

Local Lodge 1529 Newsletter

May 2010

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Next meeting is June 8th at 2:00 P.M.

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President's Message

This month I would like to talk about some issues taking place on the floor, starting with the Department 63 burr issues. As the connector industry has evolved so has our customers' requirements for on time delivery and quality. While the demands for on time delivery are greater than ever, the demand for 100% quality has really been in the spotlight. What customers would have "accepted" several years ago is now unacceptable, and a good case in point is the recent customer returns on parts from Department 63, some manufactured and "accepted" as far back as 2004. The vast amount of parts returned and their corresponding value required the company to adopt an "all hands on deck" approach to the problem which resulted in them pushing past the ten day contractual language constraints in the 310 Burr Code. Not sitting down with the Union and requesting a temporary extension of this language resulted in the filing of two grievances which resulted in the payout of several thousand dollars to 13 of our brothers and sisters out on layoff. Subsequently, the company did ask for and was granted an extension to clear up the "bubble" of burr work that was created by the original customer returns in Department 63. Extensions like this will be rarely granted, I can assure you, and only when it is apparent that it is in the best interest of keeping jobs in Sidney. It does neither active employees or those laid off any good if work is shipped to Mexico or elsewhere for burring operations, and in the long run, it does NOT make prudent financial sense for the company. Unfortunately, the company's stance on not hiring back qualified employees from lay off due to insurance concerns makes getting the work done here in Sidney far more challenging.

Vacation scheduling in some areas was difficult to say the least once again this year. The company has a "no more than 15% off at any time" rule for vacations. For a long time weekly and day at a time scheduling were treated separately when it comes to this 15% rule, but this has changed in recent years. The result is that members of this Union with 30+ years seniority were unable to get days off they requested while junior members were able to get the same days off because they were attached to blocks of 40 hours. I've never been a fan of the 15% rule, especially since it's a company policy and not contractual language. The company did, in many cases upon the Union's request, look at some members and departments and make adjustments. Hopefully new language can be hammered out this fall to make selecting the vacation time you've earned far less painful in future years. Once again, the company's lack of willingness to call back members on lay off to cover summer vacations makes this situation far more difficult to deal with.

The company has been discussing its new concept of manufacturing work units in departmental meetings. I'm not going to debate the merits of this concept. They own the place and can put machines anywhere they want. My job is to make sure they have the right people doing the right jobs, and I can assure you we will be vigilant to do so and will take whatever appropriate actions that are needed for the compliance of the job descriptions and contractual language currently in place. Only your Negotiating Committee can change job descriptions, and no such discussions have taken place with the committee in regards to this new company plan, nor are any such meetings scheduled at this time.

The company is in the process of reorganizing the assembly departments here in Sidney. This reorganization will not only involve the movement of equipment, it also involves the realignment of personnel, specifically the number of 103 and 104 code employees. The company feels the need to reduce the number of individuals in the 103 code, where anyone can bump or be "placed" for a variety of reasons, and increase the number of 104 code employees, which are somewhat more "protected" from the outside world. Contractually there were a few ways for them to achieve this goal. They could have created an entirely new classification and "hand selected" those they felt were qualified and the company does have the exclusive contractual right to qualify. They could have had a lay off of all the 103's at one time and dealt with the potential chaos that would have created. Or they could have decided to move all remaining assembly work out of Sidney, an objective they have been talking about for almost 20 years now, and one they say will be necessary if these changes aren't made. The company decided on a gradual layoff of the 103 code, with those individuals having the option of freezing their code and going out the door, bumping elsewhere in the plant if possible, or doing a 5-day bump into the 104 code. While none of the above mentioned options are desirable to this Union, none are contract violations. Our job is to make sure to the best of our ability that everyone is treated the same through this process. The only good news about this whole situation is that the company has stated their intentions are not to reduce to total number of employees working in Sidney's assembly areas, just to reallocate what classifications they work in. There will still be 103 code personnel in the plant when this reorganization is complete, but how many there will be is unknown at this time.

Upgrades for CNC operators has been a subject of much heated debate since the last "A" CNC operator returned from layoff. For every one upgrade we have seen, there are probably three others that have been turned down. Some upgrades were anticipated due to discussions with company, some came from out of the blue. Unfortunately, everyone has their opinions of themselves and their fellow workers, and the opinions of their fellow workers are more often than not unfavorable. We can't change that. What we have done in the past is work on a case by case basis to secure upgrades for those who feel they deserve it. Sometimes the company agrees, but usually they do not which

creates a lot of hard feelings and ultimately has a negative impact on productivity for the company. The latest spin on this issue is the company is working on a new set of criteria for upgrades to the "A" code. When this new criteria will be in place is unknown, but we will push for it to be in place as soon as possible. Again, the company has the contractual right to qualify, but we will endeavor to influence that whenever and wherever possible.

And now onto some Local #1529 news. I'm pleased to report we had our first Stewards Training Meeting in many years on Wednesday, May 5th. The meeting, which lasted an hour and a half, covered some very basic topics about being a steward, and there was some general conversation about current events in the shop. The overall consensus of those who attended was it that it was a good first step in a continuing effort to better educate and communicate with our membership through their elected stewards. I want to thank all who attended, especially those from 2nd and 3rd shift who gave up part of their "off time" to be there.

At that meeting we discussed the following upcoming dates leading up to contract negotiations with the company:

- **June 15, Tuesday, 11:30am – 3:30pm** – 4 hour meeting with all Department Stewards at Union Hall to review Membership Survey results and discuss contract proposal ideas.
- **July 14, Wednesday, 6:00am – 4:30pm** – All day open house at Union Hall for all members to discuss proposal ideas for upcoming negotiations. All members are urged to participate.
- **July 20, Tuesday, 6:00am – 8:00pm** - Strike Sanction Vote at Union Hall as required by Article XVI, Section 1 of the IAM's Constitution. All members need to participate.
- **July 20, Tuesday, 7:00am – 3:30pm** – All day meeting for Negotiating Committee to prepare proposals for August 1st Contract Proposal Meeting @ Sidney High School.
- **August 1, Sunday, 1:00pm** – Membership Contract Proposal Meeting at the Sidney High School Auditorium. All members are urged to attend!
- **August 3, Tuesday, 7:00am – 3:30pm** – All day meeting for Negotiating Committee to discuss results & suggestions from the Membership Contract Proposal Meeting held August 1st.

Please note several of these dates require our memberships' participation which I strongly urge.

The membership surveys we hand out every three years will be given to your Union Stewards at the May 11th Meeting, and need to be turned back in by Friday, May 14th. EVERYONE'S opinion and input is important, and I strongly urge all our members to participate in this survey which helps us develop proposals for the upcoming negotiations.

The proposed Bylaws changes posted on the plant bulletin boards have created some obvious confusion on the floor. The Bylaws Committee is chosen by the President, and is convened from time to time to review and update our Local's Bylaws when necessary. Most of the proposed Bylaws changes are housekeeping matters which are designed to simply clean up the language – they change nothing but wording. The only monetary "increase" is for the Recording Secretary's salary due to the amount of time it takes to perform those duties. The increase is for the office, not any individual, and I would like to point out that anyone can run for that office if they so choose. Please keep in mind we used to pay for a full time secretary to perform the duties now done by our Secretary/Treasurer and Recording Secretary (with an annual salary of \$33,700 adjusted for today's wages), so at what we are currently paying these two officers now we are realizing a tremendous annual savings. The proposed Bylaws change would increase the Recording Secretary's annual salary by \$1,980. The Recording Secretary's salary should have been increased when the Secretary/Treasurer's salary was several years ago when it was decided not to hire another office secretary for the Union Hall. Both Connie Hoyt and Cindy Stacy do an excellent job in those thankless positions, putting in many hours maintaining all the required documentation required to run a local lodge. No other officer's salary is being increased as a result of these Bylaws changes, even though there was much debate that they should be. Be assured no one in their right mind takes these positions for the money. And I would also like to point out that nothing in these proposed Bylaws changes will result in a dues increase. Those annual increases are dictated from the Grand Lodge. We are more than capable of handling this one salary increase with our current financial resources. I hope this clears up any misunderstandings that may exist on the floor on this issue.

There is interest in having a solidarity t-shirt and arm band made for this years collective bargaining agreement. If anyone has design ideas, please write them down, or draw them out, and submit them to your Chief Steward.

Women's Committee Report

We are still collecting recipes for the second cookbook. The recipes can be handed in to any women committee member, Alice Ziglar, Nancy Hornbeck, Star Winchester, Pam Gascon, and Beth Dyer.