



2023 third Calendar Quarter Newsletter

Hello Brothers & Sisters,

First and most important, The Union has begun the process of negotiating a new contract at Davis Vision Latham. Surveys were sent out in July; we held a zoom meeting in July and held a in-person meeting in August.

The Union met with the Company over 2 weeks in September and the company put a final offer on the table on 09/28/23 that we viewed as far below anything the negotiation team could endorse.

Next week Zoom meetings are being scheduled to go over the terms of the offer and to vote on whether to Ratify the contract as is or vote NO and authorize a strike.

I am strongly encouraging everyone to vote NO on this contract as I do not believe this offer is in your best interest.

Some of the low lights include taking away your ability to use your guaranteed personal time that we secured through arbitration back in 2018 and wage increases of only 3.25%, 2.75% and 2.25% over three years (or 8.25%) which is a historic low other than one impacted by COVID.

Because we are now working from home at this unit, it makes it much harder to communicate than in the past. So, I strongly urge everyone in the Latham facility to follow our Facebook page and look for updates from your Stewards because if we need to take further action, this is the best way to communicate with all of you.

We are hopeful we can get back with the company and negotiate a deal that we can except, but we all must be prepared to take the next steps if things continue to move this way.

I encourage all the workers to wear red on Fridays or any day you have meetings and I encourage all the other bargaining unit members to show their support by doing the same.

Back in July, Myself and your Delegates went to St Louis to the CWA Convention where we elected a new IUE President, CWA District 1 VP and CWA president and want to take this moment to congratulate IUE President Carl Kennebrew on his re-election, CWA District 1 VP Dennis Trainer on his re-election and CWA President Claude Cummings Jr on his election.

Also, at the convention I was able to get on the floor and bring a motion that was probably the second most debated item at the convention. (with the elections being the first)

In August, I continued my journey visiting all the locations by visiting the retail shops of Visionworks and Value Visions in the Western Region.

In September I finished that journey by visiting the retail shops and labs in PA.

I am also excited to share that something I have been working on for what seems like 2 years, is the first phase of the CWA retiree discount cards were scheduled to go out in the mail very soon.

In the next few months, the schedule doesn't get any lighter as we have quite a few things planned in addition to continued negotiations for Davis Vision Latham.

On October 8th we will be hosting our annual GMM in Saratoga N.Y.

In November I plan on making my final visit to the PA labs for 2023.

I am also very pleased to share that in November, Davis Vision NTS in partnership with myself, has agreed to have the IUE go to the NTS lab to provide training to both management and Union, on how to better develop relationships between the two of us. This will be a first for our local and is very encouraging.

Later in November, your Stewards will be receiving additional Steward Training.

In the 6 years I have been your President. I don't think I have ever been as busy as I have been this year. This is why it is so critical that I have promoted Stewards and provided them with training, so that they can all serve you.

As it stands, we currently have 24 Stewards throughout the bargaining units with only 1 vacancy.

When I first became the President. The Steward system was so broken. Only a few Stewards actually existed and were trained to actually help you. That left me to serve not only as your President, but also as a Steward. However, those times are now behind us and most of your Stewards are fully equipped to serve you. I also continue to provide additional education so they can continue to grow and this November, most of your Stewards will be getting another round of training.

The reason I am sharing all of this is because as my schedule continues to be filled more than ever, I am going to have to rely more on the stewards to do their duties, so that I can focus more on my duties. This also means I will need the membership to do the same. I have recently visited all 125+ locations for the third time, and I have hung up the most up to date information so that you all know who to contact if you need assistance. I have also updated our website, so the information is always there as well.

While I love hearing from each and every one of you, and it's so awesome to see that all of you are finally becoming aware of your union and how to contact us and I continue to look forward to hear from all of you, I do have to ask everyone to start utilizing the Stewards more when you need assistance for common issues as I may not be available or able to look into you issue as fast as they can.

Finally, in December I will be focusing on the next Contract, and Surveys will be going out for the Value Visions bargaining unit. I anticipate an in-person meeting will take place in January with negotiations beginning in February 2024.

Also, during these next few months, myself and your Financial Treasury Chuck Brein will begin doing the yearly required paperwork to complete the LM-2's, 990's and annual Audit.

Before I end this newsletter. I would be remised if I didn't mention and congratulate those who have been promoted during this quarter, so if you see them in your shop, I encourage you to take a moment to congratulate them.

Gunnar Lenihan, Recording, Secretary Value Vision
Michelle Fielding Trustee, Visionworks
Kim Idzinski Trustee, Visonworks
Alim Leggett Steward, Davis Vision NTS
Elizabeth Juarbe Steward, NYC/Westchester Region Visionworks
Carmen Gamble Steward, Plymouth Meeting Visionworks
Alvin Ellis Safety Committee, NTS