

LOCAL 506 UNION NEWS

Volume 65, Issue 4

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Thursday, April 17, 2014

Constitutional Amendment Proposed

At last month's membership meeting, two constitutional amendments were turned in under Article V, Nominations And Elections Of Officers. The first concerned Section 3: **Form of Acceptance** and it currently reads: **"State briefly your qualifications for the office you seek"**. The proposed change would read: **"State your qualifications for the office you seek in fifty words or less"**.

The second portion under the same Article is a house keeping matter due to a previous amendment to change the General Elections date. Article V, Section 10 currently reads: **"The Union Election Committee shall designate a day for the election during the month of March. The membership shall receive at least fifteen (15) days notice of date of election"**. The change would read: **The Union Election Committee shall designate a day for the election during the month of September. "The membership shall receive at least (15) days notice of date of election"**.

These proposals will be discussed and voted on at the May membership meetings. To refresh your memory as to the changes in the general election, please refer to Article V, Section 12 of the Constitution and By-Laws of Local 506. Also, don't forget that the general elections will be held this year and any member in good standing has the right to run for these positions.

Sub Region Meeting

On Saturday, March 29, there was a Sub Region meeting held here at the union hall concerning the ACA (Affordable Care Act) put on by the Eastern Region. **John Thompson**, an International Repre-

sentative explained what the ACA, also known as Obama Care is all about and fielded questions as to what impact this National healthcare plan will have or play out in the future. He gave a detailed report and a slide show outlining the obligations of companies who have coverage or must have coverage for their employees in the future as well as time frames in which this must be done.

He also laid out the responsibilities of individuals who don't have insurance coverage and what they need to do to obtain it and also the process. While most of us agree that everyone in this country should have healthcare, unfortunately, there are those who feel differently about it. It's really a shame that the riches nation in the world, who spends billions of dollars worldwide taking care of needs of other countries, would deny our own American citizens the right to healthcare. That's certainly one of those "COME-ON MAN" moments. We have long been proponents of a Single Payer healthcare system, but again, the ones who have the power to make it happen, are the very ones who are standing in the way of it. Hopefully in the future, all those who so desperately see the need for changes in the system will start attending these functions.

April Membership Meeting Notice

Agenda:

- General Business
- Committee Updates

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS & TIMES ARE:

Thursday, April 24, 2014 (All meetings)
7:20 a.m. (3rd Shift)
12:30 p.m. (2nd Shift)
3:20 p.m. (1st Shift)

C. P. Steward's Report

By Mike Hayes

On April 4th we had our Step II and 50 cases were heard consisting of farm-outs, average payment while on TLOW, unjust discipline, harassment by PTA's, retaliation against a union steward and returning to a primary job after being on STD.

On the unjust discipline, a terminated employee was returned to work because he had the proper documentation that showed he was covered and thanks to **Scott Slawson** for his efforts to get this overturned. We also had a warning and a week off reversed and the discipline will be removed and the employee will be made whole, thanks to **Greg Herrmann**.

We have several cases on hold from the Step II Agenda, the union strongly disagrees with and we are working to get them resolved. A lot of these unjust cases are due to managements' lack of people skills and management will go through some training classes on how to approach workers without creating a hostile work environment. I hope this happens soon so we can have peace in the affected areas and throughout the business.

Overcharged

By now, that you should have received correspondence from the company relating to possibly being overcharged by CVS CAREMARK, the company that administers the prescription benefit portion of GE health plan. Although this may very well have been an honest mistake, the fact of the matter is it's another example of the problems that we encounter when it comes to GE's health care plan.

Depending on how you paid for any prescription (s), using your WageWorks Health Reimbursement Account (HRA), or personal funds will determine how you are reimbursed. In the event that you used your personal credit card or paid by check, then you would have to use the "Pay Me Back" feature on the WageWorks portal, (1-866-272-6007) option 2 then press 3. If you have further questions, you can visit www.caremark.com or call 1-800-509-9891.

As a reminder, you do not have to use CVS CARE-MARK to obtain your prescription (s) and it's the company responsibility, depending on who your health plan administrator is to provide you with the

needed information to rectify any concerns. If you believe that you are a victim, then we suggest that you investigate the matter yourself.

On another note, if you are out on TLOW and are participating in the FSA, (Option 1 or 2) or the LPFSA (Option 3), you must contact the GE benefits center (1-800-252-5259) within 63 days to re-establish, verify or change these elections.

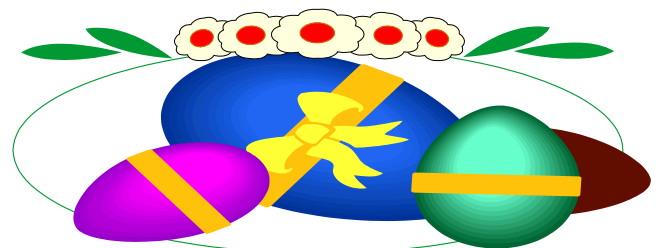
President's Report

By Scott Duke

As everyone knows, there is Internal Recalling going on now. Buildings #12, 10, Paint and 26 Test are recalling people because the Company has informed us that the work picks up in May and continues through the end of the year. That to me is a great sign, but as far as the external recalls from the street, the company has stated they will recall but until all the internal movement is complete, we won't know how many that will be, but right now, they are mainly 22 codes.

We are still waiting on an answer from the NLRB on TAA. We have submitted a huge amount of documentation and want to thank all involved. Waiting for determination from the NLRB is exhausting and hopefully the decision will come soon. As far as I'm concerned and I'm sure that everyone feels the same, that this should be a cut and dry case.

There are also rumors of verbal agreements made by the hall with management. When a manager starts saying the Hall agreed to this or that, you need to ask who, when, and where this agreement was made. We have had this happen on numerous occasions and when the boss was confronted with these questions, their back peddling gave way to the untruthfulness of their words. Please don't believe everything you hear and get yourself in a tizzy; Get the facts. FW#32 is the only week of shutdown this year.



Happy Easter

Health Care Woes

The members during last month's membership meetings overwhelmingly displayed their dissatisfaction with the current health care plan that we have with GE. While the majority feel that we should pursue other avenues or our own insurance plan, it's not as simple as some might think. Unfortunately, this plan was ratified (overwhelmingly) by our members who were employed during the 2011 contract as well as other GE unions in the CBC (Coordinated Bargaining Committee).

As you can see, it's not just about us here in Erie. After discussing this issue with our national office, UE International Representative **Gene Elk** has provided us with the following article to shed some light on this subject as well as what we can expect in the upcoming 2015 contract negotiations.

Health Insurance Issues Loom Large in Upcoming 2015 Contract

By UE International Representative Gene Elk

Since GE imposed its new health insurance plan after the 2011 negotiations, all GE workers have suffered substantially increased "out-of-pocket" expenses. These take the form of big deductibles, increased co-pays for prescription drugs and almost all medical services, and larger employee "contributions" to pay for the plan out of weekly pay checks. Making matters even worse, GE has shifted its responsibility for administering the plan from them to us. We now have to do almost all of the "paperwork," through third-party companies like Bank of America or WageWorks. GE used to do most paperwork as part of its responsibility to pay our medical bills.

The National UE together with all UE-GE locals, including Local 506, and the Coordinated Bargaining Committee of General Electric Unions (CBC) – a coalition for all GE unions – is beginning preparations for 2015 negotiations. Health insurance will undoubtedly be a major issue in the 2015 contract talks as UE fights to roll back our increased costs and improve benefits. UE will be making the case that medical costs for workers are skyrocketing, while GE has significantly lowered its costs. We fear that many members are now

doing without needed medical care because the new plan makes treatment unaffordable.

To make our case in 2015 negotiations that the new insurance plan has enriched GE at our expense, in December 2013, UE submitted to GE a comprehensive information request which requires the company to give us detailed data on workers' costs and company costs under the new plan. I regret to inform you that GE has been extremely slow in providing the data and in late-February promised to provide such information by mid-April. As we review this data, UE will provide you with our findings.

Out of frustration with the new health insurance, some UE Local 506 members have suggested "opting out" of GE's plan and purchasing our own insurance. Although well-intentioned, the suggestion to "opt-out" of GE health insurance won't work. GE would like nothing better than to stop paying for our health insurance and have us pay the full cost of private insurance. The solution to GE workers' health-care crisis is to mobilize UE members, other-GE unions, and even non-union GE workers in the fight to restore decent benefits during 2015 contract negotiations.

On May 16, the UE-GE Conference Board, representing our GE locals will meet in Erie to begin constructing our contract program for 2015. I am sure that the critical issue of decent health care benefits will be a major part of our contract program. In coming weeks and months, we will be distributing contract surveys and asking members to provide us with reports on how GE's diminished health care benefits have impacted you and your family. Our success in winning back decent health care is completely dependent on our ability together to unify and mobilize all UE Local 506 members and all GE workers in this important fight.

Chief Needed

We have been informed by **Doug Wolf**, that due to personal reasons, he has stepped down as Chief Steward of buildings 60, 63, and 18 truck. Doug expressed his sincere thanks to all those he represented over the past few years and looks forward to working with everyone in the future.

We want to take this opportunity to thank Doug for his dedication and the hard work he did in taking on this responsibility. **Scott Brozell** will fill in as Chief until a new election is scheduled, which will happen in the near future. Thanks again Doug and we wish you well.

The Wizard of Oz

By B.A. Wayne Burnett

I know that at one time or another, everyone has watched the movie, "The Wizard of Oz". We all know how Dorothy was caught in a storm and was left behind because she didn't make it to the storm cellar in time where she would have been protected. Her cries went unheard and she with her little dog Toto went for the ride of their lives.

As they landed in an unfamiliar place, she didn't realize that they had fallen on and destroyed a very wicked person. She also didn't realize that there were others there who thought she was the wicked one. Once the essence of what happened was revealed, the little people, (munchkins) who were hiding, came out rejoicing because she had destroyed someone they had greatly feared. It would be nice if the story ended there, but that was only the beginning because there came another wicked one who was much worse than the one who had been destroyed.

Now fear was back in the picture and everyone ran back to their hiding places. Thanks be to the good witch, (Glenda) who assured Dorothy that as long as she kept the ruby slippers on, she would be safe. She then instructed her as to what path she had to take and who she had to see (the wizard) to get back home. Never did Dorothy envision what or who she would encounter along the way.

What I want you to understand is that we are on a journey and if this trip is to be successful, the path we take, we must take it together. We need to realize that there will be distractions that are designed to take us off the path and just as the big bad witch was watching Dorothy as she traveled on her path, we are also being watched. If we don't stay focused, then we will find ourselves venturing off the path or taking different paths.

There's a huge danger in taking other routes when you should be traveling together. Some may not get there, others may be late and some just might say, the heck with it, let them deal with it. We know that Dorothy encountered three individuals along the way who she didn't know, but learned that each of them needed something, and they thought that if they banded together, their chances would be greater at attaining their needs. One was afraid of fire and we all have come under fire at one time or another in our lives, while one lacked courage, and another had no heart.

The important aspect of this group was that they were willing to stay on the path and look out for each

other. Will you have the courage and the heart to stand up for yourself and your co-workers when the fire gets hot or will you wait for someone else to do the work? That's the question that only you can answer.

There is a contract that looms right around the corner and if we are not on the same path, the outcome will not be to our liking. These four encountered many trials and challenges as they headed for the city of OZ, and each one they faced, they faced them together. As we get closer to the up-coming contract, (which is our OZ) we must put petty situations behind us, stop pointing fingers at each other and stop being deceived by those who you think are on your side.

Unlike Dorothy and her crew who found out that the wizard wasn't who they thought he was, the wizard (company) we will be dealing with is very real. This wizard has and knows all the tricks of the trade and if we aren't mindful of what is going on, our path will be very long and rough. Although everyone involved in this movie got what they wanted and Dorothy made it home, **THIS IS NO DREAM FOLKS, THIS IS REAL.**

Points of Interest

- You should have received your union card in the mail and we had a number of them come back to the union hall. We have asked time and time again that if you moved, that you update your address at the hall. If you didn't get yours, talk to your steward or chief steward and we will check to see if yours was returned.
- As another reminder to those who may be on TLOW, your contact should explain what you should do when you return to work regarding the FSA or the LPFSA. If you are off of the payroll system, then you should pay close attention to your contact and follow the instructions.
- The next steward and member classes will be held on May 6th. The times for these meetings are as follows: 7:15 am for 3rd, 1:00 pm for 2nd, and 3:15 pm for day shift employees. All members are welcome to attend and the more we know and learn, the better we will be when it comes to solving problems.
- Remember that if you have problems, there are various avenues that you can take to bring resolution to them. Hopefully, you will choose the one that will be beneficial to all. If it is up close and personal, contact Keith Eller (EAP Counselor). He has been very instrumental for our members and has put light back into many of our members lives who were on dark roads.

Safety Committee

Everyone should know that we just completed our VPP recertification for the Erie site. What we don't know is how we did. All the notes and information that the VPP auditors gathered from March 31st to April 4th will be sent to Washington D.C. From there the final decision will be made whether we will be recertified or not.

Being VPP certified is a great thing for everyone involved. But that doesn't mean that we are going to fake it. It was good to hear that employees gave their honest opinions and weren't afraid of reprimand. Even one of the SGE's (Special Government Employees) made mention to the employees being very forthcoming.

On April 4, 2014 a group of representatives met at the PIT for the closing comments from the auditors. **Mark Harmon** from OSHA went through a list of thank you's for everyone's help and hard work during the recertification audit. Mark said that the union was very instrumental in making this a successful audit. It is very important that everyone is involved and in support of this program.

Over the week the auditors held over 500 formal and informal interviews. This is one of the ways they get a true feeling for what is going on at our site. It is also a good way for the auditors to see if the VPP elements are in place, and helps them to determine what recommendations they should make to better this site.

Bob Carroll from OSHA participated in this audit, and also our recertification in 2008. He said one positive that he noticed how the workers help each other out. Although we need to work on communication between the management team and the shop floor employees, Bob was particularly concerned with us losing "tribal" knowledge. We have a young work force and seem to be losing information as the "old timers" retire. Bob made the comment that all feedback is good feedback. It is the only way to get better and we need to focus on the process and making things better.

Mark Harmon then added that our core elements are good. We need to continue to improve, because safety is always moving due to technology changes, processes, and so on. **Ray Kovacs** invited the entire VPP team to come back in five years for our next recertification. That way they will be able to see our improvements.

Lastly, **Randy Biletnikoff** thanked everyone and stated we have lots to improve on, but that's no surprise. We succeed or fail collectively and he agreed that we need to improve on communication. We have come a long way and it's easy to forget what we have accomplished as we focus on what we need to do next. The bar will continue to rise and we will continue to be focused and improve.

Hopefully in a few weeks we will know if we received the VPP recertification and will also receive a list of recommendations to better this site. These benchmarks being met will be the true indication that VPP is a success.

"Charities for Children, Inc." 26th Annual Adult Bowling Tournament



The 26th Annual CHARITIES FOR CHILDREN, INC. Adult Bowling Tournament, known as Erie's Most Prestigious Adult Bowling Tournament was held at Eastway Lanes on March 23, 2014. This year's event was the most successful ever with over \$30,000 raised and we could never fully express our utmost thanks to all who made this endeavor such a huge success.

Your generosity and participation (45 tournament sponsors, 64 participating sponsors, 31 volunteers and 405 paid bowlers) shows that people do care about this community and what can be accomplished when folks band together for worthy causes. There were a total of 14 charities that benefitted from this event and the Shriners Hospital for Children received the highest donated amount, (over \$8,000) and the Honorary CCB Plaque.

The overall winner was **Bain Carney** who had the most to contribute to the charity of his choice, although all bowlers received an amount to donate to their favorite charity. **Rick Makowski**, bldg. 24, President of Charities for Children and Vice President **Mike Green**, GE Cincinnati Bell employee sends out special thanks to **Valarie Pinetti**, bldg. 10, **Carl Daugherty**, bldg. 60, **Christine Peterson**, bldg. 18 and retirees **Bill Warren**, **Dan Biletnikoff**, **Karen Urbanski** and **Ken Shaffer**. This 26 year event has raised over \$339,000 and for the actual results, you can visit their web site: <http://www.ccabt.org>. Thanks again!

Orders Coming/Impact Unknown

Although orders are picking up and we are seeing some internal recalls, there is still plenty of uncertainty as to what effect it will have on current employment levels. While the needs for certain skill sets in some areas are on the rise, other skill sets in other areas may be declining. We are always optimistic that things will turn for the better and we believe that if we continue to put our best efforts into what we do, then the situation might change.

It's always important to understand that there may be better ways to get a task accomplished and it involves cooperation from both sides. There's no doubt that this workforce is capable of producing the best products in the world, given the materials, proper tools, and to have their input acted on concerning their jobs. What we need to be watchful for at this point and time is the work that now has become a buy item that was originally a farm-out and how we can convince the company to bring that work back. While the company says that farmed-out work is at a minimum, we still view it as what it is, farm-out.

Per their estimates, there was 66 employees worth of farm-outs in the first quarter compared to 82 worth in the last quarter of 2013. This has been going on for many, many years and unfortunately, we will always agree to disagree on this subject, but the reality of farm-out is that there is no contractual language to combat it. There has been some farmed-out work brought into the plant and they (company) have indicated that more will be brought back. This is still contingent on the feasibility of how and where it can be done and cost. As we all know, the key word of the company is competitiveness and that is a universal word spoken by all large corporations which we have heard time and time again.

At this time, we will continue to do what we can to show the company that Erie (Transportation) should be the preferred location to get the job done. There will be some recalls from the street, but the number will depend on what skill set is needed or how many people the company may choose to replace if someone retires. Although we know that orders have always dictated employment levels, it's important that we do everything we can so that our laid-off members might get recalled from the street. There are still a number of orders that have not been confirmed, but could possibly change our present situation if they are solidified.

MAY 2014						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
				1	2	3
4	5 <i>Cinco de Mayo</i>	6 STEWARD / MEMBERS CLASSES 7:15 AM 1:00 PM 3:15PM	7 L.A.C. MEETING	8	9	10
11 <i>Mothers Day</i>	12	13	14 R.A.G.E. MEMBERSHIP MEETING 618 MEMBERSHIP MEETING	15	16 CONFERENCE BOARD MEETING "ERIE"	17
18	19	20 E-BOARD MEETING	21	22 506 MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS	23	24
25	26 <i>MEMORIAL DAY</i>	27	28	29	30 R.A.G.E. BOARD MEETING	31

AA Meeting Schedule
 Where: Bldg. 6, Rm. 150, Conference Room
 When: Thursdays
 1st Shift - 12:00 noon 2nd Shift - 7:30 pm
 3rd Shift - 3:00 am

Trustee and Alternate Trustee Needed

Nominations will be taken at this month's membership meetings for one (1) trustee and one (1) alternate trustee. This election comes as a result of former trustee **Frank Fusco Jr.** being laid off in December, 2013 whose term runs to 2015.

Phil Demartino, the alternate trustee filled in for the fourth quarter audit, but subsequently had to resign because of personal reasons. His term also runs until 2015. Any member in good standing can run for these positions and an election will be held at the May membership meetings.