



2019 4th Fiscal Quarter Newsletter

Hello Brothers & Sisters,

Typically I like to talk about things from the start of the quarter and work my way to the end of the quarter and then talk about what's coming next, but I just can't contain my excitement and want to start by discussing the General Membership meeting held just a few days ago first.

On Sunday, September 22nd at the Saratoga Hotel and Casino, the local held its annual GMM. This year I am pleased to say over 110 members showed up. I hope that all of those that did attend found the meeting informative, and fun, but most importantly felt the unity in the room.

I know we do not solve every issue and that there are challenges every day at your respective shops, but I think our members are more unified than ever before and that they know that the Shop Stewards and your Executive Board are fighting for your rights every day.

My commitment to this membership is to continue to hold these meeting yearly as long as we continue to have over 100 members attend.

Going back to the beginning of the quarter. In July, the delegates of the Local attended the IUE-CWA Convention and I am proud to say that IUE President Carl Kennebrew was re-elected as President of the IUE. Carl's vision and plan for the IUE directly impact's our local with his efforts to organize and grow and he has made a commitment to our local.

Another important topic that was passed at the convention was merging the SIF, and growth funds. Most don't understand what that means, but to summarize, typically the leaders of the individual units, trying to utilize or access those funds have found the process burdensome with the way they are structured, however by merging those funds, it should allow our leaders at the international level such as Carl to have less red tape which makes it easier to utilize those funds so that we can get help we need with things such things as organizing.

I was fortunate enough to speak on the floor at the convention on this matter and merging those funds was approved. (My speech is currently on the Locals Facebook page).

Also announced at the convention were the 2019 CWA Scholarship winners and I am pleased to announce that one of our members Kim Idzinski from the Visionworks bargaining unit, son William Idzinski was awarded a Joe Beirne CWA Scholarship. This is the largest scholarship that the CWA offers and we are proud of William and his achievement and we wish him a successful future.

In August, I visited the Balester lab in Wilkes Barre Pa and held a meeting to discuss the upcoming contract negotiations in November. Participation at that meeting was very high as most of the members of that bargaining unit did attend.

I also visited the Newtown Square lab and surveys for their contract will be passed out at my next visit in November.

Even though this quarter didn't come with a ton of bad news. It is with regret that I share that in August. The local was informed that the mailroom/print room at the Latham facility was reducing its staff and as a result, 6 members were going to be laid off effective October 18th.

Upon learning of this decision, the local invoked its bargaining rights and negotiated an enhanced severance package for all those impacted. The department will still carry 4 associates.

This layoff affected me personally a little more than previous layoffs, as this was the department I worked in prior to becoming the president. I have built a very close relationship with those members and informing those members was the most difficult thing I have had to do so far in my Presidency.

On 8/27/19 Visionworks Senior Management Team and the Local meet for a Labor Management Meeting. IUE President Carl Kennebrew attended this meeting and the topic was the purchase of Visionworks by VSP and future organizing. This is the first time that the President of the IUE has attended a meeting for our Local.

Many of you may already be aware of the headline that was in the last IUE newsletter "The Bolt" so it was such a great moment for our local to meet with the company and have our international leaders there to discuss a very important topic solidifying their commitment to support our local.

Other topics included lab challenges, monthly training meetings and more.

Over the Labor Day holiday. I was approached by a writer from "Vision Monday", to do a piece on labor in the optical industry, and it is with great pride that I share our local was featured in their weekly online publication, and that article and interview is on our website now.

In Memorial

It is with a heavy heart that I share during the week of 9/15/19, our local lost two of its longtime members. The local held a moment of silence at the beginning of the GMM to recognize and to pay respects to those we lost. Our thoughts and prayers go out to their family and friends and to the coworkers who worked side by side with these members daily.

Marshall Raul 07/20/1952 (Retired) Davis Vision, Newtown Square 1999-2012
Finishing and ARC Tech. Shop Steward 1999-2010

Pearl Kiskis 06/24/1949 Vision works, Amsterdam Store # 1052. 30 years,
Licensed Optician.

As we transition into the final fiscal year of my first term, I just want to say it has been a tremendous honor to serve this membership and I hope that you have been happy with the progress we have made so far. Next year is going to be the busiest year yet with three contract negotiations as just the starting point. Below is a shortlist of what is planned for the upcoming year.

In Unity
Jason

Arbitration Vision works Apprentices
Contract Negotiations: Balester
Contract Negotiations: Newtown Square
Store Visits to every retail location and quarterly visits to large locations.
CWA President Meeting
CWA District 1 meeting
IUE Divisional Meeting
Local 408 General Membership Meeting
Steward Training
Contract Negotiations Latham
Local 408 Elections