



2020 1st Calendar Quarterly Newsletter

Hello Brothers & Sisters,

I was hoping to have a lot to share since our last newsletter, but unfortunately everything has been thrown off by the COVID-19 pandemic.

At this point out of the 1350 member we have, over only about 225 are still working.

I will also have info out in the coming days, what the Visionworks bargaining unit is doing about stores openings/closures. Once I have that info finalized, I will be sure to share that with all of you.

Because so many of our workers are not at their shops, I have decided to use the Facebook page as the primary means of communication. I strongly recommend that all of our members like or follow the Facebook page through the pandemic.

While this pandemic is a big blow to all of us, I know that we will recover. In the meantime, I have cancelled all of my travel through 4/30/20 and I will continue to modify that as needed.

This means that all the store visits I had planned will be delayed until further notice. I am hopeful to still get them all in by the end of the year.

While much of our business is stalled, I do have some information to share that has happened over the last three months.

Visionworks Arbitration: We receive a verdict for the arbitration held last year and unfortunately, we lost that decision. To summarize, the arbitrator felt that the state was inconsistent with its enforcement, therefore he was not going to rule on state law. He also felt that the bargaining history was in favor of the company. He did however state that he felt neither party established what is the "industry Standard"

Even though we lost, I am hopeful that the company will not make wholesale changes to their current practice and I have already shared what my recommendations are if anyone continues to see what they view as state violation.

Newtown Square: despite the pandemic, contract negotiations did begin. In February I held a meeting to speak with the members about the contract, to get one last understanding of what are the concerns in the lab, share the results of the survey that was handed out in November and let you know what we would be pushing for in the contract negotiations.

In the first week of March, the company and the union got together and began working on a new contract. Contract negotiations was very slow and very difficult, but some progress was made.

We were scheduled to get back together the week of 3/22, but all of that has been cancelled until further notice as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

What we did do was signed an extension on the current contract through 7/15, which includes an agreement that once a contract is ratified, it would retro back to 4/1 and that the current incentive in place would remain in effect until that time. I am hopeful we can get together in June (or sooner) to finish the contract.

Visionworks: the union did have a makeshift L/M meeting on 3/13 by phone and we talked about the open issues including lab issues, and I am hopeful we will see some changes soon.

Steward Updates: I am pleased to share that we have a couple of new stewards that have been appointed.

Alvin Ellis of Versant Health, Newtown Square has been appointed to replace Brandon Polisano who is no longer with the company

Kevin Swart of Visionworks has been appointed to assist Cheryl Bisbee in the Southern Tier.

Dan Palmer of Visionwork who served in the Eastern Region was given an opportunity he couldn't pass up and has decided to move on from Visionworks. I want to personally thank Dan for all that he has done these past 2 years as a steward and I will personally miss him. I will look to replace the vacant position as soon as it is feasible.

In Memorial

It is with sadness that I share that over these last few months, the union has lost a few of our brothers and sister and Business partners. My heart goes out to each of the friends, family and coworkers that worked side by side with each of them every day.

Kalene Sanderson Optical Assistant, Visionworks, Auburn

Richie Davis Owner, Davis Vision

Gene Silbersweig Licensed Optician, Visionworks, Rockville Center

Stephan Cuyler Licensed Optician, Visionworks, Irondequoit and Greece

At this point, I don't know what the future holds or when we can get back to normal, but I am hopeful it will be sooner rather than later. There is a lot of business that still needs to be done, and if three months are lost as a result of the pandemic, it will mean that I will have to conduct that business in a shorter period of time, which only means my schedule will just get even more hectic. It will be imperative that our members utilize there stewards even more for the day to day issues. I will soon put together a schedule of what I hope the next few months will look like, so be sure to check the website and Facebook page for that updated schedule.

I know that all of our lives are upside down right now, but your safety and getting you back to work as soon and safe as possible is my number one priority and I am confident we will rebound.

In Unity
Jason