



# LOCAL 506 UNION NEWS

Volume 68, Issue 4

© 21 Biroszak Printing Co. Inc.

Thursday, April 13, 2017

## UE Eastern Region Meeting

The UE Eastern Region meeting is scheduled for Saturday, April 22, 2017 in Monroeville, PA. The Local will be represented by four Delegates and nine Board Members.

The Agenda will include:

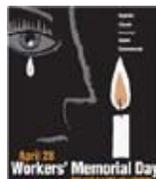
- ⚡ Local reports
- ⚡ Nominations and elections of Officers and (14) Regional Executive Board Members-at-Large, (3) Trustees and (1) Alternate Trustee
- ⚡ Nominations and elections of at-large Delegates to the UE General Executive Board (to be elected from among the Regional Executive Board Members) and (2) additional Convention Delegates (to be elected from among the at-large Regional Representatives to the UE GEB.)
- ⚡ UE Director of Organization **Gene Elk** will be attending and giving a report on UE

April 28, 2017

## Workers' Memorial Service

**When:** Friday, April 28, 2017  
6:00pm - 7:30pm

**Where:** Erie City Hall, Council Chambers  
626 State Street  
Erie, PA 16501



Every year since 1989, local Unions have gathered to pay tribute to all workers who have lost their lives on the job and celebrate life. Workers Memorial Day is to remember the victims of unsafe working conditions, to advocate for stronger protections and improved enforcement to protect working families. The service is held on April 28<sup>th</sup>, in recognition of OSHA establishment in 1971. The service is open to the public. Please join us.

## Dependent Life Insurance

Individuals who are still participating in Dependent Life - **Traditional** have an opportunity to save a significant amount of money by switching to Dependent Life - **Flex**. Flex was introduced a few years ago and is the only plan available to new hires. Those individuals participating in the Traditional plan were grandfathered in unless they elected to switch to Dependent Life - Flex.

The difference between the two plans is the premium. Traditional is a fixed rate and when contributions increase they increase for all participants. The Flex contribution changes when a spouse's age ends in a zero or five, i.e. 50, 55, 60.

As this is not a pre-tax deduction, changes to Dependent Life can be made at any time. Members should review their participation and call the enrollment center to get the rate they would pay if they made a change.

An example of an individual who made a change, they were paying \$11.54 a week for \$10,000 of coverage under the Traditional Plan. When they switched to Flex their weekly contribution dropped to \$1.15 for the same level of coverage. That's a savings of \$520/year. No statement of health is necessary unless an increase in coverage is requested.

## April Membership Meeting Notice

### Agenda:

- ⚡ Financial Report
- ⚡ Officers Report
- ⚡ Committee Reports and General Business

### Membership Meetings & Times

**Thursday, April 20, 2017**

(All meetings)

7:20 a.m. (**Officers reports only**)

12:30 p.m. (2nd Shift)

3:20 p.m. (1st Shift)

**No Food Will Be Served At Meetings**

# President's Report

*By Scott Slawson*

Since the end of November we have been actively battling with the State of Pennsylvania and many of its elected officials over the unemployment system. This has caused so many hardships for our laid off members and others. At last month's membership meeting we reported to you that the Senate labor committee voted 8-4 to send Senate Bill 250 to the Senate floor for a vote. This Bill would provide 15 million in emergency funding for a short term solution to a long term problem. Among the no votes at the committee level were Senator Wagner from York County and Senator Laughlin of Erie County.

In a recent vote at the Senate, S.B. 250 passed and is being moved to the House for a vote sometime around the 18<sup>th</sup> of this month. We have been given assurances by our Local Representatives that this should easily make it through the House. With any luck we will be able to communicate this at this month's membership meeting.

## Official statement from the Governor's office:

The department (L&I) is evaluating the potential impact from a short-term infusion of resources. We would prefer a long-term solution, but this is a good step towards the goal. However, if the General Assembly can only enact a short-term fix then the system could be forced into chaos again, if there is further inaction on a long-term solution as we saw last year. We commend Senator Ward for taking the lead on this issue. A short term fix is a step in the right direction as we work towards a long term solution that allows us to best serve the unemployed of Pennsylvania.

We would like to applaud Senator Laughlin for voting YES on S.B. 250 and truly understanding the needs of his constituents in Erie County. We would also like to note that Senator Wagner, who is running for Governor voted NO.

Recently **Deb Gornall**, our Eastern Region President, has announced she will be retiring at the end of April. Deb has been a member of UE for 45 years. She served as a Steward, Chief Steward and Secretary of the Grievance Committee with UE Local 618. After she was permanently laid off from GE in the late 80's Deb went on to serve the Union at the National level becoming an organizer and International Rep. Almost 6 years ago she took over as our Regional President and has held that position since. Deb is the meaning of the expression "dynamite comes in small packages". She has worked tirelessly in her efforts to advance the programs



and policy of the Union and advancement for the struggles of working class people.

From the Officers, Executive Board and members of UE local 506 and 618 we send you our most heartfelt wishes for a happy and healthy retirement. We will miss you!

The Officers and Executive Board would like to wish all the members and their families a safe and Happy Easter.

## Congratulations

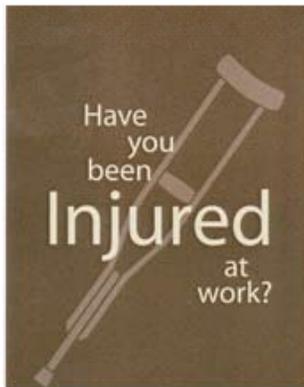
The Officers and Executive Board would like to congratulate newly elected **President Janet Gray** of UE Local 618 and send our best wishes to former **President Mike Divins**. Mike served the Union with honor and he will be missed by all.



## Al Hart Retires

**Al Hart** was hired in October of 1973 and signed a union card day one. Al started in Building 63, speed variators and worked in several other buildings and divisions over the following thirteen years. As a 506 member he served as a Steward, Trustee, Executive Board Member-at-Large and Managing Editor of the UE 506 news. Al was hired by the UE National in 1986 where he worked as a field organizer for twenty years in multiple districts. In 2006, Al became the Managing Editor of the UE News and continues to assist the National with the publication of the UE News in retirement. Al Has been a UE 506 dues paying member for the majority of his career and paid dues to our Local until his retirement. Al represented our Local well as a militant rank and file member. Al will be greatly missed and we wish him the best in his much deserved retirement. Congratulations Mr. Hart!





In the event of a work related injury you are required to treat with General Electric medical center physicians or one of the designated healthcare providers for the first 90 days. The following is the panel of six designated healthcare providers recently updated by the Company.

Name	Telephone	Specialty	Hospital	Address
Dr. Mark Krahe	(814)454-8287	Orthopedics Lower Extremity	UPMC	100 Peach St. Suite 400 Erie, Pa
Dr. Patrick Williams	(814)454-8287	Orthopedics Upper Extremity	UPMC	100 Peach St. Suite 400 Erie, Pa
Dr. Steven Gilman	(814)459-1013	Neurosurgery	SVHS	120 East 2 <sup>nd</sup> St Suite 401 Erie, Pa
Dr. David Dexter	(814)877-4577	General Surgery	UPMC	104 East 2 <sup>nd</sup> St. 7 <sup>th</sup> Floor Erie, Pa
Dr. Mark Bloomstine	(814) 454-2401	Orthopedics General	SVHS	204 West 26 <sup>th</sup> St. Erie, Pa
Dr. Brent Walker	(814)864-4078	Ophthalmology	UPMC, SVHS	1827 West 38 <sup>th</sup> St. Erie, Pa
Dr. James Johannes, Dc	(814) 899-5400	Chiropractic		4864 Buffalo Rd. Erie, Pa
Dr. Jennifer Lultschik	(814)875-2034	Occupational Medicine	UPMC, SVHS	Ge Medical Clinic Erie, Pa

## Benefits Reminder

Effective January 1, 2017, OptumRx became the new administrator of the GE prescription drug plan. This was a change in administrator only. Your GE Prescription Drug benefit design has not changed. The following information will assist you in making the most of your coverage.

### Expanded pharmacy network

The OptumRx network includes all the same independent and chain pharmacies, plus 12,000 additional pharmacies. Choices include:

- CVS
- Walmart
- Sam's Club Walgreens
- Duane Reade
- Rite Aid
- Many local independent pharmacies nationwide

To view network pharmacies visit [optumrx.com/ge](http://optumrx.com/ge) or call **1-800-509-9891**.

### New way to get a 90-day supply

As of January 1, 2107 you can get up to a 90-day supply of maintenance medications in person at Walgreens or by home delivery through OptumRx. To learn more or to find Walgreens locations near you.

### Specialty pharmacy

BriovaRx, the OptumRx specialty pharmacy, provides specialty medications and clinical support of oncology, rheumatoid arthritis and other complex conditions. If you take medication for one of the conditions, you will receive additional information and support.

### Questions?

OptumRX advocates will be available to take your calls at **1-800-509-9891**.

## Active UE 506 Demographics as of 3/29/2017

Service (Whole Years)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
# of Employees (U.E. 506)	0	1	0	0	1	50	2	0	19	16	31	271	285	174	6	28	70	5	36	26	9	9	31	9
Service (Whole Years)	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47
# of Employees (U.E. 506)	12	22	52	47	64	7	9	7	7	8	10	14	25	21	43	40	16	12	13	9	2	0	1	2

## SVLB

“Voluntary” reduction in force situations including but not limited to severance inducements, early retirement incentive packages and the like. The PA Supreme Court Case that changed the precedent on the interpretation of the “Voluntary Layoff Proviso” section of the Pennsylvania Unemployment Compensation Law was Diehl v. Unemployment Compensation Board of Review decided on 12/28/2012:

<http://caselaw.findlaw.com/pa-supreme-court/1619442.html>

*“While the VLO Proviso in Section 402(b) is not as clear as some of our sister states in providing benefits to those accepting early retirement packages, given our longstanding case law construing eligibility provisions broadly, we conclude that the VLO Proviso applies to employees accepting employer offered early retirement packages as part of a labor force reduction, because such programs are merely a different way to accomplish the workforce reduction of a layoff. If the legislature wishes to preclude eligibility to those accepting early retirement packages as part of an employer’s plan or a labor-management contract agreement, it must specify its intent clearly.”*

The ruling was cited in two cases concerning Federal employees in Pennsylvania that separated from employment under Voluntary Early Retirement Authority (VERA) and Voluntary Separation Incentive Pay (VSIP).

([http://www.pacourts.us/assets/opinions/Commonwealth/out/2095CD13\\_12-12-14.pdf?cb=1](http://www.pacourts.us/assets/opinions/Commonwealth/out/2095CD13_12-12-14.pdf?cb=1))

**SVLB Payments:** SVLB payments are \$18,000, which is below the \$20,280 (2017) threshold for severance payments that would cause any delay in members receiving regular UC benefits. It is critical that members, who are taking voluntary separation package/early retirement incentive, when filing for their UC benefits and are asked to state the reason they are no longer working **SHOULD NOT state “retirement”**, but rather “Lack of Work” or “Downsizing”. In the eyes of UC, stating “Retirement” as a separation reason tells them 1.) You are a Voluntary Quit and 2.) You are not “able and available” for work. Members would then have to take a trip into the appellate process to straighten that situation out, but it is easier to not say that and end up having to fight their own statements.

**Retirement Plan Payments or Distributions:** When it comes to 401(k) or similar type plans, if members can forgo taking any payments or distributions until they have run out of UC benefits, there is no issue. However, if they need to access those funds while collecting UC benefits, they should *speak to their financial advisor* about opening a personal IRA, and then request a “trustee to trustee rollover” from the employer sponsored plan into their personal IRA and then withdraw the needed funds. This prevents any issues with UC.

Calculating the effects of periodic payments from retirement plan is simply a math formula, but participants will need to know certain pieces of information in order to enter “their”

numbers into the calculation to guide their decision making process.

Retirement plan payments where the employer and employee funded the funds are only 50% deductible from UC benefits.

Depending on the numbers, some people can start receiving retirement plan payments immediately and it really does not have any major effect on their UC benefits, and maybe it takes them an extra month or two to exhaust their claim, in other cases starting to receive retirement plan payments immediately, can result in their UC claim expiring at 1years old.

So, they will need to know the monthly amount of their Retirement Plan Payment and at least an estimate of their UC weekly benefit amount. For new UC claims opened between 4/1/17 and 6/30/17 the “Base Year” earnings being looked at is 1/1/2016 to 12/31/2016.

If you know or can closely estimate your highest earning quarter in that period using this chart:

<http://www.uc.pa.gov/unemployment-benefits/Am-I-Eligible/financial-charts/Pages/default.aspx> then they can reasonably estimate their UC weekly benefit rate prior to their actual layoff.

**Example:** Pension plan with Employee contributions: Monthly Pension Payment: \$3,300 UC Weekly Benefit Amount: \$480 Total Value of UC Claim:  $\$480 \times 26 = \$12,480$ . Weekly Pension Calculation:  $\$3,300 \times .5$  (50% reduction due to joint contributions) =  $\$1,650 \times 12\text{-months} = \$19,800/52\text{-weeks} = \$381$ .

**Reduction in UC Benefits:**  $\$480 - \$381 = \$99$   $\$12,480/\$99 = 126$  weeks to exhaust the UC claim (Claim would expire at 52-weeks with a remaining balance of \$7,431)  $\$99 \times 51\text{-weeks} = \$5,049$  (51 due to unpaid waiting week)  $\$12,480 - \$5,049 = \$7,431$  Balance in claim upon expiration

### Filing for Unemployment Compensation Frequently Asked Questions

1.) *Should applicants indicate they are receiving a severance when filing for UC?*

**Answer:** Yes, applicants should state they are receiving a severance. However, the “threshold” for a severance payment or payments having any impact at all on UC benefits for 2017 is \$20,280, and the SVLB payments are under that amount, claimants will want to report it to avoid problems down the road, but it will have no effect on UC.

2.) *Is SVLB considered severance in the eyes of the State?*

**Answer:** Yes. The UC law defines a “severance” as “Severance pay” means one or more payments made by an employer to an employee on account of separation from the service of the employer, regardless of whether the employer is legally bound by contract, statute or otherwise to make such payments. The term does not include payments for pension, retirement or accrued leave or payments of supplemental unemployment benefits.”

The General Assembly gives Labor & Industry a wide berth to administratively interpret the law, so L&I considers “severance, separation pay or salary continuation” as the same thing under the umbrella of “severance”

\*One possible exception would be a lump sum payment paid to the employee while the employee is still performing work/services for the employer. The danger is that the claimant answers NO to receiving a severance, but the employer reports YES that the employee did in fact receive a severance.

3.) *Does the applicant indicate they will be receiving a pension?*

**Answer:** This would depend on whether or not accepting the SVLB requires them to begin receiving retirement plan payments either immediately or at some point in the future. UC refers to any and all types of retirement plans as “pensions”, which confuses claimants because they may have a “pension” in the traditional sense, but may also have a 401(k) or other form of retirement plan in addition.

On the initial UC application, the question concerning receipt of “pension” payments or lump sums asks if it will happen in the next 12-months. With regard to a pension in the traditional sense, the worker usually has to submit a request to the pension plan administrator several months in advance to set a date when monthly payments will start. They would report “Yes” they will be receiving “pension” plan payments in the next 12-months. The worker may or may not have an “official” calculated monthly figure at the time they are opening their UC claim. There will be no reduction in their UC benefits until the month that they actual begin receiving the pension payments. The pension deduction calculation will be done at the time the worker has their “official” dollar figures from the pension plan administrator. The pension deduction, if there will be one, will take effect for all weeks claimed beginning with the month the pension payments start and all weeks thereafter.

As far as 401(k) type plans that allow for various types of installments or lump sum payments. If the individual needs or insists on payments or lump sum withdrawals from the employer sponsored 401(k) or similar type retirement plan WHILE they are collecting UC benefits, *they should speak to a financial advisor* about opening a personal IRS or similar type tax sheltered retirement account at their bank or credit union, or even with the same company that administers their employer sponsored plan, and request a “trustee to trustee” rollover of the funds into the personal account. They can then do whatever they want with the money and UC has nothing to say about it, as the connection of the money to the employer has been severed. There is also no UC deductions for a worker who requests withdrawal that represents only their own contributions to the 401(k) type plan, but 401(k) type plans mingle the employee and employer contributions.

4.) *If the applicants is asked if they will be receiving a pension or lump sum. Is the SVLB a lump sum? Should they state that they are receiving a lump?*

**Answer:** The SVLB would be regarded as a form of “Severance” as opposed to a lump sum payment in the “pensions” category. “Lump Sums” in the “pension” category generally refer to someone that is eligible to withdraw a lump sum from their retirement plan and stick it under their mattress, or a situation where the worker is fully or partially vested in a plan and the plan allows for installment payments in chunks, or where someone’s balance in the plan is below a certain threshold and the plan administrator is going to send them a check within x number of days if they don’t request a rollover to another plan.

## C.P. Steward’s Report

*By Leo Grzegorzewski*

On the grievance front I do not have much to report. April 28<sup>th</sup> is the next scheduled Step II grievance meeting. We have had only one Step II since October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2016 and that was on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. In late October the UR Manager at the Erie site took on another role within the plant. That is the reason we have not had a Step II in a while. Since then the company filled the position of UR manager on March 13<sup>th</sup>, we have had several meetings. We have set a Step II schedule for 2017. Currently the backlog stands at one hundred and seven cases. I know that is a lot of cases in the backlog, but we will be back on track very soon. My goal is by the end of July to be caught up and able to hear grievances within 60 days of filing.

We have been in talks with the company on many topics, some of those topics are the medical center and job placement. The medical center issues are many. They are asking our members to fill out forms concerning their medical history and list medication that they are taking. We are working with the National and researching EEOC and ADA laws to establish what questions you are required by law to answer for the job you currently hold. On the job placement issue: We have been in discussions with the company concerning job placement, back fills and recalls from the street. We have made it clear to the company that they must follow the contract and local agreements for employees placed on temporary or permanent jobs.

On a special note, Deb Gornall our U.E. Eastern Regional President will be retiring at the end of April. Deb has dedicated her life to U.E. and the day to day struggles that our union members face. Deb has been an invaluable resource not only to U.E. Local 506 but to the National as well. Her exceptional knowledge and experience through the years has guided us through some very difficult times. I personally would like to thank Deb for everything she has done for U.E. and its members. She has always been there for us when we ask. Thank you Deb and enjoy your retirement which you so richly deserve.

Our next Members Involvement and Education Meeting will be held on April 25<sup>th</sup>. I will have the topic of that meeting to the members via leaflet. The times for the meetings will be 7:15am, 1:00pm and 3:30pm.

# UE 506 Bowling Tournament Results

On Saturday, April 1, 2017 the UE 506 Sports Committee hosted our annual UE bowling tournament. The ninety-five participants enjoyed spending time together outside the daily pressures of the shop. The Sports Committee is looking forward to next year's tournament and are discussing opening the tournament to other UE Locals. We would like to give a special thanks to participants, volunteers and the 506 Sports Committee.

**Prizes Are Available At The Union Hall During Business Hours**

- High Game – Men's Game – (289) Carl Luke
- High Game – Men's Series – (715) Robert Pickens
- High Game – Women's Game – (193) Ruby Church
- High Series – Women's Series – (567) Carol Blackmond

- 1<sup>st</sup> Prize** – Picken's Team (3202)
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Prize** – Kibbe's Circle K Boys (3155)
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Prize** – Big Dummies (3104)
- 4<sup>th</sup> Prize** – Low Hangin Fruit (3088)
- 5<sup>th</sup> Prize** – Good Old Boys (3078)

- |                         |                                       |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Game 1                  | Game 2                                |
| Scratch – Don Stanyard  | Scratch – Carl Luke                   |
| Handicap – Jeff Coleman | Handicap – Mike Emling – Don Stanyard |
| 50/50 – Kenny Barnett   | 50/50 – Low Hangin Fruit              |
|                         | Game 3                                |
|                         | Scratch – Carl Daugherty              |
|                         | Handicap – Jeff Coleman               |
|                         | 50/50 – Low Hangin Fruit              |

- Lincoln Electric Winners – Weld Gear – Dave Chadwell And Rick Ferrell
- Consulation Prizes – Jim Hellyer – Barry Miller – Kirk Ziegler – Tim Fuhman
- Gift Certificate –Ken Barnett

MAY 2017						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10 618 MEMBERSHIP MEETING RAGE MEMBERSHIP MEETING	11	12	13
14 	15	16 506 EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING	17	18 506 MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS	19	20 
21	22	23	24	25 GEB MEETING	26 GEB MEETING	27 RAGE BOARD MEETING
28	29 	30 MEMBERS INVOLVEMENT MEETING	31			

## Important Medical Plan Numbers and Web sites

WageWorks  
(HRA/FSA/DCFSA/LPFSA)

Wageworks.com/ge  
1-888-303-3006

GE Benefits Center

OneHR.ge.com

1-800-252-5259

Dental Care

Metlife.com/dental

GE Dental Benefits Claim Center

1-888-529-8474

Vision Care

davisvision.com

GE Vision Care Benefits Center

1-800-433-9375

Disability Benefits Center

1-800-392-0789

**HAVING A BENEFITS ISSUE?**

Call Mark Kresse at 875-6620

Or Tom Smith at 875-6873

**HAVING A PERSONAL PROBLEM?**

Call Keith Eller at 875-4EAP

(Ext. 4327)

## Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings

Concerned about your sobriety? Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) may be the answer... Did you know that GET offers onsite meetings?

When: Every Thursday

3:00am (3<sup>rd</sup> shift)

12:00 noon (1<sup>st</sup> shift)

7:30pm (2<sup>nd</sup> shift)

Where: Building 6, Rm. 150,

Conference Room

*ONE DAY AT A TIME*

*\*AA IS NOT SOMETHING YOU JOIN,*

*IT'S A WAY OF LIFE*

*\*SOBRIETY IS A JOURNEY ... NOT A*

*DESTINATION*