



February 2024

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## President's Report By Wayne McCarthy



On February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024; our Union Brothers and Sisters from Local 971 in West Palm Florida ratified a new contract with Pratt and Whitney. For perspective, West Palm has a little over 600 members in their bargaining unit. **Here in Connecticut, we have over 3,000 members between the Middletown and East Hartford facilities and both plants are still hiring!** Our current contract expires on May 4<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

The company's last, best and final offer was overwhelmingly accepted by the West Palm Machinist Union members. The question is, what is in their agreement that they liked? **The bigger question, what is in the Florida agreement that our members in Connecticut will find unacceptable?**

**The majority of West Palm's members do not receive a defined pension plan.** Instead, most are in the company's automatic contribution plan. Under this plan, their members receive a 4% contribution to their 401K based on their weekly gross pay. **Those members who do receive a defined pension will "cease to accrue benefits....after December 31, 2026".** This means that in 2027, the defined pension plan in Florida will be frozen for everyone.

With that said, Florida did negotiate an increase in their pension multiplier from \$84 per month per year of service to \$100 per month per year of service for covered employees who were hired before 2/1/16. So, if a Florida member on 12/31/2026 has 30 years of pension credits, they would be eligible to collect their full \$3,000 per month pension upon retirement at 62 or older (However, if you retire prior to age 62, the pension benefit is subject to early retirement reductions per the contract). **So, let's assume that at the end of 2026, a 50-year-old employee has 30 years of pension credits. From that point forward, they are locked in at that \$3,000 pension value. If they work another 15 years, until they are 65, the pension will not increase. It is frozen!!** Due to inflation, the value of that pension in today's dollars will be much lower. For that reason, your Union leadership strongly opposes any company proposal that will freeze defined pensions in the future! **Further, it has always been the Union's goal to restore the defined pension to all of our members. Make no mistake, we are heading into some very tough negotiations next year!!**

So, what was in the last best and final offer for our Florida members that was attractive enough for them to accept this contract?? The answer is quite simple, **MONEY!!** The average Florida IAM member lagged far behind Connecticut's IAM wage structure going into these negotiations. Their members made closing the wage gap a major priority. As a result, they negotiated an immediate \$2 per hour "wage adjustment" along with a **4% General Wage Increase**. After we receive our 3% raise in May, the gap between Florida and Connecticut will be much narrower. It is important to note that West Palm is the 1<sup>st</sup> RTX Union to negotiate under the current cycle. Our Connecticut Pratt and Whitney members will be the last to negotiate in the current cycle.

*Continued on page 2*

Going into 2025, we now have two major goals, retirement security for all and strong wage increases that will allow us to maintain a strong standard of living in Connecticut. Here's the reality. **If wages between Florida and Connecticut become equal, then we will be at a disadvantage when you consider the cost of living differences between the two states.** Currently, under the Federal Governments cost of living index, Connecticut is 11% more expensive than the state of Florida. In reality, for us to maintain the same standard of living we need to be paid 11% higher than the average Florida worker. **Just in case this message isn't clear to RTX and Pratt's executives, we have no intention of accepting 2<sup>nd</sup> class wages while we perform the most sophisticated and challenging work in all of Pratt and Whitney.**

In closing, I would like to congratulate our Brothers and Sisters from Local 971 in West Palm Florida for negotiating a contract that was acceptable to the majority of their members. I am now urging our members of IAMAW Local 700 to prepare for the toughest contract negotiations of our lifetimes. **Over the next 15 months, we all need to save as much money as we can in order to prepare to take this company on in the event that they present to us a last, best and final offer that does not address our goals!** We will stand together to secure an agreement that we can all be proud of. An agreement that delivers on financial security and that provides for all our members with the opportunity to retire with dignity!!

## In Memory Of Our Departed Members & Retirees

*Edward Pierpont, Ray  
Denmark, Harold DeBerry,  
Kenneth Cuellette, Elder  
Wilbert Shell Jr., Kenny  
Holland, Payton Brewer,  
John Hoy, Anthony "Tony"  
Scandura, Ed Shamburger,  
Paul Davis, Eugene "Dave"  
Forbes, John Peplau*

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Vice President..... Robert Deegan  
Recording Secretary.....Chris Goodale  
Secretary Treasurer.....Doug Campbell  
Conductor/Sentinel.....Frank Checko  
Trustee.....Chuck Hermann  
Trustee.....Heather Merrick  
Trustee.....Clayton Smith

### Contributing Editors of COMPASS

Wayne McCarthy  
Michael Shermer  
Mark Nati

### Shop Committee

Chairman	Wayne McCarthy
1st Shift	Frank Checko, Heather Merrick
2nd Shift	Mike Frei, Chuck Hermann
3rd Shift	Robert Deegan

**Join US**  
**For The Monthly Meeting**  
**At The Union Hall**

**Next Meeting**  
**March 10, 2024**  
**At 10:00 A.M.**



# AFL-CIO #1 PRIORITY THIS YEAR IS UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS FOR STRIKING WORKERS

*By Mark Nati - Political & Legislative Committee*

The AFL-CIO CT which represents over 200,000 active union workers in this state, has made getting Striking Workers unemployment benefits their #1 priority this legislative session in Hartford for workers of Connecticut. This will help level the playing field, when workers go into negotiations with employers across the state. With our contract expiring next May this will be a great help to us at the table next April if the company comes after our Pension like they did in West Palm Beach.

In the Tri-State area we are the only State that does not have this benefit. Both New York and New Jersey have had it for years now. This has not hurt their unemployment fund at all and has not led to more strikes, but better collective bargaining agreements for the workers. Our Elected Officials are now in position to get it done here in Connecticut. There is a public hearing on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of February on this issue, where workers that have been on strike will testify what we go through on Strike. Of course the CBIA will be there against it because they are against anything that is good for workers. But this is finally a bill for the middle-class. So often in Hartford everything is focused on the poor or the rich job creators which is good. The poor need the helping hand up and the Rich if they are creating good paying jobs also need help in the way of incentives to continue to provide good jobs here in Connecticut. All that being said when we the workers that provide the labor that make these companies profitable we deserve our fair share. That goes for the worker here at PWA to the workers at EB to the hard-working Nurses in the Nursing Homes who are barely making a living wage.

This is a bill finally for the Middle-Class. But we may need help. We believe this will pass the State Senate which has 9 union members. In the house we also believe we will have the votes with a little convincing of the conservative members of the house. The Governor who last year killed the bill, now says he is opened minded to it. We are working really hard to get a commitment from him on this. We may need the help of all workers in all shops across the state when the time is right, your stewards will have Governors phone number

and e-mail address and will be asking you to contact his office with our DEMANDS (if needed). We deserve a level playing field when we negotiate our future at the table with these profitable companies. Please support getting this bill passed. I can tell you one thing being an Executive Board Member of the AFL-CIO all the Unions across the state are Unanimously Unified to this bill being passed this session. We must show the WORKER POWER that we have!!!

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## Thanks Paul !

Paul Dickes steps down from his role as Chief EHS Representative and was recognized at the February monthly meeting and thanked for his years of dedication with the local as an activist. Paul was hired in 1986 and within three months of being hired was appointed, and recognized as a safety representative. In 1994/1995 Paul became the Chief Health and Safety Representative. Paul was also a Local Lodge Trustee for 18 years. Paul has been the Strike Committee Chair over multiple rounds of negotiations. Thanks again, Paul, for all of your years of dedication to the members of Local 700!



## New Bridge

The new bridge is finally complete after years of having to go around, so if you haven't seen it yet, stop by and check it out.





C.A.N.E.L. LODGE 700

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MONTHLY EH&S REPORT  
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## Monthly Report

### Report It, EARLY!

Early reporting is one of the most effective tools we have against hazards. If you have an injury the best thing you can do for yourself is to report it to your supervisor immediately. Even small aches and pains can turn into more serious injuries if there is no intervention. Delayed reporting can also lead to problems with Worker's Compensation, including cases being denied.

Injuries aren't the only thing that should be reported! There are many ways to bring attention to potential hazards. The riddi system is a good way to report hazards or issues that don't pose immediate danger. If you think you are exposed to a hazard in your work area ask your supervisor for a safety representative. One of the safety reps will come out and discuss the issue and help to find a solution. Of course, if you feel you can not do your job safely, JUST STOP!

No one knows the hazards of the job more than the people doing the job everyday. Help us keep everyone safe and report the hazards early.

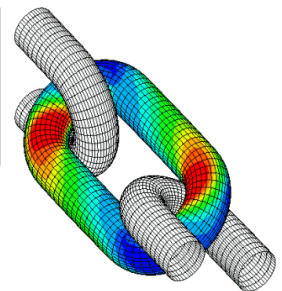
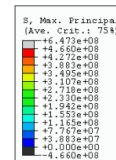
### J Aisle Update

Many of our brothers and sisters in 220 have noticed the large white curtain in the middle of the shop. This was a project to replace the old floor block with deep fill Stonhard. The project took just about a month to complete and was a great example of reporting hazards! Safety reps from all shifts worked with employees in the immediate area to eliminate any issues they had.

### Lift with your BRAIN

Brothers and sisters, we have recently had an increase in incidents related to hoists and lifting devices. Be sure if you have to use a hoist that you have done your daily inspection before using. Check for kinks or bends in wire ropes, and cracks or stress marks in chains. Ensure that the load applied to the hook sits centered in the base of the hook. Always check lifting devices for all hardware and condition. When using nylon straps be sure they are in good condition with no exposed threads. Sharp edges should be padded to prevent cutting the strap. Chain slings should be checked for cracks and stress marks. Remember that chain slings should never be twisted.

Twisting chains can add stress in unintended areas and decrease the amount of force it takes for the chains to fail.



Always make sure you're in control of your load and have a clear path of travel. Lifting can be safe and easy when you use your strongest muscle; your brain.

### Special Thanks!

Thanks again to our past chief of health and safety, Paul Dickes! We appreciate all the work, training and knowledge you gave us all over the years.

To learn more about the I.A.M.A.W. Safety and Health click on the link [Safety and Health - IAMAW](#)

To view the full Monthly EHS report, go to [iam700.org](http://iam700.org) click on [Environmental Health & Safety](#) then Monthly Report.

Respectively submitted Chief Union Safety Representative Mike Lamoureux.