

Stories by – George Comer, Jr. (2018)

Story #1

Member of Local 37 for 61 years. In the mid-90's I was a crane mechanic for C.J.L.. They were looking to buy another Lima 2400. They flew Bernie Shanahan (the master mechanic), me and 3 penny pinchers to Louisiana in C.J.L.'s plane to check one out. When we got back, my co-workers in the crane shop got on me. They asked me if I had to serve the drinks on the plane. I said I didn't mind serving the drinks, but it was the darn mini-skirt I didn't like wearing.

Story #2

I pulled up to the crane shop one day and I saw a co-worker standing in the doorway of our "Johnny on the spot". I asked him what he was doing. He said his jacket had fallen in and he was trying to get it out. I took one look and told him, that jacket wasn't any good. He said 'I know that, but my sandwich is in the pocket.'

Story #3

In 1959 work was bad in this area. I needed a job. New York City was booming, I went there and got a job running an elevator with a bucket. Local 14 sent met here. We were plastering a 26-story building by the George Washington Bridge. One day somebody threw a paper bag out of a window. It was loaded with poop. He must have had diarrhea because it splattered all over my machine, just missing me. I shut down the machine. After a while, a guy came over to me. I guess it was the boss. I told him I was not running a machine with poop on it. He had to go to the hardware store and buy more hose. Then he got a laborer to hose it down. After it was clean I went back to work. Never let anyone poop on your machine.

Story #4

Back in the 1980's Bernie and I were on the second shift running C.J.L.'s 2400 mounted on a barge. We were loading a ship with coal. We were digging blind off a deep barge with a 10 yard bucket. We had a signal man. One night the signal man was not feeling well. Bernie told him to stay in the shanty, that we did not need him. That night we set a record for tonnage loaded. It usually took 12 hours on that big of a barge. We did it in 9 hours. Sometimes a signal man just slows you down.

Story #5

When we were loading the coal ships, the wind was blowing. Coal blew back on the holding drum. The brake was either on, off, or sticking. After dealing with it for a half of a shift I found some vinegar. I poured it on the brake. It really cleaned off the brake. The next day our signal man brought in a case of gallon jugs of vinegar. We never had a problem after that.

Story #6

After I retired my family told me I needed a hobby. I thought I would try ice fishing. I gathered everything I would need and found some ice. After I cut the hole in the ice, a guy came walking up. He said he was the manager of the ice rink and I should leave and never come back. So much for ice fishing.

Story #7

I am getting a bad knee replaced early next year. I want to get it done before I die. In my afterlife I may have to shovel a lot of coal.