



# 'ANGUS BARKS'

By Jeff Francis  
AEG Executive Board

## *Best Practices?*

**UPGRADE BOARDS-** Stewards and members understand the many inadequacies of the present job posting system. Boards are poorly maintained, and located haphazardly. Postings sometimes disappear, never appear, go up too late or come down too early. Applications travel thru uncertain channels, are sometimes misfiled or misplaced, and responses are often tardy. The system is not user friendly, for the employee seeking a better job, the administrator trying to make the right choice, or the union representative looking to ensure our contract is respected.

For over ten years Local 201 has urged a ready-made solution to this problem. In the Erie Plant, part of the Transportation Division like us, job posting is handled thru their shop floor computer terminals. *An employee can check what jobs are posted, apply on-line, see who else applied, get called for the job, or see who was selected.* The Company installed this system in Erie to improve accountability and transparency.

It doesn't take a whole lot of *imagination at work*, to see that the Erie system would address many of the problems caused by our antiquated paper driven process. For the managers in Lynn who have authority over Employment and Relations, it simply is not a priority. In ten years, much money has been spent on lean events, best practices and digitization. But when it comes to something important to you and me, the Company is willing to live with a system prone to mistakes and misunderstandings.

**JUSTICE DENIED-** Most issues involving the personal situation of any of our members is worked out between local Company and Union officials. Both sides of the table have reasonable and experienced representatives. The Union relies on our contract and past practice, reaching back over 70 years as a union shop. Rarely do we have to invoke Federal or State laws to defend our members. However, several recent issues are going straight in that direction.

- 1) **The Union will not tolerate our members being fired because they are sick.**
- 2) **The Union will not tolerate the Company disciplining our members based on who they are, not based on what they have done.**
- 3) **The Union will not tolerate the Company denying benefits to our members who follow the rules.**

When Company officials take an unjustified action in these areas, and stick to it unreasonably, the Union will use the full extent of the law to protect our members.

**DISCRIMINATION SUIT-** On May 17<sup>th</sup>, Marc Thomas, president, chairman, CEO of GE Aviation Materials filed a class action suit in US District Court in Connecticut charging GE with racist pay and promotion policies and practices. Mr. Thomas has impeccable credentials. He has degrees from Stanford, Columbia and West Point, was a Green Beret commander of Special Forces, served as a White House advisor, moved up GE's managerial ladder quickly due to his recognized leadership ability, and turned around an under-achieving GE subsidiary, delivering record profits and sales. He is one of the top African-American managers at GE.

But in 2005, GE's rating of Mr. Thomas, which had always been "Top Talent", dropped to "Least Effective", and a campaign from Corporate began against him. Mr. Thomas charges this was due to his successful efforts as CEO to end a discriminatory bonus pay plan at GE Aviation Materials that gave perks to favorites, and replace it with a merit-based pay plan based on managerial performance.

Defendants include a who's-who of Transportation and Aircraft Engines managers, as well as GE's Board of Directors Compensation Committee and CEO. After they are dragged into court, and take a long look in the mirror, maybe these managers will better appreciate those GE locations that have an in-plant independent organization – a union – willing to challenge the Company's unfair labor practices. *Maybe not.*

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