



'ANGUS BARKS'

By Jeff Francis
AEG Executive Board

Current Events

PAYSTUBS- Ongoing complaints about the new paystubs continue to come off the shop floor. Examples provided by the Union at Step II were shipped to Corporate last week for review. No one at any level of the Company has been able to show us how the new artificial payrates are calculated.

Top GE and Union officials will discuss this issue this Wednesday at a special Step III meeting. Local 201 has one objective – we want our members to be able to verify the accuracy of their pay. To do this, the Company must add to the new paystubs the breakdown of hours that we had on the old paystub.

NEWWORK- Plant 1 has done well developing new work. Due to the resourcefulness of our members, planners and management, several drawing numbers are up and running, mostly in Bldg 64. The upsurge in orders for GE commercial jet engines overloaded Wilmington and Hookset with rotating parts work. It makes sense for the Company to locate the overload in Lynn, where we have the capacity and skill. New work for 1-74 & 2-74 is currently under consideration by management.

Boeing

Boeing dominates domestic airframe manufacturing. They swallowed up McDonnell Douglas, tripled profits in the last 3 years, and have a hefty backlog of airplane orders for the next several years. Yet they couldn't fund an acceptable contract offer. The Machinists Union rejected the final offer, and voted 86% to strike. You can get details at www.iam751.org.

Their contract issues will sound familiar to GE workers. 1) Pensions – Boeing offered to raise their pension formula from \$60/mo. per year of service, to \$66. Union leaders called it the worst increase they've ever been offered. Currently, the top of GE's Guaranteed Table is \$60/mo. per year of service. 2) Healthcare – In addition to tripling contribution rates, Boeing wants to end their Retiree Medical Plan for new employees hired after 1/1/06. Remember GE just ended early retirement supplements for new management employees hired after 1/1/05.

The outcome of the Machinists strike will be important for us because these big corporations like GE and Boeing do not make contract offers based on their ability to pay. Instead, they make contract offers based on the surrounding business climate at the time of negotiations. Our next contract negotiations are in 2007.

201 Strike Fund History

Local 201 has always had a strike fund. The IUE International did not start a strike fund until 1966. All funds were exhausted 3 years later, near the end of the 101-day 1969 strike. In 1979 the membership voted to designate 25¢ per member per week of our dues for our local strike fund. In 1988, our Constitution Committee discovered the 25¢ was not being funded properly, and demanded the Trustees enforce the membership's action. Since 1989, the 25¢ has gone in the Strike Fund. As a result, we have \$1.7 million in our local strike fund, to safeguard us if we face what Boeing workers are now facing.

The 201 Constitution always said strike fund monies shall not be used for any other purpose. In 1988 the membership modified that to say, except for the sole purpose of refinancing the building mortgage. Today our mortgage is free and clear.

The IUE had similar language that restricted use of International strike fund monies. By 1990 that fund had \$33 million. The International Constitution was then changed, and the IUE used strike fund monies to pay operating expenses. All during the 1990's, GE knew that a prolonged contract strike would bankrupt the IUE operating account. By the time IUE merged with CWA, the \$33 million was gone.

Today our International is the CWA, and they do a far better job tracking our money than the IUE ever did. Nevertheless, our local strike fund is an important asset to the membership, and any decision about its usage should be weighed very carefully.

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