



The Local Scene

For Members, Family and Friends of Teamsters Local 676

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Bimonthly Newsletter Volume 4 Issue 1

January—February 2007

An Important Message from our President

The Executive Board and I began our new three-year term on January 1, 2007. We thank you for your overwhelming support. I am proud to be your president, and a member of this team of hardworking individuals. I promise to make you proud to be a member of the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local #676, as I continue to serve as your President.



Howard W. Wells

Now is a good time to review the past years events and consider our hope for the New Year. Many exciting, important and gratifying items come to mind when looking back on 2006.

- The picnic held at Clementon Lake Park was a tremendous success with almost 2000 members and their families in attendance.
- The Local #676 Scholarship Fund awarded eight scholarships in its first year of existence. Congratulations to our first class of graduates -- sons and daughters of Local #676 members.
- We were able to negotiate good contracts, ratified with no work stoppages.
- There was steady growth in our membership through the creation of new jobs at existing employers, as well as new member organizing.
- We have access to the latest UPS Contract developments, as well as first hand involvement, through my appointment to the National Negotiating Committee.
- I have also been appointed Chairman of the Metro Philadelphia UPS Grievance Committee.
- Legislation we crafted and sponsored has made it to the House (NJ) for consideration. If passed, this Bill would be of great assistance in negotiating contracts for our members at PATCO.
- Won numerous arbitration cases including \$180,000 for The Glass Group employees and \$480,00 for Hoegaenes employees.
- I was appointed a Director with the Pennsylvania Conference and additionally, served on the Credentials Committee at the last IBT Convention.
- Marcus King was elected a Director of the South Jersey AFL-CIO Labor Council.
- The election of the James P. Hoffa Slate, including our own Frank Gillen President of Joint Council #53. All of our members will benefit from this victory.

James P. Hoffa, the entire International Executive Board and the Officers and Staff of Local #676 are committed to the following: Organize the unorganized, negotiate industry leading contracts, vigorously enforce Teamster Contracts, ensure a corruption free Union, continue with fiscal reform and budgetary accountability, fight trade policies that threaten American jobs, fight for pro labor legislation and oppose legislation that hurts the working families in this country, and demand stricter health and safety regulations. We are also determined to protect pensions and fight for quality medical benefits for our members and their families.

We join and support James P. Hoffa in these endeavors. Our goal, together with the IBT, is to transform the Labor Movement into a social force that improves the lives of all working people. You can make a difference and we need everyone's involvement. One voice might be ignored, but together we will be heard! We will get their attention!

(continued on page 2)



Join Us For a
**St. Pat's Day
Dinner**

**Of Ham & Cabbage, etc.
Following the March 18th
Membership Meeting**

**Local #676
Scholarship**



Applications are now available for the Teamsters Local #676 Scholarship Fund. Please contact Shirley at the Hall (856-964-2101). Applications must be received by April 15, 2007



**Local #676 Members
Third Annual Picnic**

The third annual members picnic will be held Sunday June 10, 2007 at Clementon Lake Park and Splash World. Please contact Shirley at the Hall (856-964-2101) to reserve your tickets

What's a HAZWOPER?

Hint: It's not the story you tell the DOT Officer when he pulls you over. Find the answer on page two — in the Construction Update article.

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Agents Updates and Reports

Public Sector

By Jim Bennett

State workers and Gov. Corzine confirmed that his administration has reached a tentative deal with the N.J.E.A., CWA and two other unions that represent approximately 53,000 state workers.

Gov. Corzine said the agreement which takes effect July 1, 2007 provides savings for taxpayers while protecting the healthcare and retirement security of Public Employees.

The primary changes are the raising of the early retirement option from 55 to 60 years old for new hires. Also the employee contribution rate is increased from 5 to 5.5% with a cap of \$97,200 on the total salary on which an employee can earn pension credits.

State workers also agreed to contribute 1.5% of their annual income to healthcare benefits. After these assessments they will net a 1.25% wage increase each year for the next four years.

We are monitoring these changes at the State level to protect our members. We continue to contact our legislators to let them know of our members concerns. We intend to continue negotiating the best possible contracts for our members in the Public Sector.

Construction

By Ed Pearce

Teamsters Local #676 is pleased to announce that we will host a 40 hour HAZ-MAT Training Course at the Union Hall. The classes will be conducted for the HAZWOPER (*see here it is*) 29CFR1910.129 course. The dates for the class are April 23 through April 26, 2007. The classes will begin at 7:00 AM and end each day at 5:30 PM with a half hour break for lunch.

It is important that Local #676 members in the Construction Trades maintain their HAZ-MAT Certifications, in order to maximize their ability to fill job openings. Construction members interested in this course must contact the Local at 856-964-2101 as soon as possible. Call now to secure your seat in the classes.

A big Thank You is in order for our Brother and Sister Teamsters at the IBT JC 25 Training Center. They will be traveling from Illinois to conduct these classes. Be sure to tell them Thanks!

Business Agent Charles Mahoney has been busy updating and revising the Local #676 Construction Referral Hall Rules. These changes will be reviewed by the Executive Board before implementation. It is expected that Brother Mahoney's expertise and years of experience will be invaluable to this project.

UPS

By Roy Kaiser

Organizing at UPS Freight is moving along at a slow and deliberate pace. The IBT is negotiating a Boilerplate Contract (*a boilerplate is a reused of writing that can be reused over and over without change. The term derives from steel manufacturing, where boilerplate is steel rolled into large plates for use in steam boilers. The implication is either that boilerplate writing has been time-tested and strong as "steel," or that it has been rolled out into something strong enough for repeated reuse.*) for the first organized terminal in Indianapolis.

To coordinate a first contract for the Pennsauken terminal, we are asking that UPS drivers continue to talk to UPS Freight drivers. Encourage them to attend a Union meeting or call the Hall and speak to a Business Agent. Let them know we will welcome them, as members, when the IBT kicks off the nationwide campaign. Organizing cards will be collected at that time.

UPS drivers are reminded that the DVIR and/or car condition reports must be filled out **every day** the equipment has been in use. This is a DOT requirement, not simply a UPS work rule. Complaints about mechanical or safety related items must be written up every day until repaired. If the book is not signed off by a mechanic, tell your manager. Go to the Shop and have the book signed, if the work was completed. The Union cannot hold the company accountable if the safety or mechanical problem with a vehicle is not reported and addressed in the DVIR.

(President's Message - continued from page 1)

Organizing, strong bargaining and quality representation are all crucial elements as we go forward into the new year, into the future. We must demonstrate to all working people that the Union Movement is their best chance to achieve decent wages and secure benefits.

For my part I promise you the highest level of representation. I will continue to serve the 5000 members of Local #676 and protect your interests, as President of Local #676, as a Director of the PA Conference, a member of the UPS National Negotiating Committee and the Chairman of the Metro Philadelphia Grievance Committee. I will do whatever it takes to repay your trust and confidence in me.

Good Luck to our applicants for the Local #676 Scholarship Fund.

Mark your calendars – June 10th – our 3rd Annual Picnic – see you there!

Fraternally,
Howard W. Wells, President

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Hoffa Blasts Bush Plan to Open Border To Unsafe Mexican Trucks

On Friday Transportation Secretary Mary Peters unveiled a dangerous experiment. The DOT wants to give 100 Mexican trucking firms full access to U.S. highways. On the surface you can see why the Teamsters would be against this. It's one more step in the Bush agenda to export good paying American jobs to a foreign country where corporations can fatten their bottom lines by exploiting cheap labor, lax environmental standards and nonexistent safety regulations. This is about safety, not immigration, not race. It's about being able to drive down the road with your family and not have to worry about whether the driver in that 18-wheeler in the next lane has slept in the past 20 hours. It's about whether that truck is safe to operate at 65 or 70 miles an hour. It's about whether you can trust anything the Bush administration and Mexican government says. So far the Mexican government has failed to meet the truck safety and driver training requirements of NAFTA, yet President Bush rewards them with open access to American highways. They are playing a game of Russian roulette and it will be the American driving public who pays the price. The DOT indicated only a few weeks ago that it was not pursuing this pilot program. What else are they lying about? Just two years ago, the Department of Transportation Inspector General confirmed that the Mexican government and Mexican motor carriers were not meeting congressionally mandated requirements. Another Inspector General audit report is due in the next couple of months, raising serious questions as to why President Bush is pushing this experimental program now. Given the Bush administration's track record on the truth, and the Mexican government's history of corruption — and both governments' recent history of labor relations — you surely understand why every American should be dubious of this idea. What about national security? Will the drivers be checked against the terror watch list or will our borders be open to anyone with a Mexican driver's license? Will the drivers be required to carry a Mexican passport, as U.S. citizens are required to present their passports when entering the country from Mexico or Canada? Would the trucks and trailers be scanned for weapons of mass destruction? The DOT is unable to say how many trucks will be participating in the experiment or whether there will be a system in place to differentiate between those trucks traveling within the 20-mile NAFTA commercial zones currently in place and those permitted to travel throughout the U.S. What about hours-of-service regulations? Will these rules be applied to drivers in Mexico? How would we know how many hours drivers have worked before crossing our border? And what about truck maintenance and safety? The DOT asserts that U.S. officials in Mexico will inspect all U.S.-bound trucks in Mexico. How would that affect inspections of shoddy trucking companies in the United States? According to National Transportation Safety Board member Debbie Hersman, only a tiny percentage of the hundreds of thousands of U.S. truck companies are inspected every year as it is. And fewer than 10 percent of all Mexican trucks entering the existing NAFTA commercial zones are inspected. How can the United States spare sending inspectors to Mexico when they are barely able to do the job here? Sen. Patty Murray (D-Wash.), chair of the Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Transportation, announced a March 8 hearing to determine whether the arrangement meets safety requirements. But I suggest, and every American who drives should demand, that Congress stop this experiment until these safety and security issues can be fully investigated. As with the so-called Dubai Ports deal, President Bush is willing to risk our national security by giving unfettered access to America's transportation infrastructure to foreign companies and their government sponsors. Can we really afford to expose our country — our families — to another Bush debacle?



Recent Retirees

- Harry Burk Vineland Transit
- Richard Heidman Stech Trans.
- Ronald Longo
- James Lutz
- Charles Mahoney Local #676
- Louis Neuffer B&L Motor Freight
- Leslie Nirdlinger Robt T Winzinger
- David Studstill
- Conrad Traenkner Stech Trans.
- Kenneth Vanderslice Allied Beverage

FYI
Teamster Health, Welfare & Pension
Toll Free # — 800-523-2846
Main # - 856-382-2400



Sam Passaretti who recently retired from Bridgeton Public Works after 35 yrs.

Join the Retiree's Club Today!

Meetings are held the third Wednesday of every month
11:00 AM at the Hall

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Workers' Compensation Misconceptions

By David B. Fox, Esq. — 116 White Horse Pike — Haddon Heights, NJ 08035
609-546-8822

"I'm hurt but I don't want to sue my employer."

As an attorney practicing workers' compensation, I have heard this more than once from employees injured on the job. Many times members feel guilty about filing workers' compensation claims because of the stigma that "lawsuits" have nowadays. Injured employees do not want their employers to suffer because they have filed a claim. Sometimes they believe that they will be retaliated against by the employers for filing a claim. These concerns about workers' compensation are based on general misconceptions about the workers' compensation process itself.

The workers' compensation laws differ between states. The following information is for New Jersey law only.

First, the workers' compensation process is less like a civil lawsuit and more like an administrative process. What this means is that an injured employee is really filing a claim to obtain those benefits that are provided by New Jersey law. These benefits may not be provided in their entirety by the insurance company if an injured employee does not file a claim petition. An injured employee is not receiving benefits from the employer's own budget but from the insurance company. In New Jersey, these benefits are:

1. Free medical care from the employer's workers' compensation insurance carrier. This is just like receiving medical care from the employer provided health insurance, only the workers' compensation insurance carrier gets to choose your doctor.
2. Temporary disability benefits are paid by the workers' compensation insurance carrier as a wage replacement. These benefits are only 70% of the injured employee's average gross weekly wage up to a maximum rate which changes yearly. The maximum temporary disability rate for 2007 will be \$711.00 per week. It should also be noted that this wage rate is based on the average salary of the last twenty-six weeks prior to the date of the accident, including overtime.
3. The final benefit that an injured worker is entitled to is compensation for the percentage of loss of function caused by the injury. Most employees are not aware of this benefit. The employee is entitled to financial compensation even if he or she has returned to work performing the same job for the employer. Usually, it is necessary to have an attorney to receive this benefit and legal fees in workers' compensation court for most matters are limited to 8% of the recovery amount. This compensation does not come from the employer but is paid by the employer's workers' compensation insurance company. The employer is not losing money directly out of its own pocket to pay for these benefits, these claims do not hurt their budgets.

Sometimes members also fear that they will be retaliated against for filing a claim petition. In New Jersey, it is prohibited by law for an employer to terminate an employee in retaliation for filing a workers' compensation claim N.J.S.A. 34:15-39. A discrimination complaint can be filed against the employer with the Division of Workers' Compensation if this does occur. If the disability itself is the reason for the termination, a claim can be filed pursuant to the Americans with Disabilities Act. There are safeguards to protect injured workers from being retaliated against for filing a workers' compensation claim.

By not filing a claim, an injured employee may be missing out on benefits that he or she rightfully should be collecting. All members of Teamsters Local 676 are invited to call for a free consultation regarding their on the job injuries.

Don't Take a DUI Charge Lightly

The law firm of Helmer, Paul, Conley and Kasselmann is pleased to announce that they have partnered up with Teamsters Local #676 to provide powerful representation to its union members.

The firm represents clients in cases, including but not limited to, criminal and municipal court defense and appeals, criminal expungements, family law matters, municipal court, traffic and motor vehicle matters.

The firm aggressively represents the interests of its clients while employing the highest ethical standards. HPC&K handle matters in every part of New Jersey. Our experienced attorneys know the law and the system, and use this knowledge and experience to represent clients effectively.

The managing partner of the firm Yaron (Ron) Helmer has been a practicing criminal attorney for over 28 years. He was an Asst. Prosecutor and First Asst. Prosecutor in Camden and Cumberland counties. Ron has been designated by the Supreme Court of New Jersey as a Certified Criminal Trial Attorney which is a designation held by fewer than 5% of criminal defense attorneys.

Another partner with the firm, Barbara M. Paul has represented members of local unions for over 15 years, including the Policeman's Benevolent Association, State Trooper's Fraternal Association, Carpenter's Union, Roofer's Union, Plumber's Union and Steamfitter's Union through their Legal Services Plans. She has represented these individuals in municipal court matters, family law matters, basic estate planning matters and real estate matters.

One of the law firm's associates, John P. Rowland is a former Assistant Prosecutor in New Jersey. John is a retired New York City Police Officer and an Adjunct Professor of Criminal Law at one of the local community colleges. He is also a certified Police Instructor in New Jersey. John handles all types of municipal court and traffic related offenses, particularly Driving While Intoxicated (DUI) offenses. Protect your license Don't drink and drive.