

# RWDSU

UFCW

SUMMER 2014

RECORD

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# BUILDING STRENGTH



Retail, Wholesale and  
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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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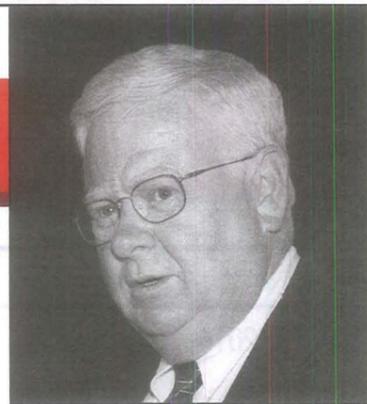
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**MESSAGE FROM YOUR OFFICERS**

# Building Strength in Difficult Times

**T**he RWDSU Convention, held this summer in August, sets the union's course for the next four years. We know that we face challenges as we build union strength for RWDSU members.

*We've proven that even in tough times, we can still strengthen our union, and give a voice on the job to those who need it most.*

Since our last convention in 2010, we've seen unprecedented attacks on not only our rights, but our livelihoods.

Politically, we've seen the enactment of right-to-work laws in Indiana and Michigan, which seemed unthinkable just a few years before. And we've seen right-wing politicians backed by wealthy special interests successfully gut the right of workers to unionize in numerous states.

At work, employers are increasing unfair scheduling practices that result in too many workers receiving insufficient hours, while forcing them to remain on call and unable to earn money at second jobs, or balance their family life.

Employers continue to take advantage of an economy that still hasn't recovered for most working people, by driving down wages and attempting to reverse decades of progress at the bargaining table. Pensions and benefits are under attack with a force we haven't seen before.

**Aggressively Fighting for Members**

Despite the hostile environment and a stagnant economy, RWDSU members haven't stopped working to keep our union strong. In this issue of the RWDSU Record, you'll read about how we've

continued to aggressively organize and bring new faces into the union – welcoming thousands of new members across the U.S in a diverse field of industries. In just the past few months, we've organized truck stop workers in New Jersey, nursing home employees in Mississippi, and book store workers in New York City – who immediately won change and forced their employer to rehire workers he fired in the wake of their union election.

And, you'll read about how RWDSU bargaining committees have continued to negotiate some of the strongest contracts in our industries, winning improvements in wages, protecting benefits, and even ensuring expansion in some of our shops.

But the modern labor movement is about more than just contracts and organizing, though that will always be our lifeblood. We've continued to be assertive in the political arena because politics impacts our contracts, working lives, and organizing efforts. We've helped elect pro-worker candidates at all levels, and we finally have a fully functioning labor board that has helped our organizers achieve quicker elections with less employer interference.

**No Silver Bullet, But We Have the Will**

We've proven that even in tough times, we can still strengthen our union, and give a voice on the job to those who need it most – such as exploited workers in the car wash and poultry industries. We have no choice but to continue to build upon the spirit and energy that powered these inspiring campaigns. We can build upon this momentum. By coming together we can build the strength we need to meet the challenges we face. ■

# Breakthrough for NYC CAR WASH WORKERS

## Carwasheros, Supporters Gather and Celebrate Accomplishments, Plan More Victories

In New York City in April, top elected officials including Mayor Bill de Blasio, Attorney General Eric Schneiderman, and City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito joined over 200 'carwasheros' and their advocates to pledge support for their fight for economic justice and the right to unionize.

A jubilant atmosphere permeated the proceedings at the second annual Car Wash Workers Assembly as car wash workers drummed on buckets and sang to celebrate the progress they've made. Workers and advocates resolved to continue fighting to make the city's car wash jobs better jobs that the largely Latino workforce can depend on to build better lives and stronger communities.

Miguel Portillo, who works at Jomar Car Wash in the Bronx, said: "This assembly is very important to us. We want all carwasheros in New York City to come together and join our fight. When we have every carwashero fighting, I know we can win. We can win more than we can imagine."

In the two years since the Wash NY campaign began with the support of New York Communities for Change, Make the Road New York and the RWDSU, workers at eight car washes have voted to unionize



NYC Mayor Bill de Blasio voiced his support for car wash workers.

and have won contracts at seven locations. The three-year contracts include wage increases, job security, fair scheduling, protection of their tips, personal days and paid holiday bonuses for Christmas and New

Year's Day. Workers have been motivated to organize by unfair labor practices and bad working conditions, which have been found at car washes across the city, including below-minimum-wage pay and wage theft.

And just before the assembly, the campaign achieved another victory for workers with a \$3.9 million settlement between Attorney General Schneiderman and car wash owner John Lage over unpaid

wages, underpayments of state unemployment and workers compensation on his workers' behalf. \$2.2 million will be divided amongst car wash workers whose wages were stolen.

"This victory is even bigger because it says in this city, in this state, that workers cannot be exploited, workers will not be exploited. We will not let it happen," Mayor de Blasio said. ■



Carwasheros celebrated two years of progress in their campaign for economic justice.

### Car Wash Accountability Act Would Protect Workers, Consumers

Beyond celebrating the achievements of workers, the Car Wash Assembly focused on progressive action like the proposed Car Wash Accountability Act. The law would require car washes to be licensed and codify measures to ensure transparency of ownership in New York City. The bill also contains measures that would enable greater enforcement of wage-theft laws and environmental regulations and impose meaningful penalties for non-compliance.

Car wash workers and other activists packed a City Hall hearing in June to support the bill, which was introduced last year. RWDSU members employed at city

car washes testified about their experiences and why the bill is needed to protect consumers, workers, and the environment.

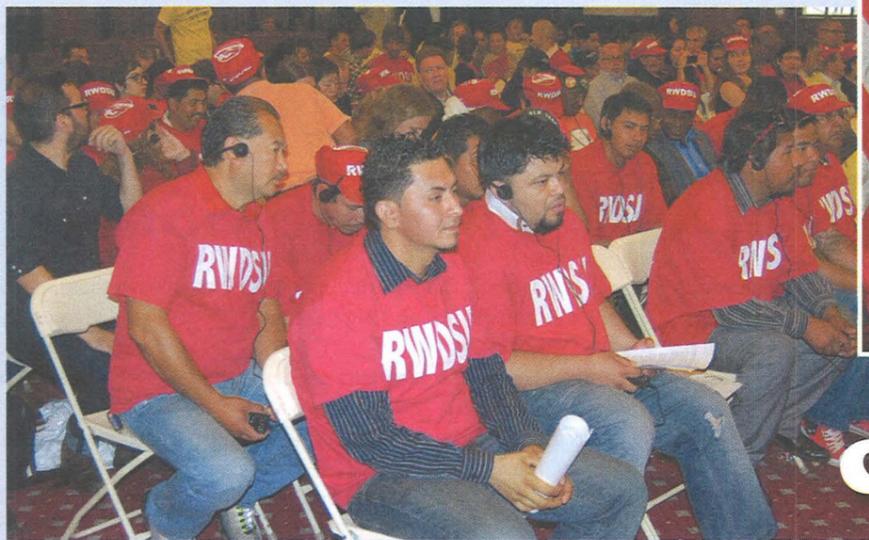
Several workers testified about having to handle dangerous compounds and detailed questionable practices like allowing unfiltered waste water to enter the city's

sewer system and dumping potentially hazardous sludge into the sewer or trash.

"At one car wash where I worked ... the other workers and I were asked to clean out the filter and put all of the sludge into the sewer," said 'carwashero' Juan Carlos

Rivera, who has worked at several establishments over the past eight years. "But they told us 'nobody can see you do this.'"

The bill is sponsored by Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito. ■



Supporters of the legislation packed City Hall.



Juan Carlos Rivera (left) testified about his experiences working at a car wash.

**carwasheros**

## RWDSU WORKERS WINNING A UNION VOICE

# Southeast Council Grows With New Members in Georgia

**W**hen workers with a union voice tell other workers they know about the difference it has made in their lives, it can help motivate others to seek out union representation.

RWDSU members employed at the Tyson poultry plant in Buena Vista, Georgia, played a pivotal role in helping workers at QSI Contract Sanitation win representation by the RWDSU. The 32 employees – who work in sanitation inside the plant – voted unanimously to join the RWDSU Southeast Council after the Tyson poultry workers told them about the many benefits of joining a union.

“Every one of us voted to join the RWDSU. We couldn’t have done this without the support of the RWDSU Tyson steward leadership. We are looking forward to seeing improved working conditions and higher wages in the near future,” said Leon Burke, five-year employee at QSI.

Workers at QSI needed a voice on the job to address their lack of a grievance procedure, and after speaking with Tyson workers realized the only way they could accomplish this was by joining the RWDSU. Now they’ll have a grievance process, along with everything else that comes with the dignity and respect of union representation. ■

The RWDSU continues to grow in the south with the addition of new members at QSI in Georgia.



## Workers at NYC Art Supply Store Vote RWDSU

**U**trecht Art Supplies sales associate Paloma Zapata works at the company’s East Village location in New York City, her first job since the 25-year-old left her home in Virginia to pursue an art career. With her work schedule limited by management to between 20 and 25 hours a week, it didn’t take long for her to realize that she and her co-workers needed a union voice in the store for better pay, working conditions, and most importantly, the sufficient hours they need to make enough money to survive.

“We all need to wake up and figure out what’s going on,” Zapata said. “We’re all human beings and deserve a certain quality of life.”

The workers began talking with RWDSU organizers, and the campaign soon resulted in an overwhelming win for Utrecht associates. It is the start of what workers hope will be a big turnaround in conditions that have deteriorated since industry giant Blick Art Materials bought out the company last year. When the company slashed all non-managerial staff hours nearly in half, the workers knew it was time to take action.

As a result of hours being cut drastically, there were staff shortages forcing workers to take on more work to keep the store running. At the same time, reduced hours resulted in smaller paychecks each week. The company’s anti-union campaign did not succeed in stifling workers’ voices.

One sales associate at Utrecht Art Supply said, “I’ve worked at a union store previously, so I know the benefits of having a union. It’s been extremely difficult to get our work done at Utrecht, especially when we know the company can give us more



(l to r) Utrecht workers Paloma Zapata, Danielle Cenata, and Daniel Matthews celebrate winning an RWDSU voice.

hours and raise our wages. I’m proud of my coworkers for choosing to make their voices heard by voting to be a part of the RWDSU.”

“Overall, the staff is excited and ready for the next move,” Zapata says.

Workers were subjected to an aggressive anti-union campaign that included multiple meetings with top management and long pamphlets filled with distortions and lies. The employees at Utrecht tried on multiple occasions to ask for basic things like better pay and having their hours restored. Now with the RWDSU the workers finally have a voice on the job and will get the respect they deserve. ■

## 65 Nursing Home Workers Join RWDSU in Mississippi

**W**hen a worker at Vineyard Nursing Home in Columbus, Mississippi, started her new job, she knew the difference that a union could make for her and her co-workers. She had previously been employed at another nursing home in Mississippi which had RWDSU membership.

Workers at Vineyard complained of a number of treatment and workplace

issues, especially a resident/employee ratio that was unbalanced and put too much stress on workers.

“There were too many residents and too few caregivers, and this was putting stress on the workers and their clients in the nursing home,” said RWDSU Representative Randy Hadley. “It was a bad situation for everyone, and people wanted change.”

The Vineyard employees listened to

what their new co-worker had to say and decided to reach out to the RWDSU Mid-South Council for a union voice.

Despite strong push back by the company, the workers at the nursing home have overwhelmingly voted to join the RWDSU, which will now represent the 65 workers there. The represented workers are CNAs, PRNs, and laundry, dietary, housekeeping, and maintenance workers. ■

## RWDSU WORKERS WINNING A UNION VOICE

# Flying J Workers Stand Up to Corporate Pressure, Vote RWDSU

**W**orkers at the Pilot Flying J Travel Center in Bloomsbury, New Jersey, stood up to management and a powerful right-wing political family to win a union voice, voting overwhelmingly to join RWDSU Local 108.

Pilot Flying J is the largest travel center chain in the country with over 550 locations under the Pilot and Flying J brands. The chain is owned by the family of Republican Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam and is operated by his brother Jimmy Haslam. Jimmy Haslam also owns a large stake of the Cleveland Browns football team.

The Haslam family is doggedly anti-union. Governor Haslam fought viciously and publicly against the UAW's effort to organize the workers at Volkswagen. But the family's money wasn't enough to stop workers at his family-owned business from unionizing. Despite the company's efforts, Flying J demanded and won a union voice.

The gas station attendants, cashiers, stockers, maintenance workers and coffee hosts at Pilot Flying J have been working to

organize for months, determined to make their jobs better.

Bill Ludwig, an employee who helped lead the effort to organize, said that while companies will stop at nothing to fight unions and employees from organizing, spin doctoring, harassment, and flat out lies aren't enough when workers demand the respect they deserve. The employees knew they were not being given a fair shake from a company that is on the Forbes 400 list.

"They claim they are trying to educate you about unions, all while bashing. I was confident that we would win because people were tired of not being treated with respect. We were being taken for granted while the company made millions," Ludwig said.

"I am very proud of the employees at Flying J for standing up to corporate pressure," said Charles N. Hall, Jr., President of RWDSU Local 108. "I guess you could compare the victory of the workers to David vs. Goliath."

Kathy Campbell, the lead organizer for the campaign said the victory was owed



New Local 108 members at Flying J stood up to a wealthy right-wing family to win their union voice.

**"I was confident that we would win because people were tired of not being treated with respect."**

to the organizing team at Local 108, and dynamic leaders like Ludwig at the store.

"They kept everyone together while under tremendous pressure from their man-

agement to vote against their best interests. This is clearly an example of workers deciding they had enough and that a union voice is the answer." ■

## Union Culture Wins at NYC Bookstores

**W**hen workers at Book Culture voted overwhelmingly to join the RWDSU in June, they were hoping it would create a channel with management to improve the working environment and make other positive changes at the stores. Book Culture has two Manhattan locations specializing in publications in the arts and humanities.

The new members also wanted to address issues ranging from low pay to lack of promotions. Workers were excited to be joining the labor movement, and were looking forward to changes at their jobs.

Elation soon turned to outrage when two workers were fired by the owner. He later sent an email to the workers reiterating that the firings were due to their participation in the union election. A third worker, the union's observer in the worker election, was also fired.

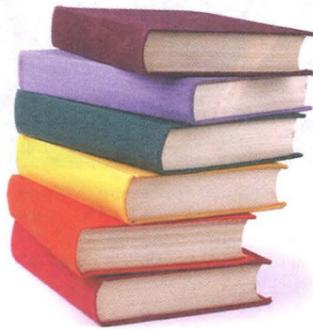
Less than two days later, the company fired two additional union supporters, again for taking part in the union election. The firings prompted workers at both stores to use their new union voice and go on strike. The same day, the

RWDSU filed charges alleging that the firings are illegal under U.S. labor law.

"We like working at Book Culture, and we like the stores. But the underlying thing is that everyone wants a collective voice, and more direct pathways to raises and promotions," said Bec Goodbourne, one of the fired workers who took to the picket line.

Activists soon rallied in front of the store with a giant inflatable rat, and the community quickly rallied behind the workers. Book Culture workers, other RWDSU members, and community members came together on the picket lines at both locations. Management was able to keep the stores open, but business slowed to a trickle. Within a day the writing was on the wall for the Book Culture owners. They agreed to rehire the fired workers, and to recognize their employees' wishes to be represented by the RWDSU.

"We are excited to be going back to work, and look forward to negotiating a fair contract. With a union in the store we'll have better communication, and management will have a more committed staff," Goodbourne added. ■



New RWDSU members at Book Culture took to the picket lines to win back their jobs, quickly showing the power of collective action.



# RWDSU POLITICAL & LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

## Wal-Mart Money Not Welcome in NY

In June, on the steps of City Hall in New York City, activists, City Council members, and community leaders held a rally calling upon Wal-Mart and the Walton family to stop trying to buy influence in New York City. The rally also highlighted the fact that Walton money goes to support numerous right-wing causes.

While the world's largest retailer has continually failed to open stores in New York City, that hasn't stopped them from trying to assert their influence on New York's communities.

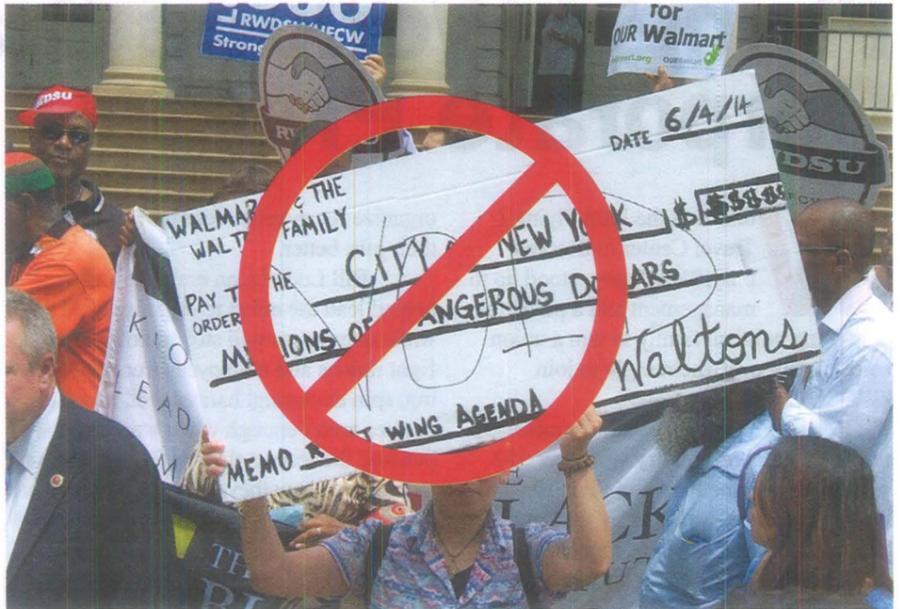
The Waltons have injected themselves directly into the school privatization debate in New York City, funding advertisements promoting charter programs. The Waltons have spent hundreds of millions of dollars supporting charter schools nationwide.

Wal-Mart money has also poured into the coffers of the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), an organization that promotes controversial voter ID requirements that make it more difficult for minorities and low-income people to vote. The retailer's money has gone to fund many right-wing causes that are at odds with the beliefs of the majority of New Yorkers.

"Walmart and the Walton Foundation have spent billions of dollars funding anti-worker, anti-immigrant, and anti-LGBT efforts around the country. They won't get away with that here," said RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum.

"We are proud of the support we have received from the City Council and we call on all elected officials in the city to reject Walmart money. Together we say no to the corrosive impact of Walmart money. Our values — our city — are not for sale!"

A letter signed by 27 members of the New York City Council was read, telling Wal-Mart they wouldn't take their money. ■



Act vists displayed a voided mock check from the Wal-Mart family – urging New York's elected officials to decline the retailer's money and influence.

## RWDSU Members Lobby in Ohio

In May, RWDSU and UFCW members in Ohio travelled to Columbus to lobby elected officials on issues important to working people in the region. Members from RWDSU Locals 21, 379, and 390 spoke with representatives at the State House.

They met with both Republicans and Democrats in an effort to reach out to elected officials with differing views, and to encourage cooperation between both parties when it comes to worker issues.

Members spoke with senators from throughout the state of Ohio.

"We think it's important to talk to both sides and try to make some progress for workers in the region. We have members across a large area here, and it's important that our concerns are heard," said RWDSU Representative Rick Marshall. "It was encouraging to see the enthusiasm RWDSU members in Ohio have for staying involved in politics. We all know how important it is." ■



RWDSU and UFCW members meet with Rep. Edna Brown (5th from left), who pledged her opposition to right-to-work legislation.

## RWDSU Helps Ensure Good Jobs With NY Medical Marijuana

The New York state legislature has made New York the 23rd state to legalize medicinal marijuana. The bill will allow patients in New York State to legally obtain marijuana for pain relief when dealing with a number of serious ailments. The bill specifies that it will be consumed in edible form, or inhaled via vaporizing.

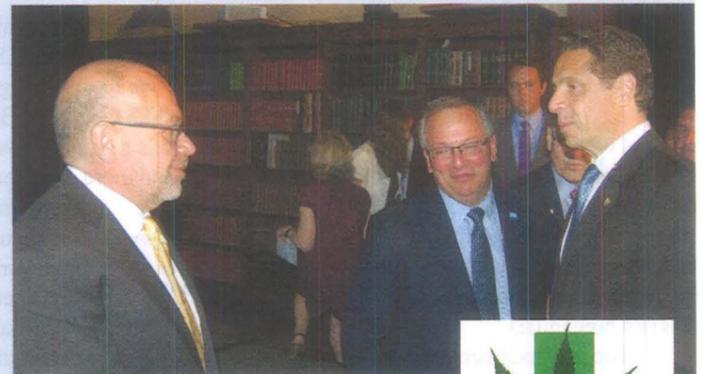
For seriously ill patients in New York, the passage of the bill means access to a safe and reliable form of pain relief. And thanks in part to the efforts of the RWDSU, the bill means access to good jobs for New York's working people.

The RWDSU and RWDSU Local 338 representatives have logged countless hours in making sure

that any legislation legalizing medicinal marijuana in the Empire State would also promote quality jobs. Representatives traveled to Colorado and Nevada to speak with workers and employers in the industry to determine how to best promote good jobs.

Local 338 worked intensively with the prime sponsor of the bill in the Senate, State Sen. Diane Savino (D-Staten Island) to ensure that all players in the industry sign a labor harmony agreement. This means that any company applying for a license to produce, manufacture, or distribute medicinal marijuana in New York will agree to "labor peace" with a bona fide labor organization qualified to represent workers in the industry – in this case, RWDSU Local 338. Employers won't interfere with the efforts of workers in the industry to join a union.

The bill, named "The Compassionate Care Act," could take up to 18 months to fully implement. The RWDSU will continue working with New York State and companies involved during this process. ■



RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum (left) and Local 338 President John Durso (middle) met with New York Governor Andrew Cuomo (right) in July, at the signing of the Compassionate Care Act.



# RWDSU A VOICE FOR WORKING PEOPLE

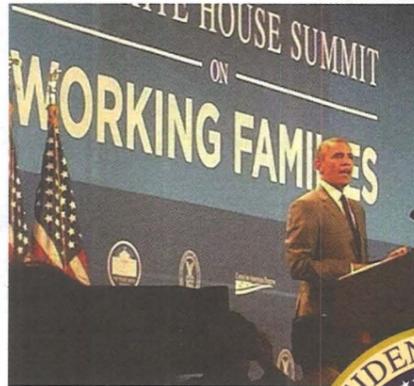
## Macy's Worker Takes Union Message to White House

**R**WDSU Local 1-S member and Macy's employee Kay Thompson addressed the White House Summit on Working Families in Washington D.C. in June. The summit was a forum created by the White House to examine work-life balance and policies that further workers' stability and economic security. President Barack Obama, First Lady Michelle Obama, and Vice President Joe Biden and his wife Jill attended and addressed the forum.

Thompson told attendees about the advantages she has in being a union member, and how RWDSU representation has helped her raise her four children. By guaranteeing her the right to choose days off six months in advance, and determine which days she's available to come in early, and which days she works late, she is able to balance her work and family life.

"This assured flexibility in scheduling allows me to prepare my children for school every day," Thompson said. "I want all retail workers to experience a sustainable working environment where family friendly workplace scheduling is a priority for all companies," Thompson added.

In addition to Thompson's testimony, the pre-Summit labor meeting viewed the Retail Action Project's thought-provoking video, Retail Reality: Shifty Business. The animated video shows the challenges faced by workers' subjected to on-call scheduling, and how unpredictable scheduling and insufficient hours are making it a struggle for retail workers to support themselves and their families. ■



President Barack Obama talked about his administration's commitment to helping workers balance work and life challenges.



RWDSU member Kay Thompson speaks at the White House Summit on Working Families.

## In Bangladesh, RWDSU Fights to Empower Garment Workers



(top right to left) RWDSU President Stuart Appelbaum, New York State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, and Monsignor Kevin Sullivan meet with factory disaster survivors in Bangladesh.

Bangladeshi garment workers talked about their fight for survival at garment factories.

**"We will advocate for justice for you and your families. We will send a message to retailers who operate factories here they must meet higher safety and workplace standards."**

**R**WDSU President Stuart Appelbaum, along with Monsignor Kevin Sullivan, Executive Director of Catholic Charities in New York, and New York State Comptroller Tom DiNapoli, traveled to Dhaka, Bangladesh, to meet with workers who are fighting to improve safety and working conditions in the garment industry. Among the workers the group met with were survivors of the Tazreen factory fire and Rana Plaza building collapse – tragedies that claimed the lives of well over 1,200 people. The trip was organized by the RWDSU, with the support of UNI Global Union, an international trade union organization which the RWDSU is a part of.

The survivors and their families described the horrendous disregard for worker safety that led up to the disasters, and the devastation they experienced. Those who survived suffered physical injury and psychological trauma. The workers say they are still fighting for major reforms in the ready-made garment sector, which currently employs more than 3 million Bangladeshis, along with just compensation for those affected by the tragedies and others like them.

"We will advocate for justice for you and your families. We will send a message to retailers who operate factories here they must meet higher safety and workplace standards, and respect the rights of

Bangladeshi workers," Appelbaum said.

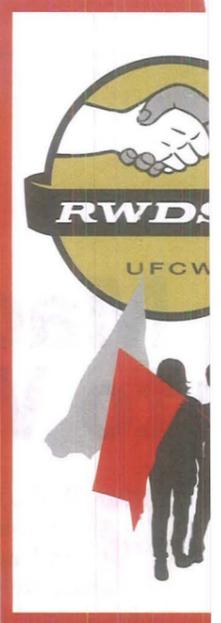
While discussing ways to make factories safer, labor leaders and Bangladeshi garment workers highlighted key differences between the Accord on Fire and Building Safety and the less effective and unaccountable Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety.

The Accord is a legally binding agreement on safety standards and compensation between labor organizations and retailers who produce ready-made garments in Bangladesh factories. H&M – which employs over 1,200 RWDSU members in New York – and more than 100 other global brands and retailers have joined the Accord in recent months. Many large retailers – including Wal-Mart, which uses hundreds of factories in Bangladesh – have refused to sign the Accord, and instead in a phony public relations gesture have joined together to create the so-called Alliance for Bangladesh Worker Safety. It's a toothless safety "program" that provides no legally-binding protection for workers.

The meetings in Bangladesh helped bring attention to the difference between the Accord on Fire and Building Safety and the disingenuous public relations move by companies like Wal-Mart and The Gap. Appelbaum said he would focus on raising awareness of the Accord in the United States, and encourage consumers to support pro-Accord retailers and brands like H&M. ■

# Four Years of Organizing Wins, Strong RWDSU Contracts

We've Continued to Accomplish Inspiring Wins Despite Numerous Challenges



Members at Coca-Cola in Lowell, Massachusetts (above), Canteen Vending in Kentucky, Kroger in Cincinnati, Dean Foods in Nebraska, or Delmonte in Illinois, or Heinz and Post in Michigan – all have shown we can negotiate strong contracts.



Poultry workers at Pilgrim's Pride rallied behind the cry "without change, nothing changes."

**A**t the RWDSU's last convention in 2010, the struggle of striking Mott's workers to win a fair contract – and in fact save their jobs, and the livelihood of hundreds of families in Williamson, New York – took center stage. The Local 220 members were in the fight of their lives against a corporate culture of greed that was focused on decimating everything the workers there had won over the years. They were risking their jobs to ensure that those jobs would be worth having for themselves and for future Mott's workers.

A little over a month after the convention ended, the Mott's workers proved that even in difficult circumstances, when workers stand together they can win. They forced management to back down from their attempt to gut their contract and slash their wages. As we mark the RWDSU's 22nd Quadrennial Convention four years later, we can see that RWDSU activists across the country took note from that struggle.

It's been a difficult four years in many ways for working people. Unemployment remains high and wages have remained stagnant. Right-wing politicians have stepped up legislative attacks on working people, and corporate greed continues to make it difficult for working Americans to find jobs that can help build better lives and support families.

But like the Mott's workers in Williamson, activists across the RWDSU are keeping the union strong even while facing some of our toughest challenges. We may not have a magic bullet or all of the answers, but we've brought thousands of new faces into the union, and are making progress in protecting members' interests and building strength for everyone in the RWDSU.

## Without Change, Nothing Changes

In June, 2012, poultry workers at Pilgrim's Pride in Russellville, Alabama, achieved the largest organizing win in the state in decades when they voted to join the RWDSU Mid-South Council. There are over 1,200 workers now represented by the union at the poultry plant. Workers rallied behind the motto "Without Change, Nothing Changes," and stayed strong in the face of management intimidation and threats to win the change that they knew could help improve their lives.

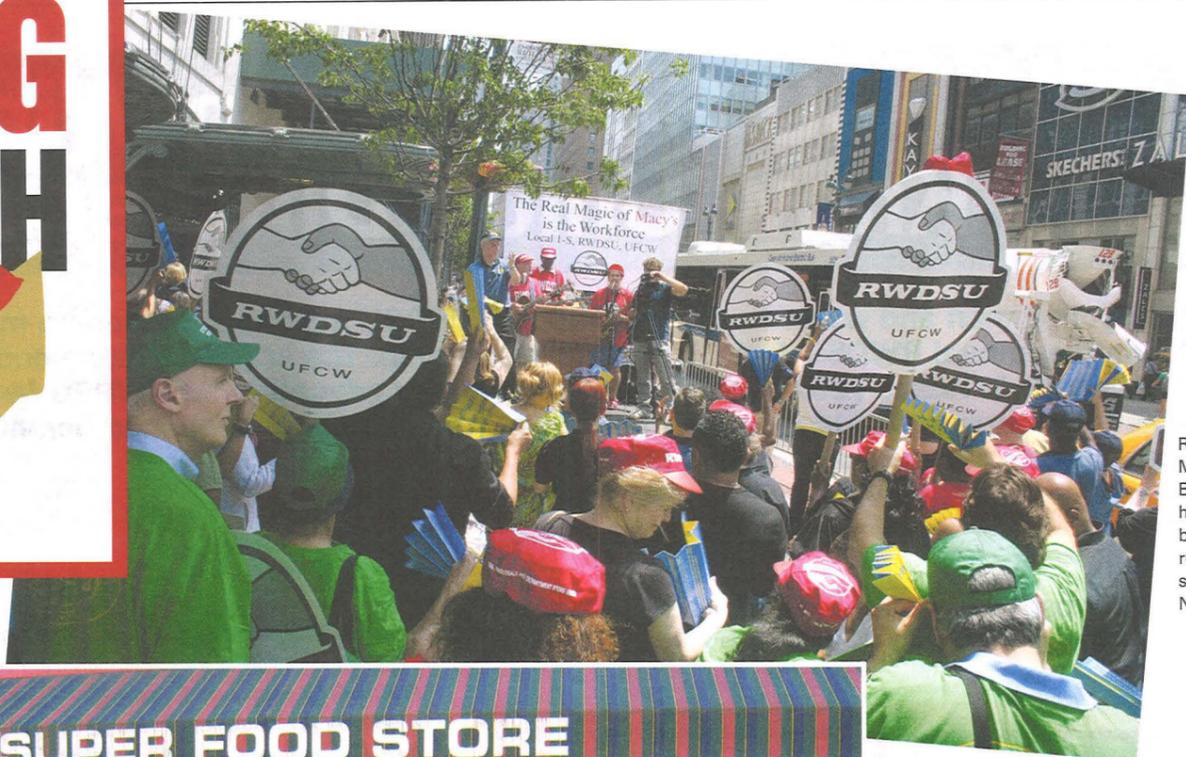
Mott's workers achieved a new contract that is one of the best members there have ever won.



Local 220 members at Mott's have shown us all how to build strength in difficult times.



# BUILDING STRENGTH



Rallies for workers at Macy's (left) and Bloomingdale's helped workers at both flagship retailers secure strong contracts in New York City.

The change they sought came when they ratified their first union contract, bringing workers their first raises in years, along with paid holidays, a grievance procedure, and most importantly, a union voice to help them stand up for themselves on the job.

Poultry workers in the South aren't the only ones who have sought out and won change with the RWDSU since our last convention.

Since the start of 2012, over 1,100 working men and women in New York City and on Long Island, New York, have won the power of an RWDSU voice by joining Local 338. The workers are employed at Duane Reade drug stores and numerous supermarkets.

Another group of workers in New York City, the largely Latino workforce employed at the city's car washes, made headlines by winning a series of strikes and elections at a number of car washes across the city.

Since 2012, workers at eight car washes have voted to unionize and have won contracts at seven locations. These are the first car wash workers anywhere east of Los Angeles to join a union – and the contracts these workers have won have brought them increased wages, benefits, and protections that never would have been possible before.

Another high-profile campaign, publicized by media outlets like Rolling Stone and the Huffington Post, saw workers at Guitar Center instrument superstores in Chicago, Las Vegas, and New York becoming the first in the chain's history to join a union in 2013. Workers at the stores voted to join the RWDSU to combat worsening conditions and attacks on their livelihood – commissions that Guitar Center workers depend upon.

At retailer H&M, workers have seen their voice at the table grow with Local 1102. Since our last convention, another 300 workers at H&M stores have joined the RWDSU. There are now over 1,200 RWDSU members at H&M.

## Building Strong Contracts

Throughout the RWDSU, members have spent the past four years securing strong contracts that bring wage increases and protect benefits – fighting back against attempts to take away our hard-fought gains, and moving workers forward.

RWDSU members in New York City at Local 1-S at Macy's and Local 3 at Bloomingdale's both won strong contracts, with hundreds of union members coming to rally in their support when negotiations stalled.

Auto parts manufacturers in Ohio, cola bottlers and route drivers in Massachusetts, health care workers in Penn-



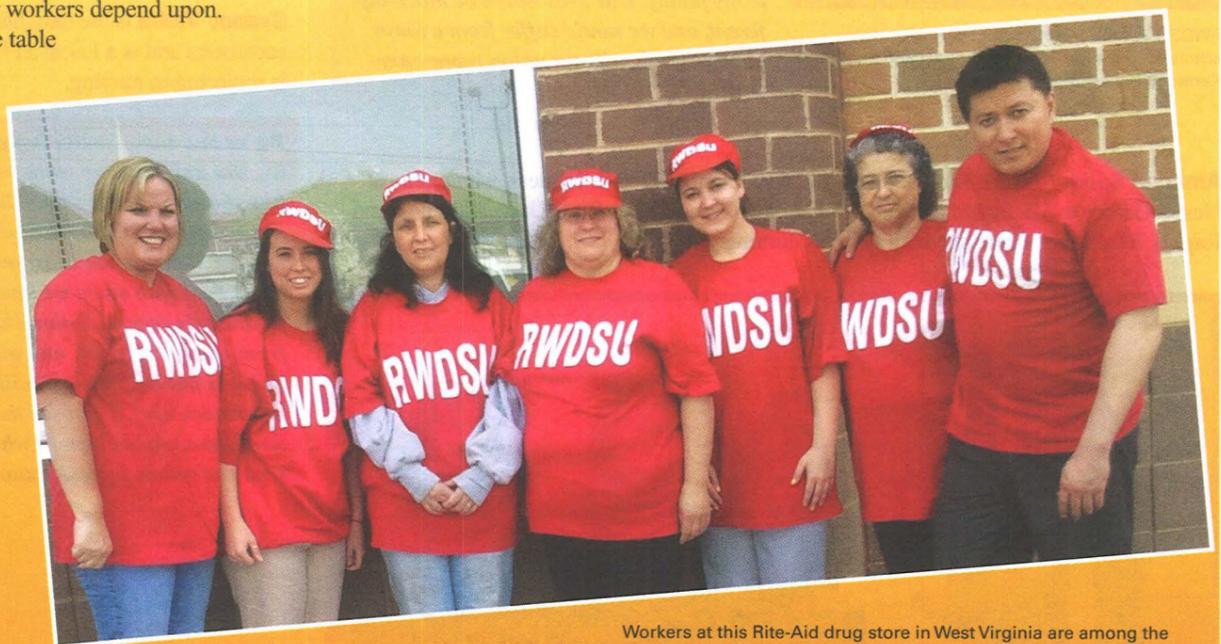
Over 1,100 new faces have joined Local 338.

Activists across the RWDSU are keeping the union strong even while facing some of our toughest challenges.

sylvania, highway maintenance workers in Indiana, supermarket workers in New Jersey, cereal workers at Post in Michigan; in a wide range of industries, with diverse workforces, members have ratified strong contracts.

And the Mott's workers who were in the fight of their lives back in 2010? In 2013, they ratified their first contract since the one they won in the wake of the strike. Because of that fight and the solidarity they built three years previously, Mott's workers achieved a new contract that is one of the best members there have ever won. The pact contained solid wage improvements, a big signing bonus, improvements in scheduling and overtime language, and secured the health care coverage.

Victories like this prove that we can build upon our past accomplishments. Even when times are tough and the clouds are on the horizon, we can stand together and build the strength we need to emerge from the storm even stronger. ■



Workers at this Rite-Aid drug store in West Virginia are among the thousands who have joined the RWDSU since our last convention.

# RWDSU Scholarship Winners Know Union Difference

**F**ive young men and women – four children of RWDSU members, and one a member himself – 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.

**Robert Kimberlin** is an RWDSU Local 938 member who works at Conagra Mills in Florida. He's currently attending the University of South Florida where he majors in psychology.



RWDSU Southeast Council Representative Sandra Williams presents Robert Kimberlin with his scholarship award.

*The vast majority of Americans are industrious, hardworking people. We are willing to work hard for our future, but we need fair treatment and proper rest to ensure our maximum productivity. Unfortunately, too many companies do not see it that way. I've been fortunate to work several union jobs, including my current one at Conagra with the RWDSU. With a union contract, I'm guaranteed breaks and paid time off. Beyond the union contract, there's a great feeling that comes with the right to have your voice heard – especially at the workplace.*

*I cannot be more thankful for the security that my mother's union contract has provided for my brother and I. The medical coverage has been a blessing during my brother's life, since it has helped our family deal with his extreme asthma. Years of treatment for health issues in my family would have been enough to send us spiraling into debt without the union benefits. Thanks to my mother's union job we've been able to maintain a good standard of living.*

**Christina Wahl** is the daughter of Jeffery Wahl, a Local 220 member employed at Mott's in Williamson, New York. Her mother is also a member of a union. Christina is attending State University of New York at Potsdam in Potsdam, New York.



(l to r) Local 220 President Michael Leberth, scholarship winner Christina Wahl and her father Jeffery.

*When Local 220 was forced to go on strike in 2010, I experienced my first direct encounters with the members of Local 220. I witnessed everyone stand together and fight for their rights. It was amazing to witness this community of workers and their strength. They were determined, and won a fair contract. And, in 2013, they achieved a stronger contract than before. By working together, the entire group was made stronger.*

**Sydney Vieira** is the daughter of Victor Vieira, who works at Canteen Vending in Massachusetts and is a Local 513 member. She is currently enrolled at Boston College and is majoring in nursing.

*We've had some health issues in my family. But unlike many workers, my father has strong union-provided health care. It has helped pay for health care when we needed it, and made illnesses less stressful to deal with since we knew we were financially secure. Unions keep workers from being exploited, and not only help workers but help their families. Based on my experiences, I can see that families and communities benefit when workers seek out union representation. ■*



Scholarship winner Sydney Vieira (left) with New England Joint Board President Tina Buonaugurio.

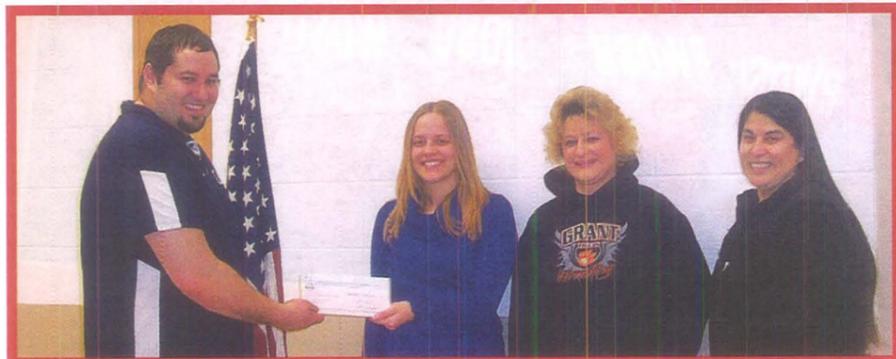
**Raina Sabharwal** is the daughter of Kanwaljit Sabharwal, an RWDSU Local 1-S member who works at Macy's Herald Square in New York City. Raina is attending Rutgers University in New Jersey, and is a science major.



RWDSU Local 1-S President Ken Bordieri with scholarship winner Raina Sabharwal and her father Kanwaljit Sabharwal.

*Union representation is an important part of my family life. My mother may be one of the thousands of members of RWDSU Local 1-S, but she has the power of everyone there. Local 1-S is dedicated to helping Macy's employees gain fair wages, safe working conditions, and benefits like medical, dental, and pension. The union ensures members' jobs are secure. With the union behind us, my mother earns fair wages and health benefits that are crucial to my family. Our lives would be much different, and we would suffer from a lower quality of life, without union representation.*

**Amanda Sanders** is the daughter of Local 530 member Donna Sanders, who works at Nestle/Gerber in Michigan. Amanda is attending Grand Valley State University in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where she majors in accounting.



(l to r) Local 530 President Jason Walker, Amanda and Donna Sanders, and RWDSU Rep. Rose Dietz.

# RWDSU AROUND OUR UNION

## Local 374 Scholarships Awarded

**L**ocal 374, representing Post Cereals workers in Battle Creek, Michigan, has awarded its annual Kevin Swafford Memorial Scholarship to four deserving students who are children of Local 374 members.

Winning \$1,000 toward their college educations were Bryce Sidnam, son of Jerry Sidnam, Justin Parker, son of Chad Parker, Andrew Haire, son of Chris Haire, and Jared Logan, son of John Logan.

The scholarship is named after Kevin Swafford, and honors the memory of the Local 374 member died following an industrial accident at Post Cereal in 2006. The winners of the scholarship write an essay that shows their understanding of the importance and role of union membership in workers' lives, and how their families have benefited from RWDSU representation. An annual golf fundraiser is held to support the scholarships. ■



Bryce Sidnam (right) receives his scholarship check from Local 374 President Mark Banaszak.



Justin Parker



Andrew Haire



Jared Logan

## Furthering Members' Education in New England

**L**ocal 513 continued its commitment to helping promote the education of RWDSU members, awarding its 2014 Anthony M. Cacciola scholarship to high school and college students. The winners will all receive \$1,000 toward their collegiate education. The scholarship celebrates the memory of former Local 513 Business Agent Anthony M. Cacciola.

Pictured from left to right: Anthony Cruz (son of Edwin Cruz of Local 513 Coke Needham), Local 513 Secretary/Treasurer Gary Miner, New England Joint Board President Tina Buonaugurio, Sydney Vieira (daughter of Victor Vieira of Local 513 Canteen Refreshments), RWDSU President Emeritus Lenore Miller, RWDSU Recorder Joseph Dorismond, Local 513 President Dennis Beaulieu, RWDSU Director of International Affairs Sarah Meyer, Kristina Gaffny (daughter of Michael Gaffny of Local 513 Coke Needham).

Not present was scholarship winner Dalena Nguyen (daughter of Rainbow Nguyen & Diana Thi both of Local 513 Coke Needham). ■



## Training for RWDSU Shop Stewards

**T**he Chicago Joint Board, RWDSU Local 1034 and the RWDSU Southeast Council recently conducted separate steward training sessions to help provide better representation for members in the workplace. These sessions educated stewards on their responsibilities including handling grievances for members. Attendees also heard presentations on health and safety and also how to help organize other workers so they can have the protection of a union voice. ■



RWDSU organizer Luis Lopez conducts an organizing presentation at the Local 1034 training session.



Southeast Council shop stewards.



Chicago Joint Board shop stewards at their training session.

# RWDSU CONTRACT NEWS

## Autoneum Local 379 *Ohio*

RWDSU Local 379 members who work at Autoneum in Oregon, Ohio, ratified a new contract that gives members a 10 percent raise over the life of the three-year agreement. In addition, health care costs will not increase, and pension benefits will remain protected. Language improvements will give workers more control over scheduling, including preventing members from being forced to work double shifts.

Autoneum is an auto parts manufacturer.

Serving on the negotiating committee were (l to r) Treasurer Carl Green, Chairperson Jeff Hendricks, Vice-Chairperson Stu Hill, Dan Mansfield, Art Lonas, and Exec. Board Treasurer Jeff Benne. Geoff Stinson (not pictured) also served on the committee.



## Snyder of Berlin Local 1718 *Pennsylvania*

Local 1718 members – who are a part of the RWDSU Allegheny Regional Joint Board – have overwhelmingly ratified a new contract with their employer, Snyder of Berlin. Members at the Berlin, Pennsylvania plant produce potato chips.

The four-year contract sees wages increase of over 11 percent, as well as increases in short-term disability and life insurance benefits. There will also be additional wage increases for two job classifications, and a shift premium differential that will get members more wage increases for certain work shifts.

There are 79 Local 1718 members employed at the Snyder plant.

## Heiner's Bakery Local 21 *West Virginia*

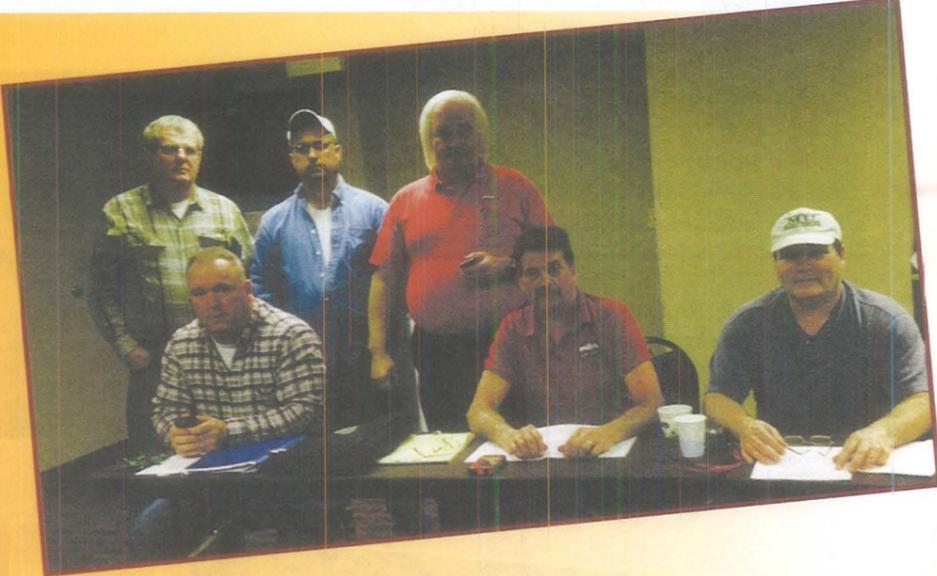
A new three-year contract for Heiner's Bakery workers in Huntington, West Virginia, will bring wage and benefit improvements for the over 450 RWDSU Local 21 members who work there. The contract covers production workers, route drivers, and maintenance employees at the facility, which produces bread and bun products.

The contract was overwhelmingly ratified, with 95 percent of those voting approving the contract.

Members will see a great improvement to their medical and health benefits, which will now be part of the RWDSU plan. New product lines have been added which will improve income for all commission workers.

The contract also provides future growth for Local 21 by guaranteeing the union's jurisdiction over a new distribution center which will soon be built.

Serving on the negotiating committee were (pictured left to right) David Means, Roger Clay, Mike Baker, RWDSU Rep Dennis Look, David Sands, and Tim Riley.



## Bloomington's Housekeeping Local 3 *New York*

The RWDSU Local 3 members who work at Bloomington's NYC Scho's housekeeping department have ratified a new three-year contract that brings wage increases every year and also adds personal days, makes improvements in minimum hiring rates, and bumps pay for new hires after a trial period. The contract was unanimously ratified.

The agreement also creates paternity leave for male employees, and additional duty pay for certain job classifications. The company will now provide work uniforms, as well as cleaning, pickup and drop off for those uniforms.

Seniority language has also been improved so that if employees leave the company and return at a later date, they'll keep their seniority status. Members will also continue to accrue seniority while on maternity leave.



(l to r) Local 3 Sec-Treas. Shaun Kavanaugh, SWSP Staff Edwin Cortiz, Shop Steward Rafael Ceballos, Local 3 President Cassandra Berrocal, and Recorder Costello Dash.

## Perfection Bakery Local 835 *Indiana*

RWDSU Local 835 members at Perfection Bakery in Fort Wayne, Indiana, voted unanimously to ratify a new three-year contract. The agreement maintains the RWDSU pension and health insurance programs for full-time workers, and sees workers winning annual wage increases. In addition, employees received a \$500 bonus.

The union's Bargaining Committee was Chief Steward Nick Buck and Indiana Joint Board President and Representative Dave Altman.

# RWDSU CONTRACT NEWS



## Five-Star Car Wash New York

Workers at Five-Star car wash in Queens, New York, have achieved a victory in a fight that began late last year when they voted to join the RWDSU. After being forced to walk off the job numerous times due to management's anti-worker tactics, the car wash workers have won their first union contract.

The three-year contract includes wage increases and protects workers from discrimination. The pact requires that a shop steward supervise the counting and distribution of tips, and workers will have a schedule posted each week, with hours and overtime distributed fairly and equally among the workers. Access to overtime will be protected.

## National Beef Leathers Local 125 Missouri

Members at RWDSU Local 125 in St. Joseph, Missouri, have overwhelmingly approved a new five-year contract with their employer, National Beef Leathers (formerly Prime Tanning Company). The company has made great strides since changing ownership following bankruptcy. National Beef has added \$100 million to the facility in new capital and the plant is still noted as the largest tannery in the world. The plant has doubled its member's size to 200 since Prime Tanning left and National Beef Leathers took over.

The contract calls for numerous improvements in language that strengthens seniority and bidding rights, improves overtime language, rest periods, with wage increases ranging from \$2.05 to \$2.80 hr. over the term, as well as a new longevity bonus for members attaining five years of seniority and an improved absenteeism point roll back after 60 days of improved absenteeism.

The agreement improves holiday and vacation language, as well as setting up a new Labor-Management Safety Committee and Labor-Management meetings to improve ongoing communication between the Union and management. It will also include a new vision plan, and an increase to the short term disability payments while off work.

Members at National Beef Leathers process cow hide into blue leather, which is then sold to vendors who turn it into everything from shoes to car seat covers.

The bargaining committee consisted of Local 125 President Travis Garton, Steve Sherlock, Darvin Waitkos, Ed Burdette and Eugene Brown. Dennis Williams, Sr. Business Representative for the Central States Council and Roger Grobstich, RWDSU Representative assisted the Committee in its negotiations.

## Saks Fifth Avenue Local 291 Chicago

On July 1, members of RWDSU Local 291 who work at Saks Fifth Avenue in Chicago, Illinois, overwhelmingly approved a new three-year contract.

The agreement maintains benefits and improves working conditions, and brings wage increases of three percent the first year, and two-and-a-half percent for the second and third years of the contract. Additionally, the first year wage increase will be paid retroactively to February 1, 2014.

The Bargaining Committee was Ryan McIntyre and Heather Smith. They were assisted by Indiana Joint Board President Dave Altman.

The Local 291 members who work at Saks Fifth Avenue in Chicago are Shipping and Receiving Employees, Visual Stylists, Cosmetic Clericals, Jewelry Stock Clericals, Fitters, and Merchandise Transporters.

## RWDSU AROUND OUR UNION



## Deserved Retirement for Long Time Local 588 Member

Local 588 President Bill Bennett has retired after 38 years at New Can company, which produces cylinders for oil filters in Holbrook, Massachusetts. The New England Joint Board presented Bill (pictured with NEJB President Tina Buonaugurio) with a plaque recognizing his years of service to New Can and the members of Local 588.

"Being a union member has made a huge difference for myself and my family. I'm proud to have been a member of the RWDSU, which helped me have a great career and a secure retirement," Bennett said. ■

[www.rwdsu.org](http://www.rwdsu.org)

Visit the NEW RWDSU website. Read the latest news, download scholarship applications, and find out about important benefits available only to union members.

Find us on Facebook —  
Retail Wholesale and  
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(RWDSU)



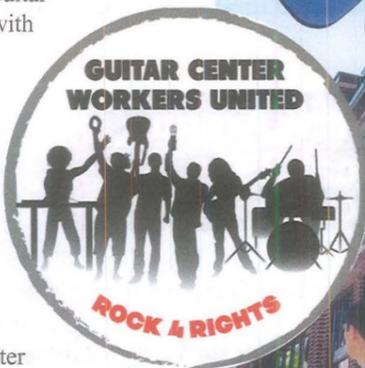
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# RWDSU AROUND OUR UNION

## RWDSU Activists Take Part in Guitar Center National Day of Action

**T**he RWDSU kicked off the first ever National Day of Action in support of Guitar Center workers in late June, and orchestrated a second Day of Action in July. RWDSU and UFCW locals mobilized around the country to leaflet their local Guitar Center, communicating with workers and customers about the RWDSU campaign. The campaign was devised to let consumers know about the challenges workers face – including insufficient and unpredictable hours, and how management is dragging its heels with Guitar Center workers in contract negotiations. And, the campaign lets unorganized Guitar Center workers know about how they can empower themselves by joining the RWDSU.



Leafleting actions occurred in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Georgia, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, and Iowa.

Workers at Guitar Center stores in Chicago, New York, and Las Vegas have already voted to join the RWDSU. ■



Local 108 members leafleting outside a New Jersey Guitar Center Store.

(left to right) New England Joint Board President Tina Buonaugurio, Organizer, Phil D'Arcangelo, and Local 513 member and Coke Waltham employee Ted Yeomelaki pass out flyers in front of a Guitar Center store in Boston.

## Organizing and Political Action Focus at RWDSU Executive Board Meeting

**A**t the RWDSU Executive Board Meeting in May in Birmingham, Alabama, the RWDSU Executive Board discussed the union's efforts to grow the union and fight for its members politically.

Former Alabama State House Representative James Fields spoke with the board about his current campaign for Alabama Lieutenant Governor. Fields has been endorsed by the RWDSU Mid-South Council. Getting members involved politically is a priority for the RWDSU, and the board discussed strategies for expanding the union's voter registration efforts in the South.

The board heard updates from RWDSU campaigns including the efforts to bring a union voice to Guitar Center employees throughout the country and car wash workers and Utrecht Art Supply workers in New York City. The board also discussed the efforts of the Retail Action Project to reform retail scheduling practices and bring more retail workers into the union movement. With the RWDSU Convention approaching, and the board discussed the planning for the event.

During the meeting, the Executive Board also heard reports on organizing and negotiating activities from throughout the union. A discussion was held on the impact of the Affordable Care Act and the challenges it has meant for members. ■



(l to r) Candidate for Alabama Lieutenant Governor James Fields, RWDSU Sec.-Treas. Jack Wurm, Mid-South Council President John Whitaker, and RWDSU Pres. Stuart Appelbaum.



RWDSU Recorder Joseph Dorismond (left) and Executive Vice President Gemma de Leon Lcpresti.

# RWDSU AROUND OUR UNION

## Unit Officer Elections in Indiana

**R**WDSU members at units at Local 835 in Fort Wayne, Indiana, have elected officers to new terms. At Holsum Bakery, the Sales and Transport Drivers have elected Chief Steward Ron Sheron and Executive Secretary Randy Lane to new two year terms.

At Coca-Cola Refreshments, members have elected the following members to a new two year terms of office:

Chairman Kyle Palm, Vice Chairman Travis Fleischman, Chief Steward Demetrius Coleman, Recording Secretary Bruce Loos, and Sergeant-At-Arms Tim Flotow. There are 42 RWDSU members that work at the Coca-Cola plant.

The production and maintenance employees who work at Perfection Bakery have elected officers to new two-year terms.

Elected to office were Chairman Eric Schwartz, Vice-Chairman Rod Gerig, Chief Steward Tim Rayl, and Recording Secretary Patrick Knittle.

There are 78 RWDSU Local 835 members who work at Perfection Bakery. ■



(left to right) Travis Fleischman, Kyle Palm, Bruce Loos, and Tim Flotow at Coca-Cola. Demetrius Coleman was not present.

(left to right) Rod Gerig, Eric Schwartz, Patrick Knittle and Tim Rayl were elected at Perfection Bakeries



Randy Lane (left) and Ron Sheron were elected at Holsum.

## Chicago Members Elect Unit Officers

**R**WDSU Local 291 members who work at Saks Fifth Avenue department store in Chicago, Illinois, elected the following members to new three year terms of office:

President Ryan McIntyre, Vice-President Heather Smith, and Recorder Regina Moody (in right hand photo).

Employees who work in the optical lab at Rosin Optical in Berwyn, Illinois, who are members of RWDSU Local 853 of the Chicago Joint Board, have elected officers to new three-year terms. Elected were President and Chief Steward Adam Woosley (right) and Secretary-Treasurer/Alternate Steward Tom Bolen (in left hand photo). ■



(left to right) Ryan McIntyre, Heather Smith and Regina Moody.

# RWDSU HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDE



## Making Our Workplaces Safer



**T**here are several important factors that can help us achieve safer workplaces. We and our employers need to recognize that injuries result from exposure to hazards. And, we need to push our employers to make a sincere commitment to health and safety at our workplaces.

### Injury and Illness Prevention Programs (IIPP)

The current leadership at OSHA is the best in the history of the agency and they are keenly aware of their enforcement limits. With only 2,000 inspectors and over 7,000,000 workplaces it would take them over 100 years to inspect each workplace once. As a result OSHA has advocated for a standard to establish IIPP around the country.

These programs have the following elements:

- Management commitment
- Worker participation
- Hazard identification, assessment and control
- Education and training
- Program evaluation and improvement

Unfortunately the current political environment in Washington has discouraged OSHA from moving ahead with this standard. However, several states with their own OSHA programs have mandated or encouraged IIPP. These programs can serve as a model to help us push our employers to demonstrate a real commitment to safety at our workplaces.

### Commitment

Employers need to show their commitment to safety by involving us, the folks who do the work every day and know the jobs best. We know the hazards and how to reduce them. And, they need to dedicate the resources to address the important health and safety issues which are identified.

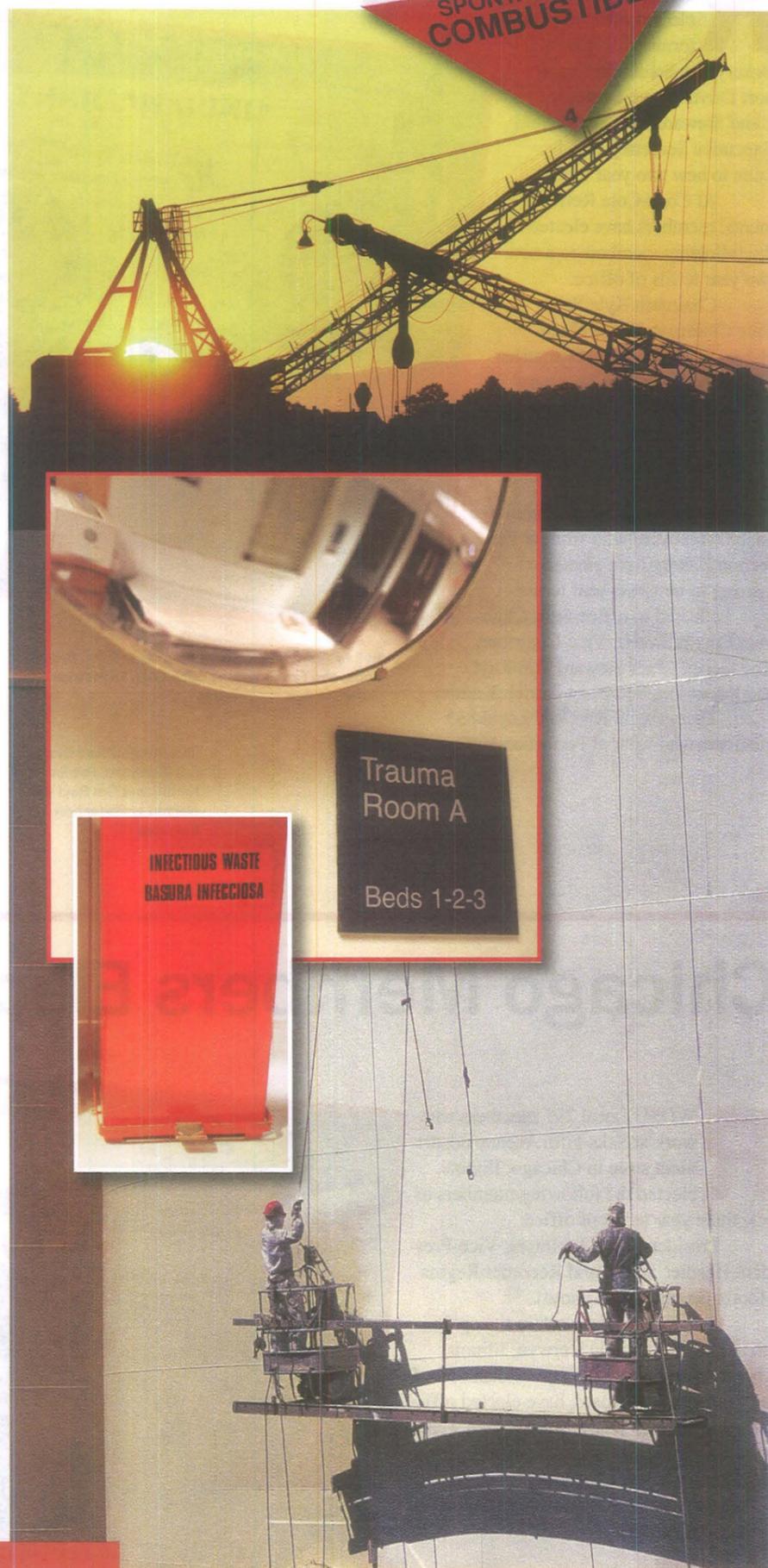
Management commitment is a constant demonstration on all levels that safety is at least as important as production. It means that fancy written safety programs and signs on the walls don't mean much if line supervisors minimize hazards and promote, encourage and overlook unsafe work practices in the name of productivity.

And we need to be committed to safety as well. That means pointing out and removing hazards when we see them, sharing concerns with fellow workers, following safety rules and not taking short cuts that would increase the chances of an injury.

### Reporting Injuries

There are many reasons why members are reluctant to report injuries. Fear of standing out, reprisals, drug testing, worksite reward programs for days of non recordable injuries, etc. But when injuries are not reported we all lose. We need to stand together and support our brothers and sisters when they get injured. Not reporting injuries minimizes risk prevention and helps management justify spending less on addressing health and safety hazards. Injured members who don't file for Workers' Compensation waive their rights to wage replacement and other benefits as well as future medical coverage for that injury. And if work-related medical costs are paid for instead by our negotiated health plan, the increased cost can affect us all of us.

OSHA is doing good work in this area as well. The agency has stated that companies which fire employees who report injuries are discriminatory and violating their recordkeeping duties. Companies which fire employees for breaking safety rules need to show that those rules are specific and enforced when an injury is not involved. OSHA is also casting a critical eye at Behavior-based safety programs if the awards for days/hours of without recordable injuries are significant enough to discourage the reporting of injuries.



### Our Right

**We have a right to a safe and healthy workplace, to return home to our families as we left them. But like other rights we need to stand together and support each other to ensure them. Your Health and Safety Department is here to help. Contact us at (212)684-5300. ■**