



## 2018 Quarter 3 Newsletter

Hello Brothers & Sisters,

In the last newsletter, I talked a lot about what we did during the first three months of my term in office and what our vision was over the remainder of this fiscal year.

In this newsletter, I would like to update you on where we stand with each of those items discussed and where we stand with some of the things I promised when I ran for office.

First off I think it's important to talk about the contract for the Vision Works bargaining unit. By the time this letter reaches everyone, ballots will be in the mail, and hopefully, we will have a ratified contract shortly after that.

While we didn't get everything, we wanted. I think we did an excellent job gaining ground on the issues the members said were important. I hope everyone is satisfied with what we were able to obtain in this contract.

The last six months have left many people questioning their future with the company. While the union cannot tell the company how to run itself, we worked diligently to secure safety nets in this contract as a result of some of the things we have seen the company do over these last six months. Of course, I hope that the company won't continue to cut hours, close stores or eliminate positions, but things like guaranteed hours for full-timers and increased severance packages should help ease some of this stress.

Some of the noneconomic issues that were in need of change were being forced to use PTO when the company closes its stores for bad weather, etc., restricted vacation and blackout periods during the summer and staying closed on Sunday. We were able to reduce the restricted period, reduce the blackout period and while we can't guarantee they won't open on Sunday, we made it very expensive should the company choose to do so. It also helps the stores that are already open on Sunday.

Financially we didn't get the best increase in the minimums, but I feel, for the most part, the market will dictate what they need to hire new associates at, so getting a solid COLA was urgent for us, and I feel we were able to accomplish that.

There are also many other things in the contract to be excited about, but these are some of the highlights.

We finally went to Arbitration for the Latham bargaining unit over the use of sick time with 48-hour notice. This is one of those situations where we got more than we started with, but had to trade stipulations to make this gain. Folks now have eight days a year they can use their time that the company must grant and it won't count toward the dreaded occurrence policy. The only caveat is there are some rules on how to use this time.

I count this as a major victory for our union. The company didn't want to give us anything, but the arbitrator made it very clear, give them something or I'm going to rule in favor of the Union. However once they made an offer, he said the same to us, take what the company offered or I will rule in their favor. With the help of your Stewards and our legal team, we came up with a process that we thought was fair on how to use that time and we also closed out two other grievances with this arbitration.

By the time this letter goes out. I will have visited over 90 of the Vision Work Retail stores, and all of the larger locations at least once. When I campaigned, I said I would visit every location by the end of my term. I am on pace to do so by the end of the first year. I have plans to finish up with the Western Region, Southern Tier, and the PA stores by fall and I will also be visiting our Value Vision locations during this time.

As promised we have a General membership meeting planned on August 12th at the Saratoga Casino and Hotel. I am anticipating a solid turn out, and it should be a lot of fun. Our local hasn't had a general membership meeting in over five years.

We will hold our fourth and final executive board meeting of this fiscal year in August. This will give us a great foundation as we head into our next fiscal year October 1st. I am proud to say that over the last six months we have not only set budgets but we have hit those budgets (often coming in below) and we will discuss these types of things at the general membership meeting.

Back in November the previous board discussed amending our constitution. This is something I agreed with, if done correctly, and with the right people in place. The issue was the timing was wrong and we didn't have the right people in place. Back in April, your new board reviewed what was on

the table to be amended, we kept what we felt was fair, changed some of the areas that needed changing and removed the items we felt didn't belong. I am targeting September for ballots to go out to the local so that you can vote on these changes to our constitution.

One of the other things I have been working on is a Woman's Committee and a Diversity Committee. I am happy to say we have a chairperson for our Woman's committee and she received her formal training back in April. In August we will be sending our chairperson of the Diversity Committee for training. More details to follow on both committees' very soon.

In June I had the opportunity to attend the CWA Presidents meeting and Legislative Conference in Washington DC. While there I had the opportunity to sit in a conference that included guest such as Senator Bernie sanders, Kirstin Gillibrand, and Elizabeth Warren. I also had the opportunity to meet with Kirstin Gillibrand directly with the purpose of asking her to adopt bills before congress that will help the American working people. One of the bills that we were pushing is the "Call Center Bill". Where it forces companies that ship our jobs over seas to still pay the same taxes as those jobs in America.

Finally, there is one more great surprise that I have in store for our membership. It includes the executive board securing a free accidental life insurance policy for every member. I won't get into specifics right now, but at our general membership meeting, we will have a guest speaker coming to talk all about it, with a letter going out to all the members shortly after. I am very excited about this opportunity, and every member will have this plan at no charge to him or her.

It has been a real honor serving this membership the past six months. I sincerely hope that folks are happy with what I have done so far. I hope you feel the impact I have brought to our Union. By communicating with and uniting our membership to the best of my ability, and increasing your Stewards. You now have more representation you can go to with your challenges. Following through on grievances and daily issues have been a priority. As many know, if you call, email, or even text me, I will respond. I look forward to what comes next and wrapping up everything I've put in motion over these next three months and ending our fiscal year on a positive note.

In Unity,  
Jason Johnson

P.S In the next newsletter, we will begin looking at our plans for the next Fiscal year.