



January 2010

Newsletter

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

Local Union 1288

4000 CLEARPOOL CIRCLE * MEMPHIS, TN 38118 * TELEPHONE: 901-363-1563 * FAX: 901-363-3289

2010 MESSAGE FROM THE BUSINESS MANAGER



Rick Thompson
IBEW Business Manager

Happy New Year to every IBEW Local 1288 member and Memphis Light Gas and Water Division employee. As your Business Manager, I would like to thank each and every one of you for your support.

2009 was a challenging year for IBEW Local Union 1288 and it's bargaining unit employees. We all had to watch, fight and pray in a lot of situations that we had to overcome. IBEW is still alive and well and recognized as a vital part of Memphis, Light, Gas and Water Division. We are also recognized as one of the strongest unions in the great City of Memphis.

Officers

Rick Thompson
Business Manager

Trent Ward
Assistant Business Manager

Bill Hawkins
Assistant Business Manager

J.D. Cox
President

Paul Lundy
Vice President
Chairman of Board

Ruth Taylor
Recording Secretary

Jacqueline Tabor
Financial Secretary

Marie Shotwell
Treasurer

Executive Board

Electric:

Brian Cook
Tony Carter

Gas:

Greg Vailes
John Jones

Water:

Corey Hester
Phillip Richmond

General Services:

Tammy Brown
Michael Jones

By far the most challenging endeavor in 2009 was in negotiation and presenting a fortified front to stop MLGW from taking some of our benefits out of our Memorandum on Understanding. We actually accomplished this and received a few additional benefits. Employees were completely understanding about not getting a raise for 2010 in these economic times, but unhappy that our insurance premium is going up, effective 2010. Our initial proposals did include a cost of living raise for 2010. However, in these bad economic times when a great deal of companies are closing and laying employees off; we thought it would have been the weapon that MLGW management needed to use against us at impasse. We tried to show the MLGW's Board of Commissioners, the Memphis City Council, the Mayor's office and the general public that we are a **responsible** Union during these harsh economic times by not asking for a raise in our last best offer for 2010. The negotiation team tried to stop our insurance premium from increasing in 2010; the same year that we did not get a raise. However, the impasse committee decided to remove the insurance article from our last best offer. While we disagreed **respectfully** with their decision, we are still fortunate to have a job with very good pay and benefits.

The grievance process at MLGW is a **nightmare** that we cannot seem to wake up from. IBEW put it on the negotiation table to remove the problem by management taken some responsibility in shortening the time process of the grievances at the front end (Step One and Two) or the grievance is sustained in the grievant's favor, if they fail to schedule and hear the grievance in the stated time frame. Employees' grievances are sustained in management's favor if they are not filed or appealed in the stated time frame. It was ironic that MLGW's President, Jerry Collins and his negotiation team **refused** to put the same responsibility on management as mandated on IBEW/employees. So, we are back to square one.

IBEW is still willing to reach an agreement with MLGW President, Jerry Collins in speeding up the grievance process time on the back end with regards to reducing **arbitration** from twenty-four months(24), to twelve months(12) ; the same as we tried to do in negotiation. This issue need to be agreed upon, before the new MOU books are printed.

Hopefully, the new Mayor along with the City Council members will use their influence to help with the grievance process at MLGW to correct the unfairness by management and the low morale of employees and to create a better working environment that will also benefit our customers/rate payers. It would appear that this MLGW administration does not want bargaining unit employees and management to have a good working relationship. It also seems that this MLGW administration loves an environment of turmoil between the workers and/or management. With all due respect, "The bargaining unit employees as a whole at MLGW have absolutely no trust or confidence in the administration of MLGW which is a travesty". Maybe this will change if MLGW President, Jerry Collins spent less time going around the company this year (2010) trying to destroy IBEW Union and its Union Leadership, in particular. It appears that Presidents and CEO's that do not really know the industry, use their time to carry on pettiness and foolishness. Corporate Leaders who terrorize their employees, should know that it is not in the best interest of the company, the employees nor the customers. That is not true or effective leadership. Presidents and CEO's across the country that do have utility experience and really do know the utility industry, use their time inspiring their employees so the workers can help them be a real leader in the industry and move their companies to higher heights. That is true and effective leadership.

IBEW Union really need a better working relationship with MLGW's Board of Commissioners in listening to the problems at MLGW and not just be given a three minute time slot at the board meetings to share our side of the problems and issues at MLGW that affect eighteen hundred (1800) employees and in many cases our rate payers too. We would like to meet with MLGW Board of Commissioners members on a regular basis, one on one to voice some of our concerns and to try and create a better working relationship.

I cannot say enough about the dedicated Officers, Board Members, Chief Stewards, Stewards, Alternate Stewards, Committee Members and the hundreds of union members who act as the eyes and ears and sometime the mouth of the Union in an unofficial capacity. I could not do the job that I do as Business Manager without each of you. Thank you and I look

(Continued from Page 1)

forward to an even better working relationship in 2010. I would be remiss to leave out my two Assistant Business Managers (Bill and Trent), that work with me on a daily basis and where would I be if it was not for my two office staff employees, (Talecia and Sabrina) that help keep me on track with the hustle and flow that occur every single day at the Union office.

IBEW Local 1288 is looking at ways that we and other local Unions in Memphis and Shelby County can use our influence to bring economics to the City of Memphis by hosting some of the Conventions and/or Conferences that our International Unions and the AFL-CIO usually host across the country. All the Unions must work together and show solidarity for this to be a big economic success. The largest concentration of Labor Unions in Tennessee are in Memphis and Shelby County. Conferences and Conventions as a whole are known to generate **hundreds of millions of dollars** a year in the host cities of which they are held. If we bring economics to the city, the politicians will come to us, rather than us going to them. **As labor unions, we must start being creative and be proactive, rather than reactive. This is the only method that will get us true respect from the politicians, corporate leaders and the business community and will get us a seat at the table when the plans of the city and the county are being formulated.** Otherwise, we may be continually lied to or ignored and only given attention during election time.

It's a new year and a new day, but we still have a lot of old things that still need to be dealt with in 2010. In spite of the negative environment that this administration at MLGW is trying to maintain; I challenge every Union member to help me create a **new IBEW Union** that will do bigger and better things in 2010 for the employees and great things in the community that we live and work in. This may just be the catalyst that will help Memphis, Light, Gas and Water Utility Company move from the bottom of the J D Powers Survey list and restore trust and confidence back to Memphis Light, Gas and Water Division.

NEGOTIATION RESULTS EFFECTIVE 2010

IBEW and MLGW negotiation team members did not reach an agreement on a new Memorandum of Understanding by the deadline of November 1, 2009, that would go into effect January 1, 2010. According to the City of Memphis impasse ordinance, each side had a cooling off period of seven days to still come to an agreement; if no agreement was still not reached, IBEW and MLGW would be at a total impasse. IBEW's and MLGW's last best offer would be automatically deferred to the Chairman of the City Council to schedule a meeting of the City Council members for the Chairman to pick three council members for the impasse committee from a random drawing.

On December 8, 2009, the Memphis City Council Members held the Impasse Committee meeting between IBEW and MLGW. At this Impasse Committee meeting, a decision was made by the Impasse Committee members (**Shea Flinn, Edmond Ford, Jr. and Bill Morrison**) to eliminate Articles 21 (Insurance) and Article 31 (Leave of Absence), by a vote of two (2) to one (1) from IBEW's package. **Shea Flinn** voted to keep the articles in IBEW's package, but **Bill Morrison** and **Edmund Ford, Jr.** voted to remove the articles from IBEW's package before taking a vote on which total package they would agree on (IBEW's or MLGW's). **Edmond Ford, Jr.** made the motion to the other Impasse Committee members to accept the remainder of IBEW's negotiation package and it was second by **Shea Flinn**. The motion passed unanimously by the Impasse Committee members to accept IBEW's negotiation package.

The following articles that were in IBEW's last best offer and were approved by the Memphis City Council Impasse Committee are:

I. Article 22 – Work Out of Class

Grades 1 – 5	\$.60 per hour
Grades 6 – 9	\$.70 per hour
Grades 10 & above	\$.80 per hour
Work in crew leader and supervisory classifications.....	\$ 1.00 per hour

This represents an increase of **10** cents per hour for all grades and **15** cents per hour increase for work in crew leader and supervisory classifications.

II. Article 27 – Hours and Overtime

The Union proposed existing language, which gives an employee on a **rare occasion** where an employee may be paid **double time, plus rest period pay**.

III. Article 36 – Safety and Health

An initial start up clothing allowance credit will be given in the amount of **\$950.00** and a credit for subsequent years will be given in the amount of **\$750.00**. Employees who are currently under this plan as of January 1, 2010 will receive credit in the amount of **\$750.00** for the next issuance of clothing. Employees who receive a clothing allowance credit will be required to wear flame retardant shirts in the performance of their duties.

The Union proposed increasing the amount of money for flame retardant clothing in the performance of an employee's duties from \$500 initial start up to \$950 initial start up and from \$400 each subsequent year to \$750 each subsequent year thereafter.

IV. Article 37 – Holidays

The designated paid holidays for Memphis, Light, Gas and Water Division are: New Year's Day, Martin Luther King Day, Good Friday, **Martin Luther King Memorial Day**, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Day, the Day after Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and employee's birthday. (Twelve/12 Holidays)

The Union proposed to add an additional holiday with pay for employees for Martin Luther King Memorial Day. This holiday will be observed on April 4th of each year, beginning with April 4, 2010.

V. Article 42 – Salary Schedule

BARGAINING UNIT SALARY SCHEDULE

(Hourly)
Effective January 1, 2010
0%*

The above 0% wage for 2010 includes the following provision:

Should any employee outside of the bargaining unit receive a pay raise for the year 2010; then all bargaining unit employees shall also receive the same percentage pay increase.

Effective January 1, 2011
2%

Re-opener for both 2012 and 2013 on wages only, per Article 45

New salary scales will be inserted for each year of the Memorandum of Understanding.

1. No employee who receives a promotion shall receive a decrease in pay, (with the exception of apprenticeship programs)
2. No employee who makes a lateral move/transfer shall receive a decrease in pay.

As voted upon by the IBEW membership, there will be no pay raise for the year 2010, but should ANY employee outside of the bargaining unit receive a cost of living pay raise (this means management, exempt or professional employees, etc), then the entire bargaining unit shall receive the same pay raise.

In addition, as noted above, when an employee receives a promotion into another position, he/she shall no longer have to go back to Step 3, nor will they have to take a reduction in pay.

Also, when an employee make a lateral move/transfer through promotions and transfer, etc. into another classification that is the same pay grade, he/she will no longer have to go back to Step 3 or have to take a reduction in pay.

Tentative Agreement signed during Contract Negotiations:

1. IBEW–Jonnie Dawson Charitable Foundation Deduction will be inserted into the Memorandum of Understanding (Article 12)
2. Military Service (From 15 days to 20 days leave of absence with pay for training) (Article 25)
3. Stand-By Pay (two (2) hours pay for every eight (8) hour pay on stand-by will be charged to the area's overtime list (Article 29), effective February 1, 2010.
4. General provisions – Organizational Changes

VI. Article 45-Term of Agreement

The new Memorandum of Understanding shall take effect on January 1, 2010 and remain in effect until January 1, 2014.

On January 8, 2010 the Union Leadership received information that **Councilman Bill Boyd** was going to place IBEW's and MLGW's last best offers on the City Council agenda to be heard January 12, 2010. We made the call to the City Council to confirm this information. We immediately started making calls to the IBEW membership to be present at the Memphis City Council meeting on Tuesday, January 12, 2010, in preparation of the contracts being on the agenda.

The IBEW membership responded to the call of its Union Leadership and showed up at the Memphis City Council meeting in great numbers. According to the City's Ordinance, President Jerry Collins (MLGW) could only challenge the decision of the Impasse Committee members made on December 8, 2009, in one of two meetings immediately afterwards (December 15, 2009 or January 12, 2010). At approximately 3:45 pm, the decision was made by the City Council that the impasse matters regarding IBEW and MLGW would not be heard, which finalized the decision of the Impasse Committee members decision to accept IBEW's contract/last best offer over MLGW's. Effective Tuesday, January 12, 2010, IBEW's and MLGW's contract was ratified/settled.

As Business Manager of your Union, I would like to say that your Union's Negotiation Team did a great job in negotiating this contract for the IBEW Local 1288 Membership in these economic times. I would like to personally thank each of the negotiation team members for their hard work, dedication, sacrifice, prayers, support and resilience during the entire negotiation period. Hats off to IBEW's Negotiation Team members: **Bill Hawkins**, Assistant Business Manager, **J.D. Cox**, Electric Representative, **John Jones**, Gas Representative, **Corey Hester**, Water Representative and **Ruth Taylor**, General Services Representative. Our Tenth District International Vice President, Bobby Klein is proud of the team effort made by Local 1288. **Now it is time to devote all of our efforts to doing the best jobs possible of taking care of our customers/rate payers at MLGW, as we normally do.**

IBEW - JONNIE DAWSON CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

IBEW-Jonnie Dawson Charitable Foundation is in its final stage of implementation with IRS. Many of you have already expressed your desire to participate in the Charitable Foundation. We are looking to have employee contribution deductions ready with the Payroll Department for the employees participation, by February 15, 2010. IBEW and its membership will be a premiere Union in this region to undertake such a task. This is all about giving back to the community that we live in, work in and to the customers that we serve and come in contact with on a daily basis in some form or another as we do our jobs at MLGW.



*In Memory of
Jonnie Dawson*

We negotiated the IBEW-Jonnie Dawson Foundation **payroll deduction slot** in our labor agreement for the employees convenience, effective January 1, 2010. The theme for our campaign will be **"Helping the Community is Everybody's Responsibility."**

We are planning a big kick off campaign sign up in the very near future with many of the city's elected officials, local leaders and organization leaders being invited. We will keep the employees abreast of this mammoth undertaking by your union. Watch and listen for more information that is coming your way soon.

MEMBERSHIP INVITATION

A special invitation is extended to all bargaining unit employees at Memphis, Light, Gas and Water who have not signed up as IBEW Local 1288 Union members. If you are not a member and would like to become a member; as IBEW's Business Manager, I am personally inviting you to contact my office and I will personally make sure you are signed up as a union member. If you were once a union member and for one reason or another got out of the Union, I am asking you to reconsider and sign back up as a union member for the strength of the Union and for your very own personal security. **It is better to have and not need than to need and not have your Union representation.** I will personally come out and sign you up as a member of IBEW Local 1288 Union for 2010. I may give the first ten (10) employees that work at MLGW an IBEW T-shirt of their preference for signing up in 2010, effective January 15, 2010.

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS

LOCAL UNION 1288
4000 CLEARPOOL CIRCLE
MEMPHIS, TN 38118

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 381
Memphis, Tenn.

Page 4

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers

January 2010

MLGW WINTER MORATORIUM GOOD INTENTION - COULD IT BE A BAD IDEA??

Periodically, the IBEW Customer Service Team comes together for the purpose of looking at all the Customer Service policies that affect the customers, employees and the general public. In the future, I am considering inviting management to some of our Customer Service Team Meetings. (President, VP of Customer Service, Manager of CCC, Manager of Credit, Manager of Dispatcher/Field Tech Operations, Manager of Cashiers, MLGW Board of Commissioner Members and/or Memphis City Council Members, etc.) Looking out for MLGW's customers needs/concerns should be everybody's responsibility individually and jointly. The IBEW Customer Service Team has concluded that the Winter Moratorium has good intentions, but needs to be revised to be positive for the customers, the employees, MLGW and the city as a whole.

The moratorium was implemented to give MLGW's customers that needed a break in paying their utility bill during the most financially demanding months of the year. This was during the Christmas/New Year

period, when some customers would be left with the decision of buying a gift(s) for their child(ren) or paying their utility bill. From the middle of December to the middle of January, all nonpayment cut offs would be suspended for all residential customers.

This process, as it is now designed creates hardship on many MLGW customers after the Moratorium period that could possibly be avoided if the Moratorium was redesigned upfront to require customers to take a little more responsibility during this period.

The IBEW's Customer Service Team members bring a wealth of knowledge, expertise, ideas and **compassion** regarding the welfare of the customers and MLGW employees and are concerned about the company's stability as a business entity as well. IBEW will address the Winter Moratorium in more details in an upcoming newsletter for informational purposes.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

**"You can be the world's best garbage man, the world's best model,
it doesn't matter what you do if you're the best".**

Muhammad Ali

General Membership Meeting
1st Thursday of Each Month
5:30pm

Stewards Meeting
3rd Thursday of Each Month
5:30pm

IBEW LOCAL UNION 1288 BUSINESS MANAGER AND ASSISTANTS



Rick Thompson
Business Manager
ibewrick@bellsouth.net
901-870-3340



Bill Hawkins
Assistant Business Manager
ibewbill@bellsouth.net
901-870-3339



Trent Ward
Assistant Business Manager
ibewtrent@bellsouth.net
901-870-3338

BUILDING CORPORATION MEETING

Special Notice to all Union members. You are also members of the IBEW Building Corporation. The topic of discussion at the Building Corporation meeting Thursday, February 4, 2010 will be to buy the old Fireman Union Hall adjacent to our property at the corner of Lamar and Clearpool Circle. There may be a vote taken at this meeting with regards to buying the property. Your presence and vote is needed.