories for working people. Across the U.S., workers are claiming their union voice to build better lives for themselves and their families.

In New York City, where the RWDSU is helping change the face of the car wash industry, workers at yet another facility have voted to join the union.

In Newark and Essex County, New Jersey, bus drivers have chosen RWDSU Local 108.

Also in New Jersey, 50 employees at a warehouse for Indian food products have voted to join RWDSU Local 262.

In Pennsylvania, workers at a Guitar Center store withstood an intense anti-union campaign to become the fourth Guitar Center location to become represented by the RWDSU.

And, the RWDSU Mid-South Council continues to build the union in the South, recently celebrating reaching the remarkable milestone of 10,000 members, doubling their size in five years.

The purpose of these stories is not to pat ourselves on the back – though the organizers and workers involved deserve plenty of credit for winning union elections at a time when the playing field is stacked squarely against them and bosses will do whatever they can to keep unions out. The purpose of publicizing these wins is to show that working people across the U.S. can make a difference in their lives. Workers are proving that they don't have to settle for lack of respect at work, and

for an economy that sees workers fighting for scraps while the rich just get richer.

Working people have had enough of being told they should just be happy to have a job, and that the wealth at the top will somehow magically trickle down to them if they just go along with low pay, poor benefits, and bosses that won't listen to them or address their problems. They are fighting back against anti-union propaganda and intimidation. They are fighting back against professional union-busters who spread lies and misinformation, and try to scare workers away from changing their jobs for the better. They are standing together.

If you have any friends, family, or acquaintances who need a union voice at their workplace, the RWDSU is here to help them realize the power that all workers have. Tell them to call an RWDSU organizer at (212) 684-5300, or visit www.rwdsu.org for more information about joining a union.

Because when workers stand together and form one collective voice, we can build stronger lives for ourselves and our families. ■

**“WORKING PEOPLE
 ARE STANDING
 TOGETHER AND
 FIGHTING BACK.”**

RWDSU AROUND THE UNION

IN BATTLE CREEK, A STRONG NEW CONTRACT AT POST CEREALS

RWDSU Local 374 members in Battle Creek Michigan, known as "Cereal City," carry on the tradition of some of the founders of the RWDSU. The members' cereal plant – Post – originally joined the RWDSU in 1937.

Now, after lengthy negotiations, the over 500 RWDSU members at Post have ratified a new five-year contract which honors the tradition of strong union representation and worker-activism at Post. The contract brings wage gains, improves benefits, and most importantly, provides strong job security.

The new contract guarantees that if Post – which has acquired the Malt-O-Meal company and its plants – closes any cereal manufacturing plants, the Battle Creek plant will not be one of them. The contract also includes language requiring the company to negotiate with the union before moving any of its production lines from the Battle Creek facility. And, the company will no longer use temporary workers for handpacking or any other jobs, further protecting union jobs at the plant and promoting strong membership.

"We were able to get strong language into this contract

that provides the most important thing we could get for workers here: security," said Michele "Mickey" Redden, who has worked at Post for 41 years. "We know our jobs will be protected, and so will our production lines," Redden added.

In addition to these hard-won job protections, members will be enrolled in the RWDSU health plan, meaning better benefits at significantly lower cost. The new contract also provides guaranteed hourly wage increases each year of the agreement and yearly bonuses four out of the five years of the contract.

Serving on the negotiating committee were: Michele "Mickey" Redden (41 years of service at Post), Tomme L. Kirk (25 Years), David Ledbetter (25 Years), Mark Banaszak (22 years), Mike Neuman (22 years), Chris

Haire (21 years), Bryan Cornwell (20 years), Rick Staib (19 years), Lance emery (19 years), and Ken Brown (42 years with the RWDSU), with RWDSU Director of Collective Bargaining Allen Mayne.

Workers at Post produce cereals such as Honey Bunches of Oats, Fruity Pebbles, Cocoa Pebbles, Grape Nuts and many more. ■

THE RWDSU Post Negotiating Committee and Post representatives celebrated the negotiation of a strong contract for Local 374 members.



ALABAMA RWDSUer HELPS RESCUE AND REUNITE FAMILY

It was a Christmas to remember for the Miller family in Alabama. And, as featured on a nightly news broadcast of ABC 33/40 Birmingham, it was also an unforgettable day for the RWDSU Representative who helped save them when they encountered raging floodwaters that carried away a car and separated them from each other.

Rickey Miller and his family were driving to a family gathering in Pinson, Alabama, when they were caught in a torrential downpour. Miller got out of the car to check to see if the road was passable, when he saw that waters were rising incredibly fast. Before he could get his family out of the vehicle, the car was suddenly swept away.

RWDSU Mid-South Council Representative Curtis Gray had also stopped along the road a ways back. Gray and the Millers told reporters the harrowing story during interviews at the Mid-South Council offices.

"Next thing I know, a car came floating down,"

said Gray. He got out and first saw Miller's daughter Faith. "She was screaming help me, help me!" Gray directed her back to the bank where the water was shallower and helped her out. Then Rickey Miller made it out of the creek and they saw his son Ryan surface.

"The car was nose down in ditch and he popped up. We told him to hang on and stay there," Gray said. Neighbors on the other side got a rope and helped him to safety. Gray said he had to convince Miller not to go back in the rushing flood waters. It was too dangerous. His wife Jamie was still missing at this point. "The little girl looked at me and said I'm not worried Dad. Mom's going to be okay," recalled Gray.

By this time, rescue crews were arriving. Gray walked about fifty feet looking around and heard her faint cries. He spotted Jamie Miller still in the frigid waters hanging onto a branch. They estimate the water was around eight feet deep. Gray alerted firefighters who were able to pull her out. She suffered a broken collarbone and plenty of bruises, but escaped without any lasting harm.

After their harrowing night, the Millers spent their Christmas night in the emergency room. "We were alive, that was enough Christmas for us to be alive and



together," said Rickey Miller.

Two weeks later, the Miller family and Gray were reunited at the Mid-South Council offices in Birmingham, Alabama, where they exchanged smiles and hugs.

"We will always remember Christmas 2015, that's for sure," Gray said. ■

(IMAGE ABOVE) The Millers' car bears the scars of Mother Nature's fury.

(IMAGE LEFT) Curtis Gray (CENTER) with the Miller family at the Mid-South Council union hall.

"It was enough for us to be alive and together on Christmas."

RWDSU WORKERS WINNING A UNION VOICE



WORKERS AT SLS Car Wash celebrate their vote to join the RWDSU.

SLS CAR WASH WORKERS LATEST TO WIN RWDSU VOICE

The workers at SLS car wash in Bushwick in Brooklyn, New York, have seen the difference that union membership has made for hundreds of car wash workers in New York City since the Car Wash Campaign began in 2012. Now, they've made SLS Car Wash the 11th car wash facility in New York where workers are represented by the RWDSU. SLS, also known as Atlantis Wash & Lube, at 1650 Bushwick Ave., has about 50 workers and is the largest car wash in the country to unionize. Eight other NYC car washes have signed with RWDSU.

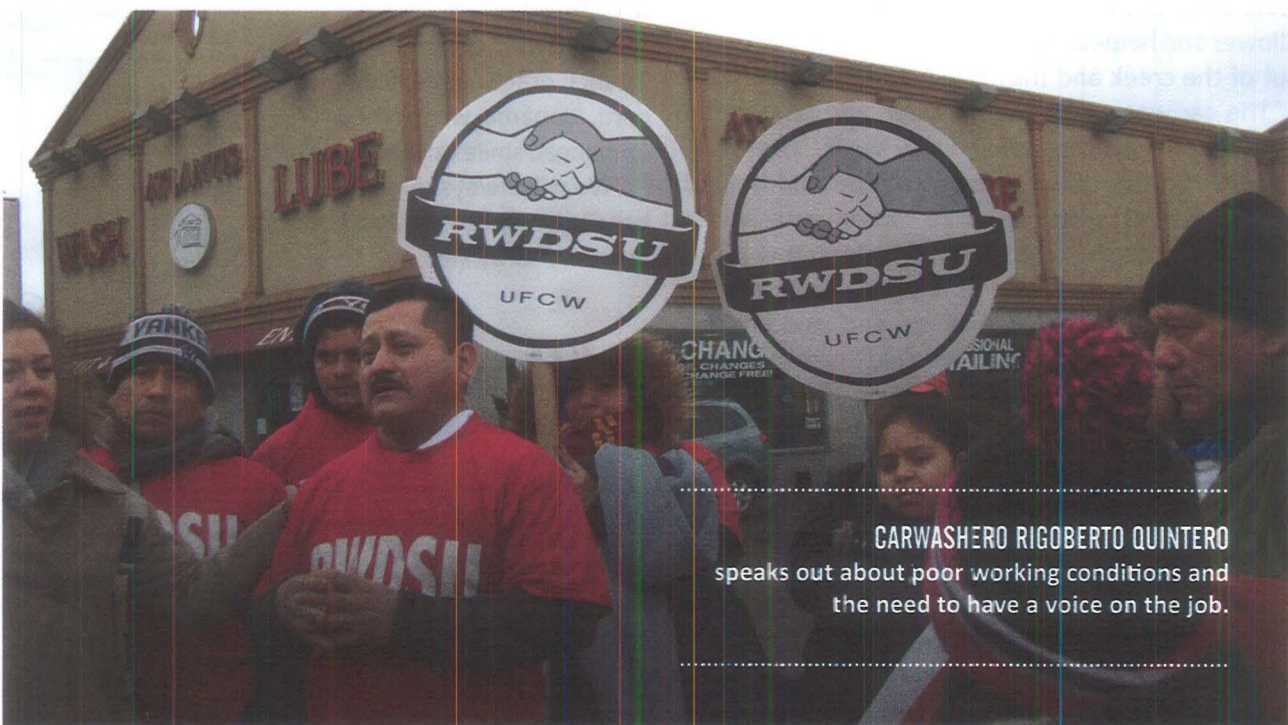
Determined workers and RWDSU organizers braved the cold winter during the organizing drive. By handing out information and talking with workers, the organizing leaders were able to rally increasing support. Workers voted overwhelmingly – 35-5 – in favor of joining the union. They wanted a change after years of mistreatment. “Before we organized a union we worked under a lot of stress,” SLS worker Cheik Umat Balde said. “The managers will always yell at us to work faster. Sometimes they will call us stupid. We had to deal with unknown chemicals with no protections. Now, with a union we will be protected – but most importantly, we will have respect and dignity, and that to me is priceless.”

A co-worker, Ramon Carcamo, who has been at SLS for six years said: “I decided to organize with my coworkers

to change the working conditions at the car wash, because I knew that we had rights that we were not getting. Now, with a union, managers will have to treat all of us with respect. We knew that if we were united no one could silence our voice for justice and claim our rights at work.”

The Car Wash Campaign, a coalition of New York Communities for Change, Make the Road New York and the RWDSU, have been advocating on behalf of workers in New York City’s largely unregulated car wash industry for nearly four years.

“Most importantly, we will have respect and dignity, and that to me is priceless.”



CARWASHERO RIGOBERTO QUINTERO speaks out about poor working conditions and the need to have a voice on the job.



(LEFT TO RIGHT) Shop Steward Tonya Jeter, Local 108 Rep. Jasper Parnell, and Shop Steward Tina McCaskill served on the Brunswick negotiating committee.

UNION A GATEWAY TO BETTER LIFE FOR DRIVERS IN NEW JERSEY

Shuttle bus drivers employed by Gateway in Newark, New Jersey, have voted overwhelmingly to join RWDSU Local 108. Drivers at Gateway provide transportation for Prudential and other corporations in the downtown Newark area. The vote was 100 percent in favor of joining the RWDSU.

Workers at Gateway wanted a change after years of stagnant wages and other issues that made life on the job difficult. And they felt that their pay, benefits, and treatment weren’t fair considering the responsibilities and stress their job entails.

“The reason why we want the union to represent us is so we can have benefits, better pay rates, holiday and vacation pay in the future. And, we want respect,” said one worker.

“The company shows them no appreciation or respect for the job they do,” said Local 108 President Charles N. Hall, Jr. “About a quarter of the workforce are part-timers who average 30 hours a week with no benefits while full-timers get very little benefits.”

This latest win for bus drivers in New Jersey comes on the heels of a similar victory for minibus and van drivers at Transdev who joined Local 108 late last year. The new members, who voted overwhelmingly for union representation, transport seniors in Essex County, New Jersey. Workers joined to address numerous issues, but most important were low pay and a lack of respect from management.

“Drivers in New Jersey aren’t being treated right. They deal with traffic, bad weather, and need to transport people safely – it’s a lot of responsibility and they deserve better. By joining Local 108, they are making a change and helping to make a difference in the industry,” Hall added. ■

WORKERS WINNING A UNION VOICE **RWDSU**

INDIAN FOOD WAREHOUSE WORKERS PREVAIL, WIN VOICE

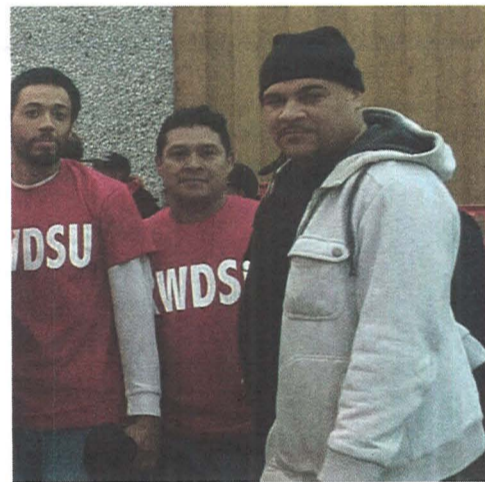
Workers at Chetak distribution facility in Edison, New Jersey, overcame an intense anti-union campaign of intimidation and retaliation from management to win a union voice. The employees at Chetak – an Indian good distribution warehouse with 50 employees – won their election to join RWDSU Local 262.

“We enjoy working at Chetak, and we look forward to being part of the company that is growing and prospering,” said Jonas Blanco, a worker at the Chetak facility. “I’m proud to be a part of the RWDSU family at Chetak where we can all fight together for a better future.”

Several months ago, the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) charged Deep Foods, which owns the facility, with illegally firing workers from Chetak for supporting the union. Despite the company’s actions, workers remained strong and voted to gain union representation.

“The solidarity of the Chetak workers has been really inspiring,” said RWDSU Local 262 President Tom Walsh. “They have shown energy and compassion for each other, and they refused to be intimidated. It’s a good day for workers everywhere when Americans stand up for their rights on the job.”

Founded in 1977, Deep Foods has grown into the largest Indian Food manufacturer nationwide. The company produces the brands Deep, Tandoor Chef, Hot Mix and many others. Its products can be found in markets such as Whole Foods and Trader Joe’s. The company has facilities in New Jersey, Texas, Florida and overseas in India. ■



CHETAK WORKERS won their union election despite an intense anti-union campaign by their employer.

CHETAK WORKERS and **LOCAL 262** President Tom Walsh (fifth from left) celebrate victory at the Indian food warehouse.



MONROEVILLE GUITAR CENTER workers celebrate winning their election, and the fact that the company’s outside union-busting consultant won’t be celebrating or wasting any more of their time.

PENNSYLVANIA GUITAR CENTER WORKERS CHOOSE RWDSU

Workers at the Guitar Center music instrument store in Monroeville outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, withstood an intense anti-union campaign to become the fourth store in the chain to vote to join the RWDSU. The workers at the store – housed in the mall made famous by the legendary 1978 zombie flick Dawn of the Dead – join workers at Guitar Center stores in Chicago, New York, and Las Vegas as RWDSU members.

Workers at the store were frustrated and confused by seemingly never ending changes to Guitar Center’s commission policies, which workers say has hurt their earning potential. And, they weren’t getting the respect they want from management. The company attempted to silence their voice by bringing in infamous union-buster Mike Ciabattini for captive meetings where he used misinformation, veiled threats, and empty promises in attempts to scare workers away from exercising their legal right to join a union.

“Despite being extremely well prepared, we were shocked by the lengths that the company was willing to go to in order to bust the union, and the complete lack of professionalism displayed by the union-buster,” said Brian Loughlin, a recent Guitar Sales hire at the store. “However, their tactics actually strengthened the resolve of the group.”

Workers celebrated their win by brandishing a fake voided check in reference to the bonus that union-busters like Ciabattini often receive for keeping a workplace union-free.

“Workers can’t earn commissions when they are in these time-wasting meetings listening to this propaganda, and they are tired of it,” said RWDSU Organizer Eric Dryburgh. “Most importantly, they just want a voice.” Now Monroeville Guitar Center workers have one.



RWDSU MEMBERS GET INVOLVED IN 2016 ELECTIONS

RWDSU members throughout the U.S. have been heavily involved in helping to get out the vote for Hillary Clinton in the Democratic primaries, following the UFCW's endorsement of the presidential candidate. RWDSU activists have been working to inform people about the issues and increase voter turnout. They've knocked on doors, called voters, distributed worksite leaflets and prepared direct mailers to get people in their communities involved in the political process.

"It's been a great year for voter engagement," said RWDSU Deputy Political Director Phil Freedman. "The Democratic primary has been focused on real, substantive issues. The labor movement has played a key role in ensuring that the lives and well-being of working people are front and center during the 2016 presidential election."

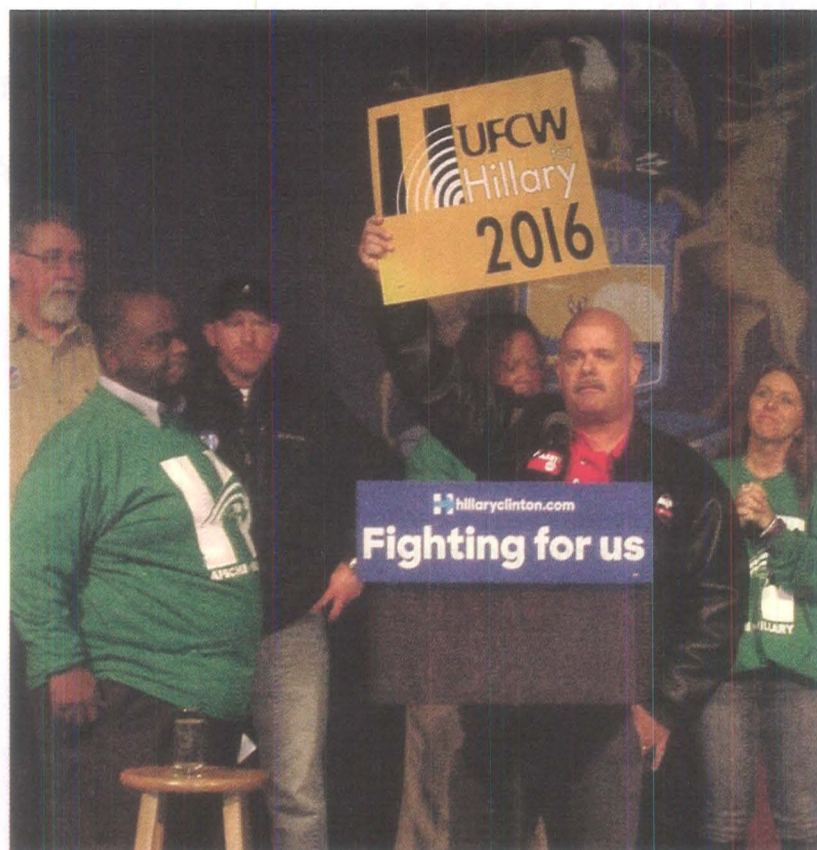
In the Midwest, RWDSU members were part of the team that visited 100,000 homes to engage with voters and inform them about how to participate in the Democratic primary. They mobilized in Detroit to knock on 13,000 doors,

engaging their fellow union members and the general public alike. In Ohio, the RWDSU was on the ground in Akron and Toledo to help the labor movement connect with 85,000 households.

In the South, the Mid-South Council and Southeast Council connected with their membership outside their worksites to raise awareness about the primaries.

The outreach has started a healthy political conversation at RWDSU worksites throughout the South, including poultry plants, food processing facilities and grocery stores. It's an important discussion that has empowered union members to be a part of selecting a new commander-in-chief.

The RWDSU was invited to an official Democratic debate. New England Joint Board President Tina Buonaugurio and Recorder Phil D'Arcangelo were in attendance for the debate between Vermont Senator Bernie Sanders and Clinton at the University of New Hampshire. Additionally, Southeast Council's Sandra Williams attended the debate in Charleston, South Carolina. ■



RWDSU COUNCIL 30
Representative Joseph Silva speaks at a rally in Detroit the weekend before the Michigan primaries.

NEW LAW PROTECTS GROCERY WORKERS IN NEW YORK

In February, the Grocery Worker Retention Act (GWRA) became law in New York City. The RWDSU fought for and won passage of the GWRA, which requires that all eligible employees at a supermarket are retained for at least 90 days following a change in ownership.

The GWRA provides protection for the 50,000 Supermarket workers in New York City who until now faced a sudden loss of income and benefits when their stores were purchased by new operators. And, it protects New York's communities by ensuring that experienced workers who know health regulations and sanitation procedures are handling their groceries.

The law will bring stability to the grocery store industry in New York City, which currently suffers from volatile conditions with the eminent merger, closing or the establishment of new ownership of supermarkets. The recent A&P bankruptcy has provided a vivid example of this, rippling through the city with 52 stores impacted throughout the five boroughs including subsidiary brands such as Pathmark, Waldbaum's, Food Emporium, and Food Basics. Some stores have been closed, others sold or auctioned, or even transformed into non-supermarket entities.



NYC MAYOR BILL DE BLASIO (at desk) signs Grocery Worker Retention Act as RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum (to the right of de Blasio) and Local 338 President John Durso (far right) look on.

FIGHTING FOR A HIGHER WAGE AND DIGNITY AT WORK IN NY CHANGES

There is dignity in all honest work, and all workers deserve to be treated with respect. When people go to work each day, they deserve to be able to support themselves and to earn a decent living. That's why RWDSU members in New York lent their voice to the successful movement to raise minimum pay to \$15 an hour – significant,

life-changing raise for three million workers in the Empire State.

Earlier this year, Nicole Brown, a retail worker and a member of the RWDSU's Retail Action Project (RAP), spoke out in Albany, New York about the importance of raising the minimum wage in the state to \$15 an hour.

Brown spoke at a press conference and testified about the obstacles retail workers face in supporting their families on current retail wages.

"I have worked in retail for over ten years at various stores. Yet, despite being employed, I have struggled financially, which can be emotionally draining. I have not been able to afford renting an apartment, and the only way I have managed to put a roof over our heads is by going in and out of shelters. I have had to depend on food stamp benefits to feed my family," Brown said. ■

RAP MEMBER NICOLE BROWN (left) discusses her experiences trying to make ends meet on insufficient pay in retail.



SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS KNOW UNION DIFFERENCE **RWDSU**

FIVE YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN

— four children of RWDSU members, and one a member herself — have won the annual RWDSU Alvin E. Heaps Scholarship. The scholarship, named after former RWDSU President Al Heaps (1919-1986), promotes higher education for RWDSU families and recognizes scholastic performance and an understanding of the difference union membership has made in their lives, and how unions can help all working families.



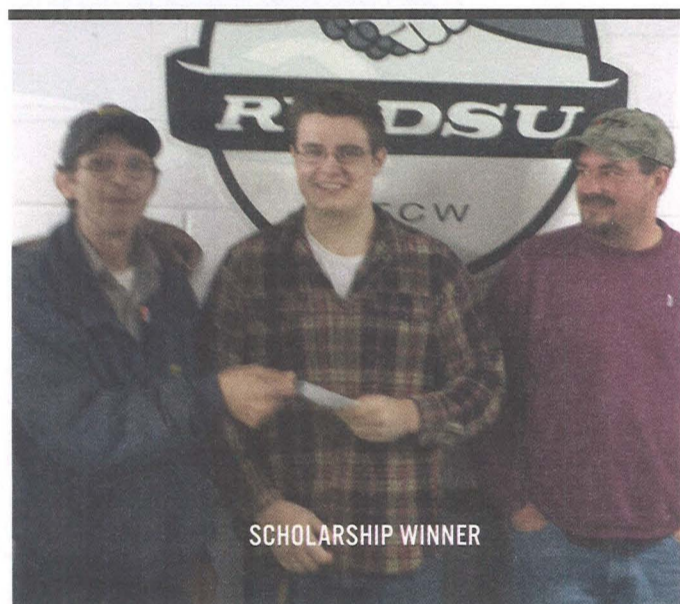
SARA ALVAREZ is the daughter of Clemente Alvarez, a Local 513 member who works at Coca-Cola in Massachusetts. She is attending Curry College in Milton, Massachusetts.

“Families benefit from unions because they provide security.” In 2008, when the U.S. experienced a severe financial crisis, my father’s union membership helped reduce my family’s stress. He signed a contract that secured his job and wage increases for five years. My mother on the other hand was not a union member. During the same time, she saw no raise for one year, and then was forced to take a ten percent pay cut the next. I support employees’ membership in unions so they can secure their futures in their professional and personal lives.



NATACHA FERMIN FERNANDEZ is a Local 338 member and supermarket worker. While attending Manhattan Community College in New York City, she is studying Nursing.

“Unions play a crucial role in securing benefits, and enforcing workers’ rights on the job.” While working as a cashier at a supermarket, the RWDSU helped ensure that I was compensated correctly for my vacation time. After working for over a year, I took the vacation time I had earned, but something didn’t feel right. While I had earned 30 hours of vacation, my check only reflected 20 hours. I contacted the union to ask them about it, and within a few days an RWDSU representative came to my workplace to discuss the issue with myself and management. The issue was quickly resolved and I was compensated correctly.



SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

DYLAN RICE is the son of Toby Rice, a Local 220 member at Mott’s in Williamson, New York. Rice is majoring in Computer Aided Design at Cayuga Community College

“The union helped my family and all Mott’s workers back in 2010, when they went on strike. The company intended to cut benefits and pay as well.” For many weeks, the union supported my father and our family, along with many other workers. If it weren’t for the union, all of us would have had to accept what the company was doing. I’m thankful today that my father had a union, because I know that he and his fellow workers had a voice. Unions keep workers from being taken advantage of, and support many workers like my father during their struggles and hardships.



SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

KLYNN GRAY is the daughter of Local 261 member Curtis Gray, who works at Bruno’s Warehouse in Birmingham, Alabama. Gray is attending the University of Alabama and majoring in interior design.

“Working people should continue to seek out union representation because it levels the playing field and gives them a voice.” Before the creation of unions, injuries in the workplace were more common and working environments were more unsafe. Women and people of color were paid less than other workers. While my father worked in a warehouse for 29 years, he had the knowledge that the union had his back while on the job and that his voice would never go unheard. There is strength in numbers and being a part of a union is the best way to be heard.



SCHOLARSHIP WINNER

EMILY PERRIN is the daughter of David Perrin, a Local 110 member who works at Quaker Oats in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. Perrin is a nursing student at the University of Iowa.

“At companies like Walmart, workers are underpaid, have poor benefits, and get abused by management.” Without union representation, there’s no incentive for employers to treat their workers better. They run out older workers and replace them with cheaper younger workers. People have to work longer because they have poor or no retirement benefits. I am going to college to work in the medical field. I hope I can obtain a job with union membership, so I can receive my union card like my father, my grandparents, and all my other family members who have taken pride in their unions.

COVER
STORY

THE RWDSU MID-SOUTH COUNCIL: TRANSFORMING LIVES IN THE SOUTH

Union activists know that growing union membership in the U.S. isn't an easy task. And nowhere is that truer than in the traditionally anti-worker, anti-union South, where organizing members has always been a struggle.

But at the RWDSU Mid-South Council, which represents workers in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, Ohio, and Tennessee, they haven't been paying much attention to the hype that says you can't organize in the southern U.S.

The Mid-South Council recently celebrated the incredible milestone of becoming 10,000 strong. That's 10,000 workers with a voice – and dignity and respect at the workplace - who otherwise would be on their own as they try to build better lives for themselves and their families. Through organizing new workplaces, and through aggressive and successful internal organizing, the RWDSU Mid-South Council has doubled its membership in five years and emerged as a leader and the new face of the Southern labor movement.

A HISTORY OF ACTIVISM AND GROWTH

While the Mid-South Council celebrates the remarkable milestone of 10,000 members, it's important to remember that it all started with just a few hundred.

In 1938, bakery workers at the National Biscuit Company plant in Birmingham, Alabama, knew they desperately needed change. Workers toiled in deplorable conditions for \$14 a week and were treated without respect. For many workers in a South where slavery was once the law of the land, such treatment was dehumanizing.

Seeking dramatic change, in 1938, National Biscuit workers joined together in a union. And, in 1942, the National Biscuit workers partnered with employees at American Bakeries, a nearby bakery where workers had also formed a union. Together, they became Local 441, and they affiliated with the Retail, Wholesale and Department Store Employees of America, the forerunner of today's RWDSU. With the help of energetic young organizers, the local grew steadily over ensuing years.

Organizers like the late Henry Jenkins, who served as Mid-South Council President from

1979 until 2011, helped organize workers in industries that would become cornerstones of the RWDSU in the South including poultry plants, warehouses, grocery stores, and manufacturing plants. Through mergers and the establishment of other large locals in the area, like Local 261 for warehouse workers, the RWDSU kept growing in the South.

In 1957, the growing number of RWDSU locals in Alabama and Mississippi joined together to form the Alabama and Mid-South Council, which is now known as the RWDSU Mid-South Council. The council continued to organize throughout the ensuing decades, with a renewed focus on poultry plants helping to add large groups of members starting in the 1990s. In the 2000s, these efforts continued to bring workers a voice, including 850 at CP Poultry in Eufala, Alabama in 2000, and 500 at Alatrade in Phenix City, Alabama, in 2008.

WITHOUT CHANGE, NOTHING CHANGES

Today, under the leadership of President John Whitaker, the Mid-South Council has continued adding members at poultry plants, warehouses, supermarkets and health care facilities.

In the summer of 2012, at Pilgrim's Pride Poultry in Russellville, Alabama, over 1,200 workers scored the biggest union victory in the state in decades when they voted to join the RWDSU Mid-South Council.

"There are so many workers in the Mid-South area who need change, and we know that without change, nothing changes," Whitaker said. "Workers here are underpaid, and worse, exploited. And when they join us, their lives can be transformed."

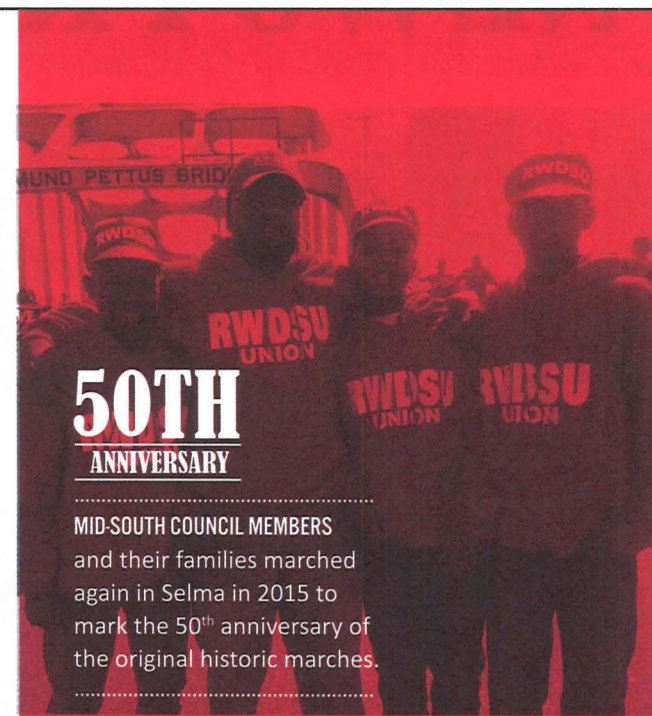
Pilgrim's Pride worker Cheryl Kowalski's life is a testament to that transformation. "Before, we had no respect from management, and absolutely no voice in anything that affected us. They told us what to do and when to do it, and there were no questions allowed. The bottom line was 'do what you are told or you don't have a job.' But the union provided us with a glimmer of hope," Kowalski said.

She and her workers won raises – many for the first time ever – and also paid time off. "It was satisfying to see those workers get what they had earned, and what they deserved," Whitaker added.

The Alabama Mid-South Council leadership team - including Whitaker, Secretary-Treasurer James Shackelford, Curtis Gray, Randy Hadley, James Sisson, Jose Aguilar, Allen Gregory, Syrena Paluchowski, Shelley Caver, Aviette Embry – are dedicated to continuing to grow the union.

"We are going to keep getting stronger, because the more of us there are, the better our contracts will be. And ultimately, that will improve the lives of all workers in the Mid-South area and move us all forward," Whitaker said. ■





50TH ANNIVERSARY

MID-SOUTH COUNCIL MEMBERS and their families marched again in Selma in 2015 to mark the 50th anniversary of the original historic marches.

CHANGING LIVES AND CHANGING TIMES

THE SOUTH THAT THE MID-SOUTH COUNCIL was born into in the 1930s was very different than the one RWDSU members live in today. Institutionalized segregation and discrimination were among the many reasons why workers—many of them African-American—sought out a union voice. It's no accident that the mid-century Civil Rights movement and the labor movement gained strength and momentum together.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was there for RWDSU members at Holsum Baking Co. in the late 1950s in Montgomery, Alabama, walking on the picket lines with workers to help them win their strike. In 1965, the RWDSU again stood side-by-side with Dr. King during the historic march to Selma. RWDSU members brought supplies including tents and food to marchers' campsites along the route, providing critical support.

The Mid-South Council's ongoing commitment to civil rights continues in the 21st century. In 2008, the RWDSU negotiated a contract at the Tyson plant in Shelbyville, Tennessee, that recognized Eid-Al-Fitr as a paid holiday. This was a key request for the hundreds of Somali refugees who worked at the plant, as Eid-Al-Fitr is one of Islam's most important holidays. It was a historic first from the union that was also the first to negotiate Dr. King's birthday as a paid holiday in 1968.

"In the South, we've seen that by standing together we can fight back against oppression and make change—creating a fairer society," said RWDSU Mid-South Council President John Whitaker. "Our union was part of that change in society during the civil rights movement, and it's a part of change today as we help working people build better lives."

WORKERS AT WAYNE FARMS POULTRY in Union Springs, Alabama, celebrate joining the union with the late Henry Jenkins in 1970.

Workers at GOLDEN LIVING HEALTH CARE in Trussville, Alabama, joined the Mid-South Council in 2013.

The strength and diversity of the MID-SOUTH COUNCIL was on display at a 2011 members' meeting.



THE UNITED FOOD AND...

NEWS FROM AROUND THE UFCW

a VOICE for working America



In March, hundreds of Stop & Shop workers, customers, community leaders, clergy and union members gathered in Braintree, Mass., to call on Stop & Shop, and its parent company Ahold, to provide a fair deal and a better life for its employees. New England Stop & Shop workers are currently working under an expired union contract while the profitable company insists on cuts to hard-earned benefits.

ACTIVISTS RALLY FOR STOP & SHOP WORKERS

FIVE UFCW LOCALS—Locals 328, 371, 919, 1445 and 1459—representing 35,000 Stop & Shop workers have been in negotiations with the company since early January. “Stop & Shop’s proposals show that the company has strayed from its core values,” said Tim Melia, president of UFCW Local 328. “This used to be a company that took pride in offering the best wages and benefits in the region, and attracting the best workers. Our members are only asking for their fair share of the success their hard work has built.”

The rally came after Stop & Shop’s parent company, Netherlands-based grocery giant Ahold, released its latest financial statement, earning in excess of \$10 billion last year.

Senator Elizabeth Warren wrote a letter of support for the workers calling it “critically important” that Stop & Shop workers achieve a contract that “provides strong wages, comprehensive benefits, and retirement security.”

RWDSU Local 338 members from New York City were among the activists there to support workers. Talks between the company and the union resumed in mid-March, following the rally and a strike authorization vote.

QUEST DIAGNOSTICS WORKERS JOIN UFCW IN SAN DIEGO

QUEST DIAGNOSTICS WORKERS in San Diego have voted to join UFCW Local 135. The workers join a growing movement of phlebotomist and lab technicians who have come together from the Northwest to the Southwest to raise standards in the health care industry. Workers wanted to join a union in order improve their jobs and workplace. Better wages, respect on the job, stable schedules, and vacation and sick days are some of the top priorities for workers. Negotiations for their first contract begins next month.

Quest Diagnostics is a leading diagnostics services

“Provide a fair deal and a better life for employees.”

provider in oncology and genetics. Quest Diagnostics annually serves one in three adult Americans and half the physicians and hospitals in the United States, and has 45,000 employees. Given the company’s prominence, workers hope that through the growing power of their combined voice, Quest Diagnostics workers will be able to influence and improve standards for workers throughout the industry. ■



QUEST DIAGNOSTICS workers joined the UFCW for a voice at work.



UFCW Secretary-Treasurer Esther López

UFCW NAMES ESTHER LÓPEZ NEW SECRETARY-TREASURER

IN FEBRUARY, the UFCW International Executive Board elected Esther López as the new UFCW Secretary-Treasurer. Lopez is a lifelong labor and civil rights activists, first connecting with unions while working to register Latino voters when she was a teenager.

For López, it’s an exciting time to be part of the labor movement, but also an important time for the direction of the U.S.

“We are deciding what kind of a country we want,” López said. “Will it be one of hope and opportunity for all of us, or a country of divisiveness and hate? I know that hope and inclusiveness will prevail, and I know that we are going to take an important role in making that happen.”

López began with the UFCW in November 2006 when she was hired as Director of the Civil Rights and Community Action Department. In that role, she has helped put the UFCW on the front lines of the most crucial civil rights battles of our time—fighting back against voter suppression, working to end exploitation of refugees from countries like Burma, Sudan and Somalia, creating more opportunities for women, and expanding LGBT equality.

“The UFCW and the RWDSU are on the front-line of the labor movement with our organizing and contract bargaining efforts. With the leadership team we have in place, led by President Marc Perrone (and including RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum, who also serves as UFCW Executive Vice President), we are positioned to build a stronger movement, and change countless workers’ lives for the better,” López said. “This is an amazing opportunity we have here, and I’m proud and honored to be a part of it.”

ELECTIONS RWDSU



COCA-COLA LOCAL 835 INDIANA

RWDSU LOCAL 835 members who work at Coca-Cola in Fort Wayne, elected officers to new two-year terms. Elected were Chairman Travis Fleischman, Vice-Chairman Demetrius Coleman, Chief Steward Benjamin Jennings, Recording Secretary Bruce Loos, and Sergeant-at-Arms Bruce Reuille.

(LEFT TO RIGHT) Benjamin Jennings, Travis Fleischman, Bruce Reuille, Demetrius Coleman, and Bruce Loos.

LOCAL 512 members who work at the Fayette County Highway Department in Connersville, Indiana, held their Unit Officer Election. Elected to new two-year terms of office were Chief Steward Jerry Lewis, Executive Secretary Danny Jarboe, and Alternate Steward Rick Taylor.

FAYETTE HIGHWAY DEPARTMENT LOCAL 512 INDIANA



(LEFT TO RIGHT) Rick Taylor, Jerry Lewis, and Danny Jarboe.



PRAIRIE FARMS DAIRY LOCAL 810 INDIANA

MEMBERS OF RWDSU LOCAL 810 in Fort Wayne, Indiana, nominated and elected new officers to lead the Local for the next three years. Elected to office were President Tim Brunson, Secretary-Treasurer Rex Moore, Recorder John Webb, 1st Vice-President Matt Sliger, 2nd Vice-President Kevin Wilson, and 3rd Vice-President Cyler Carroll. There are 110 Local 810 members who work at Prairie Farms Dairy in Fort Wayne, Indiana, Prairie Farms Distribution Branch in Mishawaka, Indiana.

(LEFT TO RIGTH, FRONT ROW) John Webb, Tim Brunson, and Rex Moore. (LEFT TO RIGHT BACK ROW) Kevin Wilson, Matt Sliger, and Cyler Carroll.



MICHIGAN JOINT COUNCIL

The RWDSU MICHIGAN JOINT COUNCIL has elected officers to new two-year terms. Election was held on January 20, 2016. Elected, and shown in photo.

(LEFT TO RIGHT) Vice-President Jason Walker, Recorder Joyce McDonald, President Randy Belliel, Executive Vice-President Rich Hauxwell, Secretary-Treasurer Brad Stover, and Vice-President Rick Ross. Also elected and not pictured were Vice-Presidents Tim Ferguson and Chris Haire.

RWDSU CONTRACTS

ACADEMY

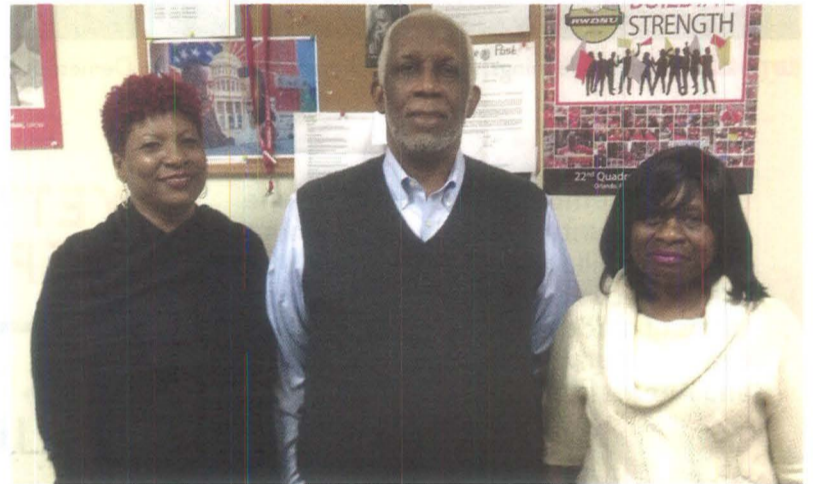
LOCAL 108 NEW JERSEY

ACADEMY BUS DRIVERS in New Jersey continue to win progress with each new contract. **LOCAL 108** members at Academy have ratified their third agreement since joining the RWDSU in 2003. This new three-year pact includes average wages of 3.5 percent a year, an increase in the starting rate of 17.25 percent, a 15 percent increase in retirement benefit contributions by the employer, and an additional pay differential for certain routes. Workers also won a 4th week of vacation after 15 years on the job, and an additional personal day. "I'm proud of the progress the bus drivers at Academy have made since joining the RWDSU. These drivers are sending a message to other drivers in the state that they can be paid a fair wage, and that they deserve to be fairly compensated for their hard work and dedication to transporting people safely," said Local 108 President Charles N. Hall, Jr.

MUNICIPAL WORKERS FOR THE CITY OF BRUNSWICK, New Jersey, have ratified a new four-year agreement. The **RWDSU LOCAL 108** members won wage gains of over 7 percent over the life of the pact. In addition there are increases in meal and vehicle use reimbursement, and the health care plan has been protected. In addition, any employee holding a title in the classification of water treatment operator, water treatment plant maintenance, or water distribution will see a \$5,000 increase in salary.

CITY of BRUNSWICK

LOCAL 108 NEW JERSEY



(LEFT TO RIGHT) Shop Steward Tonya Jeter, Local 108 Rep. Jasper Parnell, and Shop Steward Tina McCaskill served on the Brunswick negotiating committee.

PEPSI

LOCAL 1096 INDIANA

LOCAL 1096 members who work at Pepsi in Seymour, Indiana, voted to accept a new four-year contract. The new agreement provides a nine percent wage increase over the next four years and strengthens seniority rights in the bidding process. It provides additional mileage pay for merchandisers and provides improved language in the area of paid sick days and paid personal days. It improves the health insurance benefits, with less cost to the employees. The contract also increases pension contributions. In addition, the contract establishes an hourly pay rate for drivers when they are stranded due to truck breakdowns. There will now be a reasonable time frame in which an employee can receive discipline, otherwise it cannot be issued. And, all tools used by MEM service techs be provided by the Company.

RWDSU LOCAL 184-L members in Kansas City, Kansas, produce tasty Cheez-It snacks in a number of different varieties. Now, they'll do it with a great new three-year contract that brings annual wage increases, an increase in pension benefits, and other benefits. The contract – negotiated with Keebler – also improves health care benefits at no additional cost. The tool allowance for maintenance workers will increase, the shoe allowance increases for workers, and workers have an option for additional life insurance. Serving on the bargaining committee were local President Jermaine Fields, Sec-Treas. Carla Smith, Recorder SaMatha Robinson, and Vice Presidents Anthony Edwards, Dwayne Fields, LaVonne (Rose) Heisler, Edward Wright, Derwin McNeely, and Derrald (Pete) Levels. Assisting the Committee were Dennis Williams, Sr. Business Representative for the Central States Council, and Roger Grobstich, RWDSU Representative.

KEEBLER

LOCAL 184-L KANSAS



THE BARGAINING COMMITTEE was Executive Secretary Randy Lane, Jr (LEFT) and Chief Steward Ron Sheron. They were assisted by Indiana Joint Board President Dave Altman.

HOLSUM BAKERY

LOCAL 835 INDIANA

TRANSPORT DRIVERS AT HOLSUM BAKERY in Fort Wayne, Indiana, voted to accept a new three-year contract providing wage increases in every category by which the drivers are paid (i.e. mileage, store door stops, terminal stops, drops, hook ups, spotting of trailers, delay time, etc.). The new agreement now requires the Company to pay the full cost of the employees' uniforms. The employees' health insurance coverage and pension are maintained for the life of the agreement. The new agreement will also provide language improvements in the areas of safety and job bidding.

RWDSU LOCAL 599 members at A.T. Wall in Rhode Island, a manufacturer of metal tubing aeronautical, defense, research, and other uses, ratified a new three-year pact that brings wage increases and also creates more flexibility for using paid time off. In addition, for the first time, members at the plant will receive paid sick days. Local 599 member Frank Garcia, New England Joint Board President Tina Buonagurio, NEJB Sec.-Treas. Melvin Drungo, and NEJB Organizer Phil Darcangelo served on the negotiating committee.

A.T. WALL

LOCAL 599 RHODE ISLAND



MEMBERS at Pepsi Haverhill celebrate their new contract.

PEPSI HAVERHILL

LOCAL 513 MASSACHUSETTS

A new five-year agreement between **RWDSU LOCAL 513** members and the Pepsi Bottling Company of Merrimack Valley plant in Haverhill, Massachusetts, protects health care and lowers cost to members, and raises wages. Members received a \$600 signing bonus, a boot allowance, and also reimbursement for training costs.

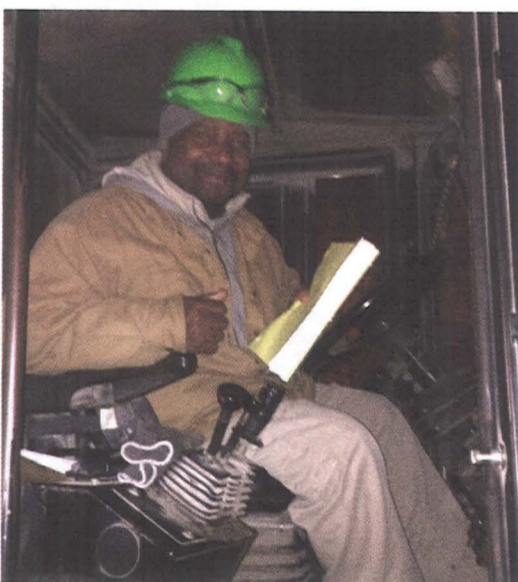
PEPSI ROUTE DRIVERS and maintenance workers in Seymour, Indiana, will see nine percent wage increases over the course of their new four-year contract, along with stronger seniority rights for job bidding. The contract also provides additional mileage pay for Merchandizers and provides improved language in the area of paid sick days and paid personal days. Health insurance benefits are improved with less cost to the employees, and pension contributions by the company are also higher. The contract establishes mixed work week language, and provides a mixed work week rate of pay. It establishes an hourly pay rate for drivers when they are stranded due to truck breakdowns. And the agreement now require that all tools used by MEM Service Techs be provided by the Company.

PEPSI

LOCAL 1096 INDIANA



(L TO R) Bargaining Committee Members Christopher Dean, Dana Freese, and Jeff Reynolds. They were assisted by Indiana Joint Board President and Representative Dave Altman.



CHIEF STEWARD AND BARGAINING COMMITTEEMAN James Brown, Jr.

WOOLEY LUMBER COMPANY

LOCAL 512 INDIANA

RWDSU LOCAL 512 members who work at the Wooley Lumber Company Yard and Kiln in Indianapolis, Indiana, and the Wooley Lumber Company Saw Mill in Mooresville, Indiana, voted and approved a new three-year contract which provides four percent wage increases. And, the new agreement maintains the employees' union insurance coverage for the life of the contract. The funeral leave provision of the contract has also been improved.



AFL-CIO EXEC. VICE-PRESIDENT Tefere Gebre, RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum, RWDSU Organizer Nick Ruiz, and Hi-Tek worker Omar Gomez.

AFL-CIO'S GEBRE VISITS WITH CARWASHERS

National AFL-CIO Executive Vice-President Tefere Gebre visited with RWDSU members at Hi-Tek car wash in Queens, New York, in March. Gebre, an immigrant from Africa, is familiar with the obstacles faced by immigrant workers who are trying to build lives in a new country.

They talked about the issues workers face in the car wash industry, and the difference having a union has made for them.

"Workers are being ignored. Regardless of immigration status, or color, workers across the U.S. are facing tough battles and struggling to get by," Gebre said. Gebre also lent his voice to the Fight for \$15 campaign.

"It's not going to be easy, but now is the time for us to fight for \$15 an hour in New York. It's a matter of decency and equality," Gebre added.

Gebre talked with workers like Mexican immigrant and five-year Hi-Tek employee Alberto Martinez, who told him about the difference the union has made in his life.

"Before joining the RWDSU, the employer looked at us like we were nothing. Today we have respect, and we know that there is someone to defend us and support us at work," Martinez said. ■

"Before joining the RWDSU, the employer looked at us like we were nothing."

LOCAL 338 MEMBERS LOBBY FOR HUMAN SERVICES WORKERS

Local 338 members who work in the human services industry have an important and demanding job: working to help create better lives for the developmentally disabled. This year, Local 338 members have been lobbying state legislators for more funding in the New York State budget for human services workers.

In recent months, four Local 338 Shop Stewards - Alether Williams and Gilbert Simmons who work at the Institute of Applied Human Dynamics (IAHD) in the Bronx, as well as Angela Tronolone and Yolanda Jones from Community Resources on Staten Island - have gone to the State Capitol to speak with legislators.

On their recent trip to the Capitol, Alether, Gilbert, Yolanda, and Angela all shared stories about the work that they do providing educational and social services, and how they also struggle to care for their own families. The initial State Budget proposed a 0.2% cost of living adjustment, which provides funding for wage increases for direct care providers. This proposal would, on average, only allow for two cent an hour raises. Local 338 strongly advocated to members of the Assembly and State Senate the need to substantially increase the cost of living adjustment so as to allow for meaningful wage increases.

For Local 338 members at IAHD and Community Resources, the work that they do is more than just a paycheck. They all have a passion for caring for their consumers, who they also see as an extension of their own families. These workers deserve a fair raise for the important work they do. ■

"They all have a passion for caring for their consumers, who they also see an extension of their own families."



LOCAL 338 MEMBERS Alether Williams and Gilbert Simmons (IAHD in the Bronx), Local 338 staffers Nikki Kateman, Laura Meltzer, and Rosa LaFontaine, members of UFCW Local 2013 with New York State Senate Minority Leader Andrea Stewart-Cousins during a UFCW/RWDSU Member Lobby Day.

Making Memories and Staying Connected



Celebrate Mother's Day with union member only Savings from Union Plus.

Stay connected with 15% off qualified AT&T wireless plans through Union Plus*.

Savings on just about everything from flowers and gift baskets to gift certificates. Discounted tickets to movies, plays, sporting events and theme parks. Great deals on car rental, travel and more.

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* Available only to current members of qualified AFL-CIO member unions. Must provide acceptable proof of union membership such as a membership card from your local union, a pay stub showing dues deduction or the Union Plus Member Discount Card and subscribe to service under an individual account for which the member is personally liable. Offer contingent upon in-store verification of union member status. Discount subject to agreement between Union Plus and AT&T and may be interrupted, changed or discontinued without notice. Discount applies only to recurring monthly service charge of qualified voice and data plans, not overages. Not available with unlimited voice plans. For Family Talk, applies only to primary line. For all Mobile Share plans, applies only to the monthly plan charge of plans with more than 300MB, not to additional mobile device access charges. May take up to 2 bill cycles after eligibility confirmed and will not apply to prior charges. Discount applied after application of any available credit and may not be combined with other service discounts. Additional restrictions apply. Contact AT&T at 866-499-8008 with questions.

RWDSU-MMMD-03-30-16



OUR STRENGTH CAN MAKE WORKPLACES SAFER

The RWDSU Health and Safety Department provides lots of training sessions on different hazard issues. As we do this we want to build on the knowledge and experience of our members. Nobody knows the job better than the folks who do it every day. Not the supervisor, not the manager or OSHA. The goal of your Health and Safety Department is to support that knowledge and help you and your coworkers develop effective ways to reduce the risk of work-related injuries and illnesses.

For many people workplace health and safety means OSHA, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

We certainly support OSHA. It is essential that there is a national agency committed to the importance of reducing the occupational diseases and injuries which kill over 50,000 Americans each year. And the leadership at OSHA since 2008 has been the best in the history of the agency. They have actively sought our active involvement in determining agency priorities, and have taken on critical issues such as the underreporting of injuries, the hazards of poultry processing work and the abuse of temporary and immigrant workers.

But OSHA has many limitations. It has been underfunded and understaffed from the outset. It would take OSHA over 100 years to inspect the estimated 8,000,000 workplaces they are responsible for. One of OSHA's primary missions is to develop standards which set limits on the level of exposure to hazards in the workplace. We would like to think that these standards embody the best scientific knowledge and medical research available, and that they ensure there will be no ill effects if the standards are not exceeded.

POLITICKING OSHA

But in reality OSHA standards are extremely political. This was made dramatically clear when

OSHA issued an ergonomics standard in late 2000 to begin to address the risk factors which result in the greatest number of annual occupational injuries. Congress and then-President George W. Bush repealed the standard three months later and forbid OSHA from working on a new standard. Today OSHA is trying to take much needed action to reduce levels of exposure to silica (sand) and is facing intense industry opposition. The few OSHA standards created since 1970 have been won as a result of the determination and hard work of labor unions, public health advocates and other allies. The forces who opposed those standards are flexing much greater political muscles these days. Consistently they grossly overstate the cost of regulations and minimize or completely disregard the benefits.

As we enter another election cycle we need to appreciate how critical political outcomes are in determining our right to organize, our right to fair compensation and our right to safety in our workplaces.

OUR UNITY MAKES A DIFFERENCE

We need to use our strength to insist that our workplaces are safe whether or not there is an OSHA standard that applies. For example there is no OSHA standard related to workplace violence. That means we need to insist that our employers take our knowledge of the risks and implement measures and policies which reduce the danger. There is no OSHA standard on lifting and repetitive work, so we need to fight to ensure that burdensome job tasks are analyzed and equipment and adequate staffing is available to reduce the risk to our bodies.

Our safety at work is very important to all of us. We need to share our concerns with our coworkers. Together we are winning changes in

our workplaces like improved ventilation and indoor air quality, better security protections, substitution of less hazardous chemicals and elimination of stressful on call scheduling. There are resources and help available to meet these challenges. The RWDSU Health and Safety Department is ready and able to help provide useful informational resources, train health and safety advocates, and help build effective workplace health and safety committees at your workplace. ■

“We need to insist that our workplaces are safe whether or not there is an OSHA standard.”



For More
INFORMATION

on how you can work together to make your workplace safer, contact the RWDSU Health and Safety Department at (212) 684-5300, or email sbmooser@rwdsu.org. ■