



# LOCAL 506 UNION NEWS

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Friday, May 15, 2009

## FIRST MINORITY MEMBER INSTALLED AS A LOCAL 506 OFFICER

On April 16, 2009, **Wayne Burnett** was sworn into office becoming only the sixth Business Agent to serve Local 506 during its 72-year history. That day was also historical because Wayne became the first African American elected to hold one of the top offices in our organization. Appropriately, this event took place in the same year Americans saw Barack Obama installed as President of the United States.



Business Agent Burnett is new to being an officer but he is not new to the Local 506 involvement. Wayne served as a steward for over 30 years making him one of the most experienced members currently on the executive board. He has held three executive board positions in the past twelve years: Local 506 Financial Secretary, Treasurer and more recently Building 7's Chief Divisional Steward. Probably of most importance, Wayne was a founding member and past chairman of the Local's Unity Council. This successful and unique program was established to intervene when worker-to-worker conflicts arise. The council has also helped overcome diversity issues that have popped up in the Plant.

## OATH OF OFFICE

UE General President **John Hovis** administered the Oath of Office to the Local 506 Officers at the 3rd shift meeting on April 16th.



(L to R) UE General President John Hovis, Bob Plonski, Steve Hyzer, Dave Adams, Scott Duke, Mike Hayes, Matt McCracken, Wayne Burnett and Jim Pifer.

## MAY MEMBERSHIP MEETING NOTICE

### Agenda:

- ☐ Convention Delegate Election (See related article page 3).
- ☐ President Pifer will give GEB report.
- ☐ Officers' Reports, Committee updates and general business matters.
- ☐ Committee reports, Officer's updates and general business matters will follow.

### MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS AND TIMES ARE:

**Thursday, May 21, 2009 (All meetings)**  
 7:20 a.m. (3rd Shift)  
 1:00 p.m. (2nd Shift)  
 3:20 p.m. (1st Shift)



## CHIEF PLANT STEWARD

We had our Step Two on Friday, April 24, 2009 and it was a long meeting. Forty-six cases were presented, some were discipline, farm-outs, payment issues and working out of class and code. We ended up with 21 cases resolved, 11 cases put on hold and 14 will go to Step III. Our next Step III meeting will be on Tuesday, May 19, 2009 in Cleveland, OH. There are 14 cases that will be presented. In attendance will be Jim Pifer, Wayne Burnett, Giovanni Caputo and myself. As of May 5, 2009 there are 97 cases still to be presented at Step II. Our next Step II meeting will be on Friday, May 29, 2009. Steward classes are scheduled for Tuesday, June 23, 2009; all members are welcome to come. The times for the Steward classes: 7:10 a.m for third shift, 1:00 pm. For second shift and 3:10 pm for first shift.

I would like to provide some information on two of the grievances to be presented on Friday, May 29, 2009 at the Step II meeting. UE 506 grieves the fact the company was transferring members from a temporary job to another without assigning them a permanent class and code and the other is, UE 506 believes the company has permanently laid off 506 members who are qualified to bump less senior employees.



### STEWARD CLASSES

**Scheduled for Tuesday, June 23rd, 2009**

**Three classes at 7:10am; 1:00 pm and 3:15pm**

The classes are designed to help stewards learn more about government benefits (i.e.. unemployment compensation).

## UNITY COUNCIL HERE TO HELP

The Unity Council was formed to help address discrimination and harassment issues in the Plant. If you have a need to talk with someone from the Council you can reach them at the following numbers:

Chairperson Cyndy Casey, Bldg. 12	824-0150 (pager) or 725-2417(Home)
Don Brown, Bldg. 63	490-4433 (cell)
Scott Duke, Bldg. 12	875-6239 (shop – 2nd shift)
Tim Newara, Bldg. 10-26	875-6054 (shop-days)
Rich Laskowski	875-2348
UE LOCAL 506 HALL	899-3108

## News n View's

*By President Jim Pifer*

Hello, this is my first article for the U.E. NEWS so I'll tell you a little about myself. First of all, I'd like to thank you, the members, for giving me the opportunity to represent you for the next two years. My goal is to keep the members informed on issues inside the plant and also give my point of view on matters that may or may not be the view of the board.

- ✓ It's no secret that 2009, and possibly longer, are going to be very slow as far as work is concerned. The members have every right to expect both sides to do what is necessary to bring back farmed out work and bring in new work.
- ✓ You should expect to be here 40 hours unless something unforeseen happens, you need a waiting week or if you are laid off for a full week of TLOW. It is important to note that though we have been busy the last several years and now that work has slowed down, we expect to be treated with respect and I'm sure the company expects the same.
- ✓ Remember brothers and sisters, when something adversely affects one member, it affects us all, regardless of what building you work in. Please don't have the false sense of security that it won't happen in your building. Other divisions shouldn't have to take care of THEIR OWN PROBLEMS, by themselves. If it's an issue that has the potential to affect all members then we will unite as one to combat it. When issues remain unresolved rest assured the 3 officers will think things through and recommend to the e-board what we feel is in the best interest of our members.
- ✓ Have pride in your union! To you younger serviced members, if it wasn't for 506 and the gains and sacrifices from past members, this shop wouldn't be any different than the one you left as far as wages and working conditions are concerned [in most cases].
- ✓ I would like to take this opportunity to tell the members how much respect I have for Frank and commend him for a job well done and for setting a high standard for myself and for all future Local 506 Presidents to aim for.
- ✓ On Friday, April 24<sup>th</sup> the 3 officers met with Todd Wyman and his staff, he laid out this years schedule as it stands right now. We also talked about trust and integrity. I believe we ended the meeting with a better understanding of the expectations both sides have.
- ✓ Patte Dillen our Job Preservation Chairperson is bringing me up to speed as far as work is concerned. If there is any one interested in getting involved with Job Preservation contact Patte or call the hall.



## LOCAL 506 MAY PRIMARY ENDORSEMENTS

The Legislative Action Committee (LAC) made recommendations to endorse the following candidates in the May 19, 2009 Primary Election. The Executive Board and the Membership approved their recommendations.

The following candidates were endorsed for  
Erie County Council:

2<sup>nd</sup> District     **Joe Giles**  
4<sup>th</sup> District     **Ron Cleaver**

The candidate endorsed for Erie City Mayor:  
**Mayor Joe Sinnott**

The following candidates were endorsed for  
Erie City Council:

**Jim Thompson**  
**Curtis Jones Jr.**  
**Joe Schember**  
**Waydell Johnson**

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This letter to the Erie Times Editor appeared in the  
Wednesday, May 6th edition. Well stated Lozada.

## FREE CHOICE ACT DRAWS PRAISE

Is this country not concerned with freedoms anymore? A secret ballot not union campaigns is not what the Employee Free Choice is about.

I am a current union member with great appreciation for what UE Local 506 has provided and fought for. Previous to my employment with GE Transportation; my co-workers and I watched firsthand as that company fired employees for minor wrongdoings.

We listened as the company gave the timeworn speech that we were a family and that they can fix issues without the involvement of a union that just wants to collect dues money. We watched as the leaflets and flyers for the union were trashed and defaced. We read the company e-mails, saw the changes in policy and felt the threats from non supporters.

The Employee Free Choice Act will help employees who feel threatened by a company. It does not automatically establish a union and it does not write or sign a contract. It helps employees stand up for their rights as a free people.

**Norberto Lozada Jr./Erie**

## 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL MICHAEL D. CROTTY EMERGENCY SERVICES BIKE RUN AND BIKE SHOW

**Date of Bike Run and Bike Show**

**June 27, 2009**

**Rain Date - June 28, 2009**

Run starts at the Lawrence Park Fire hall at 4102 Main Street, Erie PA, finishes at the General Electric Picnic Grove on the Shores of Lake Erie – Bike Show to follow the run. The ride features stops held by various fire departments in Erie County...North East, Wattsburg, Edinboro and McKean

Cost of Registration: Rider - \$25.00, Passenger - \$20.00. If possible please pay in advance\* if paying by a check, please mail to: Lawrence Park Fire Department, 4102 Main Street, Erie PA 16511. The check should be addressed to: Lawrence Park Fire Department / Michael D Crotty /tower/facility.

All registered riders and passengers will receive a T-Shirt and will receive a meal. T-Shirts and meals will be available to people on the grounds. Early Registration: Can be found at [www.michaeldcrotty.com](http://www.michaeldcrotty.com)

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## CONVENTION DELEGATE ELECTION NOTICE

An election will be conducted during the May 21, 2009 Membership Meetings to fill four Rank and File Convention Delegate positions. Voting will only be conducted while meetings are in session. **PLEASE BRING YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD TO VOTE.** The Candidates are listed below in alphabetical order.

1. **DAVE ALLEN**, BLDG. 10
2. **DON BROWN**, BLDG. 63
3. **CYNDY CASEY**, BLDG. 12
4. **DAVE CHADWELL**, BLDG. 5
5. **TERRY GIGAX**, BLDG. 63
6. **MARK HALLER**, BLDG. 6
7. **STEVE HARRIS**, BLDG. 4
8. **CHRIS MCSHANE**, BLDG. 12
9. **JOHN PAYNE**, BLDG. 18C
10. **RICH TARNASKI**, BLDG. 6
11. **JASON TRAYER**, BLDG. 6
12. **DAN VOTO**, BLDG. 12
13. **DOUG WOLF**, BLDG. 63
14. **ROGER ZACZYK**, BLDG. 10



## EASTERN REGIONAL MEETING REPORT

On Saturday, April 25, 2009, ten members of this Local attended the Eastern Regional Council meeting held in Monroeville, PA. The Region consists of New York, New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, Washington D.C., North Carolina, Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Ohio. What we learned was something that most already knew, that times are tough all over. All Locals are experiencing some kind of problem due to this worldwide financial crisis. In locals that are involved in new contracts, it is even worse, because their companies are taking advantage of the present economic situations. We, here at Local 506, sometimes think we have problems, but just imagine being in a "right to work state" where you have no bargaining rights. It is vital that we as working people stay on top of our political leaders to pass the Employee Free Choice Act.

Also during the meeting **President Jim Pifer** was elected as Secretary/Treasurer (replacing **Frank Fusco**) and **Roger Zaczyk** was elected to the Executive Board (replacing **Mark Pierson**).

Our **National President John Hovis** gave an update on the finances of the National Union and some recommendations that will be brought up at this year's convention. He also explained the measures the National was taking during this worldwide crisis.



Eastern Regional Officers being sworn in. Officers include Local 506 President Jim Pifer, Roger Zaczyk and Don Brown (Dave Allen is not shown)

### Recent UE 506 Retirees

Bldg#18-C

**Richard J. Barzeski**  
**Gordon H. Merritt**



## ODDS AND ENDS

- ❑ For those of you who didn't attend last month's meeting, I'd like to take this time to thank you for electing me as your Business Agent. My sole purpose for over thirty years has been to serve this membership.

Fulfilling the shoes of previous B.A. **Pat Rafferty** by no means is an easy task. Pat's knowledge extends far beyond what most realize, and (with his help) I'm confident that I can and will capture a good deal of that knowledge. I ask for your patience.

Remember Brothers and Sisters, times are different now. When things change, we sometimes change. Let's remember, that we are a union and in order to move forward, we must do it together.

- ❑ The company has indicated that they want to move station #1 of Building #10 into Building #5. They have yet to discuss with the officers of when this will happen or any other particulars of this move. As we have this discussion, we will keep the members informed.
- ❑ As we have always done in the past, we will be offering discounted Amusement Park Tickets. However, since shutdown is split this year into two periods, we will probably only (unless they are seasonal) offer these discounts during the July shutdown period. More information will be published in the June issue of the UE NEWS for the hours of distribution.
- ❑ The Vacation Averaging Period begins Fiscal Week # 21 and runs through Fiscal Week # 24. For those who don't know, this is the piecework-averaging period that determines your Shutdown pay (For Fiscal Week #27).
- ❑ Last reminder - Members continuing to carry the original GE COMPREHENSIVE MEDICAL PLAN (CMB) must submit 2008 insurance claims by June 30, 2009 or risk losing reimbursement. — **Wayne**

## In Sympathy

The Officers and Executive Board Members of UE Local 506 wish to extend their sincere condolences to the family and friends of **Kelly McClinton, Building 18C**, who passed away April 11, 2009.



*Memorial Day*  
*May 25, 2009*





## PENSION SERVICE EXPLAINED

What's the difference between PBS and PQS? When do I lose service pension credits? What happens if I work less than 1000 hours in a year? Can I receive more than one credit in a calendar year? These are all commonly asked questions that all too often receive wrong answers. Hopefully, the following information will help you better understand pension service, how credits are accrued and when they are lost or suspended.

**PENSION QUALIFICATION SERVICE (PQS)** is used to determine "eligibility" for certain optional pensions and pension benefits. **For example:** In the event of a permanent job loss, you need at least 25 years of PQS and be age 55 to 59 to be eligible for a Regular SERO. Or, to be eligible for SERO 30, you need at least 30 years of PQS, be under age 55, and you have to be directly impacted by a permanent lack of work with no opportunities for placement or displacement. **You receive one year of PQS each year that you work at least 1000 hours.**

**PENSION BENEFIT SERVICE (PBS)** is used to calculate the "amount" of some of your pension benefits. In simplified terms, it is equivalent to your full and partial years of service while you participate in the GE Pension Plan.

**Q: Do I lose PBS and PQS credits when I'm laid off or on leave due to illness or an accident?**

**A:** PQS and PBS will increase for up to 12 months, provided that your service is not terminated for any reason. PBS and PQS stops accruing after the 12-month period.

**Q: How about military leave?** **A:** PBS and PQS are credited for military time if you promptly reported back to the company.

**Q: Can I gain more Pension Qualification Service, PQS by working overtime?**

**A:** No, working overtime may help you reach the 1000 hours quicker and increase your monthly Pension Benefit, but in no case will you be credited with any more than one year PQS or PBS in a given calendar year.

**Q: When won't I receive PQS or PBS?**

**A:** Here are some ways you can or may have lost PBS and PQS:

1. No credit is applied to employees while not a participant in plan.
2. Some strikes (no credits were applied during the 1969 strike)
3. Employees were offered, but did not buy back PBS, lost service for that period.
4. Prior to 1991, if you were absent for over two weeks before you had 12 months of service (Continuity of

Service) credits were not applied for that period of absence.

**Q: Will Temporary LOWs affect my Pension?**

**A:** LOWs may or may not affect the amount of pension you will receive. The Company offers two pension funds. One of them, the Guaranteed Pension, uses the last high 3 consecutive years out of your last ten years of service to calculate your Pension. So if you are counting on 2009 to be one of your high 3 years, lower earnings will have an impact on your pension benefit.

The other Pension, the Regular Pension uses your annual earnings to calculate how much will be added to your total annual pension benefit in a given year. Therefore, if your earnings are reduced, the money added to your annual pension will be lower for that year. The current formula adds 1.45% of the first \$40,000 you make (that comes to \$580) and 1.9% of everything you make over \$40,000. Combined, those amounts will be added to your annual pension benefit.

## SPORTS SHORTS

April showers bring May flowers. With the rising temperatures and sunshine outside, everybody wants to spend more time outdoors. With that in mind the Sports Committee is bringing you some outdoor activities. On May 16<sup>th</sup>, the French Creek float flows downstream and on June 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Lawrence Park Sandlot Volleyball Tournament will serve up entertainment at the Nagle Road Courts, at 9 am.

On Sunday, June 14<sup>th</sup>, the Erie Firefighters are reviving the VA 5K Run/Walk. Call Chairman Matt McCracken at 5963 if you are interested in volunteering or participating. The Committee is also planning the UE Golf Tournament. It will be held at Riverside in August.

Thanks go out to the volunteers and those of you who participated in the **April 4<sup>th</sup> UE Bowling Tournament** and congratulations to the following winning teams and bowlers:

1<sup>st</sup> Place Team "Strike Force" scored 3517: Bowling on the team were: **Tom Astemborski, Jason Hanes, Chris Adamski, Mike Shultz and Captain Kurt Fesenmyer.**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Place team "Not Very Good" rolled a pretty good 3407. **Cy DePoali, Dan McFadden, Harry Carpenter, Tom Eicher and Captain Ron Ingaldi** made up that team.

### INDIVIDUAL WINNERS

High Game - Men: **Pat Bruno - 299**

High Series - Men: **Ron Ingaldi - 775**

High Game - Women: **Nancy Bohman - 222**

High Series - Women: **Ruby Church - 555**



## UE 506'S VERY OWN "BIKER BUREAUCRAT" STEPS DOWN

*Written by Dale Stubenhofer & Greg Engel*

Longtime Business Agent Pat Rafferty will leave the office for the last time at the April Membership meeting. "It's time", Pat said. "I wanted to leave this office with my replacement up to speed on the variety of issues and duties that come across this desk".

Pat had an opportunity to SERO out in October of 2007, but he turned it down. "I wasn't ready", he said. "It caught me by surprise I guess- I didn't expect my seniority date to qualify, but it did. And I had things I wanted to see through to completion, including training a replacement for this position". Pat will most likely retire in the October 2009 round of early retirements.

Pat has a history of service with UE 506 that compares with anyone who has ever held a 506 office. Coming to GE in 1970, he quickly became active as an alternate steward and then as Steward and Alternate Chief Steward. He was elected Executive Board At Large in 1979, 1981 and 1983. He was very much interested in the piecework system and documented the decline of the system as pay raises were added to the base rate but not the "adder", meaning the value of piecework rates decline over time without maintenance to the entire system. His documentation was useful in the 1982 national negotiations.

In December 1983 Pat was elected Chief Steward of 18 Control. In June of 1985 he was elected President of Local 506, a position he held for two terms. It was during this time Bldg. 64 was sold to LeLand. Pat was instrumental in securing a UE contract for this new UE Local and the UE 506 employees who remained in Bldg. 64. Returning to the shop in 1989, he continued to attend meetings and be involved as much as he could while working mostly on second shift.

In 1995 Pat returned to the Executive Board as Financial Secretary. He served in this capacity for two years and in 1997 ran successfully for the office of Business Agent. He has been reelected to this office every two years since then. During this time Pat instituted several enhancements for the members, including pre-retirement counseling and, together with Chief Plant Steward Dave Kitchen, much-improved Workman's Compensation and Unemployment Compensation help for members. This coming at a time when GE was replacing "live benefit help" with a bunch of 800 phone numbers and then Governor Tom Ridge was attacking WC and UC benefits by eliminating staff and budgets. In 2002 when the state of PA was rolling out it's new "call center" Pat and Dave approached the officials with a long list of shortcomings in the system frustrating Union Members, which, up to then, had not been addressed. Several meetings followed and the end result was the Pennsylvania booklet *"A Guide for Setting Up a Claim by Telephone or Internet"* written by Pat Rafferty.

As Pat looks at the last of his 144<sup>th</sup> series of membership meetings as Business Agent, he expressed some of his thoughts to the members regarding the future of our Local. Because of his passion for this union, he started his parting comments by heeding a warning to be mindful of electing the right people for leadership in this local. He warned to stay away from those who would frivolously

waste dues money or would bring their own agenda's to the table instead of the overall good of the membership. Pat spoke of being thankful for working with so many great officers and board members over the years, and expressed the faith he has in the youth and the future of this membership. In conclusion, as a long time leader of this union, Pat made three requests of the membership: 1. Continue the UE 506 tradition of Rank and File unionism; 2. Keep UE 506 as a bottom-up, members run union; 3. Keep UE as the bargaining unit, the alternative unions would be detrimental.

### HAVING A PERSONAL PROBLEM?

**\*Please note – Dave Adams has a new pager number: 824-0141**

Call when you need guidance or advice.

Call when you need information or a referral

Call when you need help – Call NOW

Contact UE Local 506 Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

**Liaison Dave Adams at Page No. 824-0141 or**

**Call an EAP Counselor at 875-4EAP (Ext. 4327)**

### AA MEETING SCHEDULE

Where: Building 2-1, Bay A-Column 8, Mezzanine

When: Thursdays 1<sup>st</sup> Shift 11:30 am

2<sup>nd</sup> Shift 7:30 pm

3<sup>rd</sup> Shift 3:00 am

## JUNE 2009

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10 R.A.G.E. MEETING	11	12	13
14 Flag Day VA5K Run	15	16 E-BOARD MEETING	17 CSF MEETING	18 MEMBERSHIP MEETING	19	20
21 Father's Day 	22	23 STEWARDS CLASSES	24	25	26 R.A.G.E. BOARD MEETING	27
28	29	30				