1999

Dear Member:

As we enter into a new century we have to reflect back on the foundation that was put into place over the last half century. The achievements and goals before us are only extensions of the visions of our predecessors. Although the officers and membership of UAW Local 571 are excited about the technological opportunities in the upcoming 21st century we must also be suspect and vigilant of how these advancements could influence the how and where the work is done tomorrow. The Solidarity of the membership was a key factor in obtaining a fair contract this past year. Solidarity will be a key factor in maintaining our membership in the future.

JANUARY

On January 25, 1999 the MDA-UAW Local 571 and Electric Boat Corporation held a negotiation "kick-off" luncheon. Local 571 President Mel Olsson, EB President John Welch and EB Vice Presidents Mike Toner and Bob Nardone addressed those in attendance. A new negotiating process was introduced and subcommittees were formed and tasked to review issues, gather data and make recommendations for the negotiating committee to utilize during the formal process.MDA-UAW officers and CT AFL-CIO representatives provided support to the Postal Workers Union members who were doing informational picketing at the New London Post Office.

FEBRUARY

E. Roy Colville & John F. Saffomilla Scholarship applications were made available to the membership.UAW Local 571 member Dennis Popp announced his intentions to seek election as Mayor of Groton. The Company announced its intent to purchase Newport News Shipyard.President Mel Olsson, First Vice President John Worobey, Jr., Recording Secretary Pete Johnson, Treasurer Ed Nevins, Paul Garry, Beau St. Hilaire and Mark Ciliano attended the Unification Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C. Met with Congressman Sam Gejdenson, Congressman Patrick Kennedy and Senator Jack Reed to discuss issues of concern, mainly the EB purchase of Newport News. President Mel Olsson, Second Vice President Bob Canova, Scott Riccitelli and Jason Thompson attended the UAW TOP Conference in Chicago. This conference allowed for other UAW locals to gain knowledge of what we do at Electric Boat and the skills and talents we have to offer. The Company approached the union with a request to temporarily allow salary employees to assist with the checking backlog. The membership adamantly voiced their disapproval with this request. Union officers and the Electric Boat Joint Apprentice Committee met with CT state representatives to review our current apprentice program and discuss the continuing effort to have our program accredited.

MARCH

The MDA-UAW and Computer Sciences Corporation kicked off negotiations in Mystic, CT. MDA-UAW Local 571 and Computer Sciences Corporation agreed on a new three year contract with 5%, 3% 4% increases and provisions for uncapping Union employees. Negotiating subcommittees made presentations to the Joint Negotiating Committee. Members at CSC unanimously approved the proposed negotiated contract.

 APRIL

The Pentagon denied Electric Boat's planned purchase of Newport News Shipyard. On April 10th UAW Local 571 and the CT Central Labor Council held a fundraiser for Dennis Popp for Mayor of Groton. In attendance were Congressman Sam Gejdenson; John Olsen, President of the CT AFL-CIO; Wade Hyslop, CT State Representative; and John Laperle, Region 9A UAW CAP Representative. On April 28 the Worker's Memorial ceremony was held at Washington Park. UAW Local 571, the MTC and other Union representatives from the Southeastern CT area placed floral wreaths of recognition at the recently renovated memorial site.

MAY

Dennis Popp was elected Mayor of the Town of Groton. The grassroots effort by Local 571 members was a significant contribution toward the ultimate results. UAW Local 571 officers attended the Black Engineering Council Scholarship Dinner at the New London Country Club. The Eastern Seaboard Apprentice Conference was held in Connecticut this year. Apprentice Chairman Bill Giustini and company representatives provided presentations about the past, the present, and the future of our apprentice program and the work involvement at Electric Boat. The Region 9A UAW Joint Conference was held in Hartford, CT. President Mel Olsson was re-elected Chairman of Region 9A TOP Council. Local 571 logo shirts were distributed throughout the membership. Wednesdays were selected as "Solidarity Shirt Days". President Mel Olsson was re-elected Chairman of the Electric Boat Employees Community Services Committee. AFL-CIO recognition was added to the Worker's Memorial sign at Washington Park by Mayor Dennis Popp.

JUNE

Negotiations continued with the union calling in Federal Mediator Tom Carroll as an overseer even though the atmosphere was still conducive to good faith bargaining. This action would prove to be the most cohesive move during the negotiation process. Scholarship recipients were selected by our panel of judges. Winning the competition were: Rachael A. Brown, daughter of member Ernest A. Brown; Margaret B. Downie, daughter of member William N. Downie; Nicholas C. Langlois, son of member Richard C. Langlois; Morgan L. Main, daughter of member Harold Bentley; Amanda L. Servedio, daughter of member Vito R. Servedio and Alison M. Vachon, daughter of member William Vachon. Each recipient received a $2,000.00 E. Roy Colville/John F. Saffomilla Scholarship Award.

JULY

About 150 Local 571 members and their families attended "Bat Night" at Dodd Stadium in Norwich. Our popular Local 571 annual picnic was attended by almost 600 people this year. Retirees, active members and their families participated in their favorite activities at the Sunrise Resort in Moodus, CT. The Union and the Company successfully reached an agreement on a new three year contract proposal this month. On April 28, 1999 the membership voted 1218 to 271 to accept the new contract proposal with Electric Boat Corporation which included two 4% GWI increases, a 6% cash bonus payment, up front pension improvements, an additional $1.00 for $1.00 SSIP option, pre-tax benefit contributions and an optional care account, med account and vision plan.

AUGUST

A meeting as held with President Mel Olsson, Recording Secretary Pete Johnson, EB President John Welch and Maine Maritime Academy Deans Bill Eisenhardt and Verge Forbes to solidify commitments toward accreditation of our Apprentice Program.

SEPTEMBER

Grievance Representative Dave Bliven organized a "Solidarity" steak fry at the Groton Elks and those in attendance were treated to great food and entertainment. The officers attended the Region 9A UAW Leadership Conference. This was a great opportunity to discuss and share some of our concerns, issues and strategies (political and organizational) with the Region 9A leadership and other UAW local officers. The Rhode Island AFL-CIO Convention took place this month with Congressmen Patrick Kennedy and Dick Gephardt assuring President Mel Olsson that they were aware of the business and budgetary concerns of our membership and Electric Boat Corporation. The annual golf tournament was held at Cedar Ridge Golf Course. Except for a brief morning shower, the event proved once again to be a fun filled day thanks to committee members Ed Nevins, Scott Riccitelli and Joanne Basile; and volunteers Bob San Juan, Joe Harcut, Dave Bliven and Bill Larkin.

 OCTOBER

The Heart Walk at Rocky Neck Park proved to be another successful endeavor by MDA-UAW and Electric Boat Corporation participants with over $150,000.00 being raised for the Heart Association. The negotiated benefits of floating holidays and flexible workweeks was finally instituted. Financial Secretary Wayne Burgess was elected President of the Southeastern CT AFL-CIO Labor Council and Vice President of the Connecticut State Council AFL-CIO. Insurance open enrollment allowed for MDA-UAW members to utilize the care account and med account and to participate in the voluntary vision plan for the first time per the recently negotiated contract.

NOVEMBER

The MDA-UAW Executive Board and Executive Council approved expenditures to upgrade the office computer system due to the Y2K syndrome before us. Thanks, in part, to a video tape consisting of a commentary by Local 571 members Mel Olsson, Roy Colville, Paul Garry, Bob Voss, Bill Giustini and Brenda Giordano expressing their opinions on the value of affiliation with International Union UAW, the Bath Marine Draftsmen's Association membership voted to affiliate with the International UAW. Eighty-two percent of those voting chose to affiliate. The New Technology Committee continued to meet, reviewing new software and computer applications, in efforts to expand MDA-UAW member's workplace and job responsibilities. Congressman Sam Gejdenson unveiled submarine stamps at the Groton Sub Base. UAW and Company officials were involved in the programs. Two UAW Local 571 members won prizes in the annual UAW V-CAP Dollar Drive. 1st prize (27-inch color TV) was won by Dave Gervais and 4th prize (UAW garment bag) was won by Michael McGuire.

DECEMBER

At the General Membership meeting the members voted to support the Bath UAW leadership training by subsidizing their participation at UAW programs. Councillor Dee Hill was recognized by President Mel Olsson for her outstanding work as a Loaned Executive to the Southeastern CT United Way. Tickets for our annual Holiday Dinner Dance rapidly sold out again this year. The popular event was held on December 18, 1999 at the Groton Motor Inn.