



"The labor movement was the principal force that transformed misery and despair into hope and progress."

Martin Luther King Jr.



Greetings UE Eastern Region members.

October – December 2023

Since the UE National Convention, I have been plenty busy. Included below is a fraction of my activities.

It is not just a report. It is intended to educate folks by sharing discussions that are going on in other UE locals. We can learn from each other.



These first 3 photos are from a major rally in Pittsburgh PA. to support the

Pittsburgh Post Gazette workers who have been on strike for over a year now. This rally was their one-year anniversary of being on strike.

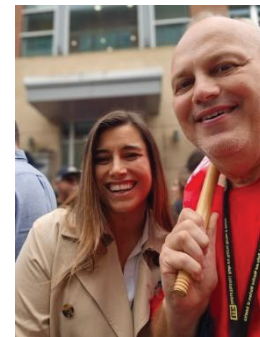
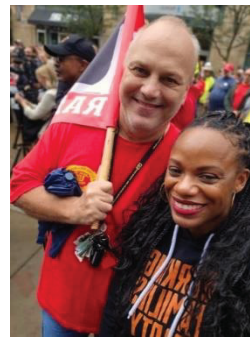
Members from UE 506 made the trip to stand in solidarity and contribute to the Local strike and defense fund. The Post Gazette workers stood in solidarity with UE 506 and 618 during their strike.



Also, at the rally and speaking to support the striking workers was Pittsburgh Congresswoman, Summer Lee (PA. 12th). Joining Summer was our newly elected Allegheny County Executive Sara Innamorato.



The UE Eastern region is proud to say that we endorsed both amazing women.



At the end of October I traveled to Verona VA. to visit our UE Local 123. At Local 123 our members produce industrial size air conditioners from scratch. UE 123 has been there since the mid 1960's when they threw out a company union in a violent struggle. Raw material comes in one end of the plant and a 40-foot flatbed trailer size air conditioner comes out the other end.



(UE 123 pictures taken in August 2023)

They have a steering committee and were working on a "Trunk or treat" event. They voted on the UE National Convention Constitutional amendments. They were also preparing for Local union elections which are

held on State and Federal election day. They reported signing up 6 new members into the union. VA is a “right to work for less” state and maintaining super majority membership is critical to send a message to the boss. I congratulated and challenged them to sign up 6 more in the following month.



I gave a report on our upcoming Eastern region meeting in Charlotte NC on April 26- 28 2024. I commented on the importance of not

writing statements against coworkers for the company or assisting the company with investigations of our members. I suggested that no one knows what you see or don't see. We agreed that no one should feel intimidated into giving testimony and if you do, you should then ask for a Union steward. If you sign your name to any statement (or discipline), you can always add the words **“under duress”**.



The most important thing I shared was that for the union to flourish, leaders need to lead an aggressive struggle and members need to play their role as members – engaged, leading and supporting aggressive struggle. **That means members must get involved, participate, press for action, engage in action, etc.** I challenged the Local E. Board and members present that we must talk to each other. That is where the work is done. Workers talking to workers. My challenge to them was for each person to talk to every coworker on their shift/department about the importance of not running to the boss and

ratting out coworkers. We must stick together and getting each other written up destroys solidarity. If you have an issue with a coworker, then you should work it out with your coworker(s) or Local union steward and officers.

I started out on November 4th, 2023, headed to Wharton NJ for a plant tour led by UE member Anthony Sanchez. This is the home of UE Local 115/Refresco. At Refresco our members bottle beverages. It was an amazing tour. The tour consisted of watching drinks such as Gator Aid get mixed and bottled by the tens of thousands a day. The last time I was there



was during our Eastern region meeting in April of 2022. At that time these workers were still in their second fight for union recognition via an NLRB election. A second election was necessary because the company challenged the conduct of the first election. In the first election the NLRB screwed up and on a technicality the employer successfully forced a second election. After our region meeting in 2022 a dozen Eastern region members snuck onto Refresco property and recorded a video message for our members that were fighting to win their second election through the NLRB. We won again by a bigger margin than the first time. We are very proud to add UE Local 115 to our union and congratulate them on their first contract in 2023.

From Wharton NJ I drove north to Wallingford CT to meet with members of UE Local 222 -sub Local 75 on November 6th. This is a union of about 200 para



educators. I attended a membership meeting with about 25 members. This was a new local for me to visit. The President of UE 222 (Julie Knowlton) is also President of sub Local 75. My message here was pretty much a framework for what I would say to all Locals I would visit throughout my tour. The message was



A. **Its an amazing time for labor.** Workers are organizing a lot of new unions. UE alone has seen more organizing in the last 2 years than it has since the late 1930's and 1940's. Strikes have been breaking out everywhere. UE 506, UE 618, the Pittsburgh Post Gazette, the UAW, Screen actors, Screen writers, etc.. Workers are also making historic breakthroughs in the south. In Virginia Beach VA municipal workers are expecting to soon have lawful collective bargaining. In North Carolina public employees are shutting down cities, demanding better wages, benefits, working conditions and fighting for lawful collective bargaining.

B. **Knowledge is power.** I was making sure to hand out "Them and Us Unionism" booklets everywhere I went. I was also making sure every Local received at least one book on Labor history/struggle, A UE news, steward guides, UE stewards, etc.

C. **I preach militancy,** rank and file control, aggressive struggle, and a general message that "when we fight - we win"!

D. **I told them I was mining for gold, diamonds, and copper.** That means I was looking to find new activists, stewards, officers, labor leaders and maybe someone who could change the world in the labor movement. I urged that these people are among us and are just waiting for us to find them.

E. **I thanked our members for their labor.** I wanted them to know how valuable they are and that their union values their labor because without them nothing works.

UE Local 255 represents workers at a food Co-op (Hunger Mountain).

in Montpelier VT, I visited these folks on November 7th and 9th. The Local has been in a struggle with a new management team that is hostile to the Union. New President Charlotte Domino and other elected representatives were sworn in during their membership meeting.



During the UE Local 255 membership meeting I found out that the young leadership had decided to take the fight to the boss. Truly

inspiring to see these these workers finding their way into militant aggressive struggle.

They decided to attend a meeting of the Co-op governing body. Co-op workers are also actually members/



owners of the store and also get to vote. Our UE 255 members went to the meeting with stickers and handouts. They had good conversations with many of the Co-op members. They were definitely airing managements dirty laundry. UE 255 President Charlotte Domino and Vice President (and GEB member) Amber Hannigan led the way. Along with Lyle Green who made the sign for all to see and brother Jamie Young who came later with some fire. Elizabeth Jesdale (UE Eastern region Recording secretary and 255 member) also came out and was very excited to see the union in action.



On November 8th I visited UE Local 221. UE 221 is an amalgamted Local. This means it consists of several smaller work locations which each have a different employer. Some Locals are just difficult to visit, especially on short notice. Such was the case at UE Local 221 in Burlington

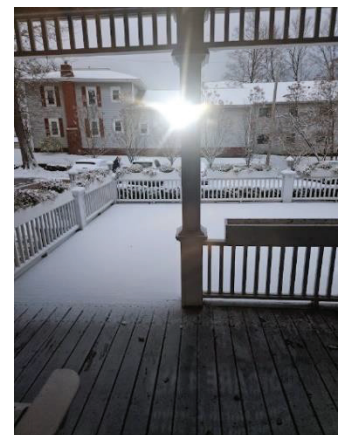
Vermont. A good union organizer finds a way. Every UE member in this union should view themselves as a union organizer. As such, you have a responsibility to organize each other toward collective aggressive militant struggle.

So I showed up at Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity (CVOEO) at shift change and just made my presence known by holding the UE flag outside the workplace



I didn't approach anyone coming or going because the nature of the work can be sensitive and clients could be startled by a stranger. Nonetheless I made the effort to stand outside for about an hour on a pretty cold day.

In Burlington VT in November, sometimes you can be surprised at 5:30 AM with a first snowfall. Such was the case when I visited with UE Local 203, City Market Food Co-op. City Market has 2 locations in Burlington. UE 203 has a general agreement with the employer to try and not engage in union activities as much as possible during the Thanksgiving/Christmas season. It is their busy season. So it would be frowned upon for me to walk the floor of the store and distract workers from their duties. So I woke up a couple mornings at 5:30AM and showed up at the employee entrances at each location. Members were excited to get some "Them and Us Unionism" booklets,





labor history books, UE news or anything I had. They really appreciated seeing and knowing that their region President came out at those hours and under those conditions just to say hello and thank

them for their labor.

On November 10th I met with 2 UE Local 225 members from the Vermont Achievement center in Rutland Vermont. This is a small rural city in Western VT near the ski resort of Killington. Simply amazing and beautiful country. I met with Tenille Hayden and Heather O’Bara. Heather brought her son Jace. Jace is ten years old and

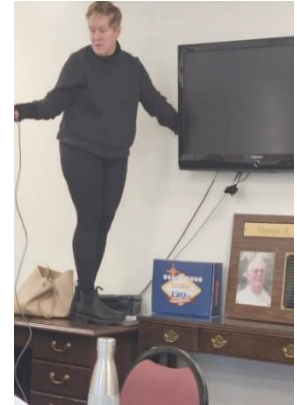


an inspiring young man. As we met, I invited Jace to attend his first union meeting. He sat in with us. He was excited. I gave him a copy of the “Them and Us unionism” booklet and before the meeting was over he had read half of it. I offered them a Labor history book and he chose a book on class warfare. He expressed that he is an avid reader. It was really good to meet these members as they are not on the beaten path and don’t get visits to often. They are doing well and I am confident we will see more of them going forward. Sometimes digging for gold means sharing a “Them and Us Unionism” booklet with children, neighbors, family and friends.

On November 11th I then went to visit UE Local 228 in Portsmouth NH. This is the National Visa Center and they process Passports and Visas for

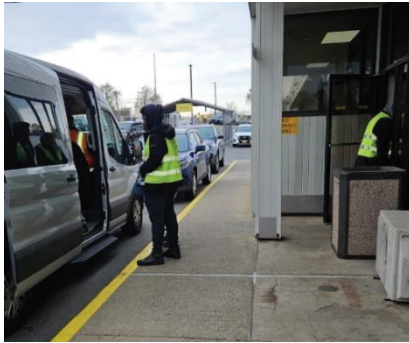
American and foreign citizens wanting a passport or to enter the United States. Nothing stops these folks. Internet issues - No problem. Cable Issues – No problem.

We had a good high energy meeting with members in the room and over Zoom. We had a good combination of regular and first time members. First time attendees were enthusiastic and ready to learn and read. They were excited to have found the union and to have come to the meeting. One of the first time members (Rosie Buswell) attended our sub region 6 training.



(L to R) Anthony Comeau, Juhanni Kempfi, Rosie Buswell, Dee Towne, Diana Fuller, Ed Martin and Barbara Allen

November 14th I started the day visiting with UE Local 250 at Hertz Rent a car at Logan International airport in Boston MA. This was a local I had never visited before. With the help of UE Field Organizer Wayne Morrison I was able to get on the property and meet more than



a dozen members as they waited to begin their day. I was impressed to see UE buttons, stickers, a banner and a

fully dressed union bulletin board. The boss gave his blessing for me to talk to folks. Well the boss listened in (a possible ULP) to my fire and brimstone and seemed not to appreciate my presence anymore. Right after I said I was done he approached me and said his men needed to get to work. I told him I was done and even though he heard me the first time he pressed on. So I went outside and waited for the next shift to arrive. I then got the word that I could not stay. No problem, mission accomplished.



On November 14th I visited with UE Local 279 (Trillium Flow Technologies) in Ipswich MA. They make industrial valves for several industries. These valves are no joke. They weigh as much as some cars. I met with UE Local 279 President Stephen Chabot and Local Financial secretary Jason Gallant at a Local diner for lunch. We had a good talk and they reported the company has been hiring some new folks. The employer also recently bought a

small company in PA. which makes a completely different product line. A problem is that management keeps poaching our members into the management ranks. The officers also reported how they recently won a significant wage increase for a senior member.

I also made it to Western MA. on the 14th. UE Local 274 is an amalgamated Local. UE Local 274 is located in and around Greenfield MA. This area is mostly small towns and cities with the most wonderful scenery and charm. I was only able to visit for a shift change meeting with UE 274 Local leaders from Kennametal.

(L to R) Chief Steward Shawn Coates, Financial Secretary Frederick Williams and Local President Mark Avery.



We had a nice little talk and I encouraged the men to keep looking to develop new activists through education and participation. Obviously I shared with them the “Them and Us unionism” booklet, a Labor history book (courtesy Chris Townsend).

Included in UE amalgamated Local 274 are Collective Copies, Kennametal, Literacy Project, FRTA, Montague DPW, Greenfield Town and Library.

I reached out to leaders in all the sub-Locals. I was able to speak with Laura Newton and Elizabeth Sallee. Both women are leaders at the FRTA. They were enthusiastic about the prospects of additional training and education which is coming up on December 13,

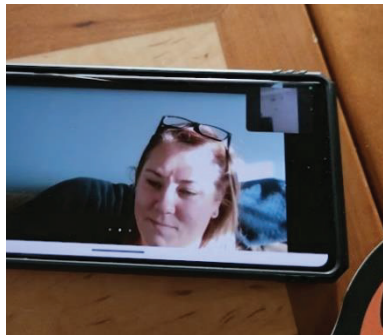


2023, in Springfield MA.

On November 15th I met with members and officers of UE Local 267 (University of Vermont).



It was a great meeting, and the folks were excited to hear about current events in UE. Members and officers present included a founding UE 267 member Wanda Doekal. Kyle Fleming was on Zoom and thought she was escaping the photo. No such luck.



Also at the meeting was Karl Suchland, Aurora Julianna Nowak, Nicole Perrault, Dave Hamilton (President) and John Pruss. One of

the main issues the Local has is communicating with their members. Many members come from numerous different countries and very few speak English. Our members are also cordoned off in separate buildings so workers never get to know each other. I suggested for Wanda to start in her building with some of the workers she is close with and do speak English. The idea is for Wanda to speak with her friend from one country/language and have that friend try to communicate with others from that country who are also union members to start a network of communication. There are about 10 languages spoken so the membership cannot talk to each other. Our members also provided

me with an honorary University of Vermont mascot. It is a Catamount. A Catamount is like a mountain lion, cougar, puma. It's nearly extinct now in the area but when the University was opened 232 years ago, they were everywhere.



GO CATAMOUNTS!

On November 16th my trip was winding down and I drove back to Cambridge in Eastern MA. to see if I could meet with members from our newest Local.



UE 256 at M.I.T. just ratified their first contract, has a new Local Constitution and was electing their first Local officers. I was able to meet with Christian Cmeheil-Warn at E Square café. At the time we were discussing how excited all were to have completed this first step of their journey in the organized labor movement. Welcome UE Local 256 and congratulations on your first contract.

WHO ARE WE? – UE!

From UE Local 267 I traveled southwest to New Britain CT. I stopped in at UE Local 275 (Viking Kitchen). It wasn't a convenient time, so I was only able to sneak into the back shipping area during break time to hand off a copy of the "Them and Us unionism" booklet and hand out a couple leaflets about our sub region 6 training in Springfield MA on Wednesday December 13th. I spoke with Jose (Danny) Santiago for a few minutes, and he was very positive and grateful for the information. Special



thanks to Local President Hector Julbe for making arrangements for me to drop off literature.



I continued heading home and stopped by to have an early dinner with retired UE IR John Woodruff in Danbury CT. It was great to see John and talk UE history from the old Northeast region.



I arrived back in Pittsburgh the morning of November 17th in time to attend a rally and march on a military weapon supplier (Arconic) who is profiteering off genocide in Gaza. UE Local 696 member Crystal Grabowski joined me along with Jayson Lovell - UE Local 667 and UE F.O Ben Wilson. Several other UE members intended to join us, but the rainy weather and illness kept some home. The event was supported by dozens of community groups and well attended considering the inclement weather.



On December 2nd, 2023 the UE Eastern region had its sub region 5 training in Bordentown NJ.

UE Director of Education Kari Thompson conducted 2 - 90 minute workshops. (1) UE History and (2) Turning an issue/ Grievance into a campaign. It was a great group of members. It was a great mix as well. We had senior members such as Jim Borowski (UE 106) and Mark Hinkel (UE 155) and younger or first-time folks such as Selena Williams (UE 119), Joao (John) Pinheiro (UE 155) and Chris Coulton (UE 155). The group had high energy and interest. They were motivated and inspiring. I was very excited by their energy, and I look forward to seeing much more of them.

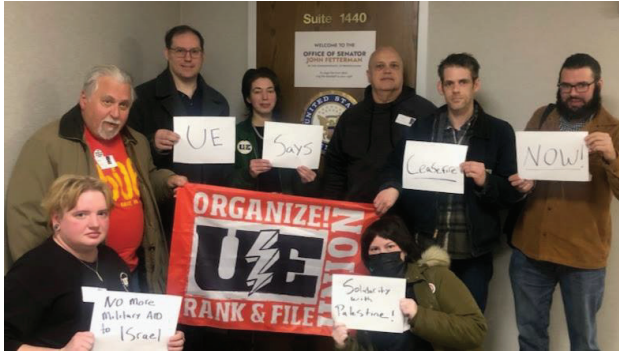


(L to R) UE F.O. Eric Cort'es- Kopp, Chris Coulton (155- Stepan) James Borowski President of UE 106 and GEB member (Buckeye refinery) Joao (John) Pinheiro Soares (155 – Chasen), Mark Hinkel President of UE 155 Amalgamated (Tinius Olsen), Tara McCauley UE International Representative and George Waksmunski UE ER President. In front is Selena Williams, UE Local 119 (ESS).

On December 4, 2023, UE members from Locals 667 (East End Food Co-op) and 696 (Planned Parenthood of Pittsburgh) met with legislative staff of Senator John Fetterman to demand a ceasefire in Gaza.

The Senators staff listened quietly, took notes and did as much as they could not to engage. Shortly after, our group also had a video conference call with Senator Casey's staff on the same subject. During the Casey call the staff was much more sympathetic while at the same time not offering much hope. We were extremely proud and impressed by these rank-

and-file members who were so well versed on the issues and the history and the bullshit that is spewed by politicians and corporate media outlets from all sides.



(L to R) Jason Lovell (667) AL Hart (retired editor of the UE news), Andrew Dinkelaker (UE Secretary Treasurer) Fritz Geist (667 President) George Waksmunski UE ER President, Josh Trapp (667) Ben Wilson UE Field organizer and Crystal Grabowski (696 -front /center).

On December 13th, 2023, we held a Sub region 6 training in Springfield MA. The topics included (1)Beating member apathy and (2)Assembling your dream team/Finding new leaders.

UE is an awesome union with an original and amazing history of diversity, militancy and shaking the labor movement to its core for the better. We are recognized across the world and inside the US labor movement as a beacon of light for others to follow. We are unique in the United States for member run control of all matters and all levels of the union.

We suffer from many of the woes that other labor unions do as well. Our members in too many cases fail to engage. Members ask what has the union done for me? They ask what does the union do for me? Why do I pay my dues? Aren't you (the union) supposed to take care of all my problems for me? They should be told that a union is not an insurance policy. It is an organization that allows them the ability to defend themselves if they engage in it. The fact

that these questions are asked indicates the union needs to be more visible and more active.



To beat membership apathy and assembling a dream team we must listen to our members. We need to reach out to them and do outreach to them. We need to do these things in an organized, focused, and relentless way. To beat membership apathy the union must always be in action. We can't just file grievances. Our objective is to teach our members the power of concerted activity and the fun of collective action. The union must be alive. People need to see it and feel it.



MAKE A PLAN – DETERMINE KEY ISSUES – A SURVEY. It can be a plantwide survey, a shift survey or a department survey and publicize the results and build a campaign off the results. **MAKE AN ESCALATING LIST OF TACTICS – FIGURE OUT A STRATEGY OF IMPLEMENTING TACTICS. BUY A CALENDAR AND PLAN YOUR FIGHT FOR 6 MONTHS TO START - FIGHT A FIGHT – GET UPDATES OUT WEEKLY OR MONTHLY. BE RELENTLESS AND UNDERSTAND THAT EVEN WHEN WE LOSE, WE WIN BECAUSE WE ARE FIGHTING FORWARD. IF YOU DON'T SUCCEED - RE EVALUATE AND TRY AGAIN AND**

**AGAIN AND AGAIN...
WHEN WE FIGHT – WE WIN!**

Later, that day I was able to drive back to Cambridge MA to meet with our newly elected leadership at local 256.



Mohamed Mohamed, UE Local 256 Area Chief Steward, myself, Sophie Coppieters 't Wallant UE Local 256 President, Christian Cmehil-Warn (former UE Local 256 Bargaining Committee member) Ruth Hanna UE Local 256 Vice President

It took us a little while to find each other and a brisk walk through Cambridge to find a nice place to break bread. I think we were all very excited about the chance to meet and get to know each other. They invited me back on January 11th, 2024, for their first formal meeting as a Local and to swear them in. I will be there.

Special thanks and shoutout to Antwon (Swanny) Gibson, President of UE Local 610 in Wilmerding PA.



(Antwon is in the center)

Antwon is also the Eastern region Vice President and GEB member. While I was on the road in

New England Antwon was covering for me in Charlotte NC at the “Southern Workers School.

Antwon attended the school on November 10 - 12/2023, He networked with several other unions and activist organizations along with representing the UE Eastern region. A big part of the education was understanding how workers have to fight their fight in the south. “The South” (southern states, especially in NC) are what is called “Right to work”. In the labor movement we call them “Right to work for less” since states with these laws are always at the bottom of wages, benefits, working conditions, safety, worker compensation, etc... Thank you, brother Antwon so much for representing the UE Eastern region.

On December 21, 2023, I was asked to speak at a rally in New York city representing the UE and the Eastern region. The rally demanded a cease fire in the Israeli genocide of the citizens of Gaza. The rally speakers were predominantly union representatives from across the spectrum of Labor. The focus was that organized labor – unions were demanding a ceasefire now.

There were thousands of people at the rally and a we marched for almost 2 miles. I attended with my 10 year old granddaughter (pictured on my left) who I allowed to end my speech with words she uttered to me earlier that day. I allowed her to conclude with “violence is never the answer”.



UE - THE MEMBERS RUN THIS UNION

UE Preamble



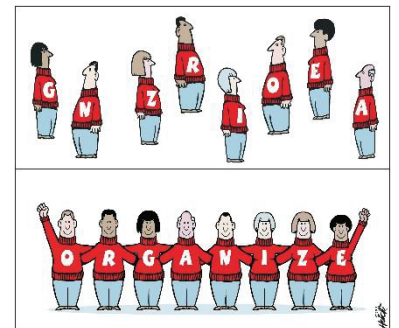
We, the Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE), realize that the struggle to better our working conditions is in vain unless we are united to protect ourselves collectively against the organized forces of the employers.

Realizing that the old craft form of trade union organization is unable to defend effectively the interests and improve the conditions of wage earners, WE THE ELECTRICAL, RADIO AND MACHINE WORKERS (UE), form an organization which unites all workers on an industrial basis and rank and file control, regardless of craft, age, sex, nationality, race, creed or political beliefs, and pursue at all times a policy of aggressive struggle to improve our conditions.

We pledge ourselves to labor unitedly for the principles herein set forth, to perpetuate our union and work concertedly with other labor organizations to bring about a higher standard of living of the workers.



This QR code provides important information for all workers on more than 80 topics. Knowledge is power.



The next UE Eastern region meeting will be held on April 26th – 28th in Charlotte NC. Elections for Region officers, Executive Board and Trustees will be held at this meeting. Make sure to nominate and elect your delegates now to attend.

UE - THE MEMBERS RUN THIS UNION

