

# UE EASTERN REGION NEWSLETTER

August 2025 Chicago IL. - UE National Convention



Southern Workers Assembly June 13 – 15  
Spartanburg SC.



UE 150 May Day rally in Cuba April 26 – May 10,  
2025



UE Local 155, Chasen Fiber Technologies,  
Irvington NJ. Strike authorization vote



UE Local 622, Shinagawa Specialty Ceramics,  
Latrobe PA. Contract ratification



UE Local 329, Kennedy Valve, Elmira NY  
Contract ratification



UE Local 610, Wabtec, Greensburg PA.  
Contract ratification

**THE MEMBERS RUN THIS UNION**





**UE Local 197 TRU – UE.** UE Eastern region members were out in the streets on May Day. At UE Local 197 TRU-UE (John Hopkins) Baltimore MD., well over 100 members rallied in front of the main entrance to Johns Hopkins to demand the University declare the property a sanctuary campus, to end surveillance and militarization of campus police, support international workers, fully fund ongoing research and commit to academic freedom. UE Eastern region President George Waksmunski drove to Baltimore that morning to stand in solidarity with UE 197 TRU-UE and spoke at the event.

**Pittsburgh PA.** Later that day the UE Eastern region joined a rally in Pittsburgh PA.

Members of UE Local 667, the East End Food Co – Op joined thousands to rally and march. UE 667 members and officers included Breezy Mueller, Iris Powell, Financial Secretary Josh Trapp, UE 667



President Jackson O'Connell-Barlow and Chief Steward Fritz Geist. Also in attendance were UE Retiree Alan Hart, national office staff and former 667 member Megan Moffitt and Secretary Treasurer Andrew Dinkelaker made a brief appearance.

The march circled the inner city starting at the United Steelworkers National office to the Federal Building and circling back in front of the County courthouse and City Hall. The streets were electric with energy from activists and organizations from all across our spectrum. The noise was deafening. It was awesome.



**UE Local 319 North Tonawanda NY.** Stopping in North Tonawanda NY we were able to visit two small locals. Battenfeld Grease & oil. UE Local 319 is one of UE's older shops and a plant that has been in operation since 1939. Battenfeld remains the largest independent producer of grease and oil products. The membership here is going through some changes with many of the OG's retiring. Nonetheless they still have a mostly senior workforce which is blending with many new hires. The local is working hard to bring the newest members on board to appreciate all that the

union has been able to accomplish over the decades. Pictured are UE member Lawrence Lock and Local President Tom Simpson holding their new "Member run unions" booklets.

The railroad tracks pictured are a reminder of days gone by when the freight trains would pull right up to the plant. In July a new President was elected. This will be the first time around for Scott Simmens as Local President. The Eastern region has reached out to Scott to let him know we are there for him.



### **UE Local 335 GE appliances factory**

**services.** Also nearby was an opportunity to stop by and visit with UE Local 335. This is a local that has been with UE for awhile. The company is small but looking to hire a few more



bargaining unit members. Pictured (l to r) are new hire Curt Charles and Local President Scott Schindler. The members of Local 335 are spread out over Western New York state. They travel their particular areas of the state servicing and maintaining various GE appliances. Scott has been quite active in the union and participating regularly in trainings and workshops. It was good to stop by and visit him in his neck of the woods for a change.

**CONGRATULATIONS to Grace Schindler for winning the 2025 Deb Gornall scholarship. Grace is Scott's daughter.**





**UE Local 279 Ipswich New York** A visit to UE Local 279 found our local in solid shape with great leadership, skilled and determined workers. This machine shop is one of the cleanest ever. Our members here make industrial valves, pumps and actuators.

Although the labor management relationship is generally better than most, the union must keep their eyes open for

encroachment. The members have a contract coming up and have every intention of reaching an agreement with a significant wage increase.

Their valves are highly engineered for oil, gas, power, and general industry. They also produce valves for water and wastewater sectors. Pictured above are UE 279 President Stephen Chabot and Chief Steward Jason Gallant with a cutaway of one of their mid-size valves.



**UE Local 243 New Haven CT.** We took a tour and visited with the officers of UE Local 243 in New Haven Connecticut. UE 243 is employed by a Swedish company called Assa Abloy that makes locks for doors. All kinds of locks for all kinds of doors. Millions of variations. The Swedes believe in making an effort to work with their employees.

The company first opened as Sargent Locke in 1822 and began operations in New Haven in 1864. In those early years the company relied heavily on immigrant labor. The majority of which were Italian. UE Local



(l to r) MacArthur Mention (Chief Steward), Steven Saunders, (Vice President), Chris Fiorentino, (President) and George Waksmunski UE Eastern Region President.

243 was first chartered in 1937. Generations of families / workers go back three, four, five or more. The workforce today is quite multicultural with men, women, people of color and Caucasians equally employed. The tour was incredible. The plant is clean and well run via a strong labor management relationship. The employer is investing heavily in the plant with a complete makeover of the exterior, office and meeting room areas. The lunchroom has been upgraded to be as comfortable and clean as a local restaurant with hot and cold food. They also have a variety of healthy options that the employees can choose from. The meals served are

quite affordable if you choose to purchase something. Another major investment for our members is bringing work back from outside contractors. Millions of dollars are being invested into creating large clean rooms which will employ dozens of new UE 243 members. Multi-million dollar investments into the shop floor are refreshing.

**UE Local 234 St Johnsbury VT.** A visit to St Johnsbury VT. brought the Eastern region to UE Local 234, Fairbank scales. This is another older local who is preparing for upcoming negotiations. We had discussions about bringing less senior members along and into the union fight for better wages, benefits and working conditions. Fairbanks scales has never given anything the workers didn't fight for. A UE flag and some "Them and Us unionism" booklets were left to help with education. The Eastern region later sent along UE logos and graphics to help with educational literature.



(l to r) Eddie, Shana, David, Crystal and Bob



UE 208 President Norma Rice, E. board member Jason Sigelman and on Zoom Financial secretary Bonnie Whitcomb.

### **UE Local 208 St. Albans Vermont**

Workers at UE local 208 perform work for the US State department. Specifically, the US Customs and Immigration Service. They are also outsourced to a private employer to exploit their labor. Over the last almost 20 years UE local 208 put an end to that exploitation and won good wages and benefits. Unfortunately, about a year ago it was announced that the work they performed was being shut down and moved to other locations. The local remains open today but the writing is on the wall even though they have done all they could through aggressive struggle and political action. The Eastern region salutes the great members of UE Local 208.



UE 269 members Wayne Carry, Jim Bergquist, Eric Whitman, Drew Patria and UE 269 President Jeff Sakowicz

**UE Local 269, Erving paper mill, Erving MA.** When visiting Erving paper mill the local found itself in an unusual situation in that they had just negotiated and ratified a new contract for the bulk of their members. A small subset of their local has a separate contract and voted not to ratify the agreement. The company said their last proposal was supporting the papermill and they would not negotiate any further.

The company did agree to retroactive pay for those that were holding out. After further consideration the smaller

group agreed that the proposal had more than first perceived and they also ratified the new contract as long as they got their retroactive pay. Things are currently quiet with members getting their first bonus check. They get \$500.00 net bonus every 6 months each year. This amounts to \$5000,00 over the life of the contract. Boot money went up to \$250.00 per year and modified to include safety clothing. They agreed to a 5-year contract with wage increases of 2%, 2%, 2%, 2.5% and 2.5%. They wanted higher pay but held onto insurance which will only increase a total of 2% over the life of the contract.

**UE Local 300, Cornell, Ithica New York.** I stopped by to visit UE Local 300 member Colin Stragar-Rice to see how things were going. He reported that things were well but the local was going through some growing pains and finding its way to craft their constitution. Currently the local is dealing with a lawsuit by two members over religious objections and the way the dues deduction cards are worded. Due to the lawsuit the Institution is refusing to collect dues until the matter is resolved by the courts.

**News update** It was recently announced that Cornell would begin complying with payroll deduction as of July 31, 2025. In addition, Local 300 elected their Executive Board and regional stewards on July 4, 2025.







**The UE General Executive Board (GEB)** met in Pittsburgh PA. in May of 2025. The GEB dealt with numerous issues including the UE National Convention, 2024-2025 budget review, 2025-2026 Budget approval. Ratification of the UE Staff Union Contract including recommending wage and per diem increases. A complaint about election conduct, trustee reports/ audits, political action reports, international reports, organizing reports and more.

In the early evening a few GEB members went out to share some time in a more social environment where we could talk among ourselves, share experiences and build bonds beyond the formal meeting. On this evening Jacob Payne (Local 896), Lauren Chua (UE 256) Dean Pacileo (UE Local 243) and George Waksmunski (UE Eastern region President) went to Georges local watering hole. UE Eastern region members will remember visiting “Pope’s place” in Polish hill at our last convention. We were hoping and expecting several other GEB members would attend, but they went out to eat first and decided to stay where they were at. It was a good evening, and all went back to the hotel at an early hour as we still had a meeting the following day.



At the end of the GEB meeting in May a surprise retirement ceremony for UE Office Manager Joanne Caparoso (far right) was organized by UE National office staff. Joanne has been a priceless talent for our union for 14 years. Joanne has been attempting to retire for a while now but stayed on to see the union through the final transition of restoring

solvency and a hopeful future for our Union. Joanne has always been a wonderful delight to work with. Truly a professional with a gentle tactful touch when the situation called for that. She will always be remembered well and appreciated for getting us through our tough times. Thank you, Joanne, from everyone in UE, especially the UE Eastern region.

**Southern Workers Assembly.** On June 12<sup>th</sup> UE Eastern region Vice President Antwon Gibson traveled to South Carolina to represent the Eastern region at the Southern Workers Assembly (SWA). The SWA is a regional group to bring about fundamental and systemic change to empower workers in the South. The organizing model in the South is much different than other parts of the country. Due to “right to work (for less)” and other anti-worker laws and biases workers have to organize for a more aggressive struggle. A struggle that always reminds them that the battle is never over.



**UE Local 150, North Carolina** travels to Cuba for May Day. UE 150 sent 5 members along with a hundred other US trade activists to Cuba from April 26<sup>th</sup> to May 10<sup>th</sup>. UE 150 members on the trip were Sekia Royal, Chris Benjamin Durham Sanitation, Tim Hunt, Rocky Mount engine Diesel CAAMWU, Nichel Dunlap Thompson former Charlotte transit operator, and Greg Moss State employee.



This trip was an acknowledgment of the need for deeper understanding and more political education of our union members. Our members bring aid in the form of medical supplies and school supplies to the Cuban people while

visiting urban Gardens, elementary schools, University and meat plants.

From Sekia’s point of view, she felt it a humbling experience to be amongst people that continue to fight every day to live free and united in their own country. A place where helping each other is a way of life despite the limited resources they have.

Just imagine living in one of the poorest countries in the world where one of the biggest bullies in the world has a complete blockade on you and your country, yet unions, workers’ rights, and workers’ freedoms are promoted by the government, including free healthcare and free education. It’s true that the UE blockade makes life unnecessarily hard but living free in a country where workers rights are on a pedestal and dignity knowing that you don’t bend the knee is priceless for the proud Cuban people.

## UE EASTERN REGION CAUCUSES

To spur more member-to-member conversations the UE Eastern region is more aggressively supporting caucuses that are in line with UE National resolutions. Current and active caucuses



are the Black caucus, LGBTQ+ and UE for Palestine (UE4P). Some caucuses being formed or re-formed are the women's caucus and International workers caucus. Go to the UE Eastern region website to join an existing caucus. [www.ue-easternregion.org](http://www.ue-easternregion.org)

### **Statement by UE for Palestine (UE4P) caucus**

UE For Palestine (UE4P) is a caucus of UE members across industries and geography that is committed to building up our campaign to end the occupation and use our leverage as workers to further that cause. We know that the complicity and support of the US government and institutions for the oppression of Palestinians runs deep. It is imperative that we use the power we've built up against our employers the way workers used their leverage to fight back against apartheid in South Africa. Join our caucus to turn our power into a tool to fight for the working class everywhere. [tinyurl.com/join-ue4palestine](http://tinyurl.com/join-ue4palestine) or at [www.ueeasternregion.org](http://www.ueeasternregion.org)



### **UE Local 228 Portsmouth NH.**

Our members have been fighting one fight after another at their SCA facility. These workers have jobs that are outsourced to Federal contractors. They work for the Department of State and process visas, passports and related immigration documents. As noted in the last ER newsletter their Chief steward Shane Tassineri was terminated

for using the pronouns of "no - none". First off, "no - none" are not pronouns. Unbelievably, the arbitrator dismissed the case pre arbitration due to the employer's argument that the matter was beyond the scope of the arbitrator's authority. The union is appealing to Federal district court to vacate the decision. The local will also soon be in negotiations which will have a primary demand to reinstate Shane.

Some of our members are green card holders and in the United States legally. Under the terror of the trump administration these workers are expressing fear to participate in exercising their Constitutional rights to free speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of the press not mention their rights under the NLRB and the CBA. Another major issue inflicted on them due to the trump administration is a limitation on working from home. During Covid the employer and government supported working from home. Many people were hired and accepted jobs with the explicit understanding they could work from home. Some workers took the jobs even though they lived 40-50 miles from the workplace. In all these cases the employer is shamelessly exploiting the situation.

This is a strong and active local that is always engaged in aggressive struggle and shop floor militancy. Their battle continues. We have full faith and confidence that they will prevail.



**AT UE Local 256 (M.I.T)** the membership is all about business. At a recent membership meeting they discussed a contract coming up, they needed to elect and fill some openings and make decisions about the UE National Convention. After membership meetings members find ways to bring members together socially, which is an incredibly important factor in building solidarity. Once a month on the night of a full moon M.I.T. employees can go out on the Charles River using sailboats provided by the Institution. On this night UE 256 members “Captain” Olivier Kigotho (Department Chief Steward and Delegate to the National Convention) and “First mate” Julia Allen (Department Chief steward/ Conference board member)

set sail with our small group.

The following day was Pridefest on campus. UE Local 256 was there leading the event. They also had a table set up to make people more aware of ways to get involved with UE 256 and equally important the initiatives the local would be demanding in bargaining which include multi-use restrooms. Members of this precious community told stories of how - many bathrooms - which were close to their workplace were unavailable to them because of their sexual orientation. This would mean long walks away from their work areas just to use a restroom that was friendly to them. It’s just such a ridiculous issue for adults to deal with in an environment of higher education. Facing the camera (on right) are UE 256 members Kristen Ammons and Julia Turcott who were at the DJ table preparing to go onstage and kick off the event. Most of UE local 256 leadership participated in a variety of supportive ways.



**UE Local 150 North Carolina Public Service Workers Union.** UE 150 has been very very busy at the state, city and on college campuses. Through political action UE members in the cities of Durham, Raleigh Charlotte and Greensboro have won millions of dollars of raises. In Charlotte workers were able to win an increase to \$24.00 per hour. In Durham UE 150 members were able to demand a nearly 12% raise for the lowest wage earners. This brings the minimum pay up to \$21.90 per hour. UE members in the City of Durham were adamant to have their voices heard. They stayed at the







City's budget hearing until 11PM to speak. In Raleigh our members used their organization of political power to win an 11% wage increase. This was one of the highest wage increases ever and the first time that regular city workers were compensated more than the police. In Greensboro the workers are still working for livable wages. They engaged in a rally for "Living wages, Safety and Respect". They won a 4% wage increase and continue to lobby and meet with local city council members and the City Manager.

Nothing new that State employees in North Carolina are under attack by the people that pay them. A boss is a boss is a boss, is a boss.

Our members at the State level were able to fend off attacks on their health plan. The State Treasurer announced a \$507 million budget shortfall and an additional shortfall of \$800 million the following year.

UE 150 answered the call as it always does. They knew the challenge, they knew the effort that would be needed and they knew the plan. They began meeting weekly. They produced fliers and YouTube videos to inform and educate their members, allies, community groups and anyone that had an interest in economic justice for the working class. They attended and spoke at State Health Plan Trustee



meetings.



From the very beginning UE 150 took the position that no cuts would be acceptable. UE 150 met with the State Treasurer Brad Briner (pictured). Brad said the increases for the lowest wage employees will only be \$5.00 per month. We were able to implement a tiered plan so the workers least able to afford any increases would be charged the least. The Board will meet in August after the final state budget is set. The real kick in the groin is at the

same time they seek these cuts they are also approving corporate tax break giveaways in billions of dollars and hundreds of millions in private school vouchers for those that want their kids to go to private schools.

At UNC Chapel hill we are fighting for everything. Pay, dignity, security. Our grad workers are demanding \$40,000 annually and \$25.00 per hour for all workers. Over 2500 signatures were collected on a petition and then delivered to the Chancellor. New members are joining, and old members are energized. They face threats of federal funding cuts. SEVIS status has been revoked for 6 Chapel hill/UE 150 grad workers and 11 NC State workers. These attacks began with the attack on the Palestinian movement. Our members have been marching and making a great deal of noise. **They shall overcome.**

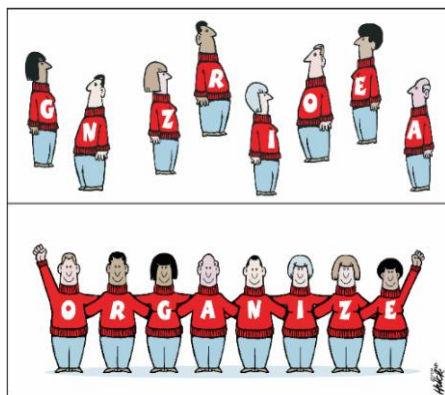
August 2025 UE EASTERN REGION

### 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 INTRODUCTION about a higher standard of living of the workers.



**This QR Code is priceless for all members.** It takes you to all 80 of our UE stewards. A UE steward is a 25-minute read on fundamental and critical topics for all members. If you want a place to quickly research an issue you're dealing with then check here.

**The next UE Eastern region meeting** will be held in March of 2026. We need to meet a little earlier in the year as we will likely be needing to vote on Region Constitutional amendments. A location for the meeting will not be available until we meet in August at the Convention when this edition will be distributed.

**THE MEMBERS RUN THIS UNION**