

LOCAL 506 UNION NEWS

Volume 65, Issue 2

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Friday, February 14, 2014

Ready, Set, Prepare Yourself

By *B.A. Wayne Burnett*

Isn't it strange how time flies? Here we are already near the end of February and even with the long winter we're still dealing with, the time just keeps rolling along. This is just to remind you that we should start preparing for the many things that we will be facing in the future.

We hope you realize just how close we are to the next contract negotiation and we strongly urge you to start thinking ahead and put something aside for a rainy day. With an already shaky schedule for this year and the uncertainty of what next year will be like, don't kid yourselves that this company isn't already preparing for 2015.

With what's going on right now here at Transportation, should give you an indication of what lies ahead. If you recall reading in the January 18, 2014 edition of the Erie Times news when the company gave its fourth quarter profit report, that GE would no longer release their annual locomotive production numbers. I hope you realize that no matter what the true reason for this tactic may be, it is designed to keep us wondering what the future of Transportation will be.

We need to understand that we will constantly be faced with new challenges and we cannot afford to be lackadaisical and must be very vigilant as to what is going on here at Transportation. If we become complacent, we might find ourselves in a position that we may not be ready for. This is not the same environment as it once was and the odds are no longer in our favor.

These are very difficult times for the working class and labor unions all over the country. We can't emphasize this enough because these big cor-

porations, along with many of our political leaders are conspiring together and we can assure you that it's not for our good.

Our own Governor Corbett has made it perfectly clear that he would sign "Right to Work" legislation without hesitation should it cross his desk. We know what that means and hopefully he will be defeated in the next election. Now is the time to not only band together, but stand together because standing together can prevent us from falling.

As stated in the last union news, the general election will take place this year and any member in good standing has the right to run for any position. We will constantly remind you over the next few months about this election because we want everyone to know about it. The one thing for anyone who holds any office in this union is to remember, that you are a servant and elected to serve. **READY, SET, PREPARE!**

Presidents' Day
February 17, 2014



February Membership Meeting Notice

Agenda:

- General Business
- Committee Updates
- Chief Stewards Swearing In

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS & TIMES ARE:

Thursday, February 20, 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 January 31st we had our Step II meeting. We closed four discipline grievances per agreements, put two on hold pending more information and sent one to third step. We also have a seniority based issue that will be moved to the third step level.

There are several piecework issues we are still discussing and we resolved a job code issue in building 2 that was upgraded through the hard work of **Leo Grzegorzewski**. There were several declarations turned in to support the petition for TAA benefits and this has been a long drawn out process in gathering information and I want to thank everyone involved for their help, patience and time.

Hopefully, if we are successful, it will benefit our displaced workers, their families and all others who were affected by the company's decision. The next Steward Classes are scheduled for Tuesday, March 4th and Tuesday, April 1st. We will have sign up sheets at all three meetings for members and stewards who want to attend these Classes.



Steward Classes

Tuesday, March 4th & April 1st, 2014
 7:20 am for 3rd shift
 12:30 pm for 2nd shift
 3:20 pm for 1st shift

Chief Stewards to be Sworn In

The Chief Stewards will be sworn in at this month's membership meeting and we want to thank everyone who showed an interest in this position. Hopefully, you who elected them will stand with them. Being a chief steward is not an easy task and this very important position will require time and most of all, commitment.

There are four new chiefs and you need to get to know them. We want to thank the outgoing chiefs for their service and to let you know that your contributions to this union were very much appreciated.

President's Report

By Scott Duke

Hello everyone, as we enter the middle of February, we should realize that 2015 is just around the corner and time is moving right along. This is to remind you that the next contract negotiations are closer than many may think and we should start preparing now.

On another note, we are in a battle with the Company over doctor's excuses and we feel that legitimate doctor's excuses should be taken into account when a person becomes ill. They should never be used as a means to discipline or be used against an employee as an attendance guideline.

We, the Officers have had a lengthy discussion with the Head of UR & the HR Manger concerning this matter. Their stance is to accept these excuses but still view legitimate time off against your attendance record. They claim that these excuses will be taken into consideration if and when an employee is faced with possible discipline.

We feel this stance is barbaric and inhumane. The company has always preached that if you're sick, stay home so you don't get your co-workers sick. We, as a union will not back down from these actions that the company wants to take and will take each case head on and if necessary, use any means necessary, including arbitration.

If you are under doctors care and you return to work "you must" provide the proper documentation to the company to cover all bases concerning your illness. So again, for them to take this stance is inhumane and we will fight it to the best of our ability.

RUMOR MILL

Once again, the rumor mill is running rapid and if you are a rumor starter, hopefully, you won't get caught up in your rumor. There's an old saying that if you don't hear one by break time, start one.

Most rumors are started to stir people up and it never amazes me how people will take them and run. After you read this small article, take cover because the sky is falling. Don't forget to pass it on so no one will be caught off guard. **RUN AND TELL THAT!**

Job Preservation and Growth Committee

The union and the company have met regularly for months as a Job Preservation and **Growth** Committee. The concept of this committee concerns preserving jobs or creating new job opportunities when circumstances change. At these meetings, after safety and quality updates are given, the COE leaders of their respective buildings gives a report as to what is happening in their areas.

As usual, we listen intently as to what is being said, and then we have the opportunity to respond to what we hear. We are dismayed, to say the least, that the basic conversation of these meetings is anything but how we can keep or bring work back to the plant. The new catch phrase these days is simply "That we must preserve what we have".

We hear constantly about flexibility, building quality products and the most famous word of all, being competitive. We understand that when orders are down, we will experience what is going on now, but when orders are down, there is no room for growth. As everyone knows, we lost many of our members last year and are currently experiencing hundreds of TLOW's. We (union) are constantly telling the company about idle machines not being utilized, farmed-out work that could be brought back, certain areas that are under staffed and many other suggestions.

This conversation always leads back to the big three (flexibility, quality, and competitiveness). We know these meetings are a contractual obligation, but if our ideas and suggestions are not truly being looked at or considered, then what's the point? The important aspect of these meetings are what orders are on the books for this year or the future and the most important answer concerning this question is, where will the work be done?

We often ask and receive the same standard answer of flexibility, quality, and being competitive. We know that our quality is there because we have an experienced workforce. That's not to say that there is always room for improvement and an experienced workforce can make those improvements with minimal disruptions. As far as the flexibility aspect, the company has completely taken advantage of what is outlined in the National Agreement under Article XII (page 40, bullet 4). This alone,

could prevent our laid-off brothers and sisters from being recalled even if orders do pick up.

Now comes the main course, "COMPETITIVENESS"! This word should be replaced with greediness. As it stands right now, the company states that there are orders to be had, but have no firm commitment from some customers for those potential orders. Every time the order subject comes up, it seems to be synonymous with the word competitive. We're beginning to wonder who our real competitors are and whether they are on the outside of GE or within the company.

Although they do have some orders, they expect this to be a soft year and according to them, the locomotive schedule is constantly changing. The one thing they do know for sure is that the TEXAS orders are confirmed. I'm sure you remember them, the **overflow plant**. Our job as a union is to do the best we can to grow this membership and this is supposed to be what the Job Preservation and Growth Committee is all about, but all that seems to be growing is the company's bottom line.

FYI (FSA / LPFSA)

If you are enrolled in FSA (option 1 & 2) or LPFSA (option 3) and on TLOW or off payroll, these accounts end when your pay ends. You may be able to continue participation through the end of the calendar year on an after-tax basis through COBRA, if you are eligible or you can submit the expenses you incurred during your participation as an active employee.

When you return to work, you must contact the GE Benefits Center (1-800-252-5259) within 63 days to re-establish, verify or change your FSA/LPFSA election. Any reduction in your election amount will be made on a prospective basis only, and cannot be less than the higher of claims paid or contributions already made in the plan year. This info should be communicated by the company to employees who may be affected.

In Sympathy

The Officers and Executive Board of UE Local 506 wish to extend our sincere condolences to the families and friends of any 506 members that may be mourning the loss of a love one.

GE-CBC Meets to Begin Plans for 2015 Negotiations

In preparation for GE National Contract Negotiations which will likely begin in May 2015, the GE-CBC met in Dayton, Ohio on January 14 to begin developing a coordinated bargaining strategy. The GE-CBC is the Coordinated Bargaining Committee of GE unions. Since 1969, the various national unions representing GE employees have engaged in coalition bargaining to exert maximum pressure on GE to establish fair wages, benefits, and working conditions. UE and IUE-CWA are the two largest GE unions and both have separate National Agreements with GE. All of the other unions have local agreements but receive the same wage increases, cost-of-living, pension, and health care benefits as the two national unions.

Participating in the January 14 CBC meeting either in person or by telephone conference call were the Machinists (IAM), Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), Autoworkers (UAW), Teamsters (IBT), Steelworkers (USW), Draftsmen (IFPTE), UE and IUE-CWA. UE International Representative **Gene Elk** and UE International Vice-President **Peter Knowlton** represented UE in person during the Dayton meeting.

Surveys and Educational Work

Discussion focused on getting all of the various unions' members ready for negotiations. In addition to CBC sponsored membership contract surveys, the participating unions discussed a series of educational bulletins which CBC will sponsor, as well as contract rallies to show support for some of our joint contract demands to GE.

All CBC unions voiced opposition to GE's plan to eliminate post-65 health care benefits for non-union salaried employees who are not retired and receiving those benefits on January 1, 2015. Despite the fact that GE continues to reap billions in profits annually, it is extremely likely that the company will demand elimination of health care for future union-represented retirees. It was agreed that CBC would generate a series of educational leaflets for members to oppose any cuts in retiree health care benefits. As part of this coordinated campaign, UE International Representative Gene Elk suggested

that CBC should be demanding that GE roll back the massive health insurance cuts which were imposed during 2011 contract negotiations.

Plant Closings and Work Transfers

Almost all CBC unions expressed deep frustration with GE on work transfers and plant closings. Just a week prior to the CBC meeting, GE announced its intention to close the DeKalb, Illinois lighting plant represented by IUE-CWA. The two UE delegates reported on the company's work transfer from Erie to Ft. Worth and GE's plan to close the capacitor plant in Fort Edward, NY. Other CBC delegates reported on plant closings in Warren, Ohio, Chicago, Houston, and Minneapolis. One IUE-CWA representative expressed frustration with the current decision bargaining process and argued for contractual improvements, commenting that in 30 recent instances where GE has provided a work transfer or plant closing notice, negotiations with GE had not turned around company plans to eliminate and/or move IUE-CWA jobs.

We anticipate difficult negotiations with GE in 2015 and will need the unity and participation of all UE members and all unions to win a fair agreement and to stop the company's attacks on our jobs, our hard-earned retirement benefits, and our standard of living.

Coordinators Corner

Many of us work jobs where we are required to make repetitive motions. When you repeat the same motions with force over and over again without breaks, and put your body in awkward angles, you may cause stress to your muscles, joints, and tendons. This is known as repetitive motion injuries, or RMIs.

There may be several things that you can do ergonomically to help relieve the stress to your body. Start and end your day with stretching exercises. Take periodic breaks and stretch your fingers, wrists, arms, shoulders, back and legs. Try varying your normal work activities. Inform your EHS-TA, Coordinator and/or Ergonomic Team of any ideas to change your work area or tools. If you are experiencing any type of discomfort or pain seek medical attention.



2013 Report

Employees' Community Service Fund of GE

By Rob Celeski

First off, I would like to thank all the members of the Community Service Fund (CSF). Last year was our biggest year ever. With the company match of 50%, our contribution of \$1.3 million helped support nearly 200 local nonprofits, impacting the lives of over 100,000 people...including many of our own member's families.

Today, our payroll deductions come from members of UE Local 506, Local 618, EIAGPPE Local 3 (Plant Security), and the Draftsman Union. We would like to thank each and every member of the CSF for your continued support. Without your donations, none of this would be possible.

The CSF Board of Directors is made up of an administrator from each division. They each spend numerous hours of their own time, after work and on weekends, volunteering and learning what each local non-profit does for our community.

We give to numerous local non-profits including the VA Hospital, Emmaus Soup Kitchen, Make-A-Wish Foundation, Safe-Net, Community Shelter Services, City Mission, and the Autism Society just to name a few. Last year alone, we gave to a total

of 186 local non-profits.

We also support the United Way of Erie County and have a seat on the Board of Directors at United Way of Erie County to ensure that the funds are used appropriately.

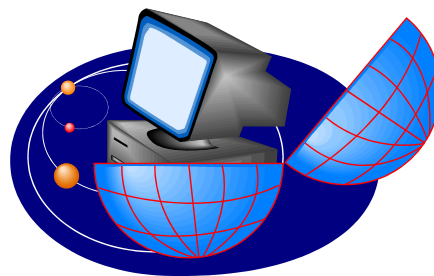
We know there are members who participate and want their contributions to go to the charity of their choosing and seeing "United Way" on their paycheck has caused some confusion. That is only a payroll deduction code to ensure that we receive the company's matching portion. Your contribution will go where you want it to go.

As with any new process, there will be a few bumps in the road, and we know that some employees were added or deleted from the CSF. Please know that the CSF Board of Directors doesn't have the ability to alter any payroll deduction without a written form from a member. We apologize for any problems that you may be experiencing. We are working hard to make any needed corrections. If you have any questions or problems, please leave a message with the CSF (875-6490). I will get back to you as soon as possible.

To Whom it may Concern

In today's society where modern technology is a way of the world and a means to receive or send information as never before can be very beneficial when used in the right way. Unfortunately, when used in the wrong way, it can be very detrimental and wage havoc in the lives of innocent people.

Many believe that whatever they read is true because it was posted on the internet. Unfortunately, for those who have such beliefs, it just shows the childlike mentality you might have by believing everything you read or see. We bring this to your attention because, when you do post something on the web, it is viewed by more people than you may know.



Many people have been held liable for spreading information that may not be true and in some cases, even if it is true, could be held accountable for different reasons. Many people have caused immense harm to others by spreading untrue information and no one deserves to have their lives disrupted because of some falsehood. On the other hand, some have lost their employment for posting information that goes against their workplace policy.

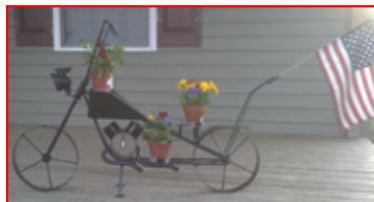
Remember, once you post something, even if you remove it, the same technology that allowed you send it, can be used to retrieve it. So be very careful when you decide to utilize or access the web, for although it can help you, it can also hurt you.

Points of Interest:

- Union cards have been ordered and should be out shortly.
- If you have a workplace issue, have the facts. No issue should be presented without some kind of information concerning the situation.
- If you are having personal problems and need to talk to someone, contact **Keith Eller**, (EAP) counselor at 875-4327
- Remember we have a Unity Committee for worker on worker conflicts. Call the union hall and give them a chance to resolve it.
- You should have received a new Health Benefits Handbook in the mail which contains changes concerning our benefits. **READ IT.**
- If you have moved, please inform the union hall so we can update our records.
- Preventive physicals can now be scheduled during working hours (with your supervisor's pre-approval). Physicals and lab work is provided by UPMC Hamot at no cost to employees covered by a GE health plan. Records are confidential and results are transferable to your primary physician. Your records are not shared with GE. Employees who complete an on-site preventive physical during January, February, or March will receive a \$25 gas card at the conclusion of their appointment.
- CVS Caremark is not the only pharmacy that you may purchase prescriptions from. For a complete list of network pharmacies, go to caremark.com or call 1-800-509-9891.

Ticket Sale!!!!

Patriotic
HARLEY DAVIDSON
Plant Stand



Donated by **BANTA MOBILE WELDING**

Sponsored by **UE Local 506 Sports Committee**


All Proceeds benefit the **Homeless Veterans Fund**

DRAWING - SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2014

at the **VAVS Bowling Tournament • Eastway Lanes**

Donation: \$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00

Need not be present to win

MARCH 2014						
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4 Mardi Gras STEWARDS CLASSES 7:30AM 12:30PM 3:20PM	5	6	7	8
9 Daylight Savings Time Begins	10	11	12 R.A.G.E. MEMBERSHIP MEETING 618 MEMBERSHIP MEETING	13	14	15
16	17 St. Patrick's Day 	18 E-BOARD MEETING	19	20 506 MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS First Day of Spring	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28 R.A.G.E. BOARD MEETING	29
30	31					

Change of Address Form

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Local _____

Return To: The Union Hall • 3923 Main Street • Erie, PA 16511

AA Meeting Schedule

Where: Building 6, Room 150,
Conference Room

When: Thursdays
1st Shift - 12:00 noon
2nd Shift - 7:30 pm
3rd Shift - 3:00 am