

Stand up for your contract — wear your union button

A VIEW ON NEGOTIATIONS

BY JIM DOUGHERTY
President



DOUGHERTY

Last week, Local 655 sent a letter to members covered under the Greater St. Louis Food Employers Council (GSLFEC) contract with Schnucks, Dierbergs and Shop 'n Save. The letter came directly from our "Rank and File" committee and reflects their views on the progress of negotiations. I agree with their view; patience to produce the best contract for our members is the right course. We will not position ourselves into a job action by setting arbitrary deadlines.

It is essential for our members to be kept informed. Unlike past years, technology has opened new avenues of communications. Once again, I want to direct you to www.groceryworkersunited.com for day to day information on the 453,000 brothers and sisters who share your uneasiness during this stressful time. Also, at www.ufcw655.com you will find a new page, "NEGOTIATIONS", added to our local website which will address any changes, as they occur.

As information becomes available, Union representatives will be circulating flyers, bulletin board postings and answering questions in the stores. Should there be any immediate action or new information, the Local 655 hotline at (636-736-2719) will be updated to reflect those changes.

Keep in mind, *negotiations are continuing, talks are moving forward* and when we conclude talks a contract proposal will be printed and mailed to you at your home. You will have time to review the contents before attending a contract ratification meeting. Remember you are the **U** in Union and the union is only as strong as its members. We must stick together, we must stand together for our common good.

VOICES ARE HEARD IN INTEREST BASED BARGAINING

Your negotiating committee is being heard. In negotiations, the committee has openly discussed contract woes of the past and work place practices that give little regard to seniority, not to mention, respect on the job. They understand it is important to create a document that ALL parties will follow and respect. On every issue your committee is voicing their views in an open dialogue, working to create new options and solutions to old problems.

Your brothers and sisters send a message to our membership:

Greater St. Louis Food Employers Council (GSLFEC) Rank & File Negotiating Committee

Dennis Hayles
Schnucks
Kossuth

"Please consider Union Brothers & Sisters, we live in difficult times. Today's quality of life issues are threatened each and everyday simply by trying to maintain our seniority rights, affordable healthcare, decent wages and retirement benefits."

Cathy Johnston
Dierbergs
Lemay

"The way we are negotiating takes a lot longer because everyone has a chance to put in their thoughts. There has been a lot of discussion and a lot of ideas. We are still getting the same benefits and still trying to get the best we can. Be patient."

Ken Marshall
Shop 'n Save
O'Fallon

"With the rising cost of healthcare, the threat of 20 new Wal-Mart Super Centers to be in the contractual area by the end of the upcoming contract, not to mention the rising costs of fuel and utilities. These are all things we have to consider during these talks. This is a process we must not rush. After all, it's our livelihoods we are dealing with."

Janis Nickel
Shop 'n Save
Arnold

"Let's take our time and keep working toward our goal of a fair contract. It may be taking longer than we would like, but I don't think we want a repeat of 4 years ago. We will reach our goal as long as we keep talking. Slow and steady wins the race."

June Small
Dierbergs
Marketplace

"Negotiations are always delicate matters and this one is no exception because of the current economic labor conditions. It is vital that we achieve a contract proposal which is in the mutual interest of both members and employers. If they fail so do we."

"In our considered opinion, the best course of action is to continue to negotiate diligently (and in good faith) on your behalf, even if this takes a little while longer."

Terry Spink
Schnucks
Dillon

"Negotiations are still going on and we are trying our best to improve and modify our current contract. Due to the fact the whole country is facing critical healthcare issues, we are taking extra care to secure a fair and affordable healthcare package for all our members."

Ron "Woody" Wilson
Schnucks
Kossuth

"There are some members that believe "giving" the companies the holidays" is a sign of weakness and allows us to lose our bargaining chip. I would like to remind the members that any job actions success, would fringe mainly on the help of the customers we serve. Yes, we have passed the deadline, but we are no different than the other contracts being negotiated around the country e.g. Southern California and Houston."

"Please don't rush us into some deadline beating proposal. We are striving to come up with the best proposal we can. Remember that you the members, hold the ultimate voice; your voice."

An Exclusive Twice Monthly Report For UFCW Local 655 Members & Their Families

LOCAL 655 REPORT

Your Neighborhood Union www.ufcw655.com

Affiliated with United Food & Commercial Workers International Union

UFCW takes a united stand with Kroger

UFCW grocery workers around the nation work hard, day in and day out to make their companies successful. National companies like Kroger are doing especially well, with soaring profits and increasing market share.

So why are UFCW members around the country fighting tooth and nail to get a fair contract agreement, in particular, with Kroger.

● In Southern California negotiations with Ralphs (Kroger), Vons and Albertsons (SuperValu) have been going on for six months, and are three months past the expiration of their contract. Grocery workers have not had a wage increase since 2002, and half of all grocery workers in Southern California, as well as 20,000 children of grocery workers, are without healthcare.

● In Toledo, Ohio, Kroger continues to insist upon deeper cuts in Health & Welfare plans, rolling the dice with funding of the H & W plan, a proposal almost certain to result in future benefit cuts. The local union may be prompted to cancel the contract extension that has been in place since April 7th.

● In Houston & Dallas, Texas, Kroger plans have been insulting with plans to under fund worker's health and welfare fund, possibly leading to disastrous benefit cuts in the middle of the contract, leaving members high and dry. Strike votes have been taken in both cities affecting local unions 455, 408 and 540 and a job action seems imminent.

Our International Union knows we are more successful in attaining good jobs with benefits and working conditions when we stick together.

It is important for our UFCW members to be unified in securing good contracts with living wages, decent health care, retirement benefits, and respect in the workplace. If Kroger is successful in lowering standards in Dallas and Houston, they will surely attempt to do the same here in Missouri. We will not allow that to happen.

Information concerning these and other problems around the country is available at www.groceryworkersunited.com which can be reached through our website: www.ufcw655.com.

Workers from American Beverage still fight for a fair contract

Local 655 negotiating committee and members employed at American Beverage Company of St. Louis have been working hard for a fair contract. The contract expired on November 3, 2006 and members have been working on a contract extension agreement since then.

On Tuesday, May 29th, 2007, members voted 39 to 1 to reject the contract proposal and voted overwhelmingly to give a strike authorization to Local 655 against the American Beverage Company. Members are looking for acceptable increases in wages, protection

of seniority rights and want the company to be responsible for increases in the cost of the company Health & Welfare plan.

The union and the company have been working on an acceptable proposal to bring before the membership as soon as possible.

American Beverage is an independent contract bottler. A contract bottler may or may not have its own beverage line, but bottles by contract for other company(ies). The Local 655 contract covers the Production, Quality Control and Maintenance departments

Time to play ball!

It's a perennial part of summer — a chance to take a whack at a large white ball, to kick up some dust on the old sandlot.

The UFCW Local 655 Annual Co-Ed Softball Tournament is back.

Where: Ellisville Athletic Fields
When: Aug. 14-16; Aug. 20-22; and Aug. 23 in case of rainout

Form a team through your shop steward or call the Union Hall at 636-736-2766.

Rosters are also available from Bryan Wynn, Kevin Ryan or Cynthia Blackmon.

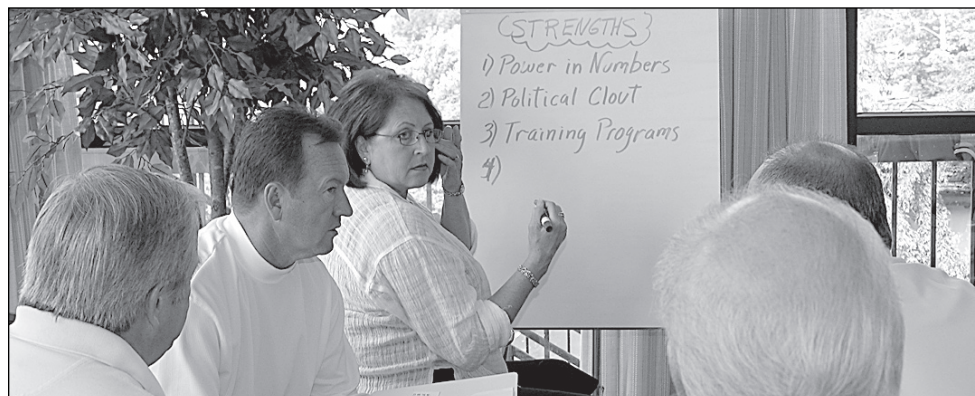
We would like to see a full field of 50 teams.



Please get your rosters and fees in early to help with the planning. Teams will be selected on a first come, first serve basis.

Send fees and rosters to: Kevin Ryan, UFCW Local 655, 300 Weidman Rd., Ballwin, MO 63011 (no later than July 27th)

Whether as a player, coach or fan, come out and enjoy the tournament.



MAKING A POINT: Local 655 Vice President Judy Davidson represented our union at the first "Labor Summit" last week by the St. Louis Labor Council to develop a strategic plan for the labor movement. Davidson was a recorder for a small discussion group prioritizing the labor movement's strengths. SEE STORY ON PAGE 1 Labor Tribune photo

After reading this page take it to your break room.