



# LOCAL 1-2 UPDATE

## ANNUAL DUES INCREASE

Towards the end of November, 2009 Local 1-2 received correspondence from the National Union excerpted here.

November 23, 2009

**TO: All UWUA FINANCIAL OFFICERS**

**FROM: GARY M. RUFFNER, NATIONAL SECRETARY-TREASURER**

**SUBJECT: NOTIFICATION OF 2010 DUES & PER CAPITA INCREASES**

Dear Brothers and Sisters:

In accordance with the Constitution of the Utility Workers Union of America, AFL-CIO, adopted in Atlantic City, New Jersey, on April 6, 1946, and amended through June 30, 2007, the National Union is officially notifying all local unions that the monthly dues paid by the membership is to be increased as of January 1, 2010, by the amount of two dollars and eight cents (\$2.08) per month.

The weekly increase that our members will experience is \$0.48 per week or less than the price of a pack of life savers.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW GRIEVANCE/ARBITRATION PROCEDURE

When we, your union sign a Collective Bargaining Agreement (contract) that contains a grievance/arbitration procedure, we agree to settle all potential disputes through this process. When the Company issues a fiat, such as the 4 week (20 day) suspension for violations of Rules We Live By (certain safety rules), we must settle disputes arising from the company's actions through this process. You do not get instant gratification. The process takes time, but ultimately a neutral third party will decide the issue. We have also filed a charge with the National Labor Relations Board. Your Union's position is that the Company is imposing a unilateral change in terms and conditions and has a duty to bargain about the severe discipline imposed for safety infractions. We like our position and will keep you posted when the issue is fully adjudicated.

OVER

## RULES WE LIVE BY

We cannot imagine the thought process that went into the thinking of removing one 1/12th of a worker's salary for a minor safety infraction. What brilliant, innovative managerial brio it took to reach this decision - i.e., increase discipline to 4 weeks pay and impose economic violence on any worker who simply makes a minor mistake. One wonders how long it took to reach such a brilliant decision: two minutes, two hours, two days, two seconds? You would have to go back to the antebellum South and find a plantation overseer for such innovative managerial skill in addressing a problem. You can see there are some deep thinking problem solvers in Human Resources at Con Edison, right out of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Oh, they are trotting out all the old cliches and platitudes at their town hall meetings: "You're lucky to have a job." "I'd rather attend a suspension, than a wake." The only one they left out is "I'd rather build a school house than a jail house." That's probably because their policy is to punish rather than to educate.

## THE BLAME GAME

By increasing the discipline for a safety infraction, Con Edison management is tacitly blaming the workers for accidents and exonerating themselves. Nothing new here.

## ACCIDENTS

The following is an incident that is typical at Con Edison.

There was an overnight ice storm that turned a Con Edison facility into a sheet of ice. The facility manager did not call in workers to salt and sand, hoping to save on overtime expenditures and receive a few well-deserved atta boys. There was a standing order in the workout location that all trucks must leave the yard, by at least 7:15 a.m., regardless of any special equipment need to perform that days assignment. The workers were forced to load their trucks on a sheet of ice with 4 or 5 supervisors urging them to hurry, hurry, hurry to meet the 7:15 deadline. One worker while carrying 3 boxes of arc-proofing slipped on the ice and badly mangled his ankle. His foot was twisted behind his leg, bones were sticking out of his broken skin and he was in excruciating pain. He went through 2 separate operations and the installation of plates and screws in his ankle and is in severe pain. The Company investigated the incident and found to no one's surprise it was the workers fault, "inattention to footing." If you are the victim of an accident while employed at Con Edison, you should know it is highly likely that you will be blamed regardless of the circumstances and the Company's obligation to provide a safe work place. This is how they justify and exonerate themselves whenever a worker is injured. This is the Company you work for-virulently anti-union, virulently anti-worker. arrogant to a fault and autocratic and totalitarian by nature. We continue to work and hope for positive change, but we are not optimistic.

**UTILITY WORKERS UNION, LOCAL 1-2**