



## Energized bakery union settles contract with Cub Foods

By Steve Share

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MINNEAPOLIS - When Bakers Local 22 developed a new Health Reimbursement Arrangement plan, the union wanted to see the substantial cost savings go into increased wages and pension contributions for its members.

The union readily settled good contracts with Lunds and Byerly's (170 employees) and with Jerry's Cub Foods (125 employees) earlier this summer.

But settling a satisfactory contract with Cub Foods corporate, covering about 350 workers at 30 stores, proved to be a challenge. "We knew they were going to be tough," said Bruce Peglow, Local 22 vice president.

In recent years, Cub corporate has turned to a hired gun from St. Louis to conduct its contract negotiations and this year negotiations dragged on and on. Local 22 members were growing weary of the delay in reaching a new contract.

Local 22 turned to the Minneapolis Central Labor Union Council (CLUC) for help. With the assistance of CLUC political organizer Gayle McMahon, Local 22 officers visited worksites to engage workers and seek their assistance in planning a campaign to put pressure on Cub. What could they do to get members involved and put Cub on notice, without going on strike?

"We had planned leafletting customers, wearing stickers and whatever else we needed to do to get [Cub] to move from their position," Peglow said. "They knew we were in the stores organizing."

On Aug. 14, however, the Cub Foods negotiator "threw down an offer for settlement that involved a lot of surrender" of workers' seniority rights and wage premiums and nothing for pensions, Peglow said. "Then he told us that if we didn't accept this offer, 'you're going to get less...' Then he threatened to get on the plane and leave..."

The next day, Aug. 15, Local 22 members met in the morning and made plans to implement their action campaign. Word got out to management.

When the negotiator returned for a meeting that afternoon, apparently "he got religion" said Ron Mohrland, Local 22 president.

"The company knew we were out and about in the stores and things were going to take place,"

Peglow said. "Apparently [the negotiator] got the word, 'sit down and bargain in good faith and give these people what they want.'"

Finally, the negotiator agreed to an acceptable offer for settlement.

Members voted to accept the three-year contract, which offers raises of 75 cents, 40 cents and 45 cents for the top class of wages and pension increases of 10 cents each year.

Mohrland noted that over 30 years, the 30-cent pension increase means an extra \$500 per month pension benefit for the workers.

Peglow credits Local 22 members for winning the settlement. "It really was their willingness to participate and do what needed to be done that brought it to success."

As Peglow told members, "the union is not three officers — it's everybody pulling together."

*Steve Share edits the Minneapolis Labor Review, the official publication of the Minneapolis Central Labor Union Council. See an entire digital archive of the Labor Review at [www.minneapolisunions.org](http://www.minneapolisunions.org)*