

St. Louis members still standing strong in negotiations

BY JIM DOUGHERTY
President

Your Local 655 negotiation team is working hard to reach a fair agreement with the employers in the Greater St. Louis Food Employer's Council, Schnucks, Dierbergs and Shop'nSave. Negotiations have continued over the past few months and are continuing with dates set in June. Both the Local's negotiating committee and representatives from the companies are working long and hard to achieve an acceptable contract proposal to bring before our membership.



DOUGHERTY

Members need to be reminded that at this time we are making headway in our contract talks. We have been working under an extension of your current contract since it expired May 13. This means your current contract is still in effect with all the terms and working conditions remaining intact. There are tough issues confronting us and no one will be rushed by an arbitrary deadline, as long as progress is being made.

On May 22 a shop steward's meeting was held prior to the Local 655 regular monthly meeting. More than 150 stewards were in attendance from Schnucks, Dierbergs and Shop'n Save. Keeping our stewards

informed during negotiations is critical for an effective line of communication to our membership. They are the hands on, go-to person at the work site and every effort will be made to provide them and our membership with any and all available information.

It is important for you to be kept informed. The Officers and Staff of Local 655 are meeting regularly to discuss negotiation updates and discuss questions the members are asking of our Union Representatives. Additionally, our website (www.ufcw655.com) and the local hotline (636-736-2719) will communicate negotiation updates, informational meetings, contract ratification meetings and any other pertinent messages. For those members who have access to computers, I hope you will go to the UFCW International website, www.groceryworkersunited.com for a look at what is happening around the country in our industry.

It should come to you as no surprise, we are facing difficult issues, in difficult times. We face issues that are critical to men, women and their families; affordable health care, wages, retirement benefits and respect on the job, to name a few.

We know our members have dedicated and sacrificed much to help make these companies the fine businesses they are today. I want to assure you that your voice is being heard, loud and clear at the bargaining table. The process however slow, is moving forward.

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



Officers and rank-and-file negotiation team

The Local 655 Negotiating Committee prepares for negotiations with the companies. In a recent work session Local 655 Vice President and Director of Collective Bargaining Dave Politte (left) and rank-and-file members (seated back row L-R) Ken Marshall of Shop'n Save; June Small of Dierbergs; Ron "Woody" Wilson of Schnucks; Dennis Hayles of Schnucks; and Local 655 President Jim Dougherty; (Front row with back to camera) Local 655 Vice President and Director of Retail Development Randy Charboneau; rank-and-file members Terry Spink of Schnucks; and Cathy Johnston of Dierbergs. Janice Nickel of Shop'n Save was unavailable for photo.

Member of the month

Shop 'n Save tipster makes life easier; gains reward

Employees may daydream of re-inventing the wheel or finding a better way to do things, but few turn their thoughts into actions for fear their employer won't give a hoot.

Kevin Schneider, produce manager at Shop 'n Save in Ferguson, knows that Smart Tips pay off.

Earlier this year, Schneider found an annoying situation, fostered an idea and took action. On May 1, at the Shop 'n Save Service Awards luncheon, he learned he won \$2,000 in prize money from the Smart Tips program for suggesting the company change the way it dispenses plastic produce bags.

Smart Tips rewards employees for tips that lead to increased sales or gross profit, or reduced expenses or shrinkage. The program began in March, and has resulted in more than \$100,000 in increased profits or savings.

"I came back from vacation one day and started picking up unused plastic produce bags that had been strewn around and wondered how many of these darn bags do I pick up everyday. I started thinking about the company's Smart Tip Program, did some calculations and figured that if they'd change the bag dispenser system, they could save about \$16,200 per year based upon a loss of 50 bags per day in 37 stores, including the labor it takes to pick up all these bags," Schneider said.

With the old plastic bag system, customers would try to pull one bag off the roll and end up with three or four at a time, Schneider said. Then, they'd throw the unused bags back on the rack and employees had to clean up the area. Not only that, but the bags laying around

made things look unsightly and picked over, Schneider said.

Schneider said Shop 'n Save ended up putting new bag dispensers in every store, replacing the plastic rolls that sent bags out in clumps.

"I feel like I killed two birds with one stone. As a produce man, I was really getting tired of picking up all those bags just to keep the department looking right. And secondly, I won \$2,600 all total in prize winnings for the idea," Schneider said. "I feel good. When I stood up to accept my prize, I gave a few brief words and thanked the manager at St. John because he was the one who turned in the idea for me."

Schneider has worked for Shop 'n Save for 15 years, starting as a part-time produce clerk and working his way up the Flower Valley, St. Ann, Mayfair, Central City and St. John's stores, "bouncing around up the totem pole." In August, he was promoted to produce manager at the Ferguson store.

Local 655 Union Representative Nick Trupiano said he was pleased Schneider was won the top prize in the Shop 'n Save Smart Tips program, because not only did he contribute a money saving idea, his department is always in outstanding shape.

"He's very conscious of the needs of his customers and is one of the top produce managers in the company," Trupiano said. "He takes his ideas and puts them to use, going beyond his everyday responsibilities."

Shop 'n Save says Schneider's suggestion will net \$35,000 savings per year to the company.



SCHNEIDER

We mourn the loss of Bill "Swifty" Swift

On Friday, June 1, news spread quickly throughout the St. Louis labor movement of the passing of William O. Smith, better known as "Swifty" to his friends in labor.

Swifty lived his life with a sincere and true love of God, his family, the city of St. Louis and the rank-and-file members of his union, Local 655.

He was a member of Local 655 since 1954 and later joined the staff with the local where he served as an organizer, union representative, Legislative and Political Director, Vice President, and prior to his retirement in 1993, served as Secretary-Treasurer.

In addition to Swifty's union activities, he

became a registered Missouri lobbyist, a St. Louis Labor Council delegate, a member of the Labor Council Candidate Screening Committee, a board member of the United Way and on the Legislative Board of the Regional Commerce and Growth Association.

Following his retirement from Local 655, Swifty continued his union activism, attending civic meetings, monthly Labor Council meetings and became a strong voice in the Alliance for Retired Americans.

His retirement also afforded him more time to enjoy his lovely wife, Mary Ellen; three daughters, Theresa, Debbie and Kathy and his seven grandchildren, Felicia, Bill, Kyle, Kasondra, Samantha, Rebecca and Griffin.

Our hearts and prayers go out for Bill and the Swift family. A fuller obituary appears on page 4.



SWIFT

Local 655's Debi Loewe walking across Missouri for her friend

Local 655 member Debi Loewe is going to have sore feet next week, REALLY sore feet, as she hobbles around the Wonder Bread Thrift Store in Desloge where she work. But the cause is not a serious medical issue, but rather a labor of love.

Debi is one of seven women who are walking across Missouri to honor the courage and vitality of a three-time cancer survivor, her best friend Carrie Pendley.

The women are walking to raise money for cancer research. Their goal - \$20,000. Details of their walk, and how you can help with a donation, are found on Page 3.

Monthly Union Meeting Reminder!

Learn more about your union rights and benefits.

Keep up to date on issues that affect your livelihood.

Join your union brothers and sisters in working for common goals on the fourth Tuesday of each month at 9 a.m. or 6:30 p.m. Important issues are discussed each month.

The next meeting will be held Tuesday, June 26.

Place:

UFCW Local 655 Union Hall, 300 Weidman Rd., Ballwin, Missouri (Take Manchester Road west of I-270 to Weidman Rd.)



After reading this page take it to your break room.