



2019 4th (Calendar) Quarter Newsletter

Hello Brothers and Sisters,

As we finish up 2019, I wanted to briefly talk about what has occurred since the last newsletter and then focus on what's coming up in the first calendar quarter of 2020.

Arbitration for the N.Y stores was finally held for the Visionworks bargaining unit over the use of apprentices and their sponsors.

While this grievance doesn't encompass all of the challenges we have faced on who has been allowed to do dispensing, we are hoping it will at least solve the issues over the proper relations between the Apprentice and Sponsor.

Win lose or draw, this is an issue that has been a challenge for far to long and something needed to finally be done about it. Arbitration wrapped up on 10/24/19 and we expect a verdict in the beginning of February.

We have done everything we can as a union to try and resolve this issue, Depending on the outcome of arbitration. We will determine what to do about MA next. We will be sure to communicate with the bargaining unit once the verdict is made.

I am pleased to announce that on 11/22/19, the Balester Optical Bargaining unit has successfully bargained a new 3 year contract. The contract was passed with a 100% ratification of those that voted with nearly a complete participation in the vote.

Highlights include a change to how vacation time is approved, payout for some unused vacation, employer contribution increases to 401k, increase in employer contribution towards medical premiums and an increase in wages (that for the first time in over a decade is more than previous contracts). This all came with no givebacks to the company.

From a financial standpoint, are books for the 2019 fiscal year are closed and our accountant has all of our information so that we can get our necessary LM-2 and 990 forms complete to the federal government in time for the second year in a row.

I am pleased to announce that we finally have a Woman's Committee and Diversity Committee in place and I am looking forward to see how each of these committees grow.

In the Diversity Committee are Jose Taveras, Steve Poston and Christian Rubio.

In the Woman's committee are SandiLyn Rivet, Annie Carnevale, Catherine Mann and Samantha Song.

If you see them at the work place, Please take a moment to thank them for stepping up and being part of these committees.

It has been a very long and rollercoaster year for our local, we have seen some of the highest highs, and our lowest lows. There still continues to be issues in the shops like mandatory OT in the Latham Call Center and lab issues at the Visionworks retail locations.

Some of these issues are beyond the scope of what a union can do, but we continue to have conversations with the company about these issues and we will continue to work hard to increase employee's rights in the work place.

As we get ready for 2020. I just ask that each of us continued to be unified as one union because that is the strongest way we can continue to make change for each any everyone of you.

In December, I will be traveling to DC meeting with senators and members of congress to continue to push for workers rights at the state and federal levels. This is just another way we continue to fight for workers rights.

One of the bills I will be asking our members of congress to pass is the "PRO ACT". I have been asked by the IUE to be one of the lead speakers at Capitol Hill. It is nerve racking and an honor at the same time.

When I return from that trip, I will be taking a 2 week vacation during the Holidays. I need to prepare for what is going to be a very busy 2020, starting with the Newtown Square Lab Contract Negotiations in February. (Contract surveys were passed out in November) and shortly after those negotiations, I will begin the journey to start visiting all the retail locations again. Starting with my own backyard the Eastern Region, sometime in March.

Please remember to continue to utilize your stewards, as I am not always available for the day-to-day issues, but always know that they follow up with me on issues every step of the way.

I look forward to seeing all of you again soon and I hope you all have a happy and safe Holiday season.

In Unity
Jason

