



**LOCAL UNION 1600
INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD
OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS**

OUR UNION VOICE

Volume 42, No. 7

July 2017

PRESIDENT'S REPORT FOR JULY

By Steve Knoebel



If you recall I recently wrote about the National Sisterhood United for Journeyman Lineman (NSUJL). I spoke about the purpose of the organization and the benefits they provide. I also mentioned the lineman rodeo they host annually. On June 16th

Journeyman Lineman Matt Manchester, out of Bethlehem, and I travelled to Clearfield, Pa. to get a firsthand look at what transpires at this rodeo. We did this with the thought of entering a Local 1600 team (s) in the future. On the evening of June 16th they held their annual "Climbing for Lost Lineman" event. During this event, which is very somber to say the least, a lantern is hung to honor any lineman that has passed away in the past year. It was during this event that Journeyman Lineman Lynn Bechdel out of Lock Haven climbed and hung a lantern to honor deceased Local 1600 brother Michael Bronokoski. Mike was a journeyman lineman out of Cocalico that passed away from cancer. For all of Local 1600 I want to say thank you Lynn. I know that had to be tough to do but it was a very special tribute in Mike's memory. The rodeo was an all-day event on Saturday June 17th. There were separate events, an Apprentice Event and a Journeyman Team Event. While the competition differed, the focus on safety and the point's deductions for violations of standard safety rules were the same for each. Some examples that would constitute a 2 point deduction: Safety straps infraction, failure to cover the neutral, secondary or primary, properly cutout or slip on pole, failure to wear hard hat properly

at all times, failure to wear long sleeve shirt with the sleeves down and buttoned or dropping tools or material from the pole.

The competition for apprentices consisted of 4 separate events.

1. Hurtman Rescue simulated hot on a 45 foot pole
2. Speed climb a 45 foot pole
3. Obstacle Course
 - Open the cutout from the ground
 - Change a fuse in the cutout
 - Changeout an insulator
 - Changeout the epholator
 - Close the cutout from the ground
4. Service install

In addition to the Hurtman Rescue and the Speed Climb, the Journeyman competition included a Hot Arm relay event and a Dead-End arm change out.

It was very impressive to watch the skill level, the dedication and the spirit the competition had. This was a full day's work on a very hot day. The competitors and the spectators were encouraged to stay hydrated as plenty of water was available.



Journeyman Lineman Lynn Bechdel hanging a lantern in remembrance of Brother Michael Bronokoski

(Continued on Page 3)

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July Membership

PPL	1315
Talen	956
Comcast	58
Ephrata	25
Hansen	28
Brookfield	16
Total	2398



**JUNE'S
IBEW PAC
winner was
James J. Myers
Unit 5**

REPORT FROM V.P. FRANK GRABOSKI



Hello Sisters and Brothers of IBEW Local 1600.

June has been a busy month to say the least. Displacements, grievance meetings, arbitration preps, arbitration hearings, negotiations along with fielding day to day calls and emails. Some recent events concern me enough to address it in this newsletter. This applies to all workers no matter what company you work for. IF you injure yourself at work or even THINK you may have injured yourself, report it immediately to your supervisor. Don't wait until the next day. If you are a shift worker, have a contact number of a manager in case a manager is not on site, call no matter what time it is. Reporting it the next morning because you didn't want to disturb a manager late at night may be great for them BUT will cause you nothing but grief. Remember the old saying "no good deed goes unpunished" SO REPORT INJURIES IMMEDIATELY!

Safety equipment and procedures are to protect us from injury; we need to use them both in order for us to remain safe. Overall I believe we are adhering to this but I need to mention its importance because a few members got into situations over safety violations, no injuries, but they received RBP including termination. Don't let your guard down, not sure, ask, need help, ask, unsafe situation STOP!

Talen 3rd Steps:

- **G17-BRU-008/Training**
Utility man yard was seeking compensation for training other workers. Not enough merit to pursue, withdrawn.
- **G16-BRU-040/Sickness**
Employee returned to work after fourth occurrence without medical certification and was not paid sick pay. No violation per CBA,

grievance withdrawn.

- **G17-BRU-011/Vacation**
Employee reported off sick prior to the start of his vacation, changed vacation to sick time however lost his vacation day. Grievance was settled Favorably, employee had vacation day returned.
- **G16-BRU-035/Payroll**
Employees experiencing difficulty in understanding paystubs and may be missing money in pay. Management agrees to investigate any payroll issue brought forth by Bargaining Unit workers. Settled Favorably.
- **G17-BRU-012/Vacation**
Employee lost 48 hours vacation time due to a technical error. Company agreed to pay the employee the 48 hours vacation time. Settled Favorably.
- An M.A. was signed 4/26/17, TE17-0130, it states: Talen Energy Corporation and IBEW Local 1600 agree that employees who have previously, successfully completed any of the following tests will be waived from taking the Skilled trades test:
 - FS Generation Electrical Test
 - FS Generation Mechanical Test
 - EEI POSS Test
 - EEI MASS Test
 - EEI Tech TestI will get this M.A. on the web for you to reference.

Arbitrations:

- **G16-MON-005 – Plant Chem Techs/Contractors**
An arbitration hearing was held April 12, 2017 for contracting out Plant Chemical Technicians work, specifically ground water sampling.

(Continued on page 3)

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P.O. Box 470, Trexlertown, Pa. 18087-0470

President & Financial Secretary Steve Knoebel
Vice President Frank Graboski
Recording Secretary Donna Kancsal
Treasurer Lucinda Erdman
Newsletter Editor Rafael Cuevas

IMPORTANT NUMBERS
LOCAL 1600 HOTLINE NUMBER



1-800-344-2200
Local Union Hall
610-395-8167
Or 1-800-342-5515
FAX 610-395-6158

(Continued from Pres. Report page 1)

There were also plenty of other forms of hydration available after the competition. I know we have some very skilled linemen of our own that are interested in competing in this event. Hopefully it can be worked out to have Local 1600 participate next year. If you would like more information on the event and the specifics of each competition, see your Chief Steward. I also took video of most of the events.

But just as the Friday evening events showed, you work in a profession that can be fatal if not treated with respect. Be careful out there, stay hydrated and take precautions against heat exhaustion. Because God forbid, I do not want to see a lantern hung to honor a Local 1600 brother or sister that died due to a work related incident.

To all the members stay safe and enjoy your summer.

Fraternally Steve Knoebel

(Continued from Graboski Page 2)

The arbitrator concluded the company had the right to contract out in accordance with Article II Section 5-D, therefore the grievance was denied. Award was issued June 16, 2017.

- **G17-BRU-003 – Termination**
An arbitration hearing was held June 21, 2017 for a PCO B.I. for allegedly violating a last chance agreement. The attorneys are required to submit written briefs to the arbitrator by July 28, 2017 then the arbitrator has 30 days to render a decision.

PPL

3rd Steps:

- **G16-CEN-019/Contractors – Snow Removal**
Company contracted out snow removal in the winter of 2016. A settlement to return snow removal to PPL FM Staff at the SFC for the 2017-2018 winter season is pending.
- **G16-NE-040/Contractors – Snow Removal**
A settlement is pending to return snow removal to PPL FM at the Scranton Service Center.
- **G17-LEH-008/Termination – Facilities Management Worker**
Employee terminated for an unsatisfactory performance review. Union proposed to

reinstate employee and make whole. The company declined proposal. Submitted to arbitration.

3rd steps scheduled August 2, 2017:

- **G17-GO-002/MCP Working**
Management performing Bargaining Unit work in Facilities Department at the Windsor location.
- **G17-GO-004/Job Vacancy**
Company not filling a Tech II vacancy in Facilities G.O.
- **G17-GO-005/Job Vacancy**
Company not filling a Tech III vacancy in Facilities G.O.
- **G17-GO-007/Job Description**
FMW employee assigned to perform Tech I duties at G.O.
- **G16-GO-016/Job Vacancy**
Employee left Facilities G.O. as a Tech I and accepted a posted job. He returned to Facilities but company put him back to a FMW because that is the last job he completed 6 months satisfactorily per the CBA, even though there is a vacancy in the Tech I position.

Ongoing/Open Issues:

- **Facilities** – It's obvious after reading about all the grievances not to mention cases that are submitted to arbitration already, vacancies continue to be an issue in Facilities. The parties met (Chief, Stewards, myself & company) to discuss possible ways to work through this problem but no resolution at this time.
- **Service Techs** – This is another department that has vacancy problems. The company's explanation is, overall they have enough workers, they just may not be rostered where the work is. Our folks have been cooperating by volunteering to help other areas which is a good thing, however, we need to capture some rules in an effort to be fair and consistent. The company has listened to our concerns and has been in full cooperation to work towards a win/win resolution.

In Solidarity, Frank E.G

REPORT FROM BUSINESS REP JANE BIEVER



Already July and so far a mild summer, I hope that continues. By now everyone is preparing for the 4th of July. Please keep safety as part of that preparation. Make sure picnic foods are kept at an appropriate temperature and covered. Be cautious of firework displays and make sure every safety precaution is taken. Have a Happy Fourth of July.

As mentioned in previous newsletter articles, there are many preventive services that are covered at 100% per the Affordable Care Act. Below is the web address for Capital Blue Cross's list of covered services:

<https://www.capbluecross.com/wps/wcm/connect/CBC-Public/CBC/Members/QualityCareInformation/PreventiveHealthCare>

Once you go to this site, open the document 'Schedule of Preventive Health Care Services' to see what preventive services are available to you dependent upon your age. In fact, take the document with you when you go for your annual physical. I've contacted Blue Cross to confirm that services are covered at 100%. In addition, there is no co-pay for your office visit. Please make sure you state you are there for your annual physical. One word of caution, when obtaining this service, if they are provided as a means of diagnosis you will still be billed based on your plan selection. ***These services must be billed as preventive to be covered at 100%, so make sure your doctor's office remits this accordingly.***

In addition to the preventive medical services offered through Capital Blue Cross, some employers offer additional voluntary benefits such as auto insurance, home insurance, identity theft protection and pet insurance. To see the complete list of voluntary benefits available through your employer, go to the employee benefit section on your employer website or in your employee manual.

One final note on healthcare, this is PPL specific.

- Beginning on 7/1/17, the Company will be offering **telehealth**, which is an application offered through Capital Blue Cross, to provide medical care by way of a 'video Doctor visit.' A PPL participant can access this application by way of smartphone, tablet or computer. A negotiated copay of \$10 will apply for participants in the PPO 90 plan and a copay of \$39 will apply to the Your Choice High and Your Choice low plans, if treatment is rendered by the telehealth doctor (i.e. prescription).
- Express Scripts is joining with Livongo to provide a voluntary diabetic coaching/monitoring program. Livongo will begin this program sometime near the end of July 2017. Any PPL participant that takes part in the coaching monitoring/program will be monitored and receive free test strips while in the program. There is no fee to participate.
- PPL is offering the Expert 2nd Opinion through Consumer Medical, to provide PPL participants with an avenue to seek out assistance with a diagnosis/treatment help find a medical expert within a geographic range, help get an appointment, etc. PPL hopes to have this option available in the beginning of July 2017.

PPL will be providing more communications and information on the above measures by way of mailings, Grid updates, etc.

Below is the list of issues I've been working on:

Ephrata Borough

The contract has been reviewed and printed. Each bargaining unit member should have a copy of the new Labor Agreement. If you haven't received your new Labor Agreement please contact Wendy Stover, Chief Steward or the Local 1600 Union office.

Hansen

Contract negotiations have been ongoing with Hansen representatives since March. Although there are many items that the parties have agreed upon, there are still some open issues. The parties met on

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from Biever page 4)

6/22/17, in an attempt to negotiate these items. As of this writing on 6/27/17, Local 1600 is currently waiting for the revised proposal from Hansen to determine our next action.

On another note, please join me in welcoming Jennifer Cole as a recently appointed Steward for the Hansen Call Center in Hazleton. I'm sure Jennifer will do a wonderful job. If you have any concerns, questions and/or suggestions, please don't hesitate to see your stewards, Chris Sherrock or Jennifer Cole.

Talen

Grievances – Settled

- 16THDQ-002 – Unjustified Displacement – Designer Drafting – Civil discipline
- 16THDQ-003 – Unjustified Displacement – Designer Drafting – Electrical discipline
- 16THDQ-004 – Unjustified Displacement – Designer Drafting – Mechanical discipline

Settlement for above grievances - The Company has agreed to fill 4 vacancies at the Susquehanna plant (2 Sr Drafters-Electrical, 1 Drafter Level II-Mechanical and 1 Drafter Level I-Civil). In addition to the 4 vacancies, the Company has agreed to maintain at least 1 Designer in each of the above disciplines.

PPL

Displacements

Just as the last displacement process came to a close on March 16th, PPL notified Local 1600 of another displacement. On April 18th, Local 1600 was notified of the displacement of 1 Steno/Clerk-General at the Walbert Training Center. On April 21st, Local 1600 was notified of the displacement of a Cash Receipts Leader at the General Office, 2 Steno/Clerk-Generals at the General Office and 2 Operators-Output/Records Center. The Company agreed to handle all displaced employees, as if they had 15 years of service or more. This agreement resulted in senior volunteer bargaining unit members being able to retire/sever under the enhanced options in Article X and create vacancies for the displaced employees. Local 1600 has looked into the displacement of the Steno/Clerk-General at Walbert. Due to the reduction in work and changes in technology we are unable to pursue the displacement of this employee. Local 1600 is still looking into the, Cash Receipts Leader.

We are grieving the displacements of Steno/Clerk-Generals and 2 Operators-Output/Records Center, since the Company has blatantly given 'transitional' management personnel the bargaining unit work performed by these 2 job classifications (4 positions).

Contact Centers

Grievances – 3rd Steps

15LEH-037 **Settled** – Management performing BU work – Revenue Operations was performing BU work – based on the discussion at the 3rd step meeting, with the Director of Revenue Operations, revenue operations can research but any item requiring action will be referred to the appropriate bargaining unit job classification to care for.

15LEH-039 **Withdrawn** - Discipline – RBP has reached time in effect and been removed from employee file

16LEH-010 – Denial of Vacation – currently under review

16LEH-031 – Retirement benefit – scheduling a reconvene after receipt of requested information

16NE-014 – Currently in abeyance pending decision of Federal Appeal of arb decision for 15NE-013

16NE-017 – Unjustified RBP – employee placed on RBP for cell phone use – Union proposed to settle, which the Company declined – staff will review to determine the next action

16NE-024 – Employee denied return to work with restrictions – an employee with restriction of being on the phone for 4 hours and then off the phone for 4 hours was denied a return to work – the Union proposed to settle with a replenishment of sick time – Company declined – staff will review to determine the next action

16NE-025 – Management doing Bargaining Unit work – the Company has created a new management position call a Digital Media Specialist – this job classification is performing Bargaining Unit work through social media – this will be proceeding to arbitration.

16NE-026– Management doing Bargaining Unit work – the Company has created a new management position call a Digital Media Specialist – this job classification is performing Bargaining Unit work through social media – this will be proceeding to arbitration.

16NE-027 **Withdrawn** – Unsat performance review – Employee is currently on an overall sat and has bid

(Continued on page 6)

REPORT FROM BUSINESS REP. RUSTY CLAUDIUS



Hello Sisters and Brothers,

Third Steps

17-CEN-002 - Unsatisfactory review which resulted in a demotion. (Helper T&D)

17-LAN-001 - Missed Overtime. (Troubleman)

17-NE-003 - Unwarranted discipline. (Journeyman Lineman)

17-NE-006 - Inaccurate information on Performance Review/Unsatisfactory Performance Review. (Journeyman Electrician Substation)

17-NE-007 - Inaccurate information on Performance Review/Marginal Performance Review. (Journeyman Electrician Substation)

17-NE-008 -Demotion from L3 to L2 due to alleged unsatisfactory performance. (Journeyman Lineman Trainee)

17-NE-009 – Unsatisfactory Performance Review. (Journeyman Lineman Trainee)

17-SUS-003 - Termination (Journeyman Electrician Trainee Substation)

Arbitrations

15-SUS-007 – Company is not maintaining the Leader ratio. (Linemen)

Arbitration scheduled for 7/25/17 is postponed, due to a pending settlement.

15-NE-024 – Excessive RBP. (Troubleman)

Arbitration scheduled for 8/1/17 is postponed, working on a favorable settlement.

I hope everyone enjoys their summer and vacation time! Remember to always keep SAFETY at the forefront of everything you do at home and work.

Take care,

Rusty

(Continued from Bieber page 5)

into a new job classification.

16NE-032 - Currently in abeyance pending decision of Federal Appeal of arb decision for 15NE-013

16NE-036 **Withdrawn** – Age Discrimination – employee has retired

16NE-044 – Employee forced to return to work even when Doctor has stated unable to return to work.

This employee received a letter from PPL stating that since Sedgwick had denied their claim for Short Term Disability the employee must return to work or be terminated. According to the Company Short Term was denied because the employee's absence was a condition not a disability. The Union proposed to settle this grievance by honoring the Doctor's restrictions of no work – the Company declined – staff will review to determine the next action.

On a positive note, we have received the arbitration ruling for 15LEH-035 (iQor) contracting BU work.

We have been successful and the arbitrator has ruled in favor of the Union, stating that Article II, Section 5, Paragraph D does not allow the Company to contract 24/7-365. The award provides for 8 more bargaining unit positions and restitution of initiation fees and dues dating back to November 2015. Thank you, thank you, thank you for your patience and fortitude regarding this decision. We're not done yet. We still have Solutions as contracting support and the Company has recently contracted with WNS, both for 24/7-365 support. Stand strong - Stand together – Stand as ONE.

One final note, please join me in welcoming Ellen Maisonet as a newly appointed steward to the Lehigh CCC. I'm sure she will do a wonderful job. If you have any questions, concerns and/or comments please don't hesitate to see your stewards.

Ok that's it. A long article I know and I apologize. I will try to be more frequent on my articles.

Surviving a Flash Flood in your Car



Almost half of all flash flood deaths happen in vehicles. Moving water is very easy to underestimate. Driving through any sort of moving water can sweep your car right off the road in seemingly mild flooding. Besides, the water is always the same on top. It's what's underneath that you can't predict.

It's important to know how to avoid flash floods and what to do if you are caught in one.

What To Do

- Never drive through a flooded road or bridge. Back up and try a different route.
- Stay on high ground.

Listen to the radio for weather information and take routes that avoid flooded areas. Information is readily available from the NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards. Broadcasts require a specific receiver or scanner. It's best to have a radio with the Specific Area Message Encoder (SAME), which will alert you when flash flood warnings or watches are issued. There are smartphone apps that do the same thing, but radios are more reliable than mobile data service during severe weather.

There are seven channels (MHz frequencies) used in the NOAA Weather Radio All Hazards:

162.400
162.425
162.450
162.475
162.500
162.525
162.550

Do not stay in a flooded car. If your vehicle is surrounded by floodwater, abandon the vehicle and move immediately to higher ground.

If your car is swept into the water and submerged, DON'T PANIC! Stay calm and wait for the vehicle to fill with water. Once the vehicle is full, the doors will open. Hold your breath and swim to the surface.

If you are swept into fast moving floodwater outside of your car, point your feet downstream. Always go over obstacles, never try to go under. If you are stranded on something above the floodwater, such as a tree or building, stay put and wait for rescue. Do not enter the floodwater.

Tips

Know the terms associated with floods and flash floods.

- **Flood Watch** Flooding is possible. Tune into NOAA Weather Radio, commercial radio, or television.
- **Flash Flood Watch** Flash floods are possible. Be prepared to move quickly to higher ground. Listen to radio or television for information.
- **Flood Warning** Flooding is occurring or will occur soon. Evacuate immediately if told to do so.
- **Flash Flood Warning** A flash flood is occurring. Move to higher ground immediately on foot.

Don't rely exclusively on official warning. If flash floods are possible move to higher ground.

Don't walk into moving water. Just six inches of moving water can knock you down.

Don't overestimate your car's ability to drive through floodwater. Six inches of water is enough to reach the bottom of most passenger cars. Driving in water this deep is enough to cause a loss of control or stall the car. A foot of water will float most cars and two feet of rushing water will sweep most vehicles, including SUV's and pickups.

If at all possible, avoid contact with floodwater. Floodwater may be contaminated with oil, gasoline, or raw sewage.

Floodwater may also be charged with electricity from fallen power lines.



Get the facts First Hand

ATTEND YOUR UNION MEETING

I.B.E.W. LOCAL UNION 1600 JULY MONTHLY UNIT MEETING SCHEDULE

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
General Office Unit 1600-1	July 13, 2017 6:00 p.m.	1259 Grange Road Allentown
Harrisburg Unit 1600-2	July 13, 2017 7:00 p.m.	New Cumberland VFW 109 3rd St. New Cumberland
Lancaster Unit 1600-3	July 12, 2017 7:00 p.m.	AmVets Post 19 715 Fairview Ave. Lanc.
Lehigh Unit 1600-4	July 13, 2017 6:00 p.m.	1259 Grange Road Allentown
Central Unit 1600-5	July 13, 2017 7:00 p.m.	Comfort Inn 58 State Rd. Rt. 93, Hazleton
Northern Unit 1600-6	July 12, 2017 7:00 p.m.	Sheraton 4 Points Hotel 300 Meadows Ave. Scranton
Susquehanna Unit 1600-7	July 11, 2017 7:00 p.m.	Quality Inn & Suites 15 Valley West Rd, Danville
Ephrata Unit 1600-8	July 11, 2017 7:00 p.m.	Ephrata VFW 141 S. State St. Ephrata
LOCAL UNION EXECUTIVE BOARD	July 3, 2017 9:00 a.m.	1259 Grange Road Allentown

I.B.E.W. LOCAL UNION 1600 AUG. MONTHLY UNIT MEETING SCHEDULE

<u>UNIT</u>	<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
General Office Unit 1600-1	Aug. 17, 2017 6:00 p.m.	1259 Grange Road Allentown
Harrisburg Unit 1600-2	Aug. 17, 2017 7:00 p.m.	New Cumberland VFW 109 3rd St. New Cumberland
Lancaster Unit 1600-3	Aug. 16, 2017 7:00 p.m.	AmVets Post 19 715 Fairview Ave. Lanc.
Lehigh Unit 1600-4	Aug. 17, 2017 6:00 p.m.	1259 Grange Road Allentown
Central Unit 1600-5	Aug. 17, 2017 7:00 p.m.	Comfort Inn 58 State Rd. Rt. 93, Hazleton
Northern Unit 1600-6	Aug. 16, 2017 7:00 p.m.	Sheraton 4 Points Hotel 300 Meadows Ave. Scranton
Susquehanna Unit 1600-7	Aug. 15, 2017 7:00 p.m.	Quality Inn & Suites 15 Valley West Rd, Danville
Ephrata Unit 1600-8	Aug. 15, 2017 7:00 p.m.	Ephrata VFW 141 S. State St. Ephrata
LOCAL UNION EXECUTIVE BOARD	Aug. 7, 2017 9:00 a.m.	1259 Grange Road Allentown



**Unions have been the only powerful and
effective voice working people have ever
had in the history of this country**

Bruce Springsteen