

# Local 1546 NewsLine

April/May 2002

## WAL-MART HAS NO PLACE IN CHICAGO

The announcement in February, 2002, by Wal-Mart Stores, Inc. of its intention to set up shop in Chicago's South Loop area (at Canal Street and Roosevelt Road) prompted UFCW Local 1546 to respond swiftly to this latest threat to our members by this notoriously anti-Union retailer. The proposed store—the first Wal-Mart inside a large city—would be built just walking distance from two existing UFCW-represented supermarkets: Dominick's and Jewel both already ably serve this community, while providing secure Union jobs with fair wages, valuable benefits, and representation.

"Wal-Mart puts our members at risk, and we will not stand for it," declared Local 1546 President Kenneth R. Boyd. "Across the nation, in town after town, Wal-Mart has destroyed UFCW-Union jobs and driven countless competitors out of business with poverty wages, dismal benefits, and unfair practices. Every attempt to organize Wal-Mart workers who came to the UFCW in hopes of gaining representation have been brutally crushed," President Boyd pointed out. "Our duty is clear: Stand up now to Wal-Mart before we lose one more Union job."

Local 1546 Executive Director Jorge Ramirez, who also oversees our Local Union's political and legislative initiatives, has met with leaders from labor, city and state government, business, community organizations, and religious institutions to present the facts about Wal-Mart's devastating impact on UFCW members. "Most people are unaware of Wal-Mart's carefully crafted, but false, image," Ramirez explained. "Look at Wal-Mart's business practices as an example, and you can see that it's just an illusion," Ramirez concluded.

The truth is that Wal-Mart is known for low wages (Wal-Mart workers average \$3.00 per hour less than the industry average in the Chicago area), and dismal ben-

efits (425,000 of its employees—62%—have no health insurance), discriminatory employment practices, scores of lawsuits from former employees, high instances of sexual harassment claims, and a blatant anti-Union/anti-worker stance. Wal-Mart is among the largest importers of foreign-made goods, which are often associated with offshore plants and worker abuses, child labor, and sweatshop conditions. When challenged about what it charges for merchandise, Wal-Mart ceased using the slogan "Always the lowest prices." It has furthermore been shown that for every two jobs Wal-Mart "creates," three are lost elsewhere in the same community. Wal-Mart repeatedly pushes its way into towns despite strong protest from residents. Worst of all, Wal-Mart has closed stores, threatened workers, and even changed operations just to remain Union-free. (Example: when a small group of meat-cutters at a Jacksonville, Texas, Wal-Mart voted to join the UFCW in 2000, Wal-Mart closed meat operations in all stores nationwide, and switched to pre-packaged meat.)

Most perplexing about Wal-Mart's way of doing business is that it could easily afford to pay reasonable wages with generous benefits, but chooses not to! Wal-Mart is the world's largest private sector employer with 820,000 employees, revenues of over \$191 billion dollars per year, and annual profits that exceed \$6.3 billion dollars.

A report which explains in detail the facts about Wal-Mart is available free to Local 1546 members by request (via mail, fax, or e-mail) by phoning Local 1546 at 312/733-2999 or 847/593-3500 (toll-free: 800/592-3508). The report is also featured on our web site at [www.ufcw.ocal1546.org](http://www.ufcw.ocal1546.org). (UFCW Local 1546 Executive Director Jorge Ramirez offers additional perspectives on Wal-Mart on page 5 of this issue.)

UFCW Local 1546 members working in stores near the proposed South Loop Wal-Mart location are obviously concerned about the impact of this possible new non-Union competitor on their jobs. Here are remarks from two Local 1546 members:



**Mae Ella Perkins –  
Jewel #3345,  
Roosevelt Rd. (Deli)**

"At first, I thought Wal-Mart nearby would be great. But I know the facts now, and I realize we could lose all that we've fought so hard to win. Wal-Mart doesn't play fair by running non-Union and that may spell trouble for us such as hours being cut, lay-offs or worse. Wal-Mart has no business here unless it opens 100% Union!"

**Moe Talamantes III –  
Dominick's #146,  
Roosevelt Rd  
(Meat Cutter)**



"We're facing a serious situation, and unless we help Wal-Mart employees organize, this new store is a major threat. Now, more than ever, all Union members must spend their hard-earned Union dollars at UFCW stores. Take care of the companies that take care of us. Keep our businesses strong! Our health benefits, wages, vacations, seniority, pensions, and everything we value by belonging to Local 1546 are worth this fight."





## UFCW Local 1546 Officers and Executive Board

Kenneth R. Boyd  
PresidentTerry Kramer  
Secretary-TreasurerJorge Ramirez  
Executive DirectorVicky Hayes  
Recorder

## Vice Presidents

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# Local 1546 At Work for You... Whatever it takes

By Kenneth R. Boyd, President



The contract is at the core of all that Local 1546 does for you. As a member you rely on the Union's leadership to negotiate the best contract possible. The process of reaching a satisfactory agreement is

often lengthy and complicated because your Union considers the contract to be such a critical component of our responsibility to you. For all contracts, the Union's bargaining committee strives to gain improvements for its members and does not allow itself to be rushed or intimidated. Once ratified, the contract is the "rulebook" to which Local 1546 refers to protect your rights on the job. Since words do matter, a solid contract makes a world of difference.

Local 1546 members employed by Armour Swift-Eckrich have been at the center of a grievance, that recently went to arbitration, between our Union and the company. This case revolved around the company's refusal to pay negotiated profit-sharing bonuses owed to our members working in the "Dry Sausage" plant of the company while it did pay bonuses to other members (in their Brown & Serve plant). This occurred despite the fact that both groups of workers are covered by the exact same contract. The company claimed that language concerning bonuses (that came about during contract negotiations back in 1996) was not applicable to the current contract (which was ratified

in 1999), even though the language calling for all covered members to be guaranteed at least the minimum level bonus was never removed. During the second year of the contract (2001), the company simply stopped paying our members in the Dry Sausage plant their bonuses, and our Local Union filed a grievance. Because the company refused to accept Local 1546's argument that the contract was being violated, the matter went to arbitration.

## Armour Swift-Eckrich members receive back pay.

The arbitrator ruled in favor of Local 1546 in March of 2002. Our members in the Dry Sausage plant will not only receive the past bonuses that were due to them (which total up to \$48,000 divided amongst 249 workers), but all future bonuses throughout the duration of this contract (which would exceed another \$48,000) will be paid to them as well.

The leadership of Local 1546 is pleased that our perseverance in this case led to what we see is a fair and correct resolution. Workplace justice has been achieved. The members, thankfully, will receive their past and future bonuses, as was spelled out in the contract in the first place. Yet in my opinion, this victory goes far beyond a payment of money owed. It

stands as an example of what Union members should expect. **Every member matters in Local 1546**, and this principle applies in negotiations, service in the field, the grievance and arbitration process, and all aspects of our work for you.

Without the Union contract, workers are left only with unenforceable "promises" from their employers. Could a group of non-union employees convince their company to fulfill a verbal pledge that yearly bonuses totaling nearly \$50,000 would be paid based on productivity? Not very likely. On the other hand, our members in the Dry Sausage plant of Armour Swift-Eckrich had the full resources of Local 1546 at their service: experienced and committed Union Representatives to both negotiate and police the contract; leadership willing to pursue a fair and just resolution of their grievance; capable and dedicated attorneys who can (and do) effectively argue on their behalf; and an Executive Board and staff willing to do whatever it takes to better serve those we represent.

The aim of Local 1546 is to become the best Local Union possible. But our ability to reach and maintain this goal comes with challenges, and your help is needed. Our members work on the "front lines," and we count on you to keep us informed of problems that require attention. If your wage rate is wrong or any violation of the contract is taking place, let us know so that we can work to correct it. Get involved by attending meetings, reading your Union publications, and responding to calls for

(Continued on page 3)



## Whatever it takes

(Continued from page 2)

action by Local 1546. Do your part in the political and legislative areas by voting for AFL-CIO endorsed candidates so that we can keep this Union Movement strong. If you know of a group of workers that need to have a Union contract, show your support by pointing them in the direction of Local 1546 or mention your organizing idea to your Union Rep. After all, the ongoing growth of Local 1546 enhances our ability to serve everyone who belongs. I truly believe that our recent victory at the Dry Sausage plant is a clear reminder of just how much it means to work with a Union contract.

## Chief Steward Speaks Out on Arbitration Decision

Hank Turner is proud to serve as a UFCW Local 1546 Chief Steward at Armour Swift-Eckrich. A 28-year employee of the company, Hank works as a Tractor Operator in the Dry Sausage division; he became a Chief Steward 3 years ago. We asked Hank to comment on this Union victory on behalf of the members. His goal is always to do his utmost to assist his fellow Union co-workers.

*"In my view, having the Union behind us is the reason we are receiving the bonuses due to us. The language in the contract was clear, but nothing would have been done if this same situation occurred in a non-union shop. Our members had the backing of their Union. We all worked hard to make sure justice was the result, and our Rep. and the Union Attorney stayed the course because it was the right thing to do. This case proved again that working Union is best! The reason I became Chief Steward in the first place was because I believe the members deserve to have a real Unionist in their corner right here, every day. I'm glad to be a Union member and proud to be a Chief Steward."*



(l-r) Local 1546 Union Rep. Steve Tarnowski with members Peter Kunkel, Sue Marshall and Chief Steward Hank Turner.

## Union Discovers Brookfield Farms Members Owed \$17,632 Error Caught and Corrected



Local 1546 Union Rep. Carlos Mendez (4th from left) with members from Brookfield Farms.

Local 1546 from Brookfield Farms, a meat processing plant that produces pork and corned beef products in Chicago, ratified a new contract in September of 2001. Pay increases and other improvements were featured in the agreement. However, several months after the contract went into effect, a few members asked their Union Representative, Carlos Mendez, to look into why their raises had not gone into effect and he immediately went to work to determine the answer.

"A number of the members were not at the rate that the new contract called for, and I figured if there were some, there would be more," Carlos recalls. "I followed the trail and discovered a total of 42 members had not moved to their new rates. With proof in hand, I met with the company President to explain what occurred, and he agreed right away to square up the situation for the members who had been affected. Our relationship with this company has never been antagonistic, and this was our fourth contract since former President (of Local 100A) Ruben Ramirez led the organizing campaign that brought these members into our Union. Brookfield Farms simply had a book-keeping error, which the members called to my attention and we were able to solve."

Among the members surprised and delighted to receive the "pay back" in earnings was Adan Gujosa. He received \$769.06 and went to his correct rate. "I appreciate my Union more than before," Adan said. "I've worked here for over two years, and I like this job. With a family, it helps to be paid correctly and to have the Union behind you. I count on my pension, health insurance, and it's good to know Local 1546 is guarding my rights."

Leonoso Barrera, another member at Brookfield Farms, was owed \$1,024.16 in back pay. "I'm glad we have the Union. I did have an idea that the rate I was at was wrong, but nothing happened until I spoke with Carlos, my Union Rep. I have friends who work non-union. With no Union a mistake like this would not get as easily corrected. It's a good company to work for, but the fact that we are in the Union makes it

even better. This situation has proven it."

Victor Puga echoed the feelings of the majority of Brookfield Farms members who received the pay correction check. "I was very happy. This is my first job, and I've been here three years. The Union looks out for us. And I'm glad they do."

Carlos Mendez pointed out that this is a good example as to why communication with the Union is so important. "It costs you nothing to pick up the phone or to call your Union Representative aside to ask a question. Mistakes happen, but the Union is always eager and pleased to investigate on behalf of the members. You have someone to speak up for you and stand behind you. Like many who belong to Local 1546, the over 215 of our members at Brookfield Farms work hard, demanding jobs. The fact that I speak Spanish, like many of these workers, is an advantage for them that I'm glad I can provide. My advice to all members of Local 1546: ask the Union to help because we want to help you!"

### Health & Welfare Information For All UFCW Local 1546 Members covered by the UFCW Unions and Employers Midwest Health Benefits Fund

1300 Higgins Road, Suite 300  
Park Ridge, Illinois 60068-5713  
1-847-384-7000 or 1-800-621-5133  
8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday - Friday

Department	Extension
Medical/Dental Claims	7180
Prescription Claims (RPX)	7200
Health Information Services (H.I.S.)	7050
Billing	7030

### For Jewel Employees:

Jewel Health Benefits Fund  
Albertson's ASC Benefits  
P.O. Box 20  
Boise, Idaho 83726

1-800-969-9688 or Fax 1-208-395-5908  
Disabilities Fax: 1-208-395-4882  
8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., Monday - Friday



## Where is Your Union Rep?

By Terry Kramer, Secretary-Treasurer



Your Local 1546 Union Representative services a large territory overseeing numerous job sites, contracts, and members. To keep in touch with all of those on a regular basis, your Rep. "makes the rounds" each week visiting as many sites and as many members as possible. It's a busy schedule, and a busy life.

While in the field throughout each work-week, your Rep. is talking with members about how things are going in your workplace. He or she wants to know if hours are being scheduled according to the terms of the contract; if pay checks are reflecting correct pay rates; if any necessary disciplinary steps are being properly issued; and much more. Your Rep. wants to know if members are experiencing any kinds of problems on the job, or are seeing any contractual violations.

When a member does have a problem to discuss, the Local 1546 Rep. will take the time needed to determine whether a grievance should be filed and then inform the member about the steps involved in filing that grievance. Other issues may be simpler to resolve with some experienced advice or a talk with a manager. In either case, the job of your Union Rep. is to spend time with members and do what's necessary to protect your job by seeing to it that the terms of the contract are enforced. Simply put, the best and most effective way to do that is to be where the members are.

The time spent in the field by your Union Rep. is planned so that he or she can meet with as many members as possible in the course of a week. Your Union Rep. may work late into the evenings on certain days, and weekend schedules are often part of the job too. The idea is to service all members; not just those who work the day shift.

So with all of this moving around, when does your Local 1546 Rep. have time for paperwork? One day out of each week, your Rep. is in the Local 1546 business office. Our staff of Representatives rotate these days, so that your Union Rep. is in the office on a specific day in order to take and return calls from members in his or her territory.

While in the office one day per week, your Rep. has a number of responsibilities. In addition to servicing the members from

his or her territory by phone (or those who visit the office with problems or questions) your Rep. takes this day to complete the paperwork that has resulted from the time spent in the field the rest of the week. Grievances need to be written up and filed, phone calls must be made and returned, and routine office paperwork has to be completed. One day a week is barely enough to get the job done; but time spent with the members is the priority.

So what happens if you call the Local 1546 office, hoping to speak with your own Union Rep., and he or she is not in the office on that particular day? In most cases, you will be put in touch with someone who can properly advise you or at least put any necessary procedures in motion. Your Rep. will be notified as soon as possible. If you prefer to speak only with your Rep., you can leave a message and expect a return call as soon as possible.

Local 1546 Reps. are in constant touch with the office and get – and return – all of their messages on a regular and timely basis. Emergency situations are given top priority, and less critical problems are also given the attention they deserve.

Your Local 1546 Rep. is there to serve you; that's the job. So whether in the field or in the office, that goal remains constant. And although your Rep. may not happen to be at your work site the moment a problem occurs; or in the office on the day you have a question – be assured your Rep. is unavailable because he or she is out servicing the many other members who also need help. Remember that your Local 1546 Rep. is never more than a phone call away.

### UFCW-Dominick's Drug Contract Ratified

A new three-year contract covering nearly 400 members employed at Dominick's Drug was overwhelmingly ratified (by a three-fourths margin from ballots returned) on April 9, 2002. The agreement provides for increases in wages and the pension. Among the highlights of the new agreement (2002-2005) is a premium for Certified Pharmacy Technicians, if specific conditions are met. The contract also features retro-active pay to November, 2001. The new UFCW-Dominick's Drug Contract will be produced and sent to affected members in the near future.

## Reaching Your UFCW Local 1546 Union Representative

### Main Office

1649 W. Adams Street  
Chicago, Illinois 60612  
Phone: 312/733-2999

Christine Bartholmey  
Wayne A. Clavio  
Vince Gallagher  
Chris Hurst  
Efrain Jimenez  
Richard Klukas  
Nick Listermann  
George B. Marshall  
Carlos Mendez  
Clarence O'Connor  
John A. Rosenthal  
Javier Ramirez  
Gerardo Rangel  
Harry Singleton  
Steve Tarnowski  
Hilda Vargas

### Suburban Office

601 West Golf Road  
Mount Prospect, Illinois 60056  
Phone: 847/593-3500 & 800/592-3508

Anita Burmilla  
Jeff Carr  
Ralph Chapman  
Terry DeVito  
Edward J. Flavin  
Stan Gurrola  
Vicky Hayes  
Jim Hurtado, Sr.  
Annette Konstantelos  
Tamara Mason  
Elliot Miller  
Mitchell Montgomery  
Charles "Chuck" Rieber  
Tony Rodriguez  
Kenneth Swanson  
Kenneth Urzedowski

### Rochelle Office

315 Cherry Avenue  
Rochelle, Illinois 61068  
815/562-4661

Tony Rodriguez

### Colona Office

P.O. Box 345  
Colona, Illinois 61241  
309/792-8882

Stan Gurrola

You are also welcome to learn the latest Local 1546 news by visiting your Local Union's web site at [www.ufcwLOCAL1546.org](http://www.ufcwLOCAL1546.org)





**Weingarten Rights (clip and keep with you)**

To be read word for word to your supervisor to declare your Union Rights:

If this discussion would lead in any way to my being disciplined or terminated or have any effect on my personal working conditions, I respectfully request that my Union Representative be present at this meeting. Without representation, I choose not to participate in this discussion.

UFCW Local 1546

(312) 733-2999 (Chicago/Main Office)  
(847) 593-3500 (Suburban Office)

**SU DERECHO A UNA REPRESENTACION DEL SINDICATO**

Si esta discusión pudiera en alguna forma, afectar personalmente mis condiciones de trabajo, o ser amonestado o ser despedido, yo respetuosamente solicito que el Representante de la Unión esté presente en la reunión.

UFCW Local 1546

(312) 733-2999 (Chicago/Main Office)  
(847) 593-3500 (Suburban Office)

**GRIEVANCE VICTORIES\$**

Members of Local 1546 can count on our Union to do our utmost to recover pay and hours unjustly denied due to employer contract violations. The aim of all grievance investigations by your Union is to achieve workplace justice. To reflect this commitment, Local 1546 will now publish (in each issue of our newsletter) the sum of the monetary awards and the paid hours your Local Union has recovered for members so far during the current year. "Wages Recovered" represents money paid to members by employers to resolve grievances filed and investigated by Local 1546; "Hours Recovered" refers to *paid* hours that members would simply have "lost" if the Union had not been involved. As you can see, we're on the job for you!

Jan. 1, 2002 to Apr. 19, 2002

Total Wages Recovered:

**\$156,930.35**

Paid Hours Recovered:

**1,822**

**Labor Unions' BEEF with Wal-Mart**

By Jorge Ramirez, Executive Director

Labor Unions have long complained about Wal-Mart. Some say that we are simply upset that this very large, dominant, nationwide retailer is non-union; that Unions are concerned about the number of Wal-Mart employees who could be Union members if the corporate giant would allow its workers the freedom of choice. Certainly, this is part of our complaint – but only part. The majority of our concerns have far less to do with Union membership, and much more to do with the simple difference between right and wrong.

Wal-Mart touts its "American pride" and positions itself as a patriotic American institution; buying and selling made-in-America merchandise. It's a marketing strategy that the American people have bought in abundance, because we trust that there is truth in advertising. We see the Wal-Mart smiley face on our television screens, slashing prices and bringing joy to Wal-Mart workers and shoppers alike; we see the older workers and those in wheelchairs greeting customers and proclaiming the benefits of working for Wal-Mart. We see these things, and we want to believe them. We want to believe that this is a huge corporation with a heart – and a dedication to its community – and a conscience. But Wal-Mart hardly fits this profile.

The Wal-Mart strategy, from its beginnings, has been to open stores on the outskirts of towns; mostly small towns, at first. The corporate giant received many tax breaks and perks for "revitalizing" these perimeter areas in addition to obtaining cheap land on which to build. When opened, these non-union stores had little overhead due to the low pay scale and lack of benefits received by their employees. Wal-Mart was therefore able to undercut the independent merchants who had worked for lifetimes to establish themselves in these little towns. Soon, the inevitable happened; and the Wal-Mart plan to destroy small downtown areas and consume all of the local business

as well as business from surrounding areas, had worked. It happened over and over and over again in small town after small town. Wal-Mart's promise to communities to provide hundreds of new jobs was accurate; but only at the expense of the loss of hundreds, perhaps thousands, of others.

The Wal-Mart strategy worked in small towns, and the giant retailer soon discovered that they would see a similar result in certain larger communities as well. And what about these new jobs Wal-Mart did, in fact, create? These non-union jobs with low pay, few if any benefits, no stability or security, and no guaranteed hours were not what communities had hoped for. Such jobs create a work force unable to sustain itself, let alone a family or a community. Part-time

workers with low pay and no health-care benefits make poor consumers – and often end up requiring assistance themselves from the very community they were supposed

**"Wal-Mart jobs create a work force unable to sustain itself."**

to have benefited. Thus, the Wal-Mart cycle of destroying good jobs, good businesses, and good, self-sufficient communities for the sake of pure corporate greed continues.

And how about all of those made-in-America goods that Wal-Mart purports to buy and sell? Aren't they supporting American manufacturing? What is the truth? Wal-Mart is the largest buyer and seller of foreign made goods in the country. That's the fact. So much for patriotism.

What's our beef with Wal-Mart? It's much more than Union versus non-union. It's good business versus bad business; it's fairness versus simple greed; it's the truth versus a lie. A corporation whose intent is to destroy communities for its own profit is an unfit neighbor. Very simply... we don't need that.



Moe Talamantes (left) and Jorge Ramirez discuss the possible impact of non-union Wal-Mart in the South Loop area.



**UFCW Local 1546 Membership Meetings***Mark Your Calendar...Make Plans to Attend!*

Local 1546 invites you to be present at the next Union Membership Meeting at either the main office in Chicago or the suburban office in Mount Prospect. Pick the date and location that suits you best. Join us as your Local Union leaders and fellow members discuss the issues, challenges, victories that affect you. Bring your questions and constructive suggestions. Hear the latest news about organizing, collective bargaining, political strategies, and more. Free parking is available at both meetings. All members of Local 1546 are welcome to attend. (Both meetings begin at 7:00 p.m.)

**Regional Informational Meeting**

Tuesday, May 14th, 2002 at 7:00 p.m.  
Local 1546 Suburban Office  
601 W. Golf Road, Mount Prospect IL

**Quarterly Membership Meeting**

Tuesday, June 11th, 2002 at 7:00 p.m.  
Local 1546 Main Office  
1649 W. Adams Street, Chicago, IL

## Our Credit Union: Ready to Serve UFCW Local 1546 Members

Credit unions continue to maintain a well-deserved reputation for offering a number of practical and helpful financial services to those who belong. In this era of "pay day loans" and other untrustworthy gimmicks that seek to take advantage of workers, it's reassuring to know that a reputable and reasonable option exists for members of Local 1546. "While a bank will determine whether to grant a loan based on two criteria, your collateral and credit history, the Credit Union for Local 1546 members uses three: collateral, credit and character," emphasizes Supervisory Committee Chairman George B. Marshall.

Founded over four decades ago (by the *United Packing Workers Association*, a predecessor of what is now our Local Union), the *UPWA District Area 5 Credit Union* is the official credit union of UFCW Local 1546. The two main products provided are 1.) New or Used Cars Loans of up to \$35,000; and 2.) Signature Loans of up to \$3,500.00. The *UPWA Credit Union* also offers an ideal opportunity for Local 1546 members and their families to build up savings through the establishment of an account. Becoming a full shareholder in the Credit Union begins with just a \$25.00 deposit, and there is no minimum or maximum amount required for your account. Quarterly dividends are credited to your account, and interest rates are comparable to those of a bank. (Our Credit Union now offers electronic deposit.)

Although the *UPWA Credit Union* is located at the facilities of our Main Office (1649 W. Adams, Chicago, IL 60612), most Credit Union business can be conducted by mail, phone or fax for the convenience of members.

Payroll deductions into a savings account require that your employer establishes this procedure with our Credit Union. Your employer may already participate in payroll deductions with our Credit Union; please ask! If your employer does not yet participate, phone George Marshall at 312/733-2999 (or 312/243-8288) or ask your employer to do so. If your employer already participates, call the numbers above to open your account with the *UPWA Credit Union* or to learn about the financial services offered to you as a Local 1546 member.



**AT YOUR SERVICE:** *UPWA Credit Union* Officers and Staff (clockwise, from bottom): George B. Marshall (seated) Local 1546 Union Representative, Chairman of the Supervisory Committee (and a Director) for the *UPWA Credit Union*; Lynn Ramirez, Treasurer and Manager; Richard Klukas, Local 1546 Union Representative and Chairman of the Board (and a Director) for the *UPWA Credit Union*; and Johnnie Hopkins, Clerk. Other officers of the *UPWA Credit Union* who also serve as Union Representatives on the Local 1546 staff (not pictured) include: Carlos Mendez (Vice President), Harry Singleton (Recording Secretary), Wayne Clavio (Director), and Steve Tamowski (Director).

## Executive Board Member Viewpoint

**RANDY LITTLE**

For the past six years, Randy Little has served as a Rank & File member of our Local Union's Executive Board. A UFCW member since 1974, Randy is employed at *ConAgra-Swift's Brown & Serve* facility in St. Charles, Illinois. As a dock worker concentrating mainly on outbound shipping of product, his duties include loading and unloading trucks, handling cardboard supplies and packing materials, and other responsibilities. Randy and his wife are the parents of one daughter (age 15), and the family enjoys camping together.

"My greatest pride in serving on Local 1546's Executive Board is knowing that I am able to help people when they've been wronged. I have seen first-hand that this organization is very serious and committed to protect those we represent.

"From the outside, members don't always realize just how hard the Union's Board, leadership and staff works for them every day. After I came on the Board, I was also surprised at how involved Local 1546 is in the community.

"One area I think our members should pay more attention to is politics. We must elect more pro-worker people. The November 5th election could be decided by Union families if they vote and if they elect candidates the AFL-CIO endorses. I belong to the UFCW's *Active Ballot Club* (ABC), and it's a small investment that works in our favor because it supports politicians who care about worker issues.

"This Union is our Union, but it works better when we all get involved. So I encourage my fellow Local 1546 members to come to meetings, show unity, stand up for what's right, and get involved in your Union. I have, and I've always been glad that I did."

## WORKERS' COMPENSATION QUESTIONS

Members of UFCW Local 1546 with questions about Workers' Compensation and/or injuries that occur on the job may contact (at no charge or obligation) either of two law firms for answers and advice. Members served by the Chicago/Main office may phone *Jacobs, Burns, Orlove, Stanton & Hernandez* at 312/372-1646. Members served by our Mt. Prospect, Rochelle and Colona offices may phone *Arnold & Kadjan* at 312/236-0415 or at 800/221-5651.



# A DAY OF FAMILY FUN BENEFITS A GOOD CAUSE...



**The Leukemia &  
Lymphoma Society®**

*Fighting Blood-Related Cancers*

## Join the UFCW Local 1546 Walk-A-Thon for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society

### STEP UP FOR A CURE!

On Sunday, **June 23, 2002**, Local 1546 members and their families will have the opportunity to take part in a great day for a great cause. The annual Walk-A-Thon to benefit our official charity, the *Leukemia & Lymphoma Society*, will take place at Arlington Park Racecourse. As always, **all proceeds from this event will go directly to fund the research seeking cures for these devastating diseases.**

In addition to raising money for a great cause, walkers and their families will have a great time at this event too! After the walk, our Local 1546 Family Day will provide a truly good time for everyone. Kids will be treated to face painting, a petting zoo, and all kinds of other fun activities. In the meantime, adults will enjoy the thrill of thoroughbred horse racing at beautiful Arlington Park Racecourse. It's a day that is sure to make every member of the family feel good.

Parking is free along with all the fun. And, walkers will have a chance to win great prizes in the Local 1546, UFCW Region 6, and UFCW International raffle drawings to be held that day. One ticket will be placed in the raffle drawing for every \$25 the walker collects; the more you collect on behalf of the *Leukemia & Lymphoma Society*, the greater your chances of winning!

**WHAT:** UFCW Local 1546 Walk-A-Thon for the *Leukemia & Lymphoma Society*

**WHEN:** **Sunday, June 23, 2002**  
Registration: 8:30 – 10:00 a.m. Walk: 10:15 a.m.  
Raffle: 10:40 a.m.

**WHERE:** **Arlington Park Racecourse**  
Euclid & Wilke Avenue – Arlington Heights, IL  
Track Side Building, West Patio  
(Public transportation is available on Metra.)

*Everyone is welcome to come, raise money for a good cause, and have a great day with your family! Checks or money orders must be made out to: **Leukemia & Lymphoma Society.***

**Bring** your pledge form (below) and the pledges you've collected on Sunday, June 23.

For more information, contact your Local 1546 Union Representative at our main office at 312-733-2999 or our suburban office at 847-593-3500 (or toll-free at 1-800-592-3508).

*A Local 1546 "Step Up for the Cure" Leukemia & Lymphoma Walk-A-Thon pledge form appears below for your convenience. Please photocopy this form in advance if you believe you will sign up more sponsors! If you are unable to participate, a contribution is welcome. If you cannot attend, send the form (with your check) to: **UFCW Local 1546 Walk-A-Thon, 601 W. Golf Road, Mt. Prospect, IL 60056.***

Pledges for \_\_\_\_\_ (Local 1546 "Step Up for a Cure" Walker) June 23, 2002

Name	Address	Phone	Amt. Pledged
1. _____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____	_____
5. _____	_____	_____	_____
6. _____	_____	_____	_____
7. _____	_____	_____	_____
8. _____	_____	_____	_____
9. _____	_____	_____	_____
10. _____	_____	_____	_____
11. _____	_____	_____	_____
12. _____	_____	_____	_____

**All proceeds — 100% — for research to find the cures!**

**Grand Total Collected \$ \_\_\_\_\_**



## LOCAL 1546 VALVE & PRIMER MEMBERS REMAIN STRONGLY COMMITTED DURING STRIKE

Difficult contract negotiations continue between UFCW Local 1546 and Valve & Primer in Schaumburg, Illinois. Nearly 70 members were forced out on strike in late November of 2001 based on the company's unfair conduct (the vote to strike was 56 to 1). The main issues remain fair wages and affordable health insurance. The wage increases proposed by the company—which has consistently turned a profit year after year—have been completely unacceptable. Valve & Primer has also made absurd demands for our members to increase their insurance co-pay by as much as 677% percent at first, and is still now is pushing for them to pay nearly triple the amount from the previous Local 1546 Union contract.

Walking the picket line every business day is a group of dedicated Local 1546 members, with the unwavering presence of Union staff. Chester Herbert, a 14-year Valve & Primer employee, is a welder. "We will last one day longer than the company does," he declared. "We have to. I believe this company has been fortunate to have such a dedicated and skilled workforce. We're not an expense...we're an asset to them. Valve & Primer was successful and productive because we all worked hard. These Union members have given their



James Podgorski



Chester Herbert

employer 100%, and how we've been treated is not deserved. We're also 100% behind our Union, and the company should recognize that fact."

President Kenneth R. Boyd established the Valve & Primer Strike Fund (see below) to provide assistance to the strikers and to demonstrate genuine support for fellow Local 1546 members in their struggle. "These members are symbols—even

heroes—of courage and commitment," Boyd stated. "A Local Union is comprised of its members, and they can count on the rest of us all the way. Let's stand behind our fellow members at Valve & Primer. This fight is ours too, and now is the time to show our solidarity."

James Pogorski, who will mark 14 years at Valve & Primer in June, has endured the volatile Chicago weather with his fellow members during the many months of the strike. "We're not going back until a fair contract is reached," he said. "Union members have made history in the past by sticking together for a true cause, and this situation is no different. I have no doubt that the company knows we're serious. Now it's time for the company to get serious with a decent contract offer so we can all get back to work."

Numerous Local 1546 members have demonstrated unity and support for our fellow members at Valve & Primer, which has been recognized and appreciated. But more help is needed! See the inspiring story below. Your ongoing involvement is welcome.

## Dominick's Members Show Support for Valve & Primer Strikers



Local 1546 member Ray Klaas (left) of Dominick's #139 is thanked by Secretary-Treasurer Terry Kramer for the support shown for striking members at Valve & Primer.

Members on strike at Valve & Primer found true friends in their struggle. Local 1546 members from Dominick's #139 in Bloomingdale, Illinois raised \$226.00 for our Valve & Primer Strike Fund! Through the leadership and perseverance of 22-year member Ray Klaas, members in the store collected \$113.00. Ray helped organize the fundraiser (with help from Kathy Leoding and Frank Landolina) with a challenge: he pledged to match, dollar for dollar, the amount raised. In the end, Ray wrote a personal check for \$113.00 dollars, bringing the grand total from the Local 1546 members at Dominick's #139 to \$226.00! "We pulled together because members at another Union company are in trouble," Ray said with pride. "We'd expect the same if we were facing a difficult situation. It's the right thing to do."

To make a contribution (\$5.00 minimum, or more if you can afford), send a check or money order to:

UFCW Local 1546  
Valve & Primer Strike Fund  
1649 W. Adams Street  
Chicago, IL 60612





## New Local 1546 Members Approve Contract

UFCW Local 1546 is proud to report that employees at *The Form House*, a book bindery in Bedford Park, Illinois, ratified their first contract effective March 1, 2002. This successful organizing campaign brought over 300 new members to Local 1546. The contract provided a number of meaningful improvements, including wage increases (the company had initially offered none), the reduction of health insurance co-pay by 50%, and a 401k plan that features a 50% match for 6% of employee contributions. The 18-month agreement also calls for the creation of a Joint Labor-Management Committee, scheduled paid vacations, flex time provisions, paid personal days, and eleven paid holidays per year. In addition to now working with the protection and written guarantees only a Union contract can provide, our new members at *The Form House* also have gained Union Representation and the backing of nearly 34,000 fellow Local 1546 members.

Although their principle business is

book binding, *The Form House* has an interesting distinction for a special aspect of work conducted at this facility: *The Form House* creates mailing samples of products sent to consumers such as soaps, lotions, shampoos and others. The samples are affixed into mass mailings through a special cold glue process.

The victory at *The Form House* furthermore marked the first collaborative effort between former Locals 546 and 100A as Local 546/100A following their initial merger (prior to the formation of Local 1546 will the additional merger of Local 1540).

Local 1546 Union Representative Hilda Vargas (pictured far right with members from *The Form House*) served as the Organizing Committee's Lead Organizer, assisted during the negotiation process as a

member of the Bargaining Committee, and now is the Union Representative serving our members at this worksite. Javier Ramirez was the Lead Union Negotiator for the UFCW Local 1546 contract at *The Form House*, and played a key role in the organizing drive that brought these employees into our Local Union as members.



## MEMBER PROFILE



### Member speaks up for her Union

**Melissa Sanchez** – Service Desk, Dominick's # 107, Westchester IL

During her 6 years so far as a Dominick's employee and member of our Local Union, Melissa Sanchez (right) rarely gave much thought to the role that the UFCW played in her day to day work. But

not long ago, Melissa spoke up on behalf of herself and her co-workers at her previous store (#303 in Cicero, IL) with the aim of correcting a situation she felt needed attention. She has now come to realize that her Union membership means a lot.

"Our Union contract is really a set of rules that both sides—the company and the workers—agree to abide by," Melissa contends. "I noticed that some jobs at my last store weren't consistently being performed by the people the contract said *should* be doing the work, so I brought it to the attention of my Local 1546 Union Rep., Tamara Mason (left). Everyone from the Union took the matter seriously, treated me with respect, kept me informed every step of the way, and made it clear that the members are the number one priority. I like the job my Union did for me. I recently was transferred to this store (#107) in Westchester, and we have a terrific staff here. But it's good to know we can address issues or problems if they occur, and that both sides can share the goal of solving them."

Her experience has prompted Melissa to seriously consider becoming a Local 1546 Steward at her new store. "The Union stands up for its members. That makes me proud," Melissa states. "So I'm thinking about the possibility of getting trained as a Steward so that I can do more to help my co-workers. Tamara and I are talking about it, and I'm glad that Local 1546 thought enough of me to consider me for such a responsible post."

## UNION STEWARD SPOTLIGHT

### Veteran Union Steward stands up for her members

**Anita Brown** – Local 1546 Steward, Pinnacle Nursing Home, Waukegan, IL



When asked how long she's been serving as the Union Steward at Pinnacle, Anita Brown answers with a question of her own: "How long has the Union been here? That's how long." For over 20 years, Anita has ably gained the trust of her co-workers and the respect of management. "I love a good fight," Anita asserts. Being a Steward is a way that Anita can be part of helping to solve problems for her fellow members. "I go to bat for my members, but I also try hard to get across to them that what is right is right, and what is wrong is wrong," Anita points out. "There's no harm in reminding the bosses once in a while that other people can be right too."

The need for nursing home workers to organize into Unions became clear to Anita from the start. "To me, the pension is very valuable," Anita stresses. "When you get close to retirement age like I am now, you really understand how much it matters to have a secure Union pension. A Union contract means you have the benefits you need, and representation to back you up. Your Steward plays an important part in guarding your rights. I know, I'd never work a non-Union job. You can be fired for no reason, and you have no leg to stand on and nowhere to turn. I urge non-Union nursing home workers to make the most of their jobs by organizing into a Union...preferably into Local 1546."

**Moving?** Inform UFCW Local 1546 of address, phone number, or name changes! Your employer does not do so. It's up to you to keep our records up to date. Thank you.





Nearly 20 workers from the "Soup Room Department" at Vienna Beef in Chicago are now looking forward to again enjoying the benefits, wages and protections that can only accompany Union membership. These Vienna employees produce a variety of popular soups for various restaurants and food retailers. The relatively new soup division is a growing area for the company. Our Local Union has long represented virtually all the workers (except sanitation) employed within this plant.

A new contract for the Soup Room Dept. employees will provide for significant improvements in the areas of wages and insurance, and language for pension.

The workers in the Soup Room Dept. had belonged to another AFL-CIO-affiliated Union several years ago, but had decided to vote for representation instead by a local community organization. Unfortunately,

## Local 1546 Welcomes New Members to Our Union Workers at Vienna Soup Regain Union Representation

since the time these workers had voted to give up Union representation, they became increasingly frustrated because no new contract to replace their previous agreement ever materialized—despite repeated promises by the community organization. To make matters worse, the workers had no Union representation throughout this time period.

A number of Soup Room Dept. workers had recently begun establishing contact with Local 1546, since other departments continued to be represented by our Local Union at the Vienna plant. After the community organization failed to achieve a contract, some Soup workers expressed serious interest in joining Local 1546. A "card check" revealed overwhelming support to organize with us, and the Vienna Company agreed to recognize Local 1546 as the workers' bargaining representative. Negotiations for a UFCW contract got underway shortly thereafter.

"Unfortunately, before our Union became involved, the Soup Dept. workers understandably felt that they had been left

out in the cold," recalled Local 1546 Executive Director Jorge Ramirez, who served as lead negotiator for the contract. "To their credit, they were unified and achieved their goal of re-organizing into a genuine Labor Union. They are to be admired for their perseverance. Specifically, Isabel Martinez worked tirelessly as a member of the Negotiating Committee. His fellow members should be proud of his strength and dedication. The leadership of our Union is proud that these workers chose to become members of Local 1546."

Jerry Rangel, the Local 1546 Union Representative serving Vienna, agreed. "This group of employees has consistently worked hard for an employer with a reputation for dealing well with the workers and their Unions," Rangel stated. "Because the workers are loyal to their jobs and the company, they believed joining Local 1546 was a logical and positive move. The fact that they have won Union representation with a solid new contract is a great chapter in an interesting and inspiring story."

## Local 1546 Organizing Report

An overview of our commitment to grow through organizing to strengthen Local 1546.

**La Grou** - This food distribution center is in West Chicago, IL (Local 1546 represents the workers at two La Grou warehouses in Chicago.) This drive continues to gain momentum, despite an anti-union campaign by the company. At press time, an election date has been set.

**Salem Village** - An organizing campaign at this nursing home in Joliet, IL was launched in late March, 2002. Local 1546 has filed a petition with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), and also has contacted the company to propose voluntary recognition.

**Farmland** - Local 1546 continues to hold meetings and is receiving a growing number of authorization cards. The organizing committee is working hard to help the 1,000+ workers at this pork processing plant in Monmouth, IL gain representation. Among the concerns are that injuries will rise due to the company's order to speed up production. Meanwhile, wages have been slashed.

**Nation Pizza** - An election in January, 2002 ended with a victory for this Schaumburg, IL company. However, an NLRB investigation requested by Local

1546 is continuing.

**Q & A Products** - A Union election (which the company won) at Elk Grove-based candy manufacturer was held in February, 2002. Local 1546 filed several unfair labor charges against this employer, and a hearing date has been set.

**Hilander** - This supermarket chain (owned by Kroger) operates six stores in the Rockford, Illinois area. Local 1546 is conducting a variety of activities in this campaign, which has strong support from a growing number of employees.

### Welcome to New Members

Local 1546 is pleased to report that these newly organized members have gained Union contracts. Congratulations to members at: Nicholas Meats (Chicago); Union City Apparel (Chicago); meat, seafood and smokehouse workers at Sterk's (8 locations); Midcom (Chicago); Howard's (Munster); The Farm House (Bedford Park); and Vienna Soup (Chicago).

The Organizing Department welcomes your ideas. If you know of a group of workers in need of Union Representation, contact Matt Russow at Local 1546 at 847/593-3500 or toll-free at 1-800/592-3508. We will follow-up and do our best to assist these workers.

## All New UFCW Local 1546 Union Pins Available Soon

Four new designs that reflect the spirit of membership in UFCW Local 1546 are being produced for you to proudly wear at work. Your Union Representative can soon provide you with a distinct new pin that either salutes your occupation (retail, meat cutter/deli, or nursing home/health care) or the version that prominently features the new UFCW Local 1546 logo. In addition, Local 1546 members working in packing, processing, manufacturing, etc. (who may be restricted from wearing the round, metal pins for safety reasons) have a new sticker available only to them to display with pride on hardhats or other surfaces. See your Union Representative in the near future to obtain your new UFCW Local 1546 Union Pin.



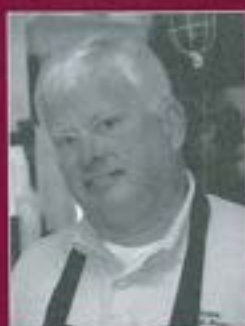


**Edward J. Bulkema** – Meat Cutter,  
*DeVries Grocery & Meat Market*  
(LaGrange, IL)

In his 35-year (so far) career as a Union meat cutter, Edward J. Bulkema has had a distinction that continues to this day: he is the *only* Union member in this family-owned store. A number of Local 1546 workplaces share this trait, but *DeVries Grocery & Meat Market* in LaGrange, Illinois conveys a special nostalgic spirit to customers walking in.

The store is neatly arranged and filled with the tempting smells old-time neighborhood food stores were known for long ago. Ed began at DeVries in 1967 (as a member of Local 320, a predecessor to Local 1546). Ed works his skill and magic at the meat counter, chatting with shoppers he's known for years (and years).

"I especially enjoy the customers," Ed remarks as he slices an order. "The Union has meant I've counted on good benefits—including a secure pension for down the road. The store? It's changed very little. Quality and service are still our number one goals, and always will be. I'm working now for the second generation of owners. I may be retired by the time the third generation takes over," Ed says with a chuckle.



## Working Solo

**David Weiher** – Meat Cutter,  
*Chuck's Gourmet Market*  
(Downers Grove, IL)

"I've always been proud to be in a Union shop," Local 1546 member David Weiher says reaching for the ringing phone. As he jots down a pick-up order, it's only been ten minutes since he returned from making a delivery and now two customers have entered the store. He's the only Union member at *Chuck's Gourmet Market* in the downtown area of Downers Grove, and David takes care of his customers—answering questions, advising them on how much to buy for a party of eight, preparation tips, and more.

"I've worked here since 1973, starting as an apprentice with my Dad," David recalls. "Today we deal with more prepared food, and staying creative is necessary. The best part of this job is being familiar with all aspects of the products we prepare and sell. There are fewer and fewer small, neighborhood markets, so it's terrific that our Union is there for independents like us. I come from a strong Union family, and I know first-hand how important good health benefits and a retirement plan are when you work for a living."

## Union Pension: Value is Clear to Retiring Members



**Janet DeSando** – Cashier, *Dominick's 3078*  
(Downers Grove, IL)

After a 27-year career at Dominick's, Janet DeSando looks back with pride on a job well done and looks forward to enjoying her pension. She just retired in April of 2002. "It's great to know I have something solid to show for my many years of work," Janet emphasizes. The industry has changed a lot during her nearly three-decades as a cashier. "Remember when

the registers were manual and you had to add the tax at the end? That's what we did back then," Janet remembers. "But people still want and expect service. So I have a hard time believing that checking yourself out at a store will ever really take off."

When asked what advice she could offer younger workers, Janet didn't hesitate. "You realize as time goes by how important it is to support your Union. Call if you have questions or if something needs attention," she urges. "The members, their Union and the company have an important aim in common: keeping the stores successful so our members keep working." Janet and her husband are now planning a move to Colorado. "When I started with Dominick's in 1975, retirement and the Union pension seemed a million years away. It came up fast, and I'm thrilled that I worked a job with a pension plan I can now rely on."



*Emilio Chiappetta (center) with good friends and fellow Local 1546 members Frank Orsino (left) and Bob Goduto at the Pik Kwik Food Mart*

**Emilio Chiappetta** – Deli  
Dept., *Pik Kwik Food Mart*  
(Roselle, IL)

He's worked hard at his job since 1975, taking good care of his customers in the deli of the *Pik Kwik Food Mart* in Roselle, and Emilio Chiappetta is looking forward to a long retirement which began in April, 2002. This happy time in his life is only possible because of his Union pension.

Emilio came to the U.S. from his native Italy in 1958. After three years at *Pik Kwik*, he joined the deli department and became a member of Local 189 (a predecessor to Local 1546). "I know so many of the customers by their first name," Emilio says with a smile. "My co-workers are the best; I'll miss them. But I'm glad for my fellow Union members because I know that they too will have good pensions when their time comes to retire."

"Problems were rare, and got solved right away—sometimes before they even began," Emilio states. "I have been fortunate thanks to my Union to have had health insurance, representation, and help if I needed it. A secure pension is something young workers may take for granted now, but they shouldn't."

### It's the Local 1546 "Union Pin to Win" Contest!

Showing your Union pride by wearing your new Union Pin already means you're a winner. As a bonus, on certain days your Union Representative may be assigned to "Union Pin Patrol," which means he or she will be able to present a \$25.00 reward to a member at a worksite—maybe you—who is wearing a UFCW Local 1546 Union Pin (or sticker). Plus, your photo may appear in our Union newsletter! (The all-new "Local 1546 Union Pin to Win" contest officially gets underway on May 1st, 2002. After July 15th, only members wearing a new Local 1546 pin will be eligible to win.)

### Union Dues Increase Notice

Effective June 1, 2002, a \$1.00 per month dues increase will be implemented for all UFCW members. This increase, which will be reflected for dues payable this June, was approved at the most recent UFCW International Convention, under Section 38-A3 of the UFCW Constitution.



## Meat plant blues:



### "Fast Food Nation"

By Eric Schlosser  
(Perennial books  
2002 \$13.95  
ISBN: 0-06-093845-5)

Reviewed by  
Michael G.  
Matejka

(Editor of Union  
News, and  
President of the  
Illinois State  
Labor Press  
Association.

Want an instant recipe for vegetarianism? Try the book, "Fast Food Nation," by Eric Schlosser, now out in a paperback edition.

Schlosser diagnoses that all American institutions, the fast food meal, from the cow in the feedlot to the underpaid kid on the greasy fryer, totaling up the real cost for a quick burger and fries.

A century ago Upton Sinclair turned the nation's stomach when he visited the Chicago stockyards to write "The Jungle." The Pure Food and Drug Act resulted, even though Sinclair's aim was to improve workers' lives. That

change only came with mass unionization in the packinghouses in the 1930s.

Schlosser's book should have the same impact today, as it examines a ruthless system of food production and consumption, where every penny saved is millions for those highway icons who feed us.

Like Sinclair, Schlosser pays particular attention to the workers. He visits the high school students who stumble through class so they can flip that burger until late at night.

He visits the meat packing plants where immigrant workers work for low wages in treacherous conditions, racking up an injury rate that surpasses any other occupation.

Meatpacking was always dangerous, but unionization helped smooth the rough edges and give workers a decent life.

Beginning in the 1970s the meat packers

smashed their unions, either through slashing conditions and provoking strikes or moving to the countryside.

The packers deserted Omaha, Kansas City and Chicago for small towns in the plains, promising jobs but instead delivering hungry immigrants, who work for substandard conditions and suffer incredible injury rates. A high turnover is the industry's key ingredient, discarding workers faster than they do gristle and bone.

Meanwhile, the ranchers who once raised the cattle are replaced by huge feedlots, where drug-pumped cattle are crammed together, their untreated waste equaling the output of a small city.

The final recipient, the customer, is part of an increasingly unhealthy nation, whose children are eating more starch and sugar and getting less exercise. Diseases like "mad cow" and e-coli lurk in the background, hidden predators who may yet haunt our future.

Meanwhile the meat packers and fast food chains pump dollars into Washington, thwarting minimum wage increases, health and safety regulations, and even minimal standards of regulation.

The fast food chains see their greatest growth not in the U.S. but overseas, as they spread their reach globally, changing diets and agriculture around the planet.

The picture is depressing but not without hope. Schlosser concludes with visits to ranchers who raise their cattle respecting



nature, letting the animals roam and not pumping them with antibiotics or trapping them in feedlots. He visits his successful family restaurants, some in multiple locations, where workers receive benefits and a livable wage. He notes the quick capitulation of fast food chains to consumer demands. When environmentalist complained about McDonald's styrene clamshell burger containers, the firm quickly dropped them. When the golden arches said it would no longer accept genetically engineered potatoes for its french fries, sales of Monsanto's New Leaf, the nation's only biotech potato, dropped quickly.

What would happen if consumers demanded safe working conditions and decent wages at packinghouses and for the kid behind the counter? Would the fear of consumer distaste spur the fry kings to change their tune? The fast food chains are profit driven and will give consumers what they want, is Schlosser's final message, if only consumers demand it.

It's not an easy message but refreshing the book doesn't end with hopelessness over corporate power.

### Farewell to Larry Shepard



UFCW Local 1546 Union Representative Larry Shepard will retire in July after working on behalf of our members for the past 14 years. Larry first went to work at a grocery store at the

age of 16, later entering the military and serving in Vietnam. Soon after his return, he again worked at the store and soon went to work at Wilson's Food, a packinghouse in Monmouth, Illinois. Active in the Union, Larry held a number of posts, including Chief Steward, and was hired as by the UFCW as a "VOC" (Voluntary Organizing Committee) Organizer in 1987 on the IBP campaign—which proved to be successful. In 1988, he came onto the Local Union staff as the Union Representative for IBP, Monmouth College, Raber Packing Co., and Calihan Pork Processors. "I enjoy helping people, and working for the Union has provided me the opportunity to do that," Larry commented. "I wish all the best for the members and staff of Local 1546."

## Estelle Greenberg Wins Publication Contest



"I believe it is important to be as active as possible in my Union," replied Local 1546 member Estelle Greenberg when asked why she submitted her winning entry into our publication name contest.

Estelle, whose suggestion will be revealed when the new format of Local 1546's publication debuts this summer, has worked at Happy Foods in Skokie, Illinois as a cashier for the two and a half years. She has won the \$500.00 U.S. Savings Bond offered as the contest prize.

"I'm proud to belong to Local 1546, and am thrilled about the mergers that created the strong, diverse Local Union we have as a result," Estelle maintains. "The pension, the benefits, the wages...these are some of the best reasons to be part of a Union, and working at Happy Foods is terrific for me."

*Editor's Note: Our sincere thanks to all Local 1546 members who submitted entries into the publication name contest. We appreciate your time, energy, and creativity. Although only one winner could be selected, certain suggestions will likely be used for sections and features in the new version of our newsletter. — S.J. Peters*



## Local 1546 - Voices in Politics



Democratic Gubernatorial Nominee Rod Blagojevich (podium) addressed Union leaders and members at a rally at the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers - Lodge 1487 in Des Plaines, IL a few days before winning the Primary Election. Seated (right) is Illinois State AFL-CIO President Margaret Blackshire.

### Make your voice heard - Vote and join Active Ballot Club

General Election - Tuesday, November 5, 2002.

Register to Vote - First-time voters and those who have moved must register.

Requirements: U.S. citizen and age 18 by November 5.

Registration Deadlines - Illinois: October 8, Indiana: October 7.

Watch for list of Union-endorsed candidates in future issues.

### Your Power in Politics: Active Ballot Club (ABC)

Join the voluntary, non-partisan political arm of Local 1546 and the UFCW known as the Active Ballot Club or "ABC." The goals of the ABC are to elect (and re-elect) candidates for public office who show true concern for working families and to enact legislation that benefits Union members. Joining and belonging to ABC cost about .25 cents a week, or approximately \$12 a year. In most cases, you can have your ABC contribution deducted from your paycheck. It's a small investment that, when combined with the contributions of many UFCW members, makes a real difference in the political process! See your Local 1546 Union Representative for details.

(Union dues are not used to support ABC, and contributions are not tax deductible.)

### Local 1546 Salutes CFL President Don Turner



(l-r) Retiring CFL President Don Turner, Local 1546 President Kenneth R. Boyd, and CFL Secretary-Treasurer Dennis J. Gannon.

A strong advocate for working families and a tireless labor leader, Chicago Federation of Labor (CFL) President Don Turner has earned the respect of Union leaders and members. His retirement in June of 2002 will conclude a long career devoted to promoting fairness and dignity on the job for all workers. Beginning as a Chicago high school teacher in 1964, he was elected Union Delegate in 1968 and joined the Teachers' Union staff in 1977. In 1984, Don became a Vice President for the Illinois Federation of Teachers before coming to the CFL staff. He was elected CFL President in 1995 after holding several posts, including Secretary-Treasurer.

"It's been my privilege to watch President Turner take the CFL in new, progressive directions," said Local 1546 President Kenneth R. Boyd, who is also on the CFL's Executive Board. "Don has worked effectively with business, labor, and community leaders with an important goal in mind: to move Organized Labor in Chicago and Cook County forward, and that's exactly what's been achieved. Don leaves the CFL in good hands, and Local 1546 looks forward to continuing working with his successor, Dennis Gannon. Our best wishes and gratitude go to Don Turner for a job well done."

## Health Care Division Update

By Union Representative Elliot Miller

**Negotiations:** Fairview Plaza (Rockford) members ratified a four-year contract in February by a 7 to 1 margin. This contract included wage and health care increases, clarified lost break time, outlined the ability to leave the facility during lunch periods and clarified an overtime protocol for members to receive more overtime. Local 1546 will begin negotiations with Burgess Square (Westmont) soon; the major issues are wages, health care, and pension.

**Grievances:** Recently Local 1546 took part in several Health Care Division grievance meetings, which resulted in the return of three unjustly terminated mem-

bers back to work. At press time, Local 1546 has also recovered over \$1,270.00 on behalf of our Health Care Division members through a number of grievances.

**Organizing:** Local 1546 launched an organizing campaign recently at Salem Village, a nursing home in Joliet, Illinois. With the help of Local 1546 members from other nursing homes already under contract and workers at this facility, we hope to gain Union representation and the benefits and protections of membership. Local 1546 has held a number of meetings with Salem Village employees and many authorization cards have been signed.

If you know individuals or groups of health care workers in need of Union representation at their workplace or who are interested in obtaining more information about UFCW Local 1546, please contact Elliot Miller (office day: Mondays) at 847-593-3500 or toll-free at 800-592-3508.

### First Contract After Organizing Victory at Sterk's



UFCW Local 1546 members from Sterk's ratified their first contract in the fall of 2001. Union Representative Clarence O'Connor (center, with tie) helped organize the meat, seafood and smokehouse members at 8 stores (in East Chicago, Hammond, Lockport, Munster, Sauk Village and Park Forest), served as a negotiator for their 4-year contract, and is now their Union Representative. Local 1546 welcomes our members from Sterk's.





## Your Union Dues: Where do they go?

It's a fact of life: *The things we need to make our lives better cost money.* Unions, just like any other organization, cost money to run. Your city government, church, the school PTA, your condo association... they all require you to "chip in" to help fund the good work they do and the benefits they provide that enrich the quality of your life. Without dividing the cost of operations amongst the membership, these organizations could not exist. Unions are no different.

But what happens to your dues after you pay them? First, a portion (about one-third) of that money goes to our International Union, which in turn provides us with many of the resources we need for organizing campaigns, worker health and safety programs, research, and many other initiatives that directly benefit the membership of the UFCW. The remaining portion of your dues stays right here to cover a number of important expenses.

The most important function of your dues money is to pay the costs associated with collective bargaining; that is, the work that provides you with the best possible contract that can be negotiated by your Local Union staff. Once your contract is in place, an experienced, professional staff of Union Representatives is required to help see that it is properly enforced. That means, keeping in touch with you and filing grievances on your behalf when necessary. In addition to servicing current members, organizing new ones to keep the movement vital also takes a portion of your dues. Our continued growth is a cornerstone of our ability to best serve all who belong, because our strength in numbers works in favor of every single member of Local 1546.

Educating members and Stewards is an important role of your Union. Your dues fund labor education classes and conferences that help our members to better understand the workings of our organization. Communications contribute to that goal as well — keeping you informed through membership meetings, newsletters, bulletins, other printed materials, and our web site. After taking care of these more basic services, your Union incurs costs as we seek to provide an ever-expanding list of extra discount programs, special family events. All of these take a "slice of the dues pie." Local 1546 does its utmost to maximize the value of each dollar spent, because every financial decision is made solely with the best interest of you—the members—in mind.

Contrary to the words of a popular song...many of the best things in life are *not* free. We all expect to pay for the services we receive. What more important service could there be than one that provides job stability, guaranteed wage increases, fairness at work, and a voice on the job? Because Union jobs—as a rule—are linked with better pay, decent benefits (including pensions and health insurance), security and more, the sum of all that you earn is far more than you ever would spend on dues. So in reality, as an old but true Labor Movement slogan points out: *"It doesn't cost to work Union...it pays!"* When you think about it, your Union dues are probably your best bargain!

### This is your Union publication...what do you want to see?

UFCW Local 1546 welcomes your input as we work to make this Union newsletter the best it can be. If you have suggestions for topics to be covered or if you have photographs, historical information, humorous workplace stories, or other items of interest to submit for consideration (including *Letters to the Editor*), please contact:

**S.J. Peters, Director of Communications / Editor**

at 847/593-3500 (toll-free at 800-592-3508)

or write to:

UFCW Local 1546 Communications Dept.  
601 W. Golf Rd., Mt. Prospect IL 60056.

## AFL-CIO National Boycott List

### (DON'T BUY)

A company and its products or services are placed on the national list of AFL-CIO-endorsed boycotts at the request of affiliated international and national Unions as a result of collective bargaining or organizing efforts. A boycott is endorsed by the AFL-CIO as part of a broader campaign on behalf of employees of the targeted company. UFCW Local 1546 urges our members to honor these boycotts as a show of solidarity for other AFL-CIO Unions. Please...**do not buy** (or patronize or use) these products or services. Thank you.

### Apparel

#### NEW ERA CAP CO.

Exclusive producer of sports caps with logos of all Major League Baseball teams, 39 colleges and universities, National Hockey League, Professional Golfers' Association, and National Basketball Association. Sold in retail outlets, sports stores, at ballparks and campus shops nationwide.

### Communication Workers

### Building Materials & Tools

#### BROWN & SHARPE MFG. CO.

Measuring, cutting and machine tools and pumps

### Machinists

#### JET EQUIPMENT & TOOLS INC.

Auburn, Wash., distributor of "JET" brand metal and wood-working power and hand tools for home and commercial use

### Teamsters

#### SOUTHWIRE CO.

Commercial and industrial wire and cable; Do-It-Yourself brand homewire

### Electrical Workers

### Entertainment & Recreation

#### BIG LEAGUE THEATRICALS ROAD CO.

Performing the "The Music Man"

### Actors' Equity Association

#### BLACK ENTERTAINMENT TELEVISION

BET cable television, Action pay-per-view, BET on Jazz

### Electrical Workers

#### TROIKA ENTERTAINMENT

Troika's touring production of The Sound of Music

### Actors' Equity Association

### Food & Beverages

#### PICTSWEET MUSHROOM FARM

Fresh mushroom and frozen vegetables with the Pictsweet label

### Teamsters

#### DIAMOND WALNUT CO.

Diamond brand canned and bagged walnuts and walnut pieces.

### Teamsters

#### MT. OLIVE PICKLE CO.

Pickles and relishes sold under the Mt. Olive and other labels, including the Food Lion and Harris Teeter "house" labels.

### Farm Labor Organizing Committee

### Transportation & Travel

#### BEST WESTERN-GROSVENOR RESORT

Hotel in Buena Vista, Fla.

### Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees

#### FOUR POINTS BY SHERATON

Hotel in Waterbury, Conn.

### Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees

#### HOLIDAY INN SUNSPREE HOTEL

Hotel in Kapaa, Hawaii

### Longshoremen & Warehousemen

#### NEW OTANI HOTEL & GARDEN

Hotel in downtown Los Angeles

### Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees

#### SAN FRANCISCO MARRIOTT MOSCONE HOTEL

Hotel in San Francisco

### Hotel Employees & Restaurant Employees



## Announcing New Local 1546 Scholarships

### The Academic Excellence Awards

*Given in honor of past Local Union Presidents William Dzik, Jack Boyd, R. Emmett Kelly, and Fred Clavio, Sr.*

Local 1546 will award four \$1,000.00 scholarships in the academic year 2002-03 to selected Local 1546 members or their dependents. To qualify, applicants (or their parents) must be members in good standing and be accepted into, or already attending, a college, university, or accredited trade school.

Scholarship recipients will be selected based on grades, participation in school activities, and community service. In addition, applicants will be asked to write a double-spaced, typed essay, not to exceed two pages, on the topic, "Why I deserve a Labor Union Scholarship."

A panel of Local 1546 rank and file board members will select the winners at the summer 2002 Executive Board Meeting.

### The Cash for College Awards

Local 1546 will also award six additional \$500.00 scholarships for the 2002-03 academic year. These awards will be given through a random drawing from all remaining qualified applicants, as well as those who wish to be considered for the random drawing only. The drawing will be conducted at the summer 2002 Membership Meeting.

### APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR BOTH AWARDS:

**Monday, July 19, 2002**

To be considered for the "Cash for College Awards" random drawing only, please complete the form below (type or print clearly), and mail it along with proof of attendance at, or admission to your chosen college, to:

UFCW Local 1546  
601 W. Golf Road  
Mt. Prospect, IL 60056  
Attn: Scholarships

To be considered for both the "Academic Excellence Awards" and the "Cash for College Awards," please complete the form below and mail it to the address given above along with proof of attendance at, or admission to your chosen college; a copy of your most recent school transcripts; a separate typed sheet detailing your school and community activities; and your typed essay.

**All decisions will be final, and winners only will be notified by Local 1546.**

**Awards will be paid directly to the school named by the scholarship recipient for the 2002-03 academic year.**

### Local 1546 Scholarship Application 2002-03 Academic Year

Please type or print clearly, completing all information. Incomplete or unreadable applications will not be considered.

Applicant's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Male or Female (circle)

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

UFCW Employer (company name & address) \_\_\_\_\_

What is the highest academic level you will have achieved by June 30, 2002? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you a UFCW 1546 member? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

If not, please provide the name and relationship of the person who is the Local 1546 member, as well as their membership date.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ I wish to be considered for both scholarships, and am enclosing proof of college acceptance or attendance; school transcripts; a list of school and community activities; my double-spaced, typed essay.

\_\_\_\_ I wish to be considered for the random drawing awards only, and am enclosing proof of college acceptance or attendance.

*Failure to provide any of the required materials for the "Academic Excellence Awards" will automatically enter you into the "Cash for College" random drawing only.*

Please mail all materials to:  
UFCW Local 1546  
601 W. Golf Road  
Mt. Prospect, IL 60056  
Attn: Scholarships

**Applications must be postmarked no later than July 19, 2002, to be considered.**



## Local 1546 NewsLine

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**Bernie Filipiak and Chuck Richter** - Consumer Packing, Broadview, IL



**Jeff Reece** - Cub Foods #3069, Lombard, IL



**Vienna Soup members** - Chicago, IL  
Welcome to Local 1546!



**Ann Finley and Colleen Palardis** (Stewards) - Lake Park Center, Waukegan, IL



**Debbie Yaccino** - Dominick's #4107, Westchester, IL

## Local 1546 Members on Camera



**Florencio Herrera** - Dominick's #71, North Riverside, IL



(l-r) **Dolly Twombly and Brenda Washington** - Jewel #3345, Roosevelt and Wabash, Chicago, IL



**Ronnie Leopold** - Casey's, Western Springs, IL



(l-r) **Ken Fudala, Maureen Boris, Dorice Cichon, James "Red" MiHelich and Dennis Larsen** - Dominick's #21, Hanover Park, IL

### Inside this Issue:

- Major Back-Pay Victories ..... Pages 2 & 3
- Union Reps: At Work for You ..... Page 4
- Wal-Mart Warnings ..... Pages 1, 5
- Leukemia Walk-a-Thon ..... Page 7
- Welcome Vienna Soup ..... Page 10
- Ten Scholarships ..... Page 15

Plus... Valve & Primer Strike update; organizing and healthcare news reports; credit union info; "Pin to Win" contest; union member profiles; political election items; and more!