

Dedicated to Working People Everywhere

Tim Mills, Chair Education Committee

www.uaw592.com

MAY-JUNE 2002

RARE DISEASE INVESTIGATED AT PRATT & WHITNEY

Thanks to the perseverance of Union people and their families, Pratt & Whitney finally commenced what IAM spokesperson John Harity characterized as "... the biggest investigation of industrial illness in history."

"The story begins when two friends who had worked side by side, at Pratt & Whitney's North Haven facility, died from a rare brain disease. When Local Lodge 707 began its investigation, the company initially claimed it was just union propaganda," explained Harity.

Both machinists worked at the jet turbine plant. Both were exposed to machine oils and various toxic chemicals. Both died just weeks apart from brain tumors.

"When I approached the company about this in '97, they said I was crazy," said Debbie Belancik, who is Health & Safety Representative at the North Haven plant.

"The story blossomed and as the numbers (cases of the disease) grew, the wives of the two men got involved. They made death bed promises to their husbands to get justice for the victims," she added.

The widows of the two men then formed the "Worked to Death" advocacy group to spotlight the growing problem and force the company to investigate what has caused relatively high

numbers of people to be fatally stricken with glioblastoma multiforma. This rapidly growing type of brain cancer normally hits less than three in one hundred thousand. As many as sixty P&W workers and retirees in Connecticut have died from the disease.

The company had promised the cancer victims' families that the study would be conducted fairly and that they be kept up to date as it progressed. However, the families are now questioning the sincerity of the Connecticut health department, by allowing Pratt & Whitney to investigate itself, since the company is paying for it.

Through their legal counsel, the families have filed an OSHA complaint to get records being withheld by the company. The *New Haven Advocate* reported that the company will turn over the paperwork, not for legal reasons, because their attorneys insist that they are not required to do so, "...but only out of the goodness of Pratt's heart," said a company official.

According to Belancik, the probe has only just begun and could take years to complete: "We will follow this through to the very end."

Interested readers may learn more by clicking on:
www.newhavenadvocate.com/workedtodeath/index.html.

“THANK YOU FOR BEING THERE”

President's Report

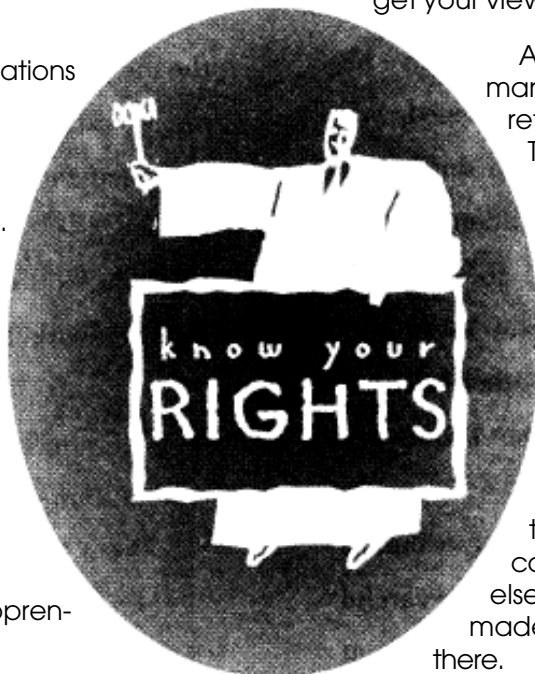
The Local Union elections are over and on June 26th, the new officers will be sworn in at our membership meeting. We will also elect a new International Executive Board at the Constitutional Convention in June. As we prepare for negotiations in the coming months, we will continue to look forward, but this month I'd like to take a look back.

We have accomplished much in the last three years, thanks to the solidarity of our members and a dedicated and active leadership. Some of the highlights include:

- Negotiated the first incentive buyout for UAW 592 members, enabling ninety people to retire early and preventing layoffs.
- Established better communications about our Union to the membership.
- Won the largest monetary arbitration award in UAW 592 history over the 401K matching contribution.
- Provided comprehensive monthly training for the steward who wished to participate in everything from labor law to grievance handling.
- Provided forty hours of ergonomics training from the UAW Health and Safety Department for every Safety Steward and others.
- Negotiated an Electrician Apprenticeship Program.
- Bargained an Employee Assistance Program patterned after the best in the UAW.
- Conducted a successful public and in-plant campaign to stop the loss of our jobs to Caribe in Miramar, Florida.
- Continued to provide events such as the annual picnic, Christmas lunch and retiree dinner.
- Sponsored Little League basketball and baseball teams.
- Organized events such as bowling nights,

Rockford Lightning games and a UAW 592 spaghetti dinner night.

- Participated in the 2000 elections and the recent primaries by registering voters, educating our members on issues, and volunteering our help to pro-labor candidates.
- Improved the Local 592 newsletter.
- Established an e-mail network and an internal website at uaw592.com in order to communicate more quickly with you.
- Used surveys and work-to-worker feedback to get your views on important issues.



All this and more takes the efforts of many members – both active and retired – who try to go the extra mile. This is really what defines a Union: All of us working together to improve the lives of others. As we do so, we improve our own lives as well.

I have made a conscious effort through this column, at membership meetings, and in person to say thank you to those who help out. It is something that cannot be said enough. So, to all of the officers, stewards, committee members and everyone else whose participation in our Union made a difference, thank you for being there.

While many of our Executive Board members will be returning for another three years, I would like to especially recognize four outgoing officers: Chief Stewards Rick Ward and Curt Nedlund, and Trustees Tom Devlieger and Chris Remhof. When you see them in the plants, be sure to shake their hands and say thanks. They did their jobs for you!

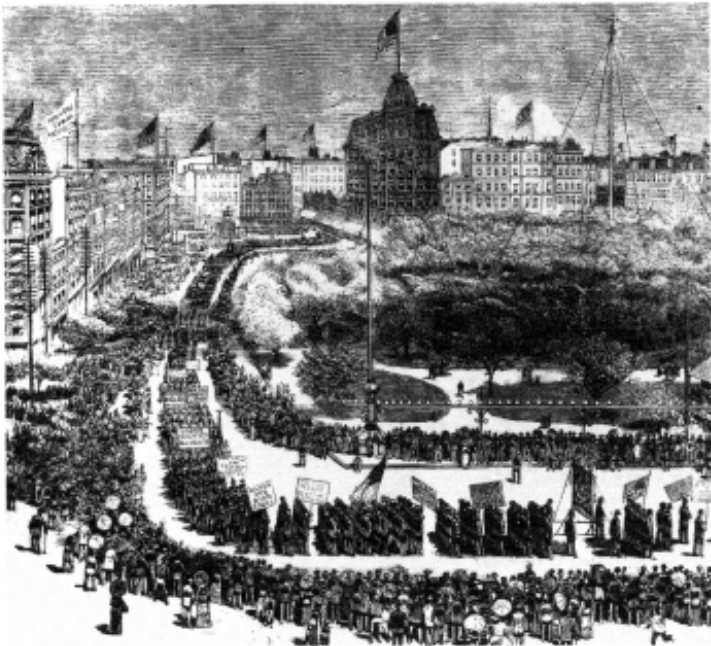
In Solidarity,
Jeff Bronson

Recreation Committee Has "Full Plate" for the Summer

Local 592 Recreation Committee Chairperson Kristy Baran says she anticipates a busy season ahead, and that the Committee is on the lookout for lots of fun-loving Union people for this summer:

"Our picnic will be held on August 3rd 2002. We are asking for volunteers to make it a big success like always," she explained.

Kristy is pleased that many young people chipped in at the picnic last year. She reported that the rest of the Committee looks forward to seeing them again this year. If you want to help, please contact Dale Blanton @ x2085, Dan Selover @ x2250, or Kristy Baran @ x8236. Tickets will be available in June.



The first Labor Day parade, New York City, 1882

"Labor Day weekend is our biggest community event, and affords us the best opportunity to strut our stuff before the public. With this in mind, we call on the entire membership and their families to march in the parade and help out with the float. We invite the women to represent UAW Local 592 in the Mrs. & Miss Labor Day pageant," she added.

"More on this stuff later... Have a ball this summer!" said Kristy.

By Tim Mills

WOMEN WORKERS' HISTORY

Chapter 61: 1919

In 1919, 275,000 steelworkers went on strike to gain a union and better wages and working conditions. Elbert H. Gary, chairman of United States Steel, denounced the strike as an attempt "to sovietize the steel industry." There was a general strike in Seattle in support of shipyard workers' demands for higher wages. The mayor called it a "Bolshevik plot." When New York's garment workers struck, bosses accused their union of raising the "red flag of Bolshevism" over the city. Textile strikers in Massachusetts, fully 60 percent of them women, were said to be bent on creating a "Soviet Lawrence."

The same year, scrubwomen and actors went on strike. Women workers struck garment shops and textile mills, and telephone companies, shoe mills and stockyards. They were joined by longshoremen, carpenters and subway employees. Even the Boston police went on strike that summer. In all, more than 4,000,000 Americans went on strike in 1919.



Most strikes were provoked by the rapid wartime increase in the cost of living. Between 1914 and 1919, the cost of milk had jumped from nine to 15 cents a quart, eggs from 37 to 62 cents a dozen, butter from 32 to 61 cents a pound. The overtime pay that allowed many workers to make ends meet disappeared with the end of World War I.

Outraged and alarmed, big business struck back with a red scare that convinced millions of Americans that every strike was the beginning of revolution. The employers' anti-red campaign put labor on the defensive. Workers' grievances were ignored, and civil liberties brushed aside.

(To be continued!)

Violence in the Workplace

Violence in the workplace is becoming increasingly more common. As layoffs continue and workers are asked to do more for the same pay, the people hitting the street find it harder to find a job — or if they get a new job it may pay less and they can't pay the bills. All these problems at work plus possible troubles at home can lead to higher stress levels for the individual. Some stress is normal but when someone becomes angry and that anger becomes unresolved, this increases the chances for violence.



Usually someone doesn't just snap from a happy employee to a violent person over a single event. More often, there is a progression or build up of unresolved issues. Individuals usually progress through stages of anger: from negative attitude, to power struggle, to hurtful criticism or gossip, to revenge resulting in a violent act.



What to do? If you think the potential for serious violence is there or that the progression of stages is taking place, contact an EAP (Employee Assistance Program) Representative to discuss the options that are available, before it's too late.

Earle Rowe - Pager 972-0418 or phone 966-8059
UAW 592 EAP Representative

ELECTION COMMITTEE SAYS CONGRATS TO MEMBERSHIP

Local 592 Election Committee Report

We have finished the 2002 Local 592 election of officers and constitutional delegates. Elected to serve for the next three years were:

Jeff Bronson PRESIDENT

Rex Thomas VICE PRESIDENT

Bill Kiddell FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Terry Myers RECORDING SECRETARY

Tom Diverdi SERGEANT-AT-ARMS

Cliff Saulters GUIDE

Pete Deskovitch TRUSTEE

Kristy Baran TRUSTEE

Cindy Fink TRUSTEE

Mike Roth CHIEF STEWARD DISTRICT 1

Ted Dever CHIEF STEWARD DISTRICT 2

Lance Anderson CHIEF STEWARD
DISTRICT 3

Mike Hughes CHIEF STEWARD
DISTRICT 4

Pete Deskovitch DELEGATE

Ted Dever DELEGATE

Kristy Baran ALTERNATE DELEGATE

We had a good turnout at 604 voters. Thank you, concerned members, for taking the time to vote.

Sincerely,
The Election Committee

BARGAINING COMMITTEE REPORT

NO FORCED VACATION SHUTDOWN! In response to the Union's grievance, the company backed away from their position of implementing a partial plant shutdown. The answer to the grievance reads: ***"Management will work with the Union in developing an acceptable approach to accommodate the needs of both parties in offering time off to employees where possible, associated with this 4th of July holiday period."***

What this means is that employees will be asked to take vacation or unpaid leave of absence during the week of July 4th. Leaves of absence during this period will not count against your attendance in any way (i.e. perfect attendance or counseling steps).

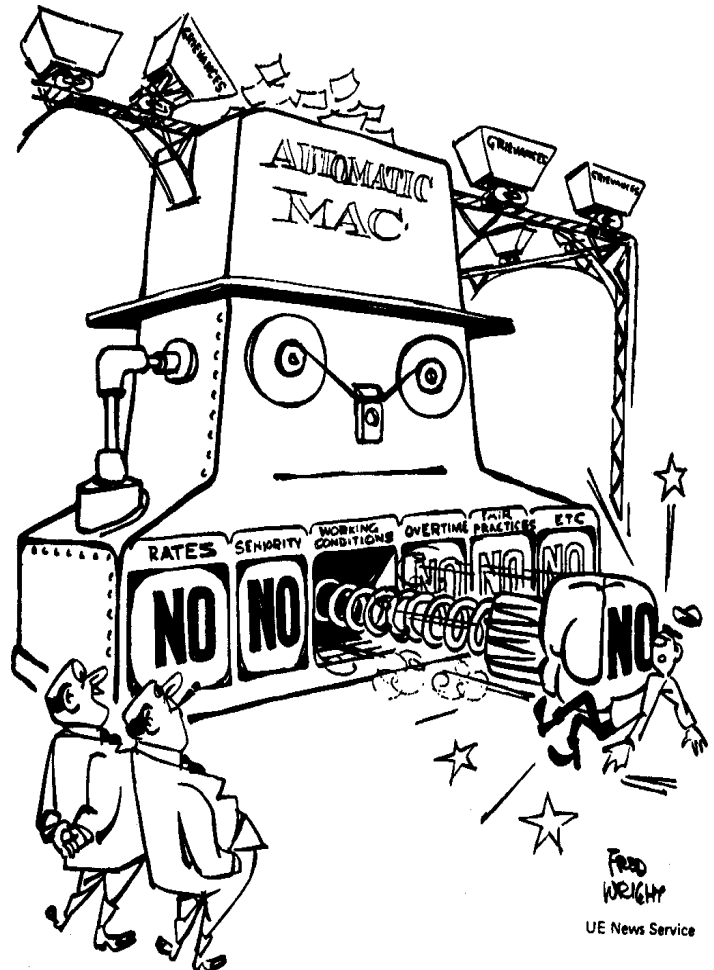
PEOPLE NOT HEADCOUNT. As of this writing there are fifty-one members on layoff. Most are on Inverse Voluntary Layoff (IVLO), however the recall of those out for the maximum six months has begun. We find it unconscionable that the company failed to prevent even ONE SINGLE LAYOFF through non-traditional work assignments. Meanwhile, we are now seeing co-op students and yellow badge temporary employees coming for summer jobs. We are demanding that the company give due consideration to our members and to the requirements of our job security language by placing qualified individuals into some of these jobs!

In an effort to maximize Bargaining Unit opportunities, you may be asked to fill out a form that will include education level, technical skills and other pertinent information. Filling out the form will be voluntary, however we encourage everyone to participate and to help prevent as many layoffs as we can, for as long as we can.

GRIEVANCES CONTINUE to be processed on issues of 1) working excessive overtime in areas with members reduced; 2) subcontracting our work without proper notification and/or justification; 3) unjust or too severe discipline. On discipline, it seems that supervision in some areas, notably Overhaul & Repair in Plant 6 and Facilities Engineering in Plant 1, have taken to "showing their muscle" in recent months by handing

out discipline that far exceeds the crimes. We are not sure what the root cause is, but it seems that the more insecure the managers become about their own future, the more they want to make a name for themselves as tough disciplinarians. This is dictatorship, not leadership.

BEREAVEMENT LEAVE has become a point of contention with the company, lately. Our bereavement language was written into the contract during the 1992 negotiations and has been used as example of progressive bargaining by the UAW International and by educators from Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The foundation for the success of this benefit is two-fold: The Company trusts employees; Employees behave in a manner deserving this trust. Bereavement leaves, like vacations, need to be pre-approved by your supervisor.



" See how well our automatic grievance machinery works! "



UAW LOCAL 592
112 No. Second St.
Rockford, ILL. 61107

NON-PROFIT ORG.
US POSTAGE
PAID
ROCKFORD, IL.
PERMIT NO. 861