

The Rubber Ball

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dale Sandell

May 21, 2013 marks the end of my first year in office. This has been an adventure to say the least. This job is a 24/7 responsibility and it takes that kind of commitment to do it right. I have had lots of help getting up to speed and I need to thank the following: First outgoing President, Kevin Kirk, has always made himself available to assist me in any way from pulling the parade float to helping me understand negotiated language and past practice at the Titan plant. Past Union President Steve Vanderheyden serves on the Executive Board and has made himself available many times for phone calls from me asking him for direction. Our Staff Representative, Mark Trone, has been a huge asset to me and to Local 745. Mark helped to guide me through this recent set of negotiations with Titan and to help get the School Unit ready for our upcoming negotiations. He has also been a friend just calling to check in on the rookie Union President. We have a fairly new committee at the tire plant, for grievance processing and negotiating. The experience of Frank Wool and Todd Hastings has been very helpful getting the rest of the committee up to speed with the grievance processing. We have really fired up the arbitration process. I have asked several ex-GNC members to help train the GNC in the art of writing and presenting arbitration. I want to thank Dan Kreeger, Steve Bamberg and Joel Kunz for sharing their valuable experience with the new GNC. They helped in cases where we were

representing members who had been discharged.

Last but not least, we have some new and some experienced chairpersons on our committees who are doing a really bang up job for Local 745. Jim Jamison is leading the Civil Rights Committee in areas of representation for all members of Local 745 and for the community. Willie Kreeger has given the Safety Committee a different outlook, and his leadership in the fields of Safety and Health is keeping the plant a safer place to work. Mark Hooper has the Political Action Committee cranking out news to keep the membership informed in National and local politics. Bunny Oviatt produces an informative newsletter and has organized our efforts to be in 5 or 6 parades this year. Thank you also to Bill Mariani for his quick responses to any issues at the union hall as building chairman. Most committees are up and running and I want to thank all members of the active groups and their leaders.

One more thanks needs to be mentioned. Our Office Manager, Mary Meier, has helped to make the Old Hammer Mechanic look like he knows what he is doing, most of the time. She proofreads my horrible spelling and changes my Hillbilly comments into a work of art. She also keeps track of all of our records and is able to produce them anytime they are needed.

As you can see, Local 745 is run by many dedicated UNION Brothers and Sisters and without the help of everyone, no one could drive this boat. Thanks goes out to everyone for your dedication.

May 29, 2013
Volume 18, Issue 4

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United Steelworkers of America

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815/235-9713

Office Hours:
Monday - Friday
7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Highlights of the May Membership Meeting

President Dale Sandell called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m., Sunday May 5, after a brief thank you for being at the meeting.

Dave Swanson called the roll call of officers. A motion was made, seconded and approved to bypass and accept the Highlights of the April 2013 as published in the Rubber Ball. This motion was approved.

Correspondence to or from membership included one thank you note from Sheila Hooper for our support in her election bid, as township chair.

REPORTS FROM OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

Executive Board: Dale Sandell reported arbitration was held April 23 in Freeport for the Tire Unit. Steve Bamberg assisted Scott Farrar in the preparation for this case. This case was another discharge case and the participants felt like it went well. There are still post hearing briefs to submit before the arbitrator will make his/her decision.

Another hearing is scheduled to be heard later in May. That case is also a discharge. Mark Steele will be the presenter and Joel Kunz will be assisting Mark in his first arb presentation. As a related issue, the School unit will be preparing their very first arbitration case. It also is scheduled to be presented in May.

We have received a well over due arb answer in another discharge case. The decision was to treat the time off as discipline and give them back their job without back pay.

The Board chose to not make a donation to benefit the granddaughter of Dennis Crooks. Brother Rich Rote was heading the collection in the plant. Donations were made at the sign in book and Rich was happy with the collection.

**THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY'S/
TREASURER REPORTS**

With the meeting being held the first of the month, neither report was made. A full and complete report will be made in June for both April and May.

INTERNATIONAL UNION REPORT

Mark Trone reported that currently there are no strikes or lock-outs in the district. A plant closure notice has been issued in the Quad Cities area. Mark will be trying to get a severance package for the brothers and sisters at that location. There has not been a conclusion on either the President's pay or the final Delta Dental pay out. Discussions continue to go on. There were several questions on these topics and others. Mark answered all.

LOCAL UNION COMMITTEES

There were reports from the following committees: Safety-Willie Kreeger; Civil Rights- Jim Jamison; Classified Staff- Cecelia Stacy; and P.A.C.- Mark Hooper.

NEW BUSINESS

After a little initial confusion, a grievance appeal was discussed. In the end membership voted to have the G&NC take a member's discharge to arbitration.

The meeting was adjourned a little after 10:00 a.m.

*Respectfully submitted,
Dave Swanson*

Calendar:

June 5	Executive Board Meeting	3:30 p.m.
June 9	Membership Meeting	9:00 a.m.
June 11	Retiree's Meeting	1:30 p.m.
June 11	School Unit, Freeport Library	4:15 p.m.
June 25	Workers' Comp Attorney	1:15-3:45 p.m.

SOAR Minutes

May 14, 2013 1:30 p.m.

Vice President Jerry Redington called the meeting to order and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited. The roll call of officers was taken with President Larry Dyson and Trustee Lee Horstmeier not present. The minutes were approved as read and the Treasurer's report was given.

Lou Cook from Central Labor asked members to volunteer for the Labor Booth at the Stephenson County Fair. Tickets to get into the fair are held at Rich Hofmaster's home next to the fairgrounds. You return the ticket when you leave so the next shift can use it. Dale Sandell spoke to us about the Local. Arbitrations are taking place. About 1200 people went through the plant for the open house. With the completion of the contract some members are retiring so the recall list is getting depleted.

Jerry Redington spoke about the history of VEBA and how it stands today. There is about 925 million in the fund with 30,250 people as recipients. Workers are putting more money into the system and with the upbeat in the stock market and tweaking of benefits the fund is recovering to hopefully last much longer.

Sandy Dyson said Larry is improving but not up to coming today.

Today in celebration of the 50th year of the Freeport plant being opened we had a slide show of past events with the Local. Members brought memorabilia they have collected from the plant and Kelly tire sale items. There were mugs, a toy truck, pocket knife, ashtrays, a calculator and other items to see. We spoke about when people started at the plant, their first day on the job and how many employees

were employed there. We continued our memories over refreshments and a special 50 year cake. Thanks to Mary Jane Zimmerman from the school district unit for making the cake.

Adjourned at 2:38 p.m.

Susan Walt, Recording Secretary

SUMMER HEAT IS COMING!

Willie Kreeger

Symptoms of Heat Stress Disorders:

- Heat cramps - Symptoms are painful spasms of the muscles. Heat cramps are caused when workers consume large quantities of water but fail to take in enough salt to replace the salt their body lost through sweating. Tired muscles are most susceptible to cramping.
- Heat Exhaustion - Symptoms for this disorder are moist, clammy, pale skin; profuse sweating; extreme weakness or fatigue; dry mouth; dizziness; fast pulse; rapid breathing; muscle cramps and nausea.
- Heat/Sun Stroke - Symptoms are a very high body temperature (104°F or higher); lack of sweat; mental confusion, delirium, or hallucinations; deep breathing and rapid pulse; hot, dry, red or mottled skin; and dilated pupils. Seek medical help at once for this condition.

Tips for Prevention:

- Acclimatization - adjust yourself to the heat through short exposure periods followed by longer exposure until your body is accustomed to the heat. It may take 5-7 days of hot weather exposure before the body undergoes changes that make heat more bearable.
- Drink lots of water/liquids - Replenish the fluid that your body is losing through sweating. Not only water, but critical electrolytes such as sodium, potassium and calcium are lost through sweating, so consider using electrolyte drinks to combat heat related disorders.
- Use your head - do not ignore possible symptoms of heat stress disorders. If you feel very hot, dizzy, nauseous or if your muscles cramp, stop and cool off!

If you have a safety concern feel free to contact the safety committee:

- Chairman Willie Kreeger
- 1st shift Kirk Knoup
- 2nd shift Chester Hollins
- 3rd shift Don Menefee

JOURNEY

Bunny Oviatt

When I look back on my years here, I realize hard work is a blessing. I was very young and ambitious a long time ago, and driven by something simple: I wanted to make money. I wasn't lucky enough to be born with a silver spoon. We had no money, like a lot of people. Sometimes supper was whatever rabbit or pheasant was dumb enough to be seen when Grandpa was toting his shotgun... or a snapping turtle wasn't quick enough to get off the railroad tracks before Grandpa went to work. (I really think snappers were a lot bigger way back then.) There were a few chickens, a cow or two, and maybe a pig at the old farmette located just outside Shannon.

We didn't have two pennies to pinch together, but the one thing this stubborn old girl did have plenty of was determination. I worked second shift at Micro Switch when I graduated from high school in Freeport. Yes, there are classmates at the Titan Plant that know just how old I really am. My cousin, Ron Bahr, worked at Kelly's and I was quick to notice he seemed to make a lot more money than I did. I told him I was going to apply for a job where he worked. I remember he did not give me much hope on landing full time employment at Kelly Springfield. I had talked to a recruiter for the Air Force as well, and scheduled an appointment in Chicago to test my abilities or qualifications for placement. The day before that test Kelly's called me to come in the next day. So, I came to the plant instead of Chicago. What a difference a day makes.

I cannot imagine where the road of life would have taken me had it not been for that phone call from Kelly Springfield.

We all have a history at the plant. We have worked all kinds of shifts, all kinds of positions, in all kinds of weather. Many of us started at Kelly Springfield, worked through the Goodyear time, and now we work as Titan employees. This is one big family. We see our fellow factory workers more than we see our own families at times.

And that is why we continue to work. It is a job, yes, but it's also the tie that binds us. We truly are brothers and sisters. We work hard in pursuit of a part of that elusive American Dream. The job has given me the opportunity to give my children a better life. I thank God for that. Although two of my children said they would never work at the plant after summer employment while in college, that is another gift unto itself.

Whatever blessings are given to us, we want more for our kids. And this job has given me more than just money. It has given me a deep understanding of the value of hard work and determination, and given my life, and my children's lives, real worth.

May 29, 2013

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**REPETITIVE TRAUMA CLAIMS
IN WORKERS' COMPENSATION**

It used to be the case that in order to be eligible for workers' compensation benefits, you had to sustain a specific injury at a particular date, place and time. If your body broke down gradually due to physical stresses over time, you were out of luck. That changed, thankfully, as the courts realized that not all injuries occurred as the result of specific accidents, and they began to recognize repetitive, or cumulative, trauma claims.

Questions arose as to how to decide upon an accident date in such cases. The courts came to realize that there are a number of possible accident dates which could be viable in repetitive trauma cases. These include the last date worked due to an injury, the date of the first doctor visit, the date the condition was diagnosed, the date symptoms appeared, and the date on which a reasonable person would have realized that the condition related to the work activities.

This gives the injured worker some flexibility, but it is also a double-edged sword in terms of time limitations. claims have been denied when workers have shrugged off symptoms until the situation deteriorated to the point where they could no longer work, only to be told that they should have reported their injuries long before they actually did.

It is better to err on the side of caution. You have 45 days from the date of accident to tell your employer not only that you are hurt, but also that you believe the job caused the problem. And you have three years from the date of your injury to file your claim with the Illinois Workers' Compensation Commission or it will be forever barred, regardless of its merits.

The lesson to be learned is that any time you feel that your physical structure is breaking down because of your work duties, you should report that to your supervisor. If you don't do it in writing, do it in the presence of a reliable witness such as your union steward. Then go to your doctor and give a clear and consistent history including the work activities which you feel caused or contributed to the problem.

If you do those two things, you will have laid the foundation for a successful workers' compensation claim.

Ken Wolfe
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(Mr. Wolfe is an AV rated workers' compensation attorney who has represented USW and other union members for over 37 years. He was elected to the Leading Lawyers Network by his peers, and is available for free consultations at the union office. His next visit will be on Tuesday, June 25, from 1:15 to 3:45 p.m.)