



...from the Hall

Issue # 1
March 2004

A newsletter by and for the members of *PACE* Local 8-237
Tacoma, Washington

The President's Corner

—by Chuck Whitt

We have talked for quite some time about starting up another newsletter within the local. I think the last newsletter we put out was something like 1991. Andy Holbrook was the President, Jim Bloom or Skip Salscheider the Vice President, and a host of others that, like the above, are gone or retired. We were still working under our first contract with Simpson (remember that 7 year contract, with a bunch of zeros in the first few years?), with the 1992 negotiations just around the corner. Yeah, it was a long time ago.

It's been at least 3 years of saying at the union meetings that we need to have a newsletter. Unfortunately, no one really wanted to step forward to put it together, so it languished in the realm of things that could be, until now.

What has changed is the times. The last couple of years have been busy with preparations for the negotiations and the negotiations themselves. But now that they're over with, and now that I've learned from my experience as editor of a newsletter of a club I belong to, I realize it's possible to do this without it being an onerous task. So, exercising a little executive privilege, I've put Bob Jones and myself on a deadline as regular contributors. That automatically gives us some content, which is, obviously, enough to get started.

I've asked Bob to write a "Vice President's Corner" column, of any topic he so chooses, as well as a summary of current grievances (sanitized so as not to include names – you'll have to come to the meetings for the gory details). The last is supposed to keep us up-to-date on the issues we face within the mill.

I'll write a "President's Corner" column of whatever pertinent information I feel will help the membership, as well as do my best

to keep you informed of the Local's activities. I'll write a second column on the contract. Using that space to convey to you how we have interpreted, applied, and resolved issues within specific sections of the labor agreement and its side agreements. I'll start with PIUMPF in this issue.

I'd like to include some other content as well. Some ideas I have are:

- Short bios on members, kind of a "getting to know you" thing.
- Where are they now? A column to bring us up-to-date on our retirees.
- Items of interest about our members, and their families, and their activities.
- A calendar of current and upcoming events.
- Feedback from members on work issues.

That is not to say that all of these things will be included in every edition, but rather when they're available and space permits. I'd certainly love to hear your suggestions too, and would be especially pleased if you were to contribute something. It may not start out as much, but it will be your newsletter, and I hope, a tool for you to stay informed.

PIUMPF

On January 1st of this year, Simpson, under the terms of the recently negotiated labor agreement with Locals 237 and 586, began collecting \$1.12 per hour from our members to pay for a PIUMPF pension plan.

PIUMPF, the *PACE Industry Union Management Pension Fund*, is a **defined benefit** retirement plan. At its current contribution

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Vice President's Corner

— by Bob Jones

Living in the big time is not an act of living, but a state of mind. Each of us has a desire to fulfill our destiny in life. Achieving that goal is sometimes a very arduous process, because life is never a straight road that you can travel with ease. You're always making adjustments; you're always taking a side road in order to get back where you need to be. This is how grievances can impact our lives. A grievance creates stress, uncertainty, and it can affect your concentration. So the next time you file a grievance let us do the work and you go about living in the Big Time and working toward your destiny in life.

Grievances

Listed below are some of the grievance that have been filed. Any feedback you may have please let Bob Jones know.

Extra board employee called in place senior employee: this is acceptable if it were shift workers, but not acceptable for day workers unless senior people are not available.

Senior extra board employee just returned from jury duty and ready to work, Jr. person was called in place of senior extra board employee for three days. Senior extra board employee was paid full-time loss.

Extra board employee was given 3-Day suspension for signing individuals in and out of vessels. Over the last three years this had been a common practice. As a result of this action, employees are no longer allowed to sign any person in or out of vessels. This individual should never have received time off for this action. Company paid grievant following four steps of the grievance procedure.

Two extra board employees were hired the same day. One employee was needed to work overtime during holiday season. To solve this issue the individual who was hired a few seconds before the other was granted overtime (based on seniority).

Supervisor helped in rigging motor change out in the washer floor department instead of calling in senior person, this issue is still in process.

Jr. person was called in to work for three days and senior person was not notified as results payroll was instructed to pay 8 hours of pay to senior person.

We have had far too many warning notices regarding attendance. Please be aware and allow yourself time to get to work.

Remember! Extra board employees if your working day shift (i.e., Yard Crew, chip cleanup, etc.), you must report to your job site before 7:30am ready for work otherwise you're considered late.

— Standing Committee Chairman Bob Jones

Weingarten Rights

EMPLOYEE'S RIGHT TO UNION REPRESENTATION

The rights of employees to have present a union representative during investigatory interviews were announced by the U.S. Supreme Court in a 1975 case (NLRB vs. Weingarten, Inc. 420 U.S. 251, 88 LRRM 2689). These rights have become known as the Weingarten rights.

Employees have Weingarten rights only during investigatory interviews. An investigatory interview occurs when a supervisor questions an employee to obtain information which could be used as a basis for discipline or asks an employee to defend his or her conduct.

If an employee has a reasonable belief that discipline or other adverse consequences may result from what he or she says, the employee has the right to request union representation. Management is not required to inform the employee of his/her Weingarten rights; it is the employees responsibility to know and request.

When the employee makes the request for a union representative to be present management has three options:

- (1) it can stop questioning until the representative arrives.
- (2) it can call off the interview or,
- (3) it can tell the employee that it will call off the interview unless the employee voluntarily gives up his/her rights to a union representative (an option the employee should always refuse.)

Employers will often assert that the only role of a union representative in an investigatory interview is to observe the discussion. The Supreme Court, however, clearly acknowledges a representative's right to assist and counsel workers during the interview.

The Supreme Court has also ruled that during an investigatory interview management must inform the union representative of the subject of the interrogation. The representative must also be allowed to speak privately with the employee before the interview. During the questioning, the representative can interrupt to

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level, PIUMPF will pay us \$100.00 per month per year of service for all our future years in the mill. Combining our Company and PIUMPF pensions, as it now stands, we will be able to retire at \$144.00 per month per year of service. That currently gives us the highest retirement amount within the U.S. paper industry.

A **defined benefit** plan is different than our 401(k) in that we're not investing our money to have some greater amount available when we retire. Rather, it's similar to our Company pension plan. Whereas a 401(k) would eventually run out of money, a **defined benefit** plan will last you the rest of your life. This removes the uncertainty that an investment plan creates and as such should make us all feel a little more comfortable as we look forward to retirement.

A little more on the idea of this being an investment plan. Shortly after we received our first checks this year, there were many questions asking why the "deduction" did not show up as a line item on our pay stubs. The answer to that is that this is not a "deduction" per se, but rather a "reduction" in our wages in trade for increased pension benefits. Giving up a \$1.12 per hour for \$100.00 per month per year of service is very similar to what we did in negotiations in 1998. There we gave up a general wage increase of .25% for \$5.00 more in pension benefits. And that never showed up on our paychecks either. Nor were we taxed on that .25%, just as we will not be taxed on the \$1.12.

The difference between that 1998 reduction and this one is that we can only contribute to PIUMPF for 2200 hours. After reaching 2200 hours, our pay will then increase by \$1.12 per hour. For day workers this will probably not be an issue, as day workers average 2080 hours per year. For shift workers this will be something to watch. The average number of hours worked on shift is 2192. Therefore, it becomes imperative that we know how many hours we've worked. And to that end, we have

been working with the Company to have an accounting of our "PIUMPF" hours. At the time of this writing we have secured, and distributed, a print out of the hours Simpson has reported to PIUMPF for the month of January. We should have one for February by the time you read this. Ultimately we would like to see "PIUMPF Hours" as a line on our pay stubs, and we are working with the Company to achieve that goal.

We also recognize the need to be able to check with PIUMPF itself to see what they're crediting us with. Currently PIUMPF makes no reports available, but I am told by the PIUMPF office in Nashville that they are working on getting an annual report out to the members. (I would just like to note here that we get no reports on our Company pension either.) I've also heard a buzz about possibly putting up a web site where members could check their hours and benefit levels. What PIUMPF will do for you is check their computer database for member contributions. You can do this twice per year by calling the following numbers. For last names starting with A through K, call Nelda Drake at 800-251-4109; For last names starting with L through Z, call Barbara Mathis at 800-251-4108.

We have secured an enormous benefit for our members in PIUMPF. With the retirement plan now in place, our members will be able to enjoy a more robust retirement after their years at this mill. And with all the hard work we put in here, isn't that a great thing to look forward to?

If you have any more questions, please feel free to corner me in the time alley or in Re-caust (ext. 443) and I'll do my best to find answers for you. You can also log on to the P I U M P F w e b s i t e a t www.pacebenefitfunds.com and look over the information they have there. Finally, PIUMPF can be reached by their toll free number at 800-474-8673.

Chuck Whitt



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clarify a question or to object to confusing or intimidating tactics.

While the interview is in progress the representative can not tell the employee what to say but he may advise them on how to answer a question. At the end of the interview the union representative can add information to support the employee's case.

Don't forget: Our union meetings are now held at the Pierce County Annex on 35th Street (behind Titus-Will Ford). The meetings start at 4:30 PM



MARCH 2004

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 CAD	2 CBD	3 CBD	4 CBA	5 CBA Payday	6 DBA
7 DBA	8 DBA Union Mtg. 4:30 PM	9 DCA	10 DCA	11 DCB	12 DCB	13 ACB
14 ACB	15 ACB	16 ADB	17 ADB	18 ADC	19 ADC Payday	20 BDC
21 BDC	22 BDC Union Mtg. 4:30 PM	23 BAC	24 BAC	25 BAD	26 BAD	27 CAD
28 CAD	29 CAD	30 CBD	31 CBD			