



LOCAL 506 UNION NEWS

Volume 67, Issue 1

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Friday, January 15, 2016

Divisional Chief Steward Elections

Voting will take place in the Divisions beginning on Monday, January 25, 2016 on second shift, and will conclude Tuesday, January 26th on first shift.

The names of all qualified candidates from each Division will be published in the UE 506 NEWS special bulletin.

At least three days prior to the date of the election the Division's Election Committee Representative will post a reasonable number of notices in prominent locations listing the names of all candidates, the date and voting hours of the election and location of the designated voting area.

Divisional Chief Stewards will be sworn in at the February membership meeting.

Nominations For Business Agent

Nominations for the position of Business Agent shall be accepted at the February membership meeting. The term of office shall expire at the regular membership meeting in October 2016.

- a. Current dues, including unemployment dues, must have been paid up thirty (30) days prior to the election of officers.
- b. A member must have paid union dues, including unemployment dues, for twelve (12) months prior to the week preceding nomination for office.
- c. No member shall have been in arrears in payment of dues more than thirty (30) days, at any time during the twelve month period described in paragraph b, above.

VRIP

The Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program (VRIP) applications were mailed out by GE during Fiscal Week 1. If you are 60 years of age or older with at least 10 years of service, and did not receive an application call the Pension Inquiry office at 1-800-432-3450.

Completed forms must be returned no later than January 29, 2016. Notification of eligible employees will begin FW 5. All employees accepting the VRIP must retire on March 1, 2016.

Please be prepared to give the Company your answer as soon as possible, a delay may prevent another employee the opportunity to retire.

M.L.K. March

The 26th annual Dr. King march will take place on January 18, 2016. We will assemble at Perry Square at 10:00AM. The march begins at 11:00AM. Marching from Perry Square to the Dr. King Memorial Center at 3rd and Chestnut St. Buses will be available for the ride back to downtown.

JANUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTICE

Agenda:

- Reduction in Work Force updates
- Officers updates
- Committee reports and General Business Matters

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS & TIMES ARE:

Thursday, January 21, 2016 (All meetings)

7:20 a.m. (3rd Shift)

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

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

President's Report

By Scott Slawson

The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress. Out of its bold struggles, economic and social reform gave birth to unemployment insurance, old-age pensions, government relief for the destitute and, above all, new wage levels that meant not mere survival but a tolerable life. The captains of industry did not lead this transformation; they resisted it until they were overcome. When in the thirties the wave of union organization crested over the nation, it carried to secure shores not only itself but the whole society.

The labor movement did not diminish the strength of the nation but enlarged it. By raising the living standards of millions, labor miraculously created a market for industry and lifted the whole nation to undreamed of levels of production. Those who attack labor forget these simple truths, but history remembers them.

As the attack on organized labor continues it is important to remember these quotes by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. There is a perfect storm brewing in the United States that is attempting to suppress wages and dismantle organized labor. Many corporations are running rough shot over their employees threatening to move their jobs to lower wage paying Right To Work (for less) States. Many of these same corporations have already made these moves even after concessions have been made. As members of UE and employees of General Electric you are well aware of this. We have seen this happen many times. It is widely known as the corporate fight for \$15.00. Despite record profit levels by many of these companies they continue their battle to suppress wages. They play on a weak economy and high unemployment rates. By doing this they continue to erode the economy and pass the social burdens onto the taxpayers. Our own government is also aiding in this fight by passing Right to Work laws, prohibiting dues check-off and stripping away collective bargaining rights. Due to these collective efforts unionism has declined to roughly 7% in the United States making us one of the lowest unionized countries in the world amongst countries with recognized unions.

For decades Unions have been the one constant force that have provided better and safer working conditions, combated at will employment and maintained economic balance. Corporate Government is

once again on the offensive with organized labor. This is a fight that has happened many times before. If left unchecked there will be no middle class standard of living. There will only be the haves and the have-nots. Take a moment this month to reflect on the great struggle and sacrifices of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and remember what it means be part of a Labor Union.

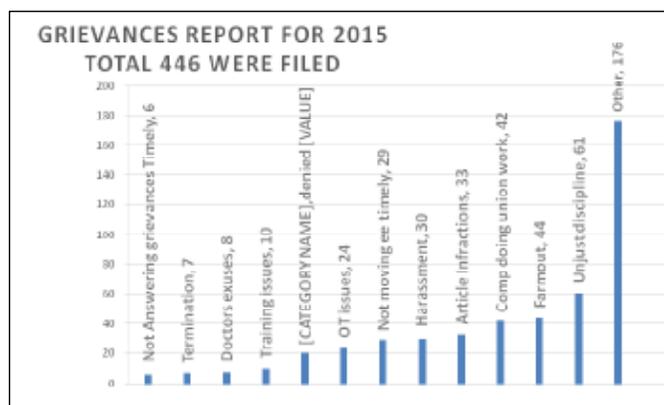
C.P. Steward's Report

By Leo Grzegorzewski

Brother and sisters as you are well aware, this past year has been one of the most difficult periods in U.E. 506's history. We have faced many challenges over the past 12 months not only in Erie but at the National level. We know U.E. Local 332 members in Fort Edward has had their plant closed for no other reason than greed. This is a shame, Local 332 produced capacitors that set industry standards for quality and reliability. Our thoughts go out to them. This past summer at the U.E. National Convention in Baltimore, MD. We listened to delegates from other locals go to the mic and describe the struggles they endure and how similar they are to ours. We are not alone, this is a national disgrace. As for our year, we dealt with National Negotiations in New York City and in June a Contract Rally that was attended by some 4,000 enthusiastic members and their families. On that note, I would like to thank Dave Poeta and the many volunteers for the hours they worked on their own time, time that was spent away from their families. The rally was a huge success. Only Erie and our great membership could pull this off, again thank you. In the fall of this year we dealt with the devastating news of massive layoffs at the Erie site of approximately 1,500 union members beginning in early January 2016 and an untold number of salary positions to follow. These layoffs will not only effect our members and their families but the community and the state as well. Over the past several months we have been in discussions with the company about securing the ACP payment or its equivalent for our members getting laid off during the first wave in early January. I am happy to report those negotiations were successful and those members will receive that money. There was cooperation on both sides and I thank everyone for that, it was the thing to do.

This year's grievance schedule was a busy one to say the least. The chart should give our members a

good picture of what took place in 2015. You will see there were a total of 446 grievances filed at the Step II level this year. This by far is a record number and proves there is a lot of work to do in 2016. I would like to thank the Membership, Stewards and Chief Stewards for documenting and trying to right the injustices that effected our members this past year. As for Department Stewards, our constitution is very clear on the responsibilities and duties for the office you were recently elected. You are this union's front line of defense and I commend you for taking this office.



Retirement Opportunities

There have been numerous questions regarding retirement due to the upcoming VRIPs and the Special Voluntary Layoff Bonuses (SVLB).

Employees choosing to retire are eligible for the **Regular Monthly Supplement** if they are between the ages of 60 and 62 and have at least five years of pension benefit service. This benefit pays \$21.00 per month, per year of service until the employee is eligible for 80% of Social Security.

In addition to the Regular Supplement, employees who retire at age 60 with at least 25 years of pension benefit service will receive a **Special Monthly Supplement** in the amount of \$425.00 per month until the age of eligibility for 80% Social Security Benefits.

Birth Year	Age of Eligibility for 80% SS
Before 1955	Age 63
1955	Age 63 and 2 months
1956	Age 63 and 4 months
1957	Age 63 and 6 months
1958	Age 63 and 8 months
1959	Age 63 and 10 months
After 1959	Age 64

DC to AC Conversion

The Company has scheduled 13 DC locomotives to be converted to AC power for later in the year. This project will be labor intensive and most assuredly will test our skills and patience. As of this writing that work has created 30-35 jobs.

Retirement Continued

Medical Insurance

If you are eligible for continued medical coverage through the Company (10 years of service), your coverage continues under GE Health Benefits until you reach age 65. The provisions that apply to you as a retiree are the same as those that apply for active employees, and you remain eligible to change your Healthcare options once a year.

Your GE Healthcare ends when you reach age 65, your spouse's healthcare ends when she/he turns 65 also.

Life Insurance

When you retire and you have at least 15 years of continuous service your GE life insurance continues at no cost to you during retirement. **Your basic life insurance is converted into a \$15,000 policy. This changed in the 2015-2019 contract.**

- **Vacation** – You will be paid for any unused vacation and Personal days. Floating Holiday must be used before you retire.
- **Individual Development Program** – Eligibility ends
- **Educational Loans** – You Remain Eligible
- **Short-Term Disability Benefits** – Coverage and benefits end
- **Long Term Disability Income (LTDI) Plan** – Coverage ends

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2016
MEMBERSHIP INVOLVEMENT TRAINING CLASS

R.A.G.E.

*By Ron Flowers
President, R.A.G.E.*

GE Says, “Hey Retirees! Have an Unhappy New Year!”

Well it is now 2016. The standard phrase this time of the year is Happy New Year. Well it isn't a happy new year for thousands upon thousands of GE Retirees who are now trying to find the means to pay for higher drug costs. In talking to many retirees over the past 2 ½ months the real effect of GE dumping the people who built their company became obvious. Drug costs for some went from \$800 a year to \$3,000 or \$4,000 thousand. Retirees who never knew what a donut hole was (\$3,310 in drug costs) are now hitting it by April or July. These are retirees who need these lifesaving drugs and are now trying to find out where they are going to get the money to pay for them. In a meeting in Schenectady, NY, the company said, “most people will make out on this change”. I say, if this hurt anybody it was the wrong thing to do. The way I look at it, this change was pointed at the old, sick and the dying who have the higher drug costs so GE can save even more money. These are also the retirees who can least afford the increased drug costs. The only thing this move can be called is Heartless!

Now GE made billions by dumping their retirees into One Exchange. Did these extra billions stop their stock from dropping last week? No, all it did was make lives miserable for the retired workers who built the company. There can be no excuse for this other than greed.

RAGE Meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month, at the Union Hall, at noon. If you know a retiree who isn't a RAGE Member, tell them to stop by.

2016 Financial Projection

The Officers have been busy trying to put a budget in place that meets the needs of our membership. Each and every expense is being studied, and we hope to present it to the membership next week. There will be a flier out early next week detailing the budget projections, and where we think cuts can be made without eliminating services to the membership.

Change of Address Form

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Pay Number _____

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

Having A Personal Problem?

Call **Keith Eller** at 875-4EAP (Ext. 4327)

AA Meeting Schedule

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

FEBRUARY 2016

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2 Ground Hog Day	3	4	5	6
7	8	9 Mardi Gras	10 R.A.G.E. MEMBERSHIP MEETING	11	12 Lincoln's Birthday	13
14 Valentine's Day	15 President's Day	16	17	18 506 MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS	19	20
21	22 Washington's Birthday	23 MEMBERSHIP INVOLVEMENT TRAINING CLASS	24	25	26 R.A.G.E. BOARD MEETING	27
28	29 Mark Pierson's Birthday					



**14th ANNUAL
HOMETOWN HEROES
BOWLING TOURNAMENT**

**EASTWAY LANES
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2016
12:30 P.M.**



APPLICATION FORM

TOURNAMENT RULES

1. Event shall consist of three (3) games bowled on one (1) pair of lanes assigned by the Tournament Director and all decisions by the Tournament Director are final.
2. **This is a singles event.** Prizes will be awarded to the highest game and highest series bowled by both men and women. There will be no duplication of awards.
3. This is a fun-filled community event for our sponsors and friends of all ages.
4. Please note your bowling fee is not considered a donation to the Erie VA Medical Center and the fee only covers the cost of bowling.

◆ **ENTRY FEE: \$15 each** ◆ **5 people on a lane** ◆ **Limited to the first 200 paid entries**

Deadline to PREREGISTER is Friday, February 19, 2016. Availability is limited the day of the event. Junior bowlers are welcome. Check in begins at 11:30 a.m. There will also be auctions. Please note that 100% of proceeds will benefit **Erie VA Medical Center.**

Mail ENTRIES to: UE Local 506; 3923 Main Street; Erie, PA 16511. You may also drop off your entry to the Union Hall at the above address any weekday from 8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. Make entry fee check payable to: UE 506 Sports Committee. Questions concerning the tournament, please contact Matt McCracken at 814-440-0218.

If you would like to **donate** for this fundraising event, **please make checks payable to: Erie VAMC and mail to VAMC Voluntary Office, 135 East 38th Street, Erie, PA 16504. Please respond to this letter by Friday, February 19, 2016, if you would like to be recognized as a sponsor.**

ENTRY FORM – TEAM LINE UP (please print)

◆ **ENTRY FEE: \$15 each** ◆

FIRST AND LAST NAME

PHONE NO.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Five bowlers not required. Singles or Pairs accepted