

## Ensuring You Always Have Access to the Right Tools

By Matt Utecht, President

**W**e are excited to announce the launch of the newly redesigned Fund website. With the ever-changing world we live in, keeping on top of the latest developments can be a daunting task. Keeping this in mind, we have been working with Wilson-McShane Corporation in the redesign of the Minneapolis Retail Meat Cutters and Food Handlers 653 Pension & Health and Welfare Funds website (MRMC Local 653 Benefits) – [www.653benefits.com](http://www.653benefits.com).



Our goal with this new website is to provide our participants with an additional communications tool to access clear and accurate information which is pertinent to you. The user-friendly site provides you access to the quality content and information you need, anytime you need it, from any device. We also enhanced the overall site navigation to bring relevant information up front while also adjusting layout to fit any type of electronic device.

The site's homepage features an uncluttered design and our newly designed logo. When redesigning the site, we wanted to evoke loyalty, security and strength – qualities we hope our participants will use when describing MRMC Benefit programs. Our members are always our first priority.



There are several notable changes beyond the look and feel; amongst the new features of the site, we have incorporated:

- ❖ **“What’s New”** is a quick reference section which highlights new programs, changes, and areas of interest.
- ❖ **“Life Events”** provides you with the information you need and steps you should take should you experience one of these life-changing events.
- ❖ **“How Do I”** is based on feedback received from our participants at the Focus Groups held last winter. In these sessions individuals expressed they would like easier access to some information. As a result, a quick reference sidebar was created with some of the higher demand items.

**(Ensuring Access** - continued on page 2)

# Ensuring Access - continued from page 1

❖ **“Website Resources”** provides you with a quick library of information. With the click of a button you can quickly access:

- Links to each Service Provider within the Plans, and a link to our UFCW 653 site [www.ufcw653.org](http://www.ufcw653.org)
- Current Plan documents
- Any form needed for the administration of the Plans
- Frequently asked questions, and more

In addition to these features, the secure site provides you with the ability to view personalized information including:

- Demographic Information
- Pension Eligibility
  - Service Credits
  - Vested Status
- Health and Welfare Eligibility
  - Grace Weeks Information
- Deductible, Out-of-Pocket and Claims Detail – via direct Links

Securing your personal data is of utmost importance to us. For this reason, you will need to register on the new website to obtain access to any of your personal information. Even if you had an account on the old website, you will need to register on the new website to ensure we take every step with keeping your information secure. The registration process is streamlined and can be completed quickly.

In addition to the dedicated phone line we offer, there is a Contact Form on the website so you may reach us any way you prefer. Feel free to provide any website feedback in this Form so we may continue to customize the tools to best serve you.

**Check out the new website today.** The secured site URL has now changed to [www.653benefits.com](http://www.653benefits.com). You may also access the site by scanning the QR code:



We hope you find the redesigned website with access to pertinent information beneficial. We will be regularly updating content, so please be sure to check back regularly. We are committed to continuously enhancing the service offerings we provide to the Minneapolis Retail Meat Cutters and Food Handlers Fringe Funds Plan participants.

# The Times They Are A-Changin'

By Paul Crandall, Secretary-Treasurer

**A** classic Bob Dylan song in 1962--

*Come gather 'round people  
Wherever you roam  
And admit that the waters  
Around you have grown  
And accept it that soon  
You'll be drenched to the bone  
If your time to you is worth savin'  
Then you better start swimmin' or you'll sink like a stone  
For the times they are a-changin'*

In last month's Fact Finder, President Utecht wrote about the staff changes at Local 653. I hope you had a chance to read about Rena Wong (our new Director of Organizing), Amber Allen (our new Union Representative), and Ondrea Shallbetter (Special Projects Union Representative), who recently wrote an article entitled "Young and Active." These additions to our staff reflect a solid commitment from leadership to organize, communicate with, energize and engage our current membership in any age group.

When you are in a union, you stand strong as a membership. Our long-term members have fought hard to protect the benefits of our contracts. We need involvement from **everyone** to ensure we build a strong movement for decades to come. In the coming months Local 653 members will see many opportunities for involvement like never before. This involvement will be in our communities, local elections, school boards, city halls, festivals, gatherings and most certainly at the State Capitol. Helping

to elect working-family-friendly candidates is essential. In the coming editions of the Fact Finder, Rena will be writing about specific details on why that is important.

We all need to stand up to nonunion competition and assist in any way possible. Please take the time to stay informed! Have discussions with your union representatives when they are in your store. You can email, text or call them at any time. It is imperative we all get involved for the upcoming challenges that are ahead for our hardworking membership.

***The ideas to build a stronger union do not lie within any one individual; they lie within all of us. They lie in the collective wisdom and strength of the 10,000 UFCW Local 653 members who work hard every day to support themselves and their families. When we unite, we stand together, and we can create a better future for every member.***

The times they are a-changin'!

# *Wilson McShane Corporation*

## **Stress Can Increase Your Risk for Heart Disease**

Stress is a normal part of life. Stress can come from physical causes like not getting enough sleep or having an illness. Another cause for stress can be emotional -- worrying about not having enough money or the death of a loved one. Stress can also come from less dramatic causes like everyday obligations and pressures that make you feel that you are not in control.

Your body's response to stress is supposed to protect you. But, if it is constant, it can harm you. The hormone cortisol is released in response to stress. Studies suggest that high levels of cortisol from long-term stress can increase blood cholesterol, triglycerides, and blood pressure. These are common risk factors for heart disease.

This stress can also cause changes that promote the buildup of plaque deposits in the arteries.

Even minor stress can trigger heart problems like myocardial ischemia. This is a condition in which the heart doesn't get enough blood or oxygen. And, long-term stress can affect how the blood clots. This makes the blood stickier and increases the risk of stroke.

In addition, people who have a lot of stress may smoke or choose other unhealthy ways to deal with stress.

### **What to do**

People respond to stressful situations differently. Some react strongly to a situation. Others are relaxed and unconcerned. Luckily, you can decrease the effect of stress on your body. First, identify situations that cause stress. Although difficult, try to control your mental and physical reactions to these stressful situations. Try the following to help manage stress and keep your heart healthy.

### **Get plenty of exercise**

Exercise has another benefit that lowers stress. People who exercise have a reduced physical response to stress. Their blood pressure and heart rates don't go up as high as people under stress who don't exercise. Regular exercise can also reduce the risk of depression, another risk factor for heart disease.

Need exercise motivation? Get a pedometer and try to walk 10,000 to 12,000 steps per day. This may also help you maintain your weight. With a pedometer, you get instant feedback and credit for all you do, such as taking the stairs instead of the elevator.

### **Build a strong support system**

Research suggests that having a strong support network like being married, having someone you can talk to and trust, or belonging to organizations or a religion can reduce your stress level and your risk of heart disease. If you already have heart disease, this same network can help reduce your risk for heart attack. Having at least one person you can rely on takes a heavy burden off you and provides comfort.

A strong support system helps you take better care of yourself, too. Research shows that a lack of social support increases the chance of engaging in unhealthy behaviors like smoking, eating a high-fat diet, and drinking too much alcohol.

## Seek treatment for constant depression or anxiety

Depression and anxiety can increase your risk of dying from heart disease, if you already have it. In one study, people were asked whether they had felt so sad, discouraged, or hopeless during the past month that they had wondered if anything was worthwhile. Those who answered yes had more than two times the risk for coronary artery disease.

Other studies suggest that long-term anxiety can increase the risk for sudden cardiac death. To reduce your anxiety level, try activities that reduce stress like yoga, walking meditation, traditional meditation, guided imagery, or other methods. Look for classes in your area. Talk with your provider if you have feelings of depression or anxiety and ask about medications that can help.

## Reduce stress from work

Studies show having a demanding job that offers you few opportunities to make decisions or provides little reward can increase your risk for heart disease.

Stress at work becomes even more of a problem when you don't have a strong support system or you have long-term anxiety.

If you can't find a different position within your company, do what you can to gain control over your environment. Try to take some time away from work every day. Do something that is relaxing and that you enjoy. It may be reading, walking, or deep breathing.

If you think you are at an increased risk for heart disease because of stress in your life, talk with your health care provider. He or she may recommend counseling, classes, or other programs to help you lower your stress level and your risk for heart disease.

**STRESS**  
& YOUR HEART



Wilson-McShane Corp.   
952-851-5797 or 1-844-468-5917

# Lunds & Byerlys Remodel at “The Kitchen”

By Scott Larson, Union Representative

Remodeling has been completed at the Lunds & Byerlys Kitchen store in Wayzata. This remodel included a relocation of the sandwich station, a new spice section along with expanded grocery throughout the store. The store has new fixtures, shelving, increased health and beauty section and additional seating in the restaurant. While visiting this store it was obvious the customers in both the retail and restaurant were thrilled by the new enhancements that were designed to make their shopping and dining experience a memorable one.

Here are some of the hardworking, conscientious members of Local 653 in their newly renovated Kitchen.



Tim Pohland



April Gurnon



Matt Magaard and Sandi Holt



Vera Lelyukh, Kathie Brower, Lizzie Holzapfel

**MOURN**  
FOR THE DEAD  
**FIGHT**  
FOR THE LIVING

**WORKERS' MEMORIAL DAY**

By Amber Allen, Union Representative

During my first week on staff, I had numerous eye-opening experiences. The one that had the greatest impact on me was a demonstration I participated in on April 28, 2016, at a major meat packing plant in St. Cloud.

*What if your employer only allowed you two bathroom breaks per week? Yes, I said two per week!*

*What if the production line on your job moved at such a fast pace it made you dizzy enough to vomit? These are the lines that produce food that you and I eat.*

These are just two distressing examples of what is going on at this plant. **This is a reality and it is happening here in Minnesota!**

I was proud to stand with these workers and fight for better working conditions and urge their employer to focus more on health and safety issues, not only for the employees, but also for you and me as consumers of these products.



# It's Golf Tournament Sign-up Time!

By Scott Larson, Union Representative



Our 7<sup>th</sup> Annual John Lego Memorial Golf Tournament will be held on Wednesday, August 24, 2016. It again will be held at Brookview Golf Course in Golden Valley. It will be a shotgun start at 8:00 a.m. Check-in will start at 7:00 a.m. As always, it will be played as a four-person scramble. There will be longest putt and closest to the pin events.

This event is open to active members and retirees. We will provide water and pop on the course and lunch will be served at the conclusion of play. The award ceremony and prizes will top off a great day of golf.

The cost again this year is \$180.00 for a foursome, which is only \$45.00 per person, which includes a golf cart.

Questions: Call Scott Larson at 763-525-1500.

## 7th Annual John Lego Memorial 4-Person Scramble Golf Tournament

1.		
(Team Captain)	Work Location	Telephone
2.		
	Work Location	Telephone
3.		
	Work Location	Telephone
4.		
	Work Location	Telephone

Make checks payable to: **UFCW Local 653**

Mail payment and  
entry form to:

*UFCW Local 653  
Attn: Golf Tournament  
13000 63rd Ave N  
Maple Grove, MN 55369*

**Thomas Gergen is partnering with U.F.C.W. 653  
for Real Estate Discounts!**

## Benefit Examples:

### Buy Side Benefit:

#### Home Sale Price

\$200,000	<u>Commission Reduction</u>	\$800.00
\$300,000	<u>Commission Reduction</u>	\$1,200.00

### Sell Side Benefit:

All listings for 653 members will be taken at an adjustable negotiable commission rate.

\*Local 653 does not advocate for any service provider.

This is one of the many choices available when buying and selling a home.\*

This exclusive offer is only available through Tom Gergen.



Call for a C.M.A. Appointment

**Thomas Gergen**  
Realtor®

**Direct: 612.386.9779**  
Gergen.Thomas@gmail.com

**Al Youngkratz**  
Realtor®

**Direct: 612.201.8257**

# New Opportunity for Full-Time Members

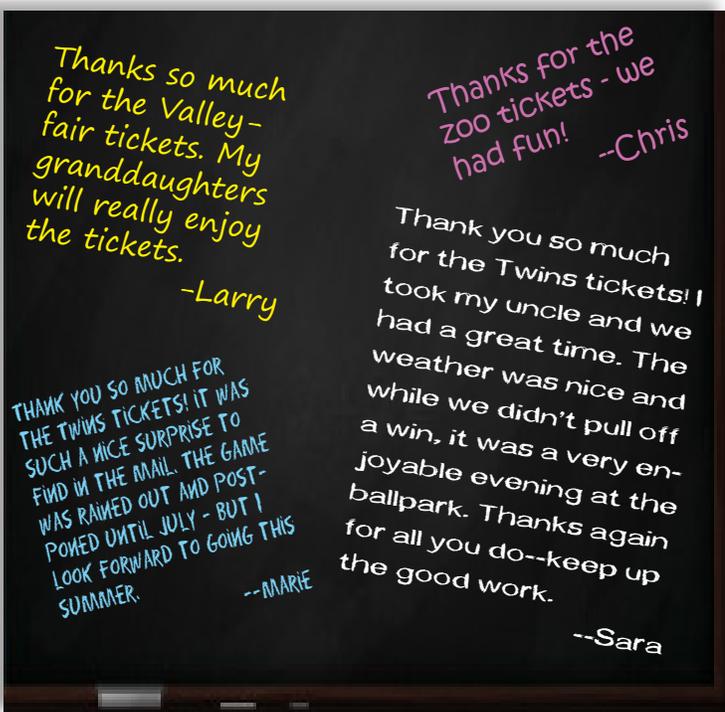
**M**y name is Tom Gergen. I have been selling real estate for twelve years. I reached an agreement with 4 Sale Real Estate to give a discount of my realtor commissions to full-time members of Local 653 when they buy or sell property using my services.

Here's a little background on my connection with Local 653. I was born in Rosemount and went to school there. In the early 70s I went to vocational school to learn how to cut meat. In nine months I was back in the Twin Cities working for Penny's Supermarkets. In the early 80s Penny's was sold to SuperValu, where I continued to work for twenty some years.

In the meantime I married my wife Arlene and we raised three children. We were able to accomplish this because we had a good steady income with great benefits provided by Local 653. The job also provided for vacation pay and pension.

So, if I can pay back to Local 653 members with discounts in commissions, I will still provide full service and feel honored to do so.

Tom Gergen  
4 Sale Real Estate



**UFCW Local 653**  
13000 63rd Avenue North  
Maple Grove, MN 55369  
www.ufcw653.org  
763-525-1500 or 1-800-292-4105

**Matthew P. Utecht, President** ([mutecht@ufcw653.org](mailto:mutecht@ufcw653.org), 612-965-4307)

**Paul Crandall, Secretary-Treasurer** ([paulc@ufcw653.org](mailto:paulc@ufcw653.org), 612-965-4301)

**JERRY'S FOODS:** Jerry's Sausage

Brainerd / Baxter Cub Foods - Baxter Super One - Crosby Super One - Pequot Lakes SuperValu - Lunds & Byerlys St. Cloud

**CUB FOODS:** Crystal, St. Louis Park

**Rena Wong, Director of Organizing** ([rwong@ufcw653.org](mailto:rwong@ufcw653.org), 612-865-4345)

**Amber Allen, Union Representative** ([ambers@ufcw653.org](mailto:ambers@ufcw653.org), 612-865-6755)

**CORPORATE CUB FOODS:** Apple Valley, Bloomington, Burnsville HOTC, Burnsville South, Chanhassen, Eagan East, Eagan North, Eagan West, Lakeville North, Lakeville South, Lakeville West, Rosemount, Savage, Shorewood

**Scott Larson, Union Representative** ([scottl@ufcw653.org](mailto:scottl@ufcw653.org), 612-961-6305)

**LUNDS & BYERLYS:** Bloomington, Central, Edina, Hennepin, Lake Street, Minnetonka, Navarre, Plymouth, Prior Lake, Richfield, Wayzata, Lunds & Byerly's Kitchen, Lunds Manufacturing

Villa at Bryn Mawr, Senova (Bryn Mawr), Healthcare Services (Bryn Mawr)

**Rick Milbrath, Union Representative** ([rmilbrath@ufcw653.org](mailto:rmilbrath@ufcw653.org), 612-965-4310)

Ingebretsen's - Swanson Meats - Cooper's Foods - Almsted's Fresh Market - Jubilee Foods - Cub Foods Shakopee - Driskill's Foods - Oxendale's Market - Bergan's SuperValu - Hirshfield's - Brede Exposition Services

**KNOWLAN'S FESTIVAL FOODS:** Andover, Bloomington, Brooklyn Park

**KING'S COUNTY MARKET:** Andover, St. Francis

**KOWALSKI'S MARKETS:** Chicago (Parkview), Eagan, Eden Prairie, Excelsior, Hennepin, Lyndale

Golden Living Center (Bloomington and Chateau), Healthcare Services (Bloomington and Chateau)

**Doug Rigert, Union Representative** ([dougr@ufcw653.org](mailto:dougr@ufcw653.org), 612-889-9121)

**JERRY'S CUB FOODS:** Bloomington, Brookdale, Chaska, Eden Prairie, Knollwood, Lake Street, Nicollet, Quarry, Richfield, Rogers, Southdale, West Broadway

**JERRY'S FOODS:** Eden Prairie, Edina, Jerry's Enterprises  
Benedictine @ Innsbruck Healthcare

**Jim Schommer, Union Representative** ([jims@ufcw653.org](mailto:jims@ufcw653.org), 612-965-4308)

**CORPORATE CUB FOODS:** Blaine North, Blaine South, Brooklyn Park North, Brooklyn Park South, Champlin, Coon Rapids South, Fridley, Lagoon, Maple Grove, Monticello, New Brighton, Plymouth Station, Rockford Road, Silver Lake Road, Vicksburg

Homestead at Anoka, Gold Cross, Monarch Healthcare

**Nancy Vaillancourt, Union Representative** ([nancyv@ufcw653.org](mailto:nancyv@ufcw653.org), 612-965-4309)

**LUNDS & BYERLYS:** Burnsville, Chanhassen, Eagan, Eden Prairie, Edina, Glen Lake, Golden Valley, Maple Grove, Ridgedale, St. Louis Park

**HAUG'S - Cub Coon Rapids (Williston), Cub Minnetonka (Haug), Cub Waterford**

**JERRY'S CUB:** Elk River

Everett's Foods

Park Health & Rehab, Healthcare Services @ Park H&R

# What are 'Sheds?'

By Jim Schommer, Union Representative

**M** eet Mark Kukowski. Mark works at the Coon Rapids South Cub Foods location, and he collects 'sheds.' Not tool sheds or gardening sheds or any structure for that matter. What I thought was a unique hobby turns out to be Mark's passion--the hunting and collecting of sheds. What are sheds? They are antlers that bucks shed every year in mid to late January until it starts to green up in the spring. Mark has logged approximately 150 hours of walking and he estimates walking about 300 miles a year in the rough terrain and snow, hunting and collecting sheds.



In 1999 Mark started logging his finds. The first year he found five sheds. He taught himself how to locate the sheds. By the second year, he found 18 sheds and by year number five he was averaging 50 sheds a year. Mark's best year was an astonishing 67 sheds! Finding a food source is a key factor in finding sheds, especially when there is deep snow. Look for the food source and deer signs, then backtrack from there--this is the best place to start your search. Pay close attention for "buck rubs." Bucks will rub trees all the way up until they lose their antlers. Mark has found antlers from the same buck year after year, seeing the sheds get larger each year and then smaller as the buck gets older. He identifies them by the unique markings on the sheds and by where they detach from the buck's head. In 2005 Mark found one half of an eight-point shed and eight years later he found the other half buried in the mud. He was amazed at how intact it

was. Mark spends 80% of his time finding these sheds right here in the Twin Cities, with half of his sheds located close to his home. Mark is a mere six sheds away from his 700<sup>th</sup> find, a goal he hopes to reach this year. Mark has found shed hunting has made him a better archery hunter. By the mounts on his wall I would say he must be an excellent bow hunter!



# AFL-CIO Strategic Research Training

By Ondrea Shallbetter, Special Project Union Representative

I recently had the opportunity to attend a first-of-its-kind training in Minnesota that is centered around educating union members, leaders and staff on how to collect and use information effectively to help build a stronger organizing campaign. The training was held at the Education Minnesota headquarters in St. Paul on May 11 through 13 and was facilitated by: Melissa Hysing, Strategic Research Director, Minnesota AFL-CIO; Julie Farb, Director of Center for Strategic Research, AFL-CIO International; Sara Myklebust, Senior Lead Researcher Center for Strategic Research, AFL-CIO International; and Todd Dahlstrom, Organizing and Growth Director, Minnesota AFL-CIO. The training was a great educational experience as well as an exciting one that helped build comradery amongst all union participants. Some of the highlights included defining what a campaign is, the role of research in a campaign, how to go about getting the facts, and the chronological steps to take in order to have a successful organizing campaign.

One definition of a campaign is a series of connected events or actions implemented over a period of time which, by changing existing power relations, leads to a specific goal or outcome. The role of research in a campaign, I learned, is much greater than what I first assumed in the fact that good research and knowing how to use it can mean winning or losing a campaign, but where do you start? We learned that one of the first steps is getting the facts about the company and its workers with reliable trade research resources.

Important questions to answer while doing research are: How does the company make its money? How does the company want to make money in the future? Who makes decisions that influence the company? What are the company's strengths and weaknesses? What external opportunities and threats does the company have?

Once you have gathered all of the facts and answered all of the questions above, you need to analyze and summarize your findings, focusing on the company's profit centers, growth plan, decision makers and any key relationships the company and its decision makers may have. Once you have categorized your information you can begin to form strategies for your campaign.

When you have come up with the most impactful strategies, you can begin to implement them as escalating tactics over time with the workers and union members. Knowing how to perform and carry out strategic research before taking action is key because you have to know what will have the most impact based on facts, not just intuition. I am beyond excited that I had the chance to learn the systematic approach of strategic researching and look forward to implementing it into our newly formed organizing department.

## Executive Board Members

Matthew P. Utecht, President	Lorrie Wayman, Vice President 5
Paul Crandall, Secretary-Treasurer	Nick Stute, Vice President 6
Judi Johnson, Recording Secretary	Paul Merchlewitz, Vice President 7
David Maas, Vice President 1	Melissa Charles, Vice President 8
Tom Potvin, Vice President 2	Michael Gaulrapp, Vice President 9
Doug Dehmer, Vice President 3	John Pignato, Vice President 10
Theresa Kick, Vice President 4	Chris Erickson, Vice President 11



# ANNUAL FAMILY PICNIC AND FISHING CONTEST WEDNESDAY, JULY 20, 2016

All members and their family, friends and retirees are welcome to fish or just come and have a great time. You can fish from shore, the fishing pier or from a boat (you provide the boat).

This is a catch / photo / release contest, so bring your camera.

There will be drawings for other prizes during lunch at the Beebe Lake Shelter.

All participants 16 and over must have a valid fishing license.

There will be three prize groups, and prizes will be awarded as follows:

- Group I    Ages 1 – 11**  
*Largest Fish – Set of Twins tickets*  
*Smallest Fish – Set of Twins tickets*
- Group II    Ages 12 – 17**  
*Largest Fish – 2 nights at Ours Resort*  
*Most Species – Set of Twins tickets*
- Group III    Adults**  
*Largest Fish – 3 nights at Ours Resort*  
*Most Species – Set of Twins tickets*

**Location:** Beebe Lake Regional Park  
7250 10th Street Northeast  
(Wright County Road 34)

**Time:** 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon (8:30 a.m. check-in)  
Awards, prizes and lunch will start promptly at 12:00 noon

**Directions:**  
To Beebe Lake Regional Park: Take 94 west to Maple Grove Parkway (Hennepin County Road 30). Go west on County Road 30 eight (8) miles to County Road 19. Turn right towards Hanover. After three (3) miles take a left on Wright County Road 34 (also listed as 10th Street). Go four (4) miles to Beebe Lake Park.

To Boat Ramp: Go ½ mile south of Beebe Lake Park on County Road 34 to Garrison. Go right (west) to 20th Street NE, then turn right (north). Ramp is ¼ mile on your right.

**Registrations must be received by Thursday, July 14, 2016.** If you have any questions, call Scott Larson at the union office (763-525-1500).

**Hot dogs and pop will be served for lunch!**



## 2016 UFCW LOCAL 653 FISHING CONTEST AND PICNIC

Print Full Name:

Employer:

NUMBER OF PEOPLE ATTENDING IN THE FOLLOWING AGE GROUPS:

1 - 11 years old \_\_\_\_\_ 12 - 17 years old \_\_\_\_\_ 18+ years old \_\_\_\_\_

Mail entry form to: UFCW Local 653  
Attn: Picnic and Fishing Contest  
13000 63rd Avenue N  
Maple Grove, MN 55369



# Thinking Ahead Will Save You Big Money!!!

By Doug Rigert, Union Representative

**W**e all know the importance of budgeting, paying bills on time and trying to make ends meet. It can be a challenge that many of us have at times, no matter how hard we try to stay afloat or get ahead. Sometimes this has to do with the choices we make and the timing of when we make them. By making good choices or decisions with the things we purchase and the money we have, the financial quality of our lives can be improved in many ways, and one very important way is less stress due to financial issues. There are times when by making or not making certain purchases we end up hurting ourselves in a financial way--it kind of ties into the philosophy of "don't work harder, work smarter." One very big area where this might possibly apply to you is in the arena of the health care benefits many of you have through your employer and which were negotiated for on your behalf by the leadership of UFCW Local 653. As many of you know, there were some changes from the last Minneapolis retail union contract to the current one that became effective March 6, 2016. Two of those changes involved employer as well as eligible employee contributions to health and welfare effective March 5, 2017. Beginning on that date, for all eligible employees the employer will make increased weekly contributions. For full-time employees it will be an additional \$50.85 for a total of \$210.65 per week. For eligible part-time employees (modified part-time) it will be an additional \$59.99 for a total of \$116.89 per week. As mentioned earlier, eligible employees will also have to make a weekly contribution for health and welfare effective March 5, 2017. For full-time employees it will be \$10.00 per week and for modified part-time employees it will be \$5.00 per week.

This brings me to the purpose of this article and its title. If you are an eligible employee currently receiving the health and welfare benefits, it is **very important** for you to know or find out at least one or two weeks prior to March 5, 2017, how many "grace weeks" you have, and if need be to purchase them back **before** this date. What are grace weeks? Grace weeks are simply the number of weeks of extended health insurance you would have if you were out of work for any of the five defined leaves of absence stated in the union contract, or if you have exhausted

or didn't qualify for the benefits afforded under the Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA), which allows you to be out of work for up to twelve weeks. If you qualify for FMLA, the employer will continue to make contributions to health and welfare on your behalf and you won't have to use any of your existing grace weeks unless you are out of work beyond 12 weeks. It is important to remember, however, that as of March 5, 2017, if you are out on qualified FMLA **you will be responsible for making your weekly employee contribution for health and welfare directly to your employer for the week(s) you are gone and NOT to Wilson-McShane Corp.**

The five defined leaves of absence in the union contract are personal leave, union leave, military leave, medical leave and parenting leave. The maximum number of grace weeks any one person can have is eight. The more grace weeks you have, the longer you will have extended health insurance. With that being said, if between now and the end of February 2017 you find out you don't have all eight grace weeks, it would save you ***big money*** to purchase back as many of them at the current rate of \$159.80 per week if you are a full-time employee versus the new rate effective March 5, 2017 of \$210.65, saving you \$50.85 for each week you buy back. The same point can be made if you are a modified part-time employee with less than all eight grace weeks. If so, it would save you ***big money*** as well to purchase as many of them at the current rate of \$56.90 per week versus the new rate effective March 5, 2017 of \$116.89, saving you \$59.99 for each week you buy back. This could save you a whole lot of money, but timing is everything and crucial in order to do so. It would be wise and financially in your best interest to find out how many grace weeks you have before the new rates go into effect, and if need be to purchase them back at a significant savings to you. To find out how many grace weeks you have and how to properly purchase them if needed, please contact Wilson-McShane at the new and improved member dedicated phone number at 952-851-5797 or toll free at 844-468-5917. You can also find out by visiting the newly redesigned and user friendly UFCW MRMC Local 653 benefits website at [www.653benefits.com](http://www.653benefits.com).

# Driskill's Gets a New Look and a New Name

By Rick Milbrath, Union Representative



In July 2015, Scott Driskill decided to move forward on remodeling his store in Hopkins. No one--not his employees nor his customers--could have ever dreamed how Scott took a typical traditional retail grocery store and turned it into a high-end looking grocery store without the high-end prices. The name also changed from Driskill's to Driskill's Downtown Market.

The new changes are amazing! When you first walk in the door you will see a new and delicious soup, salad and sushi bar. Scott also expanded new cases in the deli, meat and seafood departments while still maintaining the smokehouse. There is a new open layout with new cases in the produce department. Scott replaced the dairy and freezer sections with larger cases that offer customers more variety. The bakery had a facelift with new checkouts and courtesy counter. They have a new sitting area by the deli that includes a friendly fireplace where you can kick back and enjoy a cup of coffee to a complete meal from the deli.



Dan Mavison - Dairy

There is not one department that Scott Driskill overlooked or shortchanged. The entire store had a complete major makeover that is inviting to the needs of the customers by providing additional sales space and expanding product lines. The store has eye-catching designs with smart, colorful merchandising that you don't expect to find in a small-town grocery store. The feel you get as a customer is that this store was totally designed from front to back with you in mind. This is a store that is fun and exciting to shop. It has a relaxed full-service atmosphere that makes you feel this is the only place to shop.



Chris Cheney - Meat

The store has journeymen and key employees in every department to serve you and answer all your questions. The employees have been reporting nothing but compliments and high praise from the general public on the new look. I would recommend stopping in and checking this store out the next time you're in Hopkins.



Don Korth - Smoked Meat



Nancy Anderson - Deli

Scott Driskill without question has raised the bar in the small, beautiful, quaint town of Hopkins.



Ken Anderson - Produce

# Membership Support is a Key Component for Local 653 Success

By Mike Gaulrapp, Executive Board Member

A great place to begin when talking about support and its importance is during contract negotiations. President Matt Utecht begins this process by selecting a negotiating committee. This committee represents the workers at our stores by submitting the workers' thoughts as well as their own to President Utecht before and during the negotiating process. This process involves many meetings through the course of about a month and a half. Proposals are submitted from each side and the work begins towards a settlement that will be acceptable to the majority of our members at Local 653. Changes and counter-proposals are made, as well as dropping proposals, as the negotiations head towards their conclusion. Just like in sports and any other negotiations, it usually comes down to the last day and that's where the real support comes in. The groundwork has been put into place and now it is up to President Utecht to hammer out the final proposal to be submitted to the union members. It takes total support and trust from the negotiating committee and the union representatives that the best deal possible will come out of these final negotiations. With their track record and over 60 years of combined union experience between them, we can all be confident that President Utecht and Secretary-Treasurer Paul Crandall are getting the best deal possible and that they are worthy of our support!

Another area when it comes to supporting the union is when members volunteer their time for causes that further the success of our union. The informational picket lines at Glen Lake and Victoria were a perfect example of

members coming together to support other members who are trying to get back what is owed to them. The members who worked in these stores were very appreciative of all who came out to support their cause. The informational pickets at Walmart in Andover showed our support for local union grocery stores while also showing owners of union stores that we will step up to support the businesses that employ our workers. Rena Wong has joined our ranks as the new Director of Organizing—she will be looking for volunteers to strengthen our union through organizing efforts. She has come on board at a pivotal time, as Rena states in a recent Fact Finder: "Our union can improve the lives of not just our members, but all workers."

A final thought when it comes to support is in regards to supporting each other as friends and union members in the workplace. With the focus on bottom line profit, the workplace now puts pressure and stress on the worker to produce more and more each day. You add this to all of the stresses outside the workplace with raising families and other trials of life and it can add up to people feeling down at times while at work. We should all consider these things with compassion for one another and support each other with encouragement as we continue to work together for personal success as well as for the support of the entire union body.



## UFCW Local 653 Members:

Union Meetings are  
recessed for the summer.  
They will resume on  
Monday, October 3, 2016.

SEND IN THE ENTIRE ADDRESS  
BOX AT THE RIGHT  
FOR A CHANCE TO WIN 2 TICKETS  
TO A MINNESOTA VIKINGS GAME!

All active, dues-paying members  
are eligible for drawings.

Mail your entry to:

UFCW Local 653  
Attn: Tickets  
13000 63<sup>rd</sup> Ave N  
Maple Grove, MN 55369



## Retiree's Club Meeting Notice

**Knights of Columbus -  
Marian Hall**

1114 American Blvd. W.  
Bloomington, MN 55420

**Thursday, June 16, 2016**

10:00 a.m. Cards  
12:00 p.m. Lunch  
1:00 p.m. Speaker

For more information:

Thea Gullekson:  
952-831-3143

Char Hanson:  
612-869-9035

or Marlen Wahl:  
952-888-3220

United Food & Commercial  
Workers Union, Local 653  
13000 63<sup>rd</sup> Avenue N.  
Maple Grove, MN 55369  
763-525-1500 or 1-800-292-4105

Change Service Requested

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Twin Cities, MN**

## A Sad Goodbye to a 25-Year Union Member

By Nancy Vaillancourt



**F**ormer 25-year union member Duane Koechler passed away at the age of 45 on April 7, 2016. He was hired at Rainbow in November 1989 where he spent his entire career.

Duane was a very active Local 653 member, attending union meetings on a regular basis. Duane had a huge heart, and when it came to donating, he was more than generous with his time and money. I will always remember how Duane stepped up and brought boxes and boxes full of household items for the Women's Shelter for a drive we did several years ago. His generosity didn't stop there. Local 653 has a Toys for Tots drive every year and Duane would pull up with his truck full of new toys for the drive.

Duane was also involved in the Biggest Loser Contest. He worked extremely hard at losing weight; he lost over 70 pounds and was so proud of his accomplishment, as well he should be. Duane--you are missed. Rest in peace.