The Way I See It

By EMANUEL LAUB
President

With 1982 almost at an end, I think it's an appropriate time for reflection. While the U.S. standard of living during 1982 continued to be the best in the world, we put up with the worst economic conditions our nation has seen in half a century, all because of the Reagan administration.

For us in Local 338, I am happy to say that we managed to hold our own. Members enjoyed third-step wage increases due under our contracts. Valuable improvements were made in our prescription drug plan, which is getting more use than ever.

Our retirement program was also improved as a result of an increase in pension service credit.

We made every effort and were successful in almost every instance to see that members who lost their jobs due to store closings were placed in other jobs with the same employer or a different one where this was not possible.

Our members continued to enjoy excellent health care as a result of the efficient administration of our health insurance coverage.

Finally, thanks to our business agents and representatives, members saw the successful resolution of complaints and grievances that invariably occur throughout the year.

All of this took place while some notable changes were occurring in the food industry. Perhaps the most significant among these was the number of chain stores that were taken over by foreign interests or so-called "multi-nationals" (companies with diversified products). Another change was the number of stores operated by chains and smaller stores that were forced to close due to the depressed state of the country's economy.

Then there were the cutbacks by the Reagan administration on food stamps, increased unemployment and millions of dollars lost to wage earners as a result of Reagan's slashes in other key programs, all of which contributed to worse conditions in our industry. Finally, there is the ripple effect of the national economy on our industry, which is considerable.

(Continued on page 2)

Union to start safety program

Local 338 is planning to establish a safety program shortly after the first of the New Year, President Emanuel Laub announces.

"We are going to set this up as a joint industry-union committee with a view towards creating a greater awareness of safety precautions on the job," brother Laub explains.

"Our main objective is to get members to observe various safety guidelines so that they will reduce the number of accidents and injuries sustained in work places," the Local 338 chief executive officer explains. "This will reduce absences due to injury and contribute towards greater productivity," he adds.

Brother Laub also points out that an ongoing safety program will enable the Union to qualify for recognition by the National Safety Council and to benefit from association with the Greater New York Safety Council, which is affiliated with NSC.

Reagan's tax policies still favor the rich

If President Reagan pushes through his promised tax cut sooner than expected, don't be fooled into thinking that you'll be ahead in the money game. For, while you may be spared a few hundred dollars on income tax, it will amount to peanuts alongside what you'll be having to shell out in high interest rates, taxes on energy, bridge, tunnel and highway tolls, sales taxes and gasoline taxes.

For older persons the latest injustice is a withholding tax on pensions that are in excess of $450 a month. This is required under a law that goes into effect January 1, 1983. This law, enacted by Congress this past September, is known as the Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsi-

Holiday Greetings

The Officers, Business Agents, Organizers and Executive Board extend heartiest Season's Greetings and best wishes for a very Happy, Healthy New Year to all members and their families.

(Continued on page 2)
The Way I See It

By EMANUEL LAUB
President

(Continued from page 1)

As this year comes to a close, the future looks anything but bright. Joblessness is still climbing; the cost of living is still going up; and high interest rates and the cost of fuel and energy are still high. In addition, one big change is expected to take place which will affect not only our industry but every other one. This involves micro-electronics and includes computers, word processors and automated equipment such as numerically controlled machines. Already a $100 billion industry in 1981, the market for electronics is expected to reach a high of $500 billion by the late 1980’s. Major industries are investing heavily in this new technology because they expect to earn greater profits by increasing their control over work processes, by lowering workers’ skill levels and by reducing work forces.

The new technology will mean fewer jobs, and experts are predicting that even if the nation’s economy takes a turn for the better, it will be impossible to provide the number of jobs that will be needed to keep pace with those that are lost. One study concludes that robots presently being developed with crude sensory abilities could perform about seven million existing factory jobs, at least 45% of which are covered by union contracts. General Electric already has long-range plans to replace half of their 37,000 assembly line workers with robots. The Lockheed Corporation has on the drawing board plans for a plant which will operate without human beings. The impact on clerical employment is no less severe. One study estimates that eventually 38 million out of 50 million existing white collar jobs may be affected by the new automation.

The economic crisis in which the capitalist world is now caught is one of under-consumption and comparative over-production. Looking ahead to continuing limited markets for their products due to less income for millions of working people and a hard core of unemployed, big companies are more likely to use the new technology to further reduce work forces rather than expand production.

The odd thing about the expected technological advance is that, while it may save many corporations millions of dollars in wages and benefits, there will be fewer consumers able to buy the goods and pay for the services provided by these corporations. There is no doubt but that we will be confronted by all kinds of problems in the light of these expected developments. And we will have to deal with them as they come up, which may not be for a few years yet.

Meanwhile, the big event for us in 1983 will be negotiations on new contracts. I shall have more to say about this as we approach the expiration date of our present contract.

I close by wishing all members and their families a very Happy Chamukah and a Merry Christmas, and a prosperous, healthy New Year.

Reagan’s tax policies

(Continued from page 1)

through 69 on the same terms that it is offered to younger employees. If the employer’s health plan and Medicare both cover the same expenses, the employer’s plan is required to pay an amount up to its maximum first, and Medicare will pay only that portion of a bill not paid under the employer’s plan. In other words, the employer’s plan after January 1, 1983, will be the so-called primary coverage, and Medicare will be the secondary coverage.

The shift from being responsible for secondary coverage to primary coverage is going to mean bigger expenditures for union health plans. These already have felt the pinch as a result of the constant rise in the cost of health care services. For several years now major health care providers have been looking for ways of containing increasing health care delivery costs, but without success.

On the tax front, the Reagan administration recently ran into a storm of protest over its proposal to tax unemployment benefits. Jobless compensation already is taxed for an individual whose total income for the year is at least $12,000 or for a couple with a combined income of $18,000. The Reagan administration is also still weighing the idea of establishing a sub-minimum wage for youth.

Meanwhile, the rich are getting richer and are managing to get away with low taxes compared with working people who are dependent on wages. With all kinds of tax shelters, allowance for depreciation of equipment and tax incentives for numerous activities, corporations are still doing very well financially. As for wealthy individuals, they’re in better shape than ever when it comes to taxes.

‘Stay the Course!’

Tis the season to smile

Someone in recent times expressed the opinion that “You never see anyone smile in a supermarket.”

This of course, is one of those typical generalizations which is not either a hundred percent true or a hundred percent false. However, these days, people are probably smiling less than usual when they go marketing.

Perhaps they have good reason not to smile. They may be troubled by rising prices or (as it frequently happens) different price markings for the same products. They may be annoyed by other shoppers who wheel carts carelessly and hit their heels. They may be annoyed by other shoppers who block the aisles with their carts, indifferent to free-flowing traffic. They may be annoyed with the quality of fresh produce or the fact that something they want just isn’t in stock. Or finally, they may be annoyed merely by having to perform that chore of buying food to feed the family.

But what about you? There’s nothing in your Union contract that says you have to smile. On the other hand, there’s nothing in the labor agreement which says that you shouldn’t smile.

Oh, sure. We know that there’s plenty not to smile about. It could be a drafty front end from winter blowing through the entrance to the store. It could be the way the manager looked at you. It could be because there just isn’t enough help to handle a surge of customers who suddenly crowd the store. It could be because you just don’t feel very well, and perhaps shouldn’t have come to work at all. It could be that brat who insists on screaming because mama or papa insists on reviewing current history with the neighbor she or he just met. Or it could be the old sourpuss shopper at the checkout counter who is just naturally nasty to everybody.

Aside from all this, you argue, “Look what’s going on in the world. Crime is making all of us frightened. Everything seems to be getting dirtier and our environment is being fouled up. Working people seem to be fighting a losing battle against the cost of living. And we’re in danger of being nuked. So what’s the good of smiling?”

No argument.

However, when you’re not feeling particularly low or angry or frustrated, you might try smiling every now and then. Also, if you can focus your eyes on the person you’re smiling at, you’re apt to find that there is a mutual exchange of friendliness, or at least, recognition.

So, try it for size. It’s the season for smiling, and it might stay with you through the year.

Buy Union, Buy American!
The job you save could be your own!
Reagan trying to beat calendar at Congress lame duck session

A 320,000 public works job bill to be financed by a five-cent increase in the tax on gasoline was the only measure of importance given a chance for passage at a lame duck session of Congress which was underway as 338 News went to press. If the jobs bill is passed, you as a New Yorker would be paying out an additional five cents on every gallon of gas you buy. Aside from paying for employment for an estimated 320,000 workers, it is highly questionable what else you’d get for your nickel.

Lame duck is a term applied to an individual or group that is finishing a term in political office, having been voted out. Most political experts claim that a lame duck politician or deliberative body like the U.S. House of Representatives, Senate, or a state assembly or senate whose make-up is changing because of newly-elected members generally accomplishes very little. Since the next Congress will have 26 more Democrats in the Lower House, President Reagan has more support (from Republicans) in the present House and is therefore hoping to win passage of some key measures before it adjourns.

In addition to the jobs measure, Congress will be pressured to vote on a Clean Air Act which, in effect, would weaken the government’s present campaign to clean up the environment, especially air pollution. Other measures up for consideration are various appropriations bills covering a wide variety of programs. However, these were not expected to be voted on during the lame duck session.

Union’s officers on Cerebral Palsy telethon Jan. 22-23

President Emanuel Laub and Secretary-Treasurer James Johnson will be among celebrities appearing for the benefit of United Cerebral Palsy on January 22nd and 23, 1985. This is the seventh year that brothers Laub and Johnson will be helping UCP raise funds to combat this dreaded disease.

The telethon will be presented over Saturday and Sunday, January 22nd and 23rd for 20 hours, over WOR-TV, Channel 9. It is expected that brothers Laub and Johnson will be seen at approximately 10:00 P.M. on both nights. Members are invited to watch.

In photo below President Laub is embracing one of UCP’s poster children, April Albritton. Secretary-Treasurer Johnson has apparently registered with little Joseph Marshall after telling him something that produced the smile.

President Laub extends his thanks to all members who have cooperated by supporting this deserving cause.

"I hope that we can continue to fight this brain injury looking towards the day when it will be controlled," he says.

Mark your calendar and give to end killer cerebral palsy

Speaking Frankly

By JIMMY JOHNSON
Secretary-Treasurer

The United States now has an unemployment rate of 10.6 percent, with an estimated 11,600,000 people out of work. This is the highest level since 1940, when the Great Depression took its highest toll of workers. Joblessness in this country is considerably higher than in any other industrialized country in the world.

The unemployment rate is officially measured by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the U.S. Department of Labor. It does not take into account young workers looking for jobs for the first time, people who are waiting part time who would like full-time work, and many others. Besides them, jobless figures do not take into account the time lost by workers who have been discouraged by the depressed job market and remain at home or in school, despairing of finding a job. Then, too, the figures don’t include older workers who have found they are unable to make ends meet and would like to return to the labor force to supplement whatever income they have from pensions and investments.

This country always has prided itself on the dynamic character of its economy. Until World War II, new products and new industries were constantly being developed, and this provided a continuing reservoir of jobs both in production and service industries. Since World War II, America has worked steadily to cut down unemployment by a variety of methods, but our unemployment rates are still double the rates of other countries and repeated recessions, coupled with inflation, have forced thousands of companies out of business, thus creating a growing number of unemployed.

While new enterprises are still springing up all the time, workers who have been displaced by closings of various industries are generally not the ones with skills in demand by newer industries. Besides this, a new enterprise may not locate in the same general area as an old one. We have seen this with many companies during the past few years. One of the most notable examples is the Seth Thomas clock company, which is closing down and reopening in the south.

Unemployment hurts not only the individual affected, but also industry as a whole and the nation’s economy. In fact, the nation suffers loss of a tremendous productive capacity. This involves the value of purchasing power that is represented with high or near-full employment as well as the reservoir of skill and experience that is so necessary for this country’s economic health.

I am shocked at the seeming indifference of the Reagan administration to the plight of the unemployed. Apparently this gang in Washington sees nothing wrong in letting the big corporations earn record profits, granting wage earners peanuts in tax relief while imposing taxes on millions in “hidden” areas, and running the country for the benefit of the rich. I am also amazed at the stupidity of the Reagan administration in trying to balance the Federal budget by undercutting programs that could generate money for taxes and dollars for consumer spending on the pretext of restoring the nation’s economic health. Meanwhile, this same administration sees nothing wrong in spending billions of dollars on military items that could mean the end of civilization if they are ever used in a nuclear war.

What is needed is a varied program of job-creating projects, and rethinking of ways to revitalize almost every industry in the United States, including the major ones and smaller ones that have suffered because of foreign imports and unfair competition. Also needed is long-range planning to gear whatever technological advantages may be brought to bear in years to come to an economy in which people, rather than profits, are the main consideration.

It’s people who make the world turn — not robots or automatic machinery or industrial efficiency. None of these is incompatible with the role that the human being plays as producer and consumer.

I don’t mean to sound gloomy at a time when the spirit of the holiday season is on everyone’s mind. But we can’t shut the world out of our thoughts.

I close, therefore, by extending to all members and their families my sincere wishes for joyous holidays and a happy, healthy New Year.
Ben Holtzer
Organizer

"The notion that there is no labor vote is sheer nonsense. Working people have a big stake in political affairs because politics affects just about every aspect of their lives."

John Fitzpatrick
Business Agent

"The cost of labor is set through negotiations with management, not through arbitrary action by unions. It is a variable item that is geared to free collective bargaining."

Joseph Paul
Business Agent

"The American labor movement has done much for millions of workers, and it is probably in the area of grievances that it has given workers security, freedom of action and dignity."

Hector Torres
Business Agent

"The labor movement and our Union in particular recognizes the importance of education. This includes not only public and private institutions of learning but labor education, which gives workers a chance to improve themselves."

Emanuel Laub
President

"We know that the American labor movement is not getting weaker in spite of claims to the contrary. We know that it is continuing to strive for economic justice and job security and a share in planning for the future for organized workers. The labor movement will survive just as long as there is a need to protect the interests of working people."

Sidney Blumgold
Organizer

"Our Union is concerned not only about members' wages, benefits and working conditions, but also social and economic justice, equality of opportunity, civil rights, discrimination in any form and human dignity."

Thomas Hayes
Organizer

"The continuing challenge for the labor movement is to strengthen the weak links that endanger workers and to tighten the bonds of brotherhood and make our Union strong."

Herbert Rose
Office Mgr.

"A trade union is a sisterhood of those same goals, the same economic and social good of the major..."
Spirit of Union Philosophy

James Johnson
Secretary-Treasurer

"In spite of the continuing effort by the AFL-CIO, to increase its membership, millions of American workers remain unorganized. The world is changing and there are signs of instability everywhere. However, the philosophy of the labor movement remains unchanged. It is to bring a better way of life to both the organized and unorganized."

Murray Fischer
Business Agent

"If more consumers geared their buying to union label products, our country would not be in the serious economic shape that has been brought on through cheap imports from low-wage nations around the world."

Irving Levy
Business Agent

"Honor your Union and get others to do the same. Your Union is your best refuge both in normal times and in times of adversity."

Samuel Tannenbaum
Business Agent

"It's a familiar story, but it's worth repeating. Union membership doesn't cost. It pays. It means higher wages, good benefits, job security, dignity on the job and last but not least, political clout through collective action."

Manuel Monaco
Organizer

"Big business speaks about the high cost of labor, but tell us about those who charge too much for their products and for their money. These are the real villains in today's economic mess."

Ernesto Mattace
Organizer

"When anti-union people claim that it costs to belong to a union, they're using propaganda that has proved to be false during a century of trade union history."

Eugene Hampl
Organizer

"Every worker has the right to a job, except that when there are no jobs, this right is wronged. The "right to work" of the more than 10,000,000 jobless is today a sad commentary on our society."
For good health

Common sense helpful with or without head colds

"Brrrrr," you murmur as you turn the corner and head into that driving winter wind with its chill factor. "Darn it," you curse as you feel that dry sensation in the nasal passage that generally means an oncoming cold. "Rats," you complain as you get the shakes along with the fever headache that can mean a touch of grippe or the flu.

Right enough. It's that season for colds, grippe and flu, and inevitably we get around to trying to figure out how man can invade outer space while he himself is invaded by tiny organisms he can't even see.

No sure cold remedy

When it comes to the "common" head cold, which can often be very uncommon, there's really very little one can do about it. If you sense a cold coming on, with aspirin plus drinking liquids and luck you may be able to block that cold. Once you've got it, there's nothing to do except wait it out, continuing to treat it with aspirin and liquids.

What about the many prescription drugs sold over the counter that are advertised to "prevent" colds? There may be a few which can help you, providing you take them in time. But for the most part they play havoc with your insides because they have ingredients that can upset your stomach, nervous and circulatory systems. If you're so sick that no ready-made drug store medication can help, it's best to consult a doctor. As for grippe or flu, these are generally accompanied by fever and chills, and self-doctoring is unwise because these two ailments can add to a more serious respiratory infection like pneumonia. The best course of action with grippe and flu is to consult a doctor.

Vitamins and food

For years there has been a theory that Vitamin C helps to avert colds. If one has a well-rounded diet with the natural vitamins contained in fruits, vegetables, nuts, milk products, etc., you probably get enough vitamins, including vitamin C. The latest expert medical opinion is that too much of it affects the kidneys adversely.

As for diet, there isn't any prescribed regimen that will help you avoid colds. However, once you contract a cold, lots of liquids, and avoidance of fatty foods will make you feel better.

Cold weather guards

The best thing to do about cold weather is to take it in one's stride and not fight it. No one catches a cold because of cold weather any more than because of getting one's feet wet in a rainstorm. A cold comes on through lowering of resistance, at which time the body is more susceptible to infection.

At any rate, to deal with cold weather one should dress warmly, wearing several layers of clothes for better insulation. If you happen to be exposed to bitter weather for a prolonged period of time, don't try to warm up with alcohol (which lowers the body resistance) or hot water. Get near a source of heat and massage the chilled parts of your body. Finally, when a head cold is at its peak and your poor nose is running, don't use handkerchiefs, but rather tissues because with the latter you avoid reinfecting yourself.

Chuckles

"No, we haven't had any in a long time," the new supermarket check-out clerk told the lady customer.

Overhearing the remark, the store manager ran over and told the lady, "Of course we have it madam. I'll send to the stockroom for it right away." Then in a whisper he told the clerk, "Never tell a customer we're out of anything."

As the customer burst out laughing, the manager asked the clerk, "What did she want, by the way?"

"She just commented that we haven't had any rain recently," the clerk explained.

Gossip, one of our members suggests, is the art of saying nothing in a way that leaves nothing unsaid.

Ronald Reagan please take note: If it's true that "There's no business like show business," why are so many actors getting into politics?

One advantage of a bad memory is that you can keep enjoying the same jokes over and over again without getting bored.

Definition of a taxpayer: Someone who works for government enrichment every day but doesn't have to take a civil service examination.

Radio reporter interviewing centenarian: "How do you feel when you get up in the morning?"

Centenarian: "Amazed."

The union brother was in the hospital recovering from a broken leg, and was visited by a fellow member.

"How're they treating you here?" the visitor asked.

"Well," the patient replied, "I can't kick."

Don't make too light of injuries

Ralph's foot is still sore from having carelessly dropped a fully-loaded packing carton on it. Sally's thumb aches from having bent it far back when she moved too swiftly to pick up a shopper's discount coupon and slipped. Neither Ralph nor Sally were disabled, and even though they might have hurt themselves more seriously, they should have reported their injuries to their respective managers.

This happens all the time when members fail to report accidents and/or injuries sustained on the job. It shouldn't happen because there are situations in which members are hurt at work through no fault on their part. When this happens the incident is not reported, the cause of injury is not brought to management's attention, and can remain uncorrected.

Of course, when an accident results in a more or less serious injury, it should be reported because injured person may be hurt seriously enough to file for disability insurance.

The point is that one shouldn't make a federal case out of every injury. But it's a good idea to report all injuries to one's supervisor, even when the fault is with the victim.

Advice to stock investors: "It's not the bulls and bears one has to watch out for. It's the bum steer."

The little boy accompanied his parents to the Christmas church service, and squirmed through the pastor's delivery of the sermon. Finally, the kid whispered to his father, "Dad, if we give them the money now, can we run?"

The state of the present economy can be described as a system in which one pays $5 to park the car so one won't be fined $50 while one spends $6 for a cup of coffee that used to cost a nickel.

Definition of a mattress: A comfort human beings had to wait for until its inventor stopped sleeping on his idea.

Bank teller to nervous man at the window: "Sorry sir, but your wife beat you to the draw."

Many Happy Returns
Letters to the Editors

Dear Mr. Johnson:

On behalf of the children at Hospital for Joint Diseases Orthopaedic Institute, please accept my sincere appreciation for your most generous donation of candies and sodas. Halloween would not be the same without your generous contribution.

Once again, many thanks for your continuing support and interest in the work of this hospital.

Mrs. Janice R. Berkeley
Director of Volunteer Services

* * *

Dear Neighbor:

The Auxiliary Services for High Schools Evening Learning Center is now open. This center is designed to serve the needs of the people of Brownsville, Bushwick, Canarsie, Crown Heights, East New York and Starrett City.

We accept any adult, veteran or anyone over the age of 16 who is out of school and is interested in obtaining a diploma, going to college or obtaining a civil service job or special training. All courses are free.

The learning center is located at Maxwell Vocational High School, at 145 Pennsylvania Avenue between Liberty and Glenmore Avenues, Brooklyn, New York, and is open Monday through Thursday from 6:30 pm to 9:00 pm.

Students are registered every Monday and Tuesday from 6:30 pm sharp every week of the school year starting September 20, 1982.

These services are available

Basic skills—reading, mathematics, language arts.

* * *

Dear Mr. Johnson:

On behalf of the Administration and patients at North General Hospital, I wish to thank you and your organization for the generous donation of candy and sodas for the pediatrics patients. The children had a wonderful time at the halloween party prepared by the nursing staff.

Many thanks for your continued support and, again, I extend an invitation for you to visit us at any time.

Hospital administrator

Number of uninsured increasing seriously

An estimated 18 to 30 million people in the United States do not have health insurance. Not surprisingly, this number has grown with the rise in unemployment, since more than 90% of those who lose their jobs, lose their health benefits as well. Hospitals and health clinics around the country are feeling the effects, as cutbacks in federal and state moneys for health care combine to intensify the problem.

Among the hardest hit are public general hospitals in urban areas, which have traditionally carried large charity caseloads — and are now being asked to take on more, even as insolvency threatens. A study by Washington D.C.'s Urban Institute shows that only 12% of patients in public hospitals are insured or able to pay privately. Of the hospitals studied (including those with and without deficits), only one-seventh provided as much as 40% of the free care given.

The situation is expected to worsen before it improves. Awareness of the serious nature of the problem is growing, however, and Congress is asking the Department of Health and Human Services to make specific provisions through Medicare for the needs of low-income patients and the hospitals that serve them.

Tranquilizer prescriptions down by a third

Recent studies conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health indicate that prescriptions for tranquilizers have fallen by one third.

The studies found that the drop is part of a general decline in Americans' use of prescription drugs.

According to the Ralph Nader-affiliated health research group, the number of prescriptions written has decreased by about 7% and 100,000 prescriptions over the past six years.

We regret to report that the following members have died during the period since the last issue of 339 News. The Officers, Executive Board, staff and members extend heartfelt condolences to their families.

Richard Addison
Harry Brodsky
Meyer Brown
Barney Costa
Sam Green
Max Helfant
Seymour Hershkind
Hymen Kantrovitz
Frank Kornbluth
Marvin McLaughlin
Keva Moretzky

Ann Retzbach
Benjamin Schechter
Louis Silverman
Sam Weiner
Sidney Wittman

questions and answers

Q. I recently applied for an auto loan from a finance company. The person who took my application asked for my Social Security number. I didn't want to give it to her, but she said that she uses Social Security numbers for filing purposes. Is this practice legal?

A. Some non-government organizations use Social Security numbers for record keeping purposes. Such use is neither required nor prohibited by Federal law. Knowing your number, however, does not allow these organizations to get information from your Social Security records.

Q. My neighbor is no longer able to work because of a spinal condition. I suggested he apply for disability benefits, but he doesn't think he has enough Social Security work credit. How long does a person have to work under Social Security to be eligible for disability payments?

A. The amount of work needed for disability benefits depends on the person's age when he or she becomes disabled. A worker who becomes disabled before 24 needs credit for 1/2 years of work in the 3-year period ending when the disability begins. Workers who are 24 through 30 need credit for having worked half the time between disabled. Age 31 or older, a worker needs credit for at least 5 years of work or work out of the 10 years ending when he or she became disabled. Workers 48 or older need additional credit depending on their age and when their disability began.

Q. My granddaughter has been living with me since her parents were killed in an accident 5 years ago. Can she get Social Security benefits when I retire in a few months?

A. A grandchild may be eligible for Social Security benefits on a grandparent's record if the natural parents are dead or disabled and if the grandchild is living with and supported by the grandparent. For more information, contact any Social Security office.

Q. My husband died last month. Can I cash the Social Security check that arrived this month, or am I supposed to return it?

A. If a person who gets Social Security benefits dies, a check isn't payable for the month of death. For example, if the beneficiary died in October, the check dated November 3 (which is payment of October) should be returned unless the check is made out jointly to a husband and wife. In that case, the survivor should ask at a Social Security office whether to cash the check.

Q. My husband died a few years ago. I know I'm supposed to file an application for Social Security survivor benefits, but I don't know what papers to take with me. Can you tell me what I'll need?

A. Some of the papers you may need to apply for survivors benefits are your Social Security number and the deceased worker's number, proof of your age; proof of marriage; the children's birth certificates and their Social Security numbers, if they are applying for benefits; and the deceased worker's W-2 forms or income tax returns for the 2 years before death. Don't delay applying because you don't have all these proofs. The people at the Social Security office can suggest other proofs that can be used.

Q. When my first child was born, I quit my job as a bookkeeper. Now that all the children are in school, I've decided to return to work. Were the Social Security credits I earned in my former job taken off my record when I stopped working?

A. No. Any Social Security credits you earn, regardless of when you earn them, remain on your Social Security record. Of course, if you stop working before you have enough credits, no benefits will be payable on your Social Security record. But, if you return to work, you can earn any additional credits you need to get benefits.
American Labor History Highlights
The Earliest Trade Unions

When the earliest unions were established nearly 200 years ago, they were very like today's unions. Guild-like organizations composed of master craftsmen and journeymen were concerned chiefly with technical standards and competition that interfered with their trades.

The actual beginning of this country's trade unionism goes back to the time when Philadelphia journeymen undertook activities to improve their earnings and working conditions. Philadelphia printers made history in 1786 when they went on strike for a minimum wage of a dollar a day. Five years later Philadelphia's carpenters demonstrated to win from their employers a ten-hour workday. In 1792 the city's shoemakers organized what is considered the first official trade union, with a constitution, dues, a treasury and regular meetings.

Working men in other cities followed suit. Carpenters and cordwainers (leather workers) in Boston organized in 1788. Printers in New York City organized in 1794, and shoemakers in Pittsburgh formed a union in 1809.

Some of the unions lasted more than a few years. Others couldn't attract enough members to survive. The overwhelming majority failed because of opposition by employers.

The first known strike in the building trades occurred in 1791 when journeymen carpenters in Philadelphia struck against master carpenters who had been accused of "meantly" trying to reduce wages.

Her courage should inspire every member of Local 338

"I know what I've got, and I'm not afraid to die."

That's how Adele Csernica opened the conversation with a member of the Local 338 staff when she called Union headquarters. Mrs. Csernica, a member of Local 338 for 15 years and employed at Cookie's Steak Pub at Green Acres on Long Island, recently learned that she has leukemia. She telephoned the Union office in the hope of getting blood donors. She admitted that she was not a blood donor before she learned of her illness.

"That's the way it goes," she commented, obviously feeling regret over not having given blood in the past.

"I feel great," sister Csernica said. "I'm learning to live with it, and I hope to go back to work after the first of the New Year.

Mrs. Csernica is married to a home improvements specialist, Thomas Csernica, and they have four children (two daughters and two sons) and seven grandchildren. She has been undergoing chemotherapy, and needs regular blood platelets. She explained that any members of Local 338 wishing to give blood may do so at Long Island Jewish Hospital (Monday-Friday between 10 A.M. and 7:45 P.M., and Saturdays between the hours of 11 A.M. and 2:45 P.M.) The telephone of Long Island Jewish Hospital, incidentally, is (212) 470-2346.

So... How does a wonderfully courageous woman spend her time knowing that she has this illness?

"I do what I have to do," says Sister Csernica. "I worked until I learned what made me feel so tired and weak, which was most unusual for me. I've always gone camping on vacation, and I plan to do so next year. And, of course, the main thing is my family."

Adele Csernica and her husband have been married 35 years.

"I'm very lucky, all things considered," Adele declares. Anybody have any complaints?

If there is such a person, check with Adele Csernica.

"She's something very rare."

Senior citizens are hard hit by slumping economy, prices

Although the Bureau of Labor Statistics would like you to believe otherwise, older Americans are the hardest hit by the depressed economy, taxes, the high cost of energy and fuel, and increasing unemployment.

Some economists point to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid as "cushions" which older citizens enjoy and which allegedly give them an advantage over others. However, taxes at the source (income, sales, tolls and now, starting in 1983, pensions) make it tougher for retired persons to make ends meet.

The latest example of oppressive Reaganomics is the so-called "Tax Equity and Fiscal Responsibility Act of 1983," which President Reagan signed last September. This means that all persons receiving a pension are responsible for withholding Federal income tax from their retirement benefits.

As for Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, the best advice is not to take a thing for granted. Although Reagan keeps insisting that benefits due Social Security recipients are safe, his administration is still looking for ways to save the Social Security fund, and the only way Reagan believes this possible is to cut down on benefits and make eligibility tougher.

What many persons forget, especially the President of the United States and the Senate and Lower House, is that senior citizens are consumers, and in spite of their "cushions" of pension and Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid, they have two problems which working people don't have -- a reduced income and many infirmities which cost more money to live with.

Retirees seeking information should write Union before coming in person

Many retired members who have questions or problems with which they need help or advice come to the Union office without notifying anyone that they are doing so. This almost always results in their having to wait until someone is free to see them. It also results in delay on getting answers to questions and a solution to their problems because the information they require often takes time to secure.

How can this be avoided? By writing before you come in and learning whether the information you seek can be given without a personal visit to the Union. In the event it is necessary to come in person, make an appointment, and you will thereby save the Union and yourself time and effort. When you write, address your note to retirement department.