

WHY WE WEAR RED ON THURSDAYS

The following was originally presented to a Cornell ILR School Public Speaking class in fall 2003 by Jim "scratchie" Leone CWA 1114, Dean Nagele CWA 1118, and Mike Garry CWA 1126

Brothers and Sisters, we are here to talk to you about SOLIDARITY. In the 1989 strike against NYNEX, our Union Brother GERRY HORGAN was struck down and killed by a scab who drove thru one of our picket lines. We have been asked why we wear **RED** on Thursday's. First and foremost it is to honor Gerry's memory and pay respect to his sacrifice to each one of us that day. Moreover, it is to show our SOLIDARITY and strength in the face of workplace challenges.

Now picture this...it's Thursday and you are a manager....You walk into the crew room, the office, or the shop floor and the first thing you see is **RED**...a sea of **RED**...a sea of loyal and UNITED union workers, ready to face the challenges of the corporate machine and its underlying or obvious disrespect of all union workers. How would you feel if you were this manager and every face you looked at shared this common goal, this unified bond.

You may think that it isn't a big deal to wear **RED** on Thursdays or that it won't make a difference; that it is just not that important. Well Brothers and Sisters, we are here today to tell you that it is a big deal. In fact it is one of the most important collective actions we can engage in as union members....SOLIDARITY.

This all started some years ago at a CWA District One Conference in NY City. The Local Presidents passed a motion to put forth a Resolution at the CWA National Convention that year. This resolution was first to honor our fallen brother Gerry, and second to show our SOLIDARITY and strength. It was resolved that every Thursday we would show the Company that we are a UNITED and strong work force. That we would neither tolerate the injustice of Gerry's death nor the disrespect the Company shows us each day...Not just at contract time...Not just when we are challenged with new or unfair policy...but every single day we come to work...especially on Thursdays.

So now I ask you again, is it important to wear **RED** on Thursday's? Is it worth setting your ego aside for the honor of joining your fellow brothers and sisters in expressing your SOLIDARITY? Is it worth expressing your appreciation, your gratitude, for those that have sacrificed their standard of living, their jobs, or in Gerry's case the highest price....their lives? ... *his life*.

We know we have strength in numbers. We know that when the chips are down we will be there for each other as we have in the past...as we will in the future. What better way to defy these bastards who would try to take away our benefits, our dignity, and our pride, then this one small gesture. A simple return favor for all that we have received.

So once again brothers and sisters, I'll ask you: Is it important to wear **RED** on Thursday's For the sake of our SOLIDARITY and our UNION'S continued longevity, it is not only important, *it is vital!* We stand together....as oneUNITED!

