



## 2022 First Calendar Quarter Newsletter

Hello Brothers & Sisters,

Time sure does fly by fast. I can't believe we are already into the first 90 day of 2022. Looking back at these first 90 days, there is a quite a few things to reflect back on. First the pandemic seems to slowly getting behind us, and all I can hope is that it stays that way and we continue to get back to some sense of normalcy after 2 years.

At Visionworks we have gone through the first 90 days of the new incentive plan, and besides a few small hiccups early, it seems to be working as anticipated. We will be doing an info request in early April, just to see and compare where we truly are across the bargaining unit.

At Versant Health NTS, we were successfully in some mid-term bargaining, that saw a shift of some of the incentive wages moved over to base wage, without negatively impact the incentive overall and so far, that seems to be working as planned, with many people making more money than they previous were (especially those that do OT).

At Balester Optical I am proud to say that once again you won small lab of the year for Essilor Labs and I am also hoping that the agreement we made with Value Vision to have their work being done at your lab is working out for both parties. Later this year we will begin the process of preparing for your next contract (which will likely be in October) as I plan to have surveys out to you all around June.

One of the big issues were all dealing with globally right know is inflation. It is a topic that is often brought up when discussing our contracts and the wages. Unfortunately, when each contract was done, nobody could anticipate the record high inflation we have seen over the last few months.

That said, I do think it's important when analyzing the situation, it's important to look at the contract in totality and not just an individual year. While the raises this year don't equal to the recent inflation increase, overall, many of them are on point over a 3 year period and there have been many years where inflation was down or stagnant and the wage adjustment exceeded COLA, and in 2020, many of us still got our raises when most companies froze wages entirely.

I say this not to undermine the pinch that we are all feeling right now, but to show that we think in terms of three years and not one. The hope is things will eventually settle down a bit, and we continue to try and discuss wages with the companies whenever we get the chance to do so and the midterm negotiations with NTS is an example of that.

On the bright side, Value Vision employees should have seen any wear from .35 to .50 cent increases on March 1<sup>st</sup>, Both Davis Vision NTS and Latham have a 2.5% wage increase coming on 4/4/22, Visionworks will receive a 2.5% wage increase in July and the contract for Balester is up this fall, so some help is coming.

While it is still early, we are planning to have the next GMM in Early October, Dates and location will be shared as soon as things are finalized.

We also have a new company that is handling our Union EAP program. Information was faxed to all locations and all union boards and the app should have that information now. It is also listed on our website.

In March, the women of our Women's Committee, sent out post cards to all the women of the local, thanking them for all that they do. I hope that most of you received them as I was really proud on how they turned out. Our local is roughly 65% women and I don't think it's shared enough just how important you all are, to the job you do, in the industry we are in.

Recently The IUE-CWA Newsletter was distributed and it was great to see that once again our local shined in the newsletter for our effort from the Diversity Committee for the Diversity Day they put together back in December. We continue to showcase to the IUE-CWA just how mobilized and unified Local 408 is and it is great to continue to see that it is noticed.

Finally, I would like to take a moment to congratulate Gunnar Lenihan of Value Vision as he was elected into the vacant position of Trustee in early February, and Reggie Smith of NTS that was appointed as a Steward in February as well.

I hope that you are all doing well. Please keep checking the union boards, App, Facebook page and website for all future updates as they come.

In Unity  
Jason

**In Memoriam**

**John Laurin Versant Health Latham**

