



“Hope smiles from the threshold of the year to come, whispering, it will be happier.”

Alfred Lord Thompson

MANAGER’S COMMENTS

GREATER CLEVELAND

As 2018 came to a close I found myself in a more surly mood than usual.

I guess the main reason could be summed up in one word, depression. No, not the consider suicide degree of depression. The sad degree.

There were two contributing factors. One, the deaths recently of four people, important people, people I cared for very much. Two, the seemingly endless parade of apprentices and journeymen I’ve had to talk to about their drug addictions.

The deaths weren’t entirely unexpected and they all had lives well lived, Jim Pimental, an IBEW L.U. 103 electrician, my brother Tony, IBEW President Emeritus Ed Hill and just recently, Rich Parenti NECA’s former Eastern Region Director. All contributed large parts of themselves to the electrical construction industry. But with every loss we have to cope with, it’s the stark reality that you will never be able to just pick up the phone or drop in to talk to them that strikes me. The enormous amount of knowledge and experience they took with them, never to be accessed again, even scares me a little.

The unfortunate number of people with drug addition illnesses that in most cases were thrust upon them by, pick one or all that apply, medical doctors, pharmaceutical industry or insurance companies is really disturbing. Oh yeah, if there’s some I missed feel free to add them to the list.

With the millions upon millions of dollars our industry has spent on drug testing to be able to brag about having a drug free workplace and the millions of dollars our health plans spend on treating these folks, the fact is we’re failing badly. I don’t know about anybody else, but I’ve lost track of just the people we have identified, after the fact, that have severe addictions. Almost none of them were identified from a failed regular or random drug test. In most cases, they were identified by another human, either a co-worker, an instructor or from an appeals interview at a “Two Strikes” hearing.

And oh by the way, recently a person who admitted, after being confronted, to taking drugs that day, was sent for a drug test to confirm he had taken drugs and just what drugs they were. The testing center assured the people who sent him with the reasonable suspicion charge that they had done the right thing and they would have done the same. Good so far, right? Well, the test came back negative. It showed he hadn’t taken anything. Unbelievable! How many times do I have to say it? We have relied on drug testing to justify our drug free workplace claim and mistakenly thought we’ve been helping to solve a social problem and create a safer job site. Not! And more reason to be sad.

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MANAGER'S COMMENTS CONTINUED

So since it's obvious I'm not going to see an MD who will prescribe a mind altering drug paid for by an insurance company to help with my depressed state, I'm going to use a God given remedy...HOPE.

Now, can I say happy new year? I don't know. Can I say, have faith and hope for a happy new year? Yeah, that's what I'm going to say.

ADDITIONAL MANAGER COMMENT SPECIFICALLY FOR SIGNATORY CONTRACTORS

This additional comment can't wait until next month.

Do you believe and operate your company under the notion that the IBEW is your human resource department?

If you do, I bet you complain that some number of their members aren't worth what their rate is. So, who do you assign the blame? I'll make another bet. You don't think it's you. How could it be, you're not responsible for their deficiencies.

You'd be wrong and wrong again.

The IBEW isn't your human resource department. They are among other things, your "employment agency." Once you employ someone it's up to you to manage them. Whether you have a four person shop or a 400 person shop, what happens with your relationship with them is your human resource responsibility. To me, the two main human resource responsibilities a contractor has is productivity and discipline. If you don't track your people's progress in those areas like you do job progress you'll come to a day when you wished you did, just like the job that went bad because you weren't doing very good at tracking it. We've all done it. Though the fact is, documenting an employee's progress or lack thereof will make that "last straw" day have a better outcome. In fact, if done correctly it may produce an even better outcome. You could achieve two goals, reduce discipline problems and improve productivity. There's two goals you could achieve that are in your control. That you can control those outcomes proves human resources are part of your purview, not the IBEW's.

Now, I will also add that an IBEW Local that doesn't want to recognize that they should be working to improve the quality of the employee pool they use to fulfill their "employment agency" role deserves criti-

cism too. Working with the employers to make the "two strike rule" an effective tool is a way that helps meet the goal.

Now, I just put my JATC hat on to talk about the front end of this human resource discussion.

How many times have you, the signatory contractor, said or heard that the poor quality of journeymen in the labor pool is the JATC's fault? For me, the answer is a boatload.

Here's the best part, the "J" in JATC is YOU/YOUR NECA REPRESENTATIVE. I think you understand where I'm going.

I have pointed out many times that 90% of an apprentice's training time is spent ON THE JOB while they are your employees and therefore a human resource of YOURS. Hopefully, the light bulb just lit.

You are required to be part of producing better journeymen by both participating directly in reporting discipline problems to the JATC and seeing to it you are providing effective training in the field. Read the Apprenticeship Standards and CBA documents if you doubt me. Let me be clear on what effective training is, it's communicating with the apprentice in telling, showing, observing then evaluating and finally, sharing those evaluations with the JATC. How you get that done is up to you. The JATC's charge is clear and vital to the perpetuation of this industry. But if you're not doing your part or balk about doing your part, maybe you shouldn't be involved in the development of the journeyman pool. You're all smart people, you know what I'm saying. Participate don't bellyache.

I'm sorry for doubling up on my comments this month but not so much as to skip February. See you then.

2019 NECA NOW

It’s an odd numbered year so it must be time for a NECA NOW event!

As you probably know, this event takes the place of our Eastern Region Spring meeting every other year.

It’s a national, not regional, event featuring a wide array of educational opportunities in addition to the usual networking and social aspects of all NECA get togethers.

As business people you all know about investing in your company. The value of this investment can be born out simply by talking to your fellow NECA members who have attended. There is always someone at every Chapter Division meeting who has been to a NECA NOW event. That makes it easy to get a first hand assessment.

This year’s NECA NOW takes place at the JW Marriott Desert Ridge Resort & Spa, in Phoenix, Arizona and begins on April 1st (no April Fools joke), with a

golf outing at Wildfire Golf Club then a plenary session and the day ends with a reception and dinner at La Puesta Del Sol.

You can fill your day two and three schedule with a host of educational seminars and interactive break periods. Then again, you may want to squeeze in some pool side time, some golf or some high level networking, all potentially benefiting your business.

Day three concludes with an exciting farewell reception themed “Neon Lights & Electric Nights.”

In addition, on Thursday the 4th you are invited to a one hour closing breakfast featuring NECA Leadership Presentations.

As always, the Chapter will host a dinner for its members and guests Tuesday evening.

Please give consideration to taking advantage of this investment opportunity.

MANHOURS

Cleveland Division thru November:	3,300,294
Lake Erie Division thru November:	433,284
Northeast Ohio Division thru November:	312,817
Chapter Total:	4,046,395

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 1.) **Lake Erie Division Meeting**—January 8, 2019 –6:00 PM—Marconi’s.
- 2.) **Northeast Ohio Division Meeting**—January 9, 2019—Noon-Red Hawk Grille.
- 3.) **Cleveland Division Meeting**—January 10, 2019—5:30 PM—Capital Grille.
- 4.) **NECA NOW**—April 1-4, 2019—Phoenix, Arizona
- 5.) **SEMINAR - CASH FLOW, Managing the Lifblood of Contracting**-May 10th-7:45 AM, Doubletree Hotel, Independence, Ohio.

LOOK FOR THE NEXT REVIEW IN FERUARY 2019!!

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