Prince George’s County Council Vetoes Baker Budget; Awards Libraries Additional $2.5 Million
Do buy: Wedding gifts

Buy your wedding flowers through the Union Plus flower delivery service provider, Teleflora for a 20 percent online ordering discount. Go to the Union Plus page (www.unionplus.org) for more information.

Stock the bar at your wedding using United Farmworkers produced wines:

- Chateau Ste. Michelle
- Columbia Crest
- St. Supery
- Dollarhide Ranch
- Scheid Vineyards Inc.
- Balletto
- Charles Krug
- C.K. Mondavi
- Gallo of Sonoma
- Papagni Fruit Company
- Pillowtex Pillows, Comforters, Sheets, Toppers (UAW)
- Pyrex (USW)
- Regalware (USW)
- Weber Grills (Novelty Workers)
- White-Westinghouse (IUE-CWA)

Can’t decide what to buy? Give a gift card to the following stores:

- Albertsons
- Fry’s
- Giant
- Kroger
- Macys
- Meijer
- Safeway
- Vons

Staffed by members of the UFCW.

Help the newlyweds set up their home with these union-made products:

- All-Clad (USW)
- Anchor Hocking (GMP)
- Claus Kitchen Knives & Lawn and Garden Tools (UAW)
- Corelle Dishware (USW)
- Cutco Cutlery (USW)
- Electrolux vacuums (IAM)
- Fiesta (GMP)
- Homer Laughlin (GMP)
- Libbey Glassware (GMP)
- Picuzzi photo books, canvas images (GCIU)

May, June and July, into early Autumn bring a plethora of weddings. Friends and family deserve the best for their new union—union-made gifts.

Editors note: as with all Do Buy lists this list does not include all available union-made products and services. We welcome your suggested additions and invite you to add your products to our online database at www.unionlabel.org.
In my Democratic Party, profits are subordinate to people—I’m a Democrat with a capital D
Renne Report .................................................. 2

Ride-On agrees to fund multilingual incentive for drivers .................. 4

Cumberland Police contract approved by Mayor and City Council........... 5

Misclassified “temp” workers lobbying for fair treatment from Montgomery County ...... 6

MCGEO fighting HOC RIFs, privatization ............ 7

Montgomery County Council passes new CBA ...... 8

PGCMLS employees win big in fight for fair funding.......................... 9

We are ‘petulant children’ ........................................ 10

Active Ballot Club ................................................ 11

Reclassification grievance in Montgomery County moves to arbitration........ 12

Organizing Howard County employees and beyond ......................... 13

Protecting workers from heat illness ......................... 14

Union seeks emergency pay, promise of increased safety and security for Clarksburg officers .................. 15

Immigration reform passes Senate hurdle ............... 16

Reclassification Study wins pay increase for CHNIs .......................... 17
Gino Renne, President,
UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO

In my Democratic Party, profits are subordinate to people—I’m a Democrat with a capital D

I recently celebrated my daughter’s college graduation. During the ceremony I got to thinking about what all those kids will be doing with their hard-earned degrees twenty, thirty or forty years from now. I know from conversations with my daughter that only a few of her peers know anything at all about unions and the role that organized labor has played in building America. That certainly is one of the major flaws of higher education in the nation today. If not for the labor movement, even the academic degrees that the children of working families proudly accept every June might have been out of reach because labor pioneered the concept of universal public education in America.

For the millions of young people who will mark 2013 as the year they joined “the real world,” this ignorance about the labor movement will ultimately weaken their place in our nation’s middle class and undermine the health of our democracy. We have abundant evidence of that even here within the politics of Montgomery County where folks who claim to be Democrats with a capital D seem to feel that they can abandon the principles of their party and its commitment to workplace justice in the interest of what they claim to be “efficiency.”

I am a capital D Democrat because the Democratic Party’s core principles support working families and economic justice. One of the touchstones of justice is loyalty. In the words of Yogi Berra: “When you’re part of a team, you stand up for your teammates. Your loyalty is to them. You protect them through good and bad, because they’d do the same for you.” I submit that when loyalty is betrayed, good team members act to restore it.

In my Democratic Party, profits are subordinate to people, decency trumps expedience and loyalty never comes in second to ambition. That’s why we object when most of the Montgomery County delegation in Annapolis vote to extend a half million dollars in corporate welfare to Lockheed Martin. That’s why we object when Democrats on the County Council vote to rewrite zoning laws, allowing a WalMart in Aspen Hill. And that’s why we object when Democrats we elect commit undemocratic acts, by supporting legislation to remove long standing collective bargaining rights for police officers.

“When you’re part of a team, you stand up for your teammates. Your loyalty is to them. You protect them through good and bad, because they’d do the same for you.”

—Yogi Berra
That’s why we joined the entire regional labor movement to call for a boycott of the Montgomery County Democratic Spring Ball after the Central Committee endorsed legislation to take away effects bargaining in the FOP contract. It’s pretty simple: In an action that was very characteristic of Republican principles, the County’s Democratic Central Committee sided with autocratic management over the concerns of organized labor.

Successes

Despite that blemish, overall we’ve had some major successes in the past few months. Our contract for Montgomery County was reopened for wages and items that the County previously claimed were “non-negotiable.” The results of the negotiations were definitely in our favor. Many of Montgomery County members saw significant wage enhancements and increased job security, along with improved health and safety language. We’re still working with the county on the defined benefit pension plan.

Despite the obvious income hits we’ve endured since 2008 with salary cuts and furloughs, we still had to battle the Washington Post (and Councilmember Andrews) claiming that we’re “benefitting from a tilted field” and that our raises are “extravagant.”

Ho, hum… What else can we expect from the broken record that is the Post?

When the budget was presented to the County Council, all of the Councilmembers except Andrews voted to pass our contract. It was a nice win.

PGCMLS

In our Prince Georges County libraries, we had a major victory as well. The County Council not only restored funding cuts that the County Executive called for, but boosted the library’s funding by 2.5 million.

For the past five years, PGCMLS employees have endured many challenges. They have waited for salary increases; they’ve seen branch hours reduced by 22 percent; they’ve watched equipment and technology crumble because the budget wouldn’t allow for repair or replacement. They’ve seen their materials budget cut 40 percent while visits to the system have grown by 11 percent.

But thanks to diligent lobbying by our PGCMLS members and a sympathetic council, especially Council Chair Andrea Harrison and HEHS Committee Chair Obie Patterson, our members will see major improvements at PGCMLS with a strong possibility for negotiated wage enhancements in the near future.

M-NCPPC

In the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, our members passed their new contract by an overwhelming margin. The contract calls for pay raises totaling 6 percent in FY 14 for most of the employees.

A force to be reckoned with

Our strength, our activism and our successes recently should make clear to our elected officials and prospective candidates that Local 1994 is a force to be reckoned with. We have earned a seat at the table, and we’ll take that seat. The “establishment” politicians are now on notice that our efforts will, in fact, influence the outcome at the ballot box. Thank you.
Ride-On agrees to fund multilingual incentive for drivers

In the 2012 Collective Bargaining Agreement negotiated with Montgomery County, UFCW Local 1994/ MCGEO negotiated a pay differential for the use of multilingual skills by Ride-On bus drivers.

The differential, as outlined in the agreement, is based on the following criteria:

(a) Basic Skills - Basic skills are defined as those skills primarily required for oral or sign language communication and comprehension such as those used in conversation with clients and residents. The department head must certify that certain jobs may require occasional use of basic multilingual skills.

(b) Advanced Multilingual Skills - Advanced skills are defined as those skills required for written communication and comprehension in a second language, in addition to skills in oral communication and comprehension. The department head must certify that certain jobs may require occasional use of advanced multilingual skills.

(c) Compensation - Compensation is determined by the employee’s language skill level. Compensation is paid for all hours actually worked during the pay period. Employees certified at the basic skill level will receive $0.85 per hour for all hours actually worked. Employees certified at the advanced skill level will receive $1.00 per hour for all hours actually worked. Effective the first full pay period after July 1, 2013, employees certified at the basic skill level will receive $1.00 per hour for all hours actually worked. Employees certified at the advanced skill level will receive $1.50 per hour for all hours actually worked.

Initially, the County budgeted $119,000—enough money for 50 certified Operators to receive the multilingual differential. As of May 2013, 111 Ride-On Bus Operators had passed the certification exam in six languages.

At this time, the County Executive has committed to pay all 111 Ride-On Bus Operators. However, the Union and the Executive’s office are still negotiating the official date for retroactive payments.

Doug Menapace, UFCW Local 1994/ MCGEO Field Services Coordinator is working with County Executive Leggett’s office on the issue.

M-NCPPC members ratify new agreement

Most members at the Maryland-National Park and Planning Commission will see an nearly six percent wage increase in FY14 thanks to their new contract ratified in May. The increase comes from reinstatement of a competitive cost-of-living increase and annual increments.

The bargaining team negotiated stronger language related to designation of emergency pay and a “me-too” clause connected to non-represented commission employees. The bargaining team also settled a grievance related to the June 2012 Derecho storm, negotiating area-wide emergency pay (as defined in the contract) for members who worked from 12:01 a.m. June 30 through 5 p.m. Monday July 2, 2012. Members of the bargaining team were Marjorie Brown, Aaron Crawford, Stevie “G” Harrell, Jamele McClaurin, Brian Souders, Patricia Steck and Bobby Walker.

Montgomery County 457 deferred compensation plan moves to MassMutual

The deferred compensation plan offered to Local 1994’s Montgomery County members has switched from the Hartford Group to MassMutual. Hartford was no longer supporting 457 plans. Kyle Scully, who was the point of contact under the Hartford Plan, is still the representative under MassMutual. If you have questions, contact Kyle at 240-304-7720 or email kscully@massmutual.com.
Cumberland Police contract approved by Mayor and City Council

Cumberland City’s police officers recently had their three-year agreement approved by the Cumberland Mayor and City Council. Based on the economic woes of the City, the officers didn’t receive pay increases in year one of the agreement but strengthened language affecting working conditions in numerous articles. The three-year deal calls for economic openers for years two and three of the contract.

While this agreement was negotiated and ratified by the police membership in the spring of 2012, the Council delayed approval. The contentious issue that caused the delay was the insistence by former members of the Council that the police officers pay an additional 2.25% to the City as a pension fund administrative fee. The former members of the Council had claimed that the Union had bargained in bad faith on the fee during initial negotiations of the subject matter in a 2007 session. A change in the makeup of the city council, with the assistance of a new City Administrator enabled talks to resume. Union negotiators were successfully able to keep the administrative fee at .25 percent; instead of the 2.5 percent fee the City was trying to impose retroactively in previous negotiating sessions.

“Local 1994 supported the election of two of the new members of the City Council,” said Local 1994 Field Services Coordinator Doug Menapace. “Our questions at their candidate interviews revealed that they were willing to work to improve the lives of our police officers and their families and to support working families in Cumberland. We’re pleased with the results of this contract. We’ve recently begun negotiations on economic issues to be effective July 1, 2013 and we expect the City to provide some relief in areas that have been frozen for the last few years.”

The three-year agreement is retroactive to July 2012.

Cumberland City Police K-9 Unit loses veteran dog

On April 23, 2013, Lt. Robert Reed, an eighteen-year veteran of the Cumberland City Police Department’s Canine Unit lost his K-9 partner, Daisy Mae. A 9 year-old Bloodhound, Daisy Mae was acquired by the department in December 2005. Daisy had been used to track lost and/or missing persons and, on occasion, to track criminal offenders.

Cumberland City Police seek health plan upgrade

Cumberland City police officers have partnered with AFSCME Local 553, who represents the general city workers in negotiations with the City to improve healthcare offerings for their unionized workforces.

Cumberland City employees are now covered under a plan that only allows for instate, in-network visits. Cumberland, Md., sits on the border of West Virginia and is a stones throw from the Pennsylvania state line. A Cigna plan offered by Local Government Insurance Trust (LGIT) is designed for small municipalities and would improve the plan by wider network coverage, including allowing for out-of-state visits (allowing members to go to Morgantown or other local cities to receive network benefits), reduced out of pocket expenses including lower premiums, and improved optical coverage.

The city wants to make the move to the plan, but the IAFF local representing the Cumberland City firefighters is holding up the switch. Local 1994 and AFSCME have urged the city to move forward without the firefighters.
Hundreds of Montgomery County employees have been seeking justice from the county for misclassifying them as “temporary.” Local 1994 has been working with the employees to have them appropriately compensated, including receiving benefits such as health insurance coverage or any paid holidays or sick days.

“They work at the same or similar jobs as their colleagues on a daily basis,” said Local 1994 President Gino Renne in a letter to County Executive Ike Leggett, “in the liquor warehouse, in the recreation department, in the Department of Transportation and elsewhere… they are your own workers, misclassified and exploited as ‘temporary,’ year after year.”

The union held an unfair labor practice hearing with the county for the practice and many of the employees have testified at County Council hearings and met with Councilmembers one-on-one to tell their stories.

“For more than six years, we have not received any health insurance, no 401k plan, no paid time and a half we work on major public holidays, including Thanksgiving and Christmas,” said Ousseynou Dieng, an employee of the Silver Spring Regional Center’s Red Shirt in a letter to Senator Jamie Raskin. “We are treated like merit employees in every other aspect except when it comes to benefits. Personally, this has affected my family, as I am not able to provide them with health insurance. I cannot take vacation to spend time with my family, among other things.”

Like Dieng, many of these inaccurately labeled “temporary” employees have worked full or part time in the same position for many years—5, 10, even 15 or 20 years—without any benefits or paid leave. At the conclusion of the ULP hearing, the County requested a meeting with Local 1994 to discuss a settlement. The union is urging the Council to recognize that these employees deserve legislative protections, asking the County to close the loophole in law that allows for misclassification.

Much of the council and other political leaders have expressed sympathy for the employees but have yet to take definitive action stopping the county’s practice of misclassifying them. If discussions with the County fail to yield a favorable outcome, Local 1994 will likely pursue a legislative fix in the County charter.
**MCGEO fighting HOC RIFs, privatization**

In April, Housing Opportunities Commission Director Stacy Spann laid off 10 of HOC’s 250 employees, subcontracting the work. The layoffs included seven housing inspectors and one security coordinator.

“Housing inspectors are key to completing the work of the HOC,” said Amy Millar, acting field representative for UFCW Local 1994 who was helping the union fight against the layoffs. “They inspect properties to ensure that they’re adequately maintained and safe for residents. They have developed strong relationships with landlords and residents in the area. Not only is this a loss for HOC, it’s an erosion of the quality of housing and services provided to Montgomery County’s low income families.”

Part of the mission of the HOC is that “no one in Montgomery County is living in substandard housing.” Millar pointed out that by subcontracting the work of housing inspectors, there will be diminished accountability, diminished quality control and diminished oversight to determine that the HOC is meeting its mission.

Security Coordinators screen prospective tenants. The loss of even one security coordinator could slow the ability of the HOC to place needy families into homes.

The union also charged that Executive Director Spann failed to follow Maryland Housing and Community Development Codes 16-401 in laying off the employees and outsourcing the work. The Union is worried that Executive Director Spann will continue to lay off and outsource more of HOC’s work.

Local 1994 has met with the County Council and several state delegates over this issue. U.S. Senator Ben Cardin, Congressmen Chris VanHollen and John Delaney, along with County Councilmembers George Leventhal and Marc Elrich have sent letters to Spann and the Commissioners urging them to follow the law in privatization. The union has proposed that the Commission offer a retirement incentive to cut costs rather than continue to lay off employees.

**UFCW Local 1994 Supports ‘Fund our Communities’**

Local 1994 members joined the “Fund Our Communities” coalition in a bus tour urging Congress not to cut funds needed in our communities, but instead cut wasteful Pentagon spending.

Vital programs at risk include: Community Service Block Grants, Head Start, Title I, infrastructure spending (water, transit, roads, bridges, etc.), and housing assistance. These are also likely targets if domestic spending cuts are used to reduce federal deficits, on top of already deep cuts in federal aid to our cities, counties and state over the last two years.

The bus tour - “Prosperity Not Austerity” - traveled from Baltimore to Capitol Hill making stops at various sites between.

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**New MCGEO member former NBA superstar**

One of Local 1994’s newest card carrying members used to average 30 points a game when he played as a guard and forward in the NBA, but now he helps cross students safely across the street outside of Eastern Middle School in Silver Spring as a part-time crossing guard in Montgomery County.

Adrian Dantley grew up in the area, graduating from DeMatha in the 1970s. But, says a friend of his, even as a former NBA superstar, he isn’t prone to extravagances and is extremely frugal. Deadspin writer Dave McKenna speculated that Dantley took the job to cover his health insurance. Former NBA players don’t receive health care coverage, but Dantley told the Washington Post that he does it for the kids and to avoid sitting around the house all day.

“It’s not a big thing to me,” Dantley told the Post. “I just do it. I have a routine. I exercise, I go to work, I go home. I have a spring break next week. I have a summer off, just like when I was a basketball player.”
Montgomery County Council passes new CBA

In April with a vote of 8-1—all County Councilmember Phil Andrews voted against—the Montgomery County Council agreed to fully fund the new collective bargaining agreement. Most of the members covered under the agreement will see a 6.75% wage enhancement in FY 14. The contract represents approximately $14 million in wage increases alone. In addition, tens of millions will be contributed to health care and retirement costs.

Members turned out steadily at the Government Operations Committee hearings and at the vote of the full Council to back up the efforts of their bargaining team, making it clear that support for the agreement went deep.

The Union is still in talks with the County to improve the retirement benefits for members in defined contribution plans.

Contract Reopener Highlights

- 3.5% Increments in FY14 and FY15
- 3% Longevity Increment in FY14 and FY15
- 0.5% Lump sum payment for top of grade in FY14 and FY15 (for employees not receiving a longevity step)
- 3.25% COLAs in FY14 and FY15
- $0.50 an hour increases for seasonal employees in FY14 and FY15
- Increase in shift differentials- $1.40 evening, $1.56 night
- Reinstatement of Multilingual Certificate Program
- Up to $2000 for EVT Master Certifications
- $1338 clothing allowance for deputy sheriffs
- Written notice to union for changes to employee schedules
- Strengthened language mandating 2 consecutive days off
- 50 individual and 7 occupational class studies each year
- Tuition assistance earmarked for MCGEO members
- Stronger transfer language
- Increased protections against Reductions-In-Force
- Stronger Health and Safety Language
- Departments must develop policies to restrict public access to the employee work areas
- Deadlines to bring the Adjustable Pension Plan to completion
- Protections against harassment and disparate treatment
- Implementation of Joint Wellness Initiative

Negotiated sick leave bank in Montgomery County launches one-year pilot program

Local 1994 has negotiated a one-year pilot program for a sick leave bank in the Montgomery County bargaining unit. The program is set to start enrolling in September if the County can get the program elements in place by that time. The bank is designed to assure that employees in a sustained period of illness or disability will have paid leave available to use after exhausting their own paid leave. The new program will begin on Oct. 1, 2013. During the pilot program time, the Sick Leave Donor Program (Article 15.7 of the negotiated agreement) will be suspended.

Local 1994 and the county government will oversee the program through a Joint Sick Leave Bank (SLB) Committee with three representatives from the union and three from the county government. Employees requesting leave apply to the Office of Human Resources SLB coordinator who will review the application and make the initial decision of whether to grant the leave and how much the employee can use. If denied, the employee can appeal to the SLB Committee. The Committee’s decisions are final.

Employees awarded leave do not have to repay it, although unused leave returns to the SLB.

More information will be emailed to Montgomery County bargaining unit members when the program is made fully operational.
In a major victory for the Local 1994 members, the Prince George’s County Council voted to boost funding for the Prince George’s County Memorial Library System by $2.5 million. The county executive’s budget had called for $820 thousand in cuts to the library system. Extensive lobbying by Local 1994’s PGCMLS members and a major showing at town hall meetings swayed the County Council to abandon the Executive’s budget suggestion and instead boost the library’s funding.

“We can thank Council Chair Andrea Harrison and the support of HEHS Committee Chair Obie Patterson and his committee for nixing the County Executive’s suggested cuts,” said Gino Renne, Local 1994 president. “The council made a good choice in their unanimous support for the Library System and the citizens of Prince Georges County. Our members’ unwaivering commitment, showing up at the town hall meetings and lobbying events, certainly helped turn the tide, too.”

Renne testified in early May, urging the Council to restore the cuts, but the Council went beyond. Over the past five years, the library has seen its hours reduced by 22 percent while patron usage has increased by 11 percent. The $2.5 million increase includes funding set aside to restore Sunday hours at a few of the library branches.

Some of the funding will go to boost the materials budget, improve the technology refresh and replace budget, and to hire new staff. The technology budget had been cut by 73 percent over the past five years. Employees have dealt with a severe staffing shortage at many of the library branches for a number of years.

Finally, this boost allowed for wage increases for both FY13 and FY14. PGCMLS employees had not seen an increase in five years and furloughs had actually decreased their salaries.

“We’re very excited by what this means for our membership and for the community,” said Joe Dickson, vice president serving on Local 1994’s executive board and a PGCMLS employee. “Too often, library funding is neglected by politicians but the council stepped up and recognized how very vital libraries are in Prince Georges County.”

“I’m so proud of our members, as well,” continued Dickson. “They turned out at every town hall, and met with councilmembers on their own time to bring focus to the library budget and its inadequacies. This is an outstanding development.”

The library’s Board of Trustees sent a letter to the union thanking members for “your willingness to act in partnership with us, your strong and consistent demands for excellent library services, and for making our communities better places to live.”

Joe Dickson, PGCMLS Employee and MCGEO Executive Board member
We are ‘petulant children’

That’s what one of the enraged members of the Montgomery County Democratic Central Committee called us in a guest post on a local political blog. He also called our decision to boycott and picket the MCDCC Spring Ball a “knee jerk” reaction to the party’s decision to support stripping effects bargaining from our county police officers.

Knee jerk? The effects bargaining issue was decided in November. Our boycott and picket was in May. Six months later. One heck of a slow knee jerk reaction!

Aside from their foolish outrage, and their-over-the-top characterization of our actions, we didn’t choose to boycott and picket the ball lightly and labor was not the only participant. It’s not just about Question B (effects bargaining). We have a true problem with the structure and leadership at the MCDCC and the choices they’ve made.

We can no longer rely on them to protect traditional democratic values.

For the past 20 years, we’ve seen the Democrats in Montgomery County drift farther and farther to the right, denigrating, even vilifying, the progressive values that once defined MCDCC. They claim to espouse the need to protect working families and the middle class, but their words don’t match up with their actions.

We can’t stand by and watch while the MCDCC-endorsed political candidates use the Washington Post to gain endorsements but never call the Post out for their openly hostile stance against labor unions and working families.

We can’t stand by while the MCDCC-endorsed candidates choose WalMart over Mom and Pop stores and allow Lockheed Martin to take a half-million dollars in corporate handouts each year, at the same time, major county programs, library budgets, social service programs, have been cut back severely.

Why’d we pick the MCDCC Spring Ball? It’s a major fundraiser for the party. They use the money they raise there to print up and mail the sample ballots. They invite major political candidates and give them awards.

Happily, we were able to convince the Democrat’s gubernatorial candidates, including Anthony Brown, Heather Mizeur and Doug Gansler, that crossing our picket line wouldn’t be in their best interest. Senator Cardin declined to attend the Ball, as did quite a few others.

This was an AFL-CIO sanctioned event. We had the Young Democrats of Montgomery and Prince Georges County, members of the B.E.S.T. Democratic Club (Baltimore’s Young Democrats) and Progressive Maryland, along with a number of other progressive organizations, standing with us. In fact, Dave Kunes, president of the Montgomery County Young Democrats, declined to receive his award as “Democrat of the Year” in favor of standing on the picket line.

“Our generation is seeing ever-increasing economic inequality as challenges to the right to organize have increased,” Kunes said. “The future of youth in our county and around the country is at stake. I stand with working families and Democrats who uphold collective bargaining rights as a cornerstone of our party and our values.”

Metro-Washington Council, AFL-CIO, President Jos Williams underscored labor’s position: “Our efforts are to bring the Montgomery County Democratic Party back to the principles that made the party the champion of working people and the left out.”

He also told reporters covering the event, “2014 begins now.”

Let’s hope the party leadership heard our voice and finds its way back to us.
The Active Ballot Club (ABC) is the political division of UFCW Local 1994. ABC gives you a voice on issues that directly affect you, your family, workplace, safety, affordable health care, fair taxes, and your rights on the job.

Your ABC contribution is an investment in good government

Collective bargaining and political action: two sides of the same coin. Your union dues fuel our collective bargaining function, but we choose to use voluntary contributions from members like you to contribute to candidates who support working families.

That’s why we come to you for contributions to our Active Ballot Club (ABC). Your contributions of from $2 to $10 per pay period help candidates who care about you, your job, your benefits and working conditions.

How do we decide who deserves our support? Our Executive Board reviews all requests before we make contributions—checking a candidate’s record, performance and platform, and soliciting feedback from members like you.

Big Business outspends unions by 15 to 1

Business interests—like Wal-Mart, the Chamber of Commerce and the Business Roundtable—spend $15 in politics for every $1 spent by unions. We can’t hope to match them dollar for dollar. So, we’ve got to work smarter and harder in politics.

People over profits

We’ve got another advantage over big money and big business in politics. The other side is all about profits while we’ve got an agenda we can be proud of: education, public safety, transportation and quality of life issues.

Get involved!

Support the ABC

Your small contribution, combined with the contributions of other members can go a long way toward making our voices heard by elected officials. To sign up or for more information contact the UFCW Local 1994 office at 301-977-2447 or fill out the attached form and mail it to Local 1994 at 600 S. Frederick Avenue, Suite 200, Gaithersburg, MD 20877.

Do Your Fair Share—make your ABC Contribution Today!

Sign Me Up

Yes! I’d like to contribute per pay period to the Active Ballot Club.

Name __________________________________________________________

Address __________________________________________________________________________________________________

Employer _________________________________________________________________________________________________

Job Title __________________________________________________________________________________________________

Employer Address __________________________________________________________________________________________

Work Phone ___________________________ Home Phone ___________________________

Contribution Amount (per pay period) ☐ $2.00 ☐ $3.00 ☐ $4.00 ☐ $5.00 ☐ $6.00 ☐ $7.00 ☐ $8.00 ☐ $9.00 ☐ $10.00

E-mail address ________________________________ Signature ____________________________________________________

I understand that this authorization is voluntarily made and that the amount suggested as a contribution is a guideline and that I may contribute more or less than this amount by any lawful means, other than this checkoff, or may refuse to contribute, and that the making of payments to the UFCW Active Ballot Club is not a condition of employment with the Employer and that I have a right to refuse to sign this authorization and not to contribute to the UFCW ABC without reprisal. I also understand that my contribution will be used for political purposes, including the support of candidates for federal, state and local office. I expressly reserve the right to revoke at any time this authorization in writing. I also understand that contributions or gifts to the UFCW Active Ballot Club are not deductible as charitable contributions for federal tax purposes.
Reclassification grievance in Montgomery County moves to arbitration

In Montgomery County, several Local 1994 members requested to have their position reclassified. The reclassification would have awarded them a higher pay grade. These members have not been compensated for their efforts.

When an individual obtains a higher grade as a result of reclassification, the collective bargaining agreement calls for a reassignment of the employees service increment date and a 3.5 percent raise. Employees who have already received their increment during the fiscal year would receive a second increment and those who have yet to receive an increment would receive an expedited service increment.

All was well and good until the Montgomery County Council passed resolutions in each of the last three years which froze the payment of all service increments beginning in FY11 continuing through FY13. Anyone who had their increment date reassigned to a date on or after July 1, 2010, as a result of reclassification did not receive a second service increment or an expedited service increment.

The Union filed a grievance on a case where coworkers in the same job class, actually working in the same unit and location, submitted their paperwork for reclassification on the same date only to have their results presented on different dates. The County argued at a step 2 grievance hearing that it had no control over how fast the classification consultants performed their work. The reassigned increment date as a result of reclassification is based on specific criteria. It is either 12 months from the date that the County received an individual’s reclassification paperwork or the first full pay period following the CAO’s decision to reclassify the position, whichever occurs first.

One individual had their increment date reassigned in late May of 2010 while her coworker received her results a few weeks later and had her date reassigned in early July of 2010. Both received the same results and were awarded a higher pay grade however, only the individual who received her results in late May received a 3.5 percent raise. As the county froze increments effective July 1, 2010, the second individual has been working for the last three years alongside her coworker, doing the same job, earning 3.5 percent less.

As a result of the step 2 grievance hearing, the CAO issued a decision denying the Union’s position to provide increments to those who received a higher grade as a result of a reclassification.

The Union and the County subsequently scheduled an advisory mediation session in an attempt to resolve the grievance short of arbitration. The Union claimed that the intent of the parties was not to freeze the administrative action of an upward reclassification when the Council froze service increments.

While the County suggested that the right thing to do would be to pay individuals who were reclassified, they could not based on the fact that the Council froze their ability to do so. Efforts to resolve the issue at mediation failed. The Union has advanced the grievance to arbitration.

We will keep you posted.
Organizing Howard County employees and beyond

The Maryland State Legislature passed HB 895 granting Howard County’s library employees the right to collective bargaining. You may remember that back in 2010, we worked with some legislators to try to pass statewide collective bargaining for library employees, only to have that effort beat back. This year, our focus was on granting Howard County employees the right. We succeeded with the help of Howard County Executive Ken Ulman and the Democratic members of the county delegation in the legislature led by Del. Guy Guzzone.

The library employees in Howard County now have a choice for a voice on the job. We intend to continue to meet with them.

We’ve also set our sights on a few other organizing targets nearby.

How does organizing other library systems help our union?

We organize first and foremost to win justice for workers, but also to gain power and strengthen our union. We organize because as a public sector union, we’re the last bastions of worker strength in America. At an abysmal 11 percent, unions are poised to disintegrate if we don’t find ways to grow. When unions are weak, the security of all workers is weak. By growing, we strengthen all parts of our economy.

Too many of our unrepresented friends claim that unions have outlived their usefulness, and, worse, that unions somehow harm the economy. If anything, unions are more important in today’s economy. We all know that income inequality is a pervasive problem in our country. According to the Economic Policy Institute, unions are the primary bulwarks against inequality.

I recently saw a “banned” TED Talk about job creators and tax breaks for the wealthy by Nick Hanauer, a wealthy venture capitalist from Seattle. He lays out an argument that raising the median income of our middle class would have a far greater effect on creating jobs than allowing the current state of income inequality to persist. If keeping taxes low for the wealthy created jobs, “we would be drowning in them,” Hanauer said.

He went on to argue that the average consumer, the middle class worker, creates true jobs. With the right income, middle class people can buy more things, thus pushing the economy forward. A rich family of four with an income 1,000 times greater than the average worker isn’t purchasing 1,000 times more “stuff.” Workers earning fair wages drive demand for goods and services and employers and businesses owners benefit from the demand. We all do.

When we grow our union, we grow wages and benefits. It forces other employers to compete and either improve their wages or lose their workforce to better employers. That’s how supply and demand is supposed to work.

No doubt, without a union, the employees at the Prince Georges County Memorial Library System would not have achieved the victory we just achieved. The budget boost is a testament to the mobilization of our members there. Josh Ardison, Local 1994’s field representative/organizer for PGCMLS and his shop stewards brought their A-game and lobbied the Council tirelessly. This is a win for the union, but it’s also a huge win for the county residents.

Our future Howard County brothers and sisters, if they choose to unionize, will see workplace improvements that will influence other library systems nearby to also improve. It’s a domino effect. Our overarching goal as a union is to improve the lives of ALL working people and their families. That’s why we grow, that’s why we organize.
Secretary-Treasurer’s Report

Protecting workers from heat illness

By Yvette Cuffie

We have had a rather mild spring this year, with only three days in the month of May with temperatures in the 80s. That, of course, will change as we move into the summer months. Extreme weather is nothing new to Marylanders. We know how hot and humid it can become. I’m sure we all remember last year’s Derecho storm and the eleven days of extreme heat that followed. Remembering last summer, I thought it was important to discuss heat-related illness and prevention.

At times, workers may be required to work in hot environments for long periods. When the human body is unable to maintain a normal temperature, heat-related illness can occur and may even result in death. The Maryland Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH) sets standards related to worker’s health and safety on the job. The MOSH follows the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) with regard to high heat environments and workers in Maryland are covered, in those situations, under the Acts General Duty Clause.

The General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1) of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) of 1970, states that employers are required to provide their employees with a place of employment that “is free from recognizable hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious harm to employees.” The courts have interpreted OSHA’s general duty clause to mean that an employer has a legal obligation to provide a workplace free of conditions or activities that either the employer or industry recognizes as hazardous and that cause, or are likely to cause, death or serious physical harm to employees when there is a feasible method to abate the hazard. This includes heat-related hazards that are likely to cause death or serious bodily harm.

If you are in a high heat environment, in doors or out, it is important to understand what heat stress is, and how to prevent it.

Factors that increase heat-related illness risks to workers:

- High temperature and humidity
- Direct sun exposure (with no shade)
- Indoor exposure to other sources of radiant heat (ovens, furnaces)
- Limited air movement (no breeze)
- Low fluid consumption
- Physical exertion
- Heavy personal protective clothing and equipment
- Poor physical condition or health problems
- Some medications, for example, different kinds of blood pressure pills or antihistamines
- Pregnancy
- Lack of recent exposure to hot working conditions
- Previous heat-related illness
- Advanced age (65+)

Heat stress is an illness that results from too much heat exposure. This illness may include heat exhaustion, heat cramps, or even heat stroke, which can be fatal.

Symptoms of heat exhaustion include headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability, thirst, heavy sweating, elevated body temperature, and decreased urine output.

If a worker shows signs of possible heat-related illness you should cool the worker with cold compresses to the head, neck and face or have the worker wash his or her head, face and neck with cold water. Call 911 and stay with the person until help arrives. Encourage the worker to take frequent sips of cool water.

The best way to prevent heat-related illness is to take frequent rest breaks in cool areas, often on an hourly basis. A recommended schedule of rest breaks should be provided after measurements of heat stress conditions are completed by your employer or by MOSH. If you are able to, rest in a cool room with temperatures below 75 degrees Fahrenheit. If you are outdoors try to find a shady area out of the sun to rest. Drink plenty of water. Do not wait to be thirsty. A quart or more of water is lost each hour by sweating on hot jobs. Your body must replace this loss by drinking water often. When it is very hot, you should drink fluids twice or more an hour. In order to prevent heat cramps avoid excess salt. Use appropriate clothing and other protection to keep yourself cool. Finally, protect your health by coming to work in good physical condition.

If you have questions, need further information or assistance regarding heat stress at your place of employment, contact Maryland Occupational Safety and Health at 410-880-4970 or 301-483-8406.
The Maryland Court of Special Appeals in Annapolis upheld the Montgomery County Labor Relations Administrator’s ruling that the Montgomery County Executive violated the County Code when he refused to include an interest arbitrator’s award as part of his budget submission in 2011. The LRA’s award in 2011 favored UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO and the unions representing the police and professional firefighters.

“The entire shift was drafted to stay over to contain the situation,” said Blackwell-Sayles. “Luckily, there were no incidents of violence, no real problems.”

The facility houses around 900 inmates.

The circuit board failed again the following Saturday, allowing a number of the doors to again unlock and leaving the officers and staff there vulnerable. The union quickly filed a grievance about the safety and health of the officers.

Montgomery County DOCR management responded, calling in an outside consultant to examine the issue and determine its cause.

“So far, the problem looks to have been addressed,” said Blackwell-Sayles. “The county is responsive to our grievance and says it’s willing to make whatever changes to protect our officers safety. We think the safety and health grievance will be resolved in our favor quickly.”

The union has filed a separate grievance seeking emergency pay for the officers required to stay during the issue. Blackwell-Sayles thinks that grievance, which hasn’t yet been scheduled for a hearing, will be resolved favorably as well.

**Court sides with Union, limits Leggett’s authority**

The Maryland Court of Special Appeals in Annapolis upheld the Montgomery County Labor Relations Administrator’s ruling that the Montgomery County Executive violated the County Code when he refused to include an interest arbitrator’s award as part of his budget submission in 2011. The LRA’s award in 2011 favored UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO and the unions representing the police and professional firefighters.

The Court of Special Appeals issued a thorough decision rejecting every single one of the County Executive’s assertions that the Executive had “unlimited authority” to introduce an interest arbitrator’s award as part of his budget submission in 2011. The LRA’s award in 2011 favored UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO and the unions representing the police and professional firefighters.

The Court of Special Appeals issued a thorough decision rejecting every single one of the County Executive’s assertions that the Executive had “unlimited authority” to introduce a budget and could refuse to submit a binding interest arbitration award to the County Council.

The Court affirmed the Labor Relations Administrator’s decision that the County Executive committed a prohibited practice under the Collective Bargaining Law by omitting the arbitrator’s award from his budget.

“The Court of Special Appeal’s Decision affirms some basic principles of democracy,” said UFCW Local 1994 MCGEO President Gino Renne.

“First, the County Executive is not above the law and he is not all-powerful. The Executive is part of a system of checks and balances that includes the Council and the Labor Relations Administrator. Second, when the County Council enacted a statute requiring binding arbitration, the Council meant to limit the Executive’s discretion and was acting squarely within its authority.”

UFCW Local 1994, MCGEO attorney Carey Butsavage said, “This decision is a victory for all of the hard-working Local 1994 members in Montgomery County. It affirms the principles set forth by the Council in the Collective Bargaining Law and the authority of the Labor Relations Administrator.”

President Renne added, “We are thrilled with this ruling and believe that it sets the ground rules for future bargaining between our union and the county, bargaining that should be carried out in the spirit of harmony and cooperation as the County Code intends.”

Local 1994’s attorneys, along with attorney for the Professional Firefighters (IAFF Local 1664) and the Fraternal Order of Police (Lodge 35), are examining the implications of this decision.
Immigration reform passes Senate hurdle

UFCW, other unions lobby Congress for quick passage

In a strong 13 to 5 bipartisan vote, the Senate Judiciary Committee cleared another hurdle on the road to passing immigration reform legislation at the beginning of June.

S. 744—the Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act of 2013—is a substantial step forward in overhauling our nation’s immigration policies. It includes many of the UFCW’s principles for reform including a roadmap to citizenship for those already here and strong protections for immigrant workers. S. 744 will grow the economy, stabilize families, and strengthen communities.

“Americans deserve a real solution to our broken immigration system,” said UFCW in a statement about the bill. “And the only way to fix it once and for all is through comprehensive reform that includes a pathway to citizenship for 11 million immigrants in this country without papers.”

Local 1994 members and staff joined thousands of other pro-reform activists at an immigration reform rally in April.

“Revamping our immigration system can’t wait any longer,” said Gino Renne, Local 1994 president. “Let’s put our differences aside and get this done.”

Lisa Blackwell-Sayles, new field representative/organizer

Local 1994’s newest field representative/organizer Lisa Blackwell-Sayles isn’t new to the issues facing Local 1994 members. In fact, she’s not new to the union at all. She interned at Local 1994 a few summers ago and her father, Dave Blackwell, has been with Local 1994 for many years.

Blackwell-Sayles is a graduate of University of Dayton and has a background in law. She is also fluent in Spanish.
Reclassification Study wins pay increase for CHNIIs

In 2009, Montgomery County hired a consultant to conduct a classification study for the Community Health Nurses in the county. It had been 25 years since the county had conducted a study for the registered nurses.

“The previous descriptions did not reflect the diversity of skills required by and mastered by the RNs,” said Stephanie Baker, a CHN for Aging and Disability Services.

The consultant hired in 2009 faltered in the first version of the study – the CHNs pointed to poor communication between the consultant and the nurses as a roadblock to the study’s proper completion.

“Their conclusions did not take into consideration the broad scope of practice required to perform effectively in the various CHN settings in the county,” said Baker.

Baker and her coworkers at Aging and Disability approached Local 1994 about the classification study and the problems they were experiencing. Local 1994’s Secretary/Treasurer Yvette Cuffie, a CHN herself, set up a series of meetings where the RNs reviewed and dissected the consultant’s classification recommendations.

“Throughout our meetings,” said Cuffie, “the group was focused on how the first consultant’s conclusions fell short and how we could improve them. Stephanie and her colleagues worked diligently to prove their case. I say, and I think anyone else would say, they were highly successful.”

The union and the RNs took their conclusions to Montgomery County’s Human Resources Director Joe Adler. Adler agreed to meet with a group of RNs to discuss a new study.

After a comprehensive presentation of their findings, HR and DHHS agreed that the 2009 class study failed to encompass the full responsibilities of the RNs. The County agreed to hire a new consulting firm and to restart the classification study in 2011.

“Throughout the progression of the new study it was evident that HR and Local 1994 were committed in their support,” said Baker. “Although there were some challenges, the CHN job descriptions were resubmitted and reviewed. The classification study was a nearly perfect reflection of the scope and practice of the RNs working in the County. We’re very happy with it.”

In November 2012, the County granted a grade increase (from a 23 to a 24) for the CHNIIs as a result of the second study.

“This proves that two parties, although different in their roles, can unite to achieve positive, fair and well-deserved outcomes for county employees,” Baker added.

Baker worked with her fellow community health nurses – Maureen Wickham, Nancy Palker (retired), Janeane Marks, and Connie Johnson (retired) – on the original committee. Denise Bruskin-Gambrell (Local 1994 executive vice president) also played a role.

“We’re so proud of what Secretary/Treasurer Cuffie, Vice President Bruskin-Gambrell, Ms. Baker and her coworkers accomplished,” said Local 1994 President Gino Renne. “This is a prime example of how members and their union can use their collective power to advance their workplace rights and achieve success. In fact, this is a case study in the power of using your union voice.”

MWC’s Community Services Agency helps workers, families in times of need

The Metro-Washington Council’s Community Services Agency works to improve the lives of workers and their families by meeting their human and social services needs. They work to build broad and diverse coalitions to promote and protect dignity and justice for workers and by empowering workers and their unions to make their communities better, more responsive places to live, work, raise a family and retire.

CSA provides an emergency assistance program. Over the past year, they’ve helped 360 working families avoid evictions, foreclosures, utility cut-offs and hunger. With their holiday basket project, they’ve provided food, gifts and funds for 75 area needy families at Thanksgiving and Christmas. Their food drives have collected non-perishable food and distributed it to 100 neighbors in need. Their participation in the United Way’s Shoebox Project has supplied personal care items in 150 shoeboxes.

CSA is a United Way/Combined Federal/DC ONE Fund Campaign Participant and is a member of the DC Jobs Council, the Fair Budget Coalition, the Fairfax County Alliance for Human Services, and the AFL-CIO Community Services Network. CSA provides services for residents of suburban Maryland, Northern Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

To contribute to the CSA, United Way and DC One Fund Campaigns: #8253; Combined Federal Campaign: #19579; Maryland Charity Campaign: #9320.

To get more information, call Kathleen McKirchy at 202-974-8221 or email kmckirch@dclabor.org.
Your Union Pride Photo Could Win You Up to $500 in Prizes!

UFCW represents 1.3 million workers in every occupation across the U.S. and Canada. We want YOU to help us highlight the work that UFCW members do every day!

1. Go to our Facebook page to upload a picture of you or your UFCW member co-workers at work, and/or with a UFCW-made product.

2. Then, look at the pictures, and vote on the photo you like the best. UFCW members and allies will be voting to determine the picture that best showcases UFCW–made, UFCW pride.

3. The winner gets a $500 gift card to a UFCW-represented grocery store, the two runners up get a $250 gift card to a UFCW grocery store, and the next three finalists get great UFCW gear!

So tell your friends and co-workers. Spread the word, and let us see your UFCW pride!

The International Union will announce the contest winners on August 16th.