



UNION NEWS

Connecticut Employees Union Independent • February 2013

CEUI MEMBERS AT THE CAPITOL

On December 12, 2012 CEUI members and the Connecticut Legislative Transportation Committee held an informational hearing to discuss highway safety and the driving culture in Connecticut. Our members sounded an alarm about the dangerous driving culture on our highways. Compelling testimony was given in regard to distracted, aggressive, and speeding drivers. This behavior is a threat to all of our safety. However, the workers who are in this environment for the entire workday are at greater risk of injury.



The hearing was well attended by CEUI members and legislators. The Committee Chairman, Rep. Tony Guerrera (29th District, Rocky Hill, Newington & Wethersfield), Rep. Russ Morin (28th District, Wethersfield), Rep. Frank Nicastro (79th District, Bristol, Forestville), Rep. Roland Lemar (96th District, East Haven, New Haven), Rep. Rick Lopes (24th District, New Britain, Newington), Rep. Jonathan Steinberg (136th District, Westport) are some of the legislators who attended the hearing. In addition, DOT Commissioner James Redeker and DOT Maintenance Bureau Director Michael Lonergan attended.

Testimony was given by CEUI President Ron McLellan, DOT Crew Leader Rick DiNardi, DOT Maintainer Johnny Jackson, DOT Service Patrol drivers Frank Chaluto (Old Saybrook), John Blanchard (Waterbury) and William Medina (Waterbury), and DOT Supervisor Mike Sowell (Torrington Bridge). Lori Pelletier, Secretary-Treasurer of the CT State AFL-CIO offered her testimony. In addition Dale Ethier, DOT Maintainer (Glastonbury), Hank Joyner, DOT Maintainer (Danbury), and James Bellamy, WCSU (Danbury) also commented on the issues.

Legislators were engaged in the discussion and had many questions and comments about the serious issues that surround highway and work zone safety. In addition, all legislators on (continued on pg 2)

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(continued from Page 1) the Transportation Committee were given a packet of all written testimony, the Union's recommendations to improve highway and work zone safety, and data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. They have a website, www.distraction.gov, which contains great information on distracted driving and prevention.

Here are some of the quotes from members and legislators from the hearing:

- Rep. Russ Morin: "We should hold a press conference with legislators in a work zone so they can experience what we deal with."
- Transportation Committee Chair Tony Guerrero (Rocky Hill): "Sometimes State workers get a bad rap. What would we do without them working on our roads?"
- DOT Commissioner James Redeker: "I am impressed with the turnout and with the deep thought that went into the recommendations."
- Rep. Frank Nicastro: "I see our DOT crews out there every day on my way in from Bristol. I worry about their safety when I see driver's texting and talking on phones."
- Hank Joyner: "if you want to hit them where it hurts, start taking their cars."
- Rick DiNardi: "I ask that we put all our energy and resources into making our highways as safe as possible. I never want to see any family have to experience the tragedy that my family has endured."



Frank Chaluto: "I see people swerving from left to right as they text or talk on their cell phones. People shave, put on makeup, eat, look at maps and even read books while driving."



Johnny Jackson: "A tractor trailer drifted over into our work zone and hit the rear of my truck at full speed. I can't even describe to you the sound and the impact I felt to my body."

We want to extend our gratitude to all who attended and those who gave testimony. A special thanks to Rick DiNardi who stepped up to ensure the safety of his fellow members during a very difficult time for him and his family.

On February 14, 2013 the Transportation Committee held a public hearing on a variety of transportation bills. CEUI President Ron McLellan gave testimony in support of HB 5350 an Act Concerning the Safety of Workers in Roadway Work Zones, HB 5549 An Act Increasing the Fines For Distracted Driving. The bills will continue to evolve as they go through the committees. We will update members when we have finished the bills. Members will need to contact legislators and come to the Capitol to lobby.

To see the video of the December 12th hearing, go to www.ceui.org. I hillit remquamus maio tet

GRANDFATHER YOUR CURRENT NORMAL RETIREMENT AGE

Do not miss the opportunity to retain your current normal retirement age.

Who is Eligible for this Election: All current, active Tier II and Tier IIA members who were employed prior to July 1, 2011.

Time Period for Election: Employees must make their irrevocable election by July 1, 2013

Where can I get more information: The Union website www.ceui.org /Union office at 860-343-8700 or the Office of the State Comptroller website www.osc.ct.gov / 860-702-3480

Where do I sign up: Your Agency's Human Resources Office

This opportunity should only be considered if you anticipate retiring on or after July 1, 2022 and want to retain the current Normal Retirement Age of 60 with 25 years of service, or Age 62 with 10 years of service.

From July 1, 2022 forward, the Normal Retirement Age will increase to age 63 with 25 years of service and age 65 with 10 years of service.

Note: Because this is a one-time election that can't be reversed, make sure you have all the information and understand the rules that apply to this election before you sign the form. Do not miss the deadline of July 1, 2013.

If you have any questions or need assistance, please contact the Union.

THANK YOU

My heartfelt thanks to everyone who has donated time and well wishes during my current illness.

It is very much appreciated. I am fortunate to work with such caring and supportive people.

Sincerely,
Chris Robert
Custodian/CCSU

To Ron McLellan,
Just like to thank the union members who donated time that I have received. Time is being spent recovering from surgery and spending 7 weeks in the hospital. Thanks to my co-workers from Ella Grasso Center, Stratford, Cheshire, and Southbury Training School. I am getting better day by day; it takes time, that's what the doctors tell me. Thanks again to all.

Rick Schaer
Skilled Maintainer/Ella Grasso Regional Center

On behalf of my wife, Esther Owusu Manu, my family and I sincerely thank you the president and your union for great humanity shown to Esther Owusu Manu before and after her suspected illness.

This is truly a union every worker should join and support, is a union in need and a union indeed.

May the almighty God of this nation and the world at large bless you and every member of this union until the world falls apart.

Your obedient servant,
Prince Joe Manu,
husband of 44 years to
Esther Owusu Manu
Custodian/Eastern Connecticut
State University

GREEN CLEANING PROJECT UPDATE: The Union is in the fourth year of the project studying the effects of cleaning products on the health of custodians, cooks, DOT rest area attendants and animal care technicians at various state institutions. The Union, led by the Chief Stewards, is partnering with UCONN Health Center and ConnectiCOSH on this study. The goal of the study is to better understand custodians' use of cleaning chemicals, their health effects, and experience in transitioning to Environmentally Preferable Products ("green"). The study also reflects worker voices on chemical use patterns, effectiveness, incentives, and obstacles for green cleaning programs.

The project started with a series of on-site focus groups, followed by a survey. Researchers shadowed and analyzed the work tasks of participants. Researchers conducted an inventory of products in use at state agencies. Through the grant, training will soon be available for workers at state agencies. Thank you to the many union members who have volunteered to participate in the study. More information can be obtained from Loyola Welsh at the Union.

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT REALIGNMENT: On January 11, 2013 CEUI members from Facilities Operations and Residential Life met at the University of Connecticut Dodd Center with Executive Vice President & Chief Financial Officer Richard Gray, Associate Vice President Tom Callahan, and other top administrators to discuss the realignment of Central Facilities Operations and Department of Residential Life maintenance duties. This realignment is a result of the Strategic Re-Design Initiative authorized by the Board of Trustees in February of 2011.

Future meetings will be scheduled to keep members informed of the progress going forward. The initial integration of the two maintenance departments is expected to be finalized by June 30, 2013. (NOTE: As it stands currently, Residential Life custodial staff is NOT considered part of this reorganization).

Currently, there are five (5) working groups being established to address key business operations. Associate Vice President Tom Callahan has requested participation by CEUI members in these working groups. Members who wish to participate and/or receive more information about these groups are encouraged to contact Tom Callahan at (860) 486-2927 or Thomas.Callahan@uconn.edu.

CEUI has requested that the University of Connecticut continue to keep us informed of the ongoing realignment process. Any questions regarding this issue may be directed to President Ron McLellan at (860) 343-8718 or Secretary/Treasurer Leslie Maddocks at (860) 343-8713.

WORKER HEALTH AND SAFETY NEWS: Do you have a safety concern at your work site? Contact the Bargaining Unit Job Safety Committee. The union has two safety stewards who can investigate safety concerns or complaints that you may have. John Marchese and Willis Ballard work on Mondays to visit sites and resolve health and safety concerns. They can be reached 24/7 at the following numbers: John Marchese: (860) 343-8742 and Willis Ballard: (860) 343-8740. For imminent danger safety issues, contact the Union at the main number, (860) 344-0311.

CEUI has worker trainers who have assisted agencies with their health and safety training needs. Over the past year, they trained trades people at Connecticut Valley Hospital in the area of lead and asbestos awareness. The trainers are Gina Gates, Kevin Backman, John Marchese, John Birtwistle, Willis Ballard, Paul Kalajian and Steve Rice. If you have a training need at your agency, please contact Loyola Welsh, Steward Coordinator, at (860) 343-8721.

Three new safety stewards were recently approved by the Executive Board: Joe Conforti, DOT/Waterbury Repair District 4, Michael Kross, DOT/District 3 Property Control, and Fred Schluntz at DMHAS/CVH and Whiting. Congratulations on your appointments.

CEUI SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE FOR CHILDREN OF CEUI MEMBERS

Applications are now available for the 2013 Salvatore Perruccio Scholarship. CEUI offers four (4) \$2,500 scholarships to a deserving child (note: grandchildren are excluded) of an active (not retired) dues paying member of CEUI. The specifics for qualifying are:

1. You must be a senior in high school about to enter a four-year accredited college by the Fall of 2013.
2. You must fill out a preliminary application and return it by April 15, 2013.
3. You must return a final application postmarked by May 17, 2013.
4. Qualifying students will be individually interviewed by the Scholarship Committee.
5. Winners will be expected to attend the 26th Annual Salvatore J. Perruccio Golf Tournament held June 27, 2013.

To obtain a preliminary application please call Tracy at (800) 622-3359 x712 or at (860) 343-8712. You may also request an application by email: tdeegan@ceui.org. Please be sure your email indicates both the name of the parent and the child.

DO YOU KNOW A MEMBER DESERVING OF A HUMANITARIAN AWARD?

The Salvatore J. Perruccio Humanitarian Award is presented to a member for outstanding recognition of his/her time spent serving the community by volunteering and/or providing his/her leadership and lending a helping hand whenever needed. The award is presented to a CEUI member who demonstrates qualities such as being humane, kindhearted, public-spirited, idealistic, generous, merciful, considerate and exceptionally kind. If you would like to nominate a "special" CEUI member whose efforts are deserving of this award, please submit his or her name by May 17, 2013, to Tracy Deegan at the Union office or email it to: tdeegan@ceui.org. The Humanitarian Award will be presented at the 26th Annual Salvatore J. Perruccio Golf Tournament on June 27, 2013.

SEIU SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM 2013

SEIU offers a number of scholarships to members. The availability, requirements and due dates for the SEIU scholarships can be found online at www.seiu.org/members/ — click on "scholarships". As a reminder, the SEIU scholarships are not handled by CEUI; they are processed and funded through the SEIU office in Washington DC.

UNION PLUS EDUCATION SERVICES

If you are a union member with dreams of getting an advanced education, or if your son or daughter is looking to continue their schooling after high school, now's the time to start making progress toward your goal. Visit www.UnionPlus.org/Education — there you will find multiple links to scholarships, grants, rebates and discounts. Union Plus brochures are available at the Union office. Please call if you'd like one mailed to you.

INTERESTED IN A ROUND OF GOLF?

Help support the Salvatore Perruccio Scholarship Fund by playing in our golf tournament at the Portland Golf Course on June 27th. Contact Tracy at the Union at (860) 343-8712 for registration material.

RETIREMENT CORNER – The best years of your life

Beginning with this issue of the CEUI UNION NEWS the Retirement Corner will be a standard section dedicated to keeping members of the CEUI Retiree Division informed. George Spurlock has been the Retiree Staff Rep since September of 2003. Prior to working for CEUI, George worked for the University of Connecticut as QCW plumber and retired after 27 years in June of 2003. As a long time member, former steward, and retiree of UConn, George is extremely sympathetic to the needs and concerns of retirees and their families. He is well versed in retirement, medical, dental and prescription issues and has many contacts within the Retirement & Benefits Services Division and contracted insurance companies with the State of Connecticut. George can be reached on Tuesdays and Thursdays at (800) 622-3569 ext. 722 or locally at (860) 343-8722 and at gspurlock@ceui.org.

NATIONAL NEWS--During these extremely difficult economic times retirees are especially vulnerable to attacks on their benefits. On January 1st the U.S. House of Representatives voted 257 – 167 to allow income taxes to rise sharply for the wealthiest citizens of our country for the first time in two decades forcing them to pay a fairer share. This deal allowed seniors to dodge budget cuts (at least for now) though during recent months there have been recurring proposals to make changes in Social Security and Medicare which could adversely affect the day-to-day financial needs of seniors if ever approved.

STATE NEWS--Retirees from the State of Connecticut have been fortunate thus far to have our benefits remain intact, especially considering the political events transpiring across the country, in states like Wisconsin and Michigan. With the approval of the SEBAC 2011 Agreement the Pension and Healthcare agreement was extended until June 30, 2022. This agreement was originally slated to expire in 2017. With many states facing budget deficits across the country this is a significant win for Connecticut state employees and retirees. Members who normally receive their COLAs in their January pension checks will again receive them on time.

MEDICARE & SOCIAL SECURITY--Normally you and your spouse will automatically receive your Medicare card approximately 90 days before your 65th birthdays. Based on the requirements of your medical plan you must accept both Part A and Part B. Once enrolled in Medicare, your State of Connecticut insurance becomes secondary to Medicare.

The pension contract allows for the reimbursement of the monthly Medicare Part B premium (Social Security will subtract this amount from your Social Security check and the State of Connecticut will reimburse you in your state pension check). Once you or your spouse receive your Medicare card in the mail, please send a signed copy to the Union (in c/o George Spurlock) in order for your claim for reimbursement to be sent to the State of Connecticut for processing. Effective January 2013, the Medicare Part B premium increased from \$99.90 to \$104.90 for most members. If the State of Connecticut has already processed your Medicare card you should notice this increase in your January pension check.

Retirees who received disability retirements from the state or Social Security Disability must accept Medicare Part A and Part B when offered, regardless of age. The same applies for any spouses on the State of Connecticut medical plan. Reminder: Retirees who have received disability retirements from the state must report all income to the state including all Social Security benefits.

SILVERSCRIPT--Effective January 1, 2012 SilverScript (a subsidiary of CVS Caremark) began to administer prescription drug coverage for State of Connecticut retirees and dependents eligible for Medicare. Once you are eligible for Medicare, you will receive a new SilverScript ID card for prescription coverage, usually within 90 days of your eligibility. You will need to provide your pharmacist with your new SilverScript ID card once received. Your prescription co-pays will remain the same, although if any maintenance medication had a \$0 co-pay, it will revert back to the amounts you previously paid. To prevent loss of medical or prescription benefits do not opt out of the SilverScript Medicare D prescription and do not enroll in an individual Medicare Part D prescription plan.

SERVICE TO MEMBERS

Alfonzia Booker and Ron Underhill, DOT Maintainers from Milford Bridge Garage, maintain the Stratford Avenue Bridge across the Poquonock River in Bridgeport. For years the parking for their personal vehicles has been located in abandoned, dangerous lots; the cars have been burglarized and vandalized for thousands of dollars. Pursuant to Article 60, Section 3 Parking, the Union was successful in advocating for safe and secure parking. Members now have key access cards and passes to the transit authority secure lot.

Joseph Prince, Building Superintendent 1, Gateway Community College, was denied his regular on-call stipend while on vacation, despite making and receiving phone calls to management, vendors, and contractors. Mr. Prince was successful in working with the Union to be made whole for his monetary on-call loss.

Joe Pulliam, a DOT Crew Leader working for Milford Bridge, had been performing Temporary Service in a Higher Class as a Transportation General Supervisor. After filing a grievance to this end, Management agreed Mr. Pulliam was performing the duties of a Transportation General Supervisor, and agreed to pay him the difference in wages for the contractual time period.

Freddy Rosario, Cook, DMHAS/Blue Hills, was placed in Temporary Service in a High Class as a Head Cook and did not receive compensation for performing the duties. At a Step 2 hearing, the Union presented his case and a decision was made to make Freddy whole for all lost wages.

Philip Pion, Lead Mail Handler, Department of Social Services, was working as a Mail Services Supervisor. A Step 3 hearing was held with DAS, where the agency was told to reclassify Mr. Pion to the Mail Services Supervisor position and make whole for all lost wages within 60 days.

Scott Depaulo, Maintainer 3, DOT/Miller Avenue was denied a lateral transfer into a Maintainer 3 position at the Property & Facilities Maintenance facility on Flagler Street. A grievance was filed, and the response was made that Mr. Depaulo was the senior lateral candidate and was awarded the transfer.

Workers Compensation

Joseph Colello, Custodian, SCSU had payments for permanent partial disability delayed by Gallagher Bassett Services. The Union requested a hearing and it was determined that a clerical error had prevented the benefits from being paid out. This was corrected and Mr. Colello received his payment in one lump sum.

Anthony Audain, Custodian, UConn/Storrs, had a slip & fall at work. His claim was accepted and he was able to return to work on a part time schedule, however he was not being compensated by the insurance company for part of his work day. The Union requested a hearing and the Commissioner ordered post specific benefits be given to Mr. Audain to make up for lost wages.

Benjamin Criscuolo, QCW Mechanic, DOT/East Haven, was injured on the job. Gallagher Bassett denied the claim stating it did not arise out of the scope of his employment. The Union requested a hearing and presented the medical opinion from the treating physician indicated it was work related. Gallagher sent Mr. Criscuolo to a Respondent's Medical Exam, and he agreed with the original treating physician, the claim was accepted and benefits paid.

Shawn White, Storekeeper, UConn/Storrs, had a slip & fall at work. The insurance company contested the extent of his injuries. The Union requested a hearing and Mr. White was sent to a Respondent's Medical Exam. The report supported the original treating physician's medical diagnosis. At the hearing the insurance company gave authorization for the medical treatment.

Joseph Moreira, QCW Carpenter, Department of Public Works, suffered an injury to his head while at work. The Union requested a hearing for a scarring award. The Commission awarded 8 weeks of benefits for the scarring to Mr. Moreira's head.

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A Message from the Soto Family:

The Soto Family wishes to thank all of our Union brothers and sisters for their love and support in this rough time, especially for all the cards and notes we have received from far and wide.

We wish to pass along a message from our daughter Vicki that we hope can inspire you and your family to Live, Laugh, and Love.

"As we grow up, we learn that even the one person that wasn't supposed to ever let you down, probably will. You'll have your heart broken and you'll break others' hearts. You'll fight with your best friend or maybe even fall in love with them, and you'll cry because time is flying by. So take too many pictures, laugh too much, forgive freely, and love like you've never been hurt. Life comes with no guarantees, no time outs, no second chances. You just have to live life to the fullest, tell someone what they mean to you and tell someone off, speak out, dance in the pouring rain, hold someone's hand, comfort a friend, fall asleep watching the sun come up, stay up late, be a flirt, and smile until your face hurts. Don't be afraid to take chances or fall in love and most of all, live in the moment because every second you spend angry or upset is a second of happiness you can never get back." ~Vicki Soto



Donations to the "Vicki Soto Memorial Fund, Inc." can be mailed to the Union office.