

USW@Work

A Publication of the United Steelworkers

A Powerful Voice for Workers

SPRING CITY LIGHTS THE WAY ⁴

STRIKE AT ASARCO ⁸

**NEW CONTRACTS AT
BFGOODRICH AND ALCOA** ^{14, 19}

WOMEN ON THE RISE ²²



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"I'M HONORED THAT HCL WORKERS CHOSE TO JOIN OUR UNION AND OUR FIGHT ON BEHALF OF ALL WORKING PEOPLE. THEY DESERVE TO HAVE THEIR VOICES HEARD. TOGETHER, WE'LL MAKE SURE THEY ARE."

INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT THOMAS M. CONWAY, SEPT 25, 2019, ON THE DECISION BY PITTSBURGH TECHNOLOGY WORKERS AT GOOGLE CONTRACTOR HCL TO JOIN THE USW

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Photo by Steve Dietz.

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Soul of a Union Man

I was glad to see Brother Gerard's "Soul of a Union Man" reprinted in the summer issue. Leo grew up understanding in his bones the challenges of working people and writes beautifully about that past.

One of Leo's legacies, the BlueGreen Alliance, can play a major role in the U.S. response to the climate crisis onslaught. I hope to see ongoing coverage of our union's work with the BGA in the coming months.

*Jana Pellusch, secretary SOAR Chapter 13-PC3
Pasadena, Texas*

Getting Involved

I was thrilled reading the last edition of *USW@Work* and seeing younger folks getting involved with the union and having mentors to guide them along the way. It's important for the next generation of workers to know labor's history and to keep fighting for what's right, as Kenneth Lewis of Newport News, Va., said in the new organizer training story.

*Xavier Collier, Local 801, Next Gen Committee
Evadale, Texas*

Support Health Care Workers

We are proud to be members of a union that puts a priority on issues of workplace safety. Health care occupations may not be the ones most people think of when we talk about unsafe work environments, but the truth is that there is an epidemic of violence in hospital jobs like ours.

The USW has been extremely active in pushing for solutions to this problem, and we are hoping that the readers of *USW@Work* will keep up this fight. We've been urging members of Congress to support the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act (H.R. 1309/S. 851).

Under this bill, OSHA would create a national standard requiring health care and social service employers to develop and implement violence-prevention plans.

We ask that all USW members contact their representatives in Congress and urge them to support this bill. You can find your representatives and their contact information at www.house.gov/representatives.

Every member of this union, and every American worker, deserves to come home each day safe and healthy. Together, we can make it happen.

*Rose Alwine, president, Local 158
Malinda Sholler, financial secretary, Local 158
Monongahela, Pa.*

Equal Pay

On Sept. 30, the federal government began requiring employers with more than 100 workers to report to the federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) how much they pay employees of different races, genders and ethnicities.

That means the EEOC will know for the first time which corporations are the worst offenders – the corporations that pay women and minorities less than they pay white men for the same jobs.

Although the information won't be available to the public, it will help the EEOC enforce federal laws barring such discrimination. It would be great if the EEOC could get equal pay, for example, for the U.S. women's national soccer team.

At a time when union membership is declining, it's good that the federal government will step in and enforce equity. The value of union membership is that equity already is enforced with labor agreements. All people who work in certain categories of jobs – whether they are men, women, white, black, Hispanic, Asian or whatever – receive the same pay and benefits because it is guaranteed in their labor union's contract with the employer.

That's part of the union advantage.

*Linda Deane, Local 900
Livermore Falls, Maine*

A March to Remember

Workers in Marietta, Ohio, will never forget Leo Gerard. As a staff representative, I was assigned the task of negotiating a first contract for 77 workers at a small plant that produced magnet material. The company refused to recognize the union, and in March 1997, the USW began a strike for recognition.

The company hired a giant law firm, Jones Day, to represent it. It was quite clear what intentions were. But the resolve of the USW and in particular, then Secretary-Treasurer Gerard, to win the struggle could not be matched by the company and its expensive lawyers.

We won that strike after 23 months with an outstanding first contract and the reinstatement of 19 striking workers who were unfairly discharged. Leo attended many of our rallies. His gutsy fearlessness was contagious to all of us.

One of our biggest rallies was attended by thousands of USW members and retirees. Leo and AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka were the main speakers. Leo was determined to march two miles through downtown Marietta to the plant gates.

As we set off with Leo leading the march, a half dozen local police officers jumped out in front. One officer yelled at Leo, "Where's your permit? You can't march without a permit." Never missing a step, Leo shouted back at him, "Right behind me." What a leader, what a union!

*Gary Cochran, retired District 1 staff
New Matamoras, Ohio*

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USW active, retired members and their families are invited to "speak out." Letters should be short and to the point. We reserve the right to edit for length.



Aneudi Manzanet
Photos by Steve Dietz

Foundry Workers Create Vintage-Style Lamp Posts

USW members mix muscle and artistry with old and new technologies at Spring City Electrical Manufacturing to create ornate cast-iron and aluminum lamp posts for major cities, small towns, college campuses and theme parks.

Intricately detailed lamp posts, luminaires and accessories made at Spring City's 19th century foundry by members of Local 132 grace the grounds of the U.S. Capitol, Universal Studios, Disney World Florida, and the streets and sidewalks of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C., among other places.

Located on South Main Street in Spring City, Pa., 30 miles northwest of Philadelphia, the company traces its history back 175 years. It occupies a complex of buildings on eight acres where a foundry was first built in 1843, nearly a generation before the Civil War began in 1861. "What we do here you

can't get done at an automated foundry," said Local Recording Secretary Jon Bowers, a computer-controlled machine operator.

Fixture parts and patterns used in production are made on computerized machinery, but much of the work of building sand molds, pouring iron or aluminum, and grinding and painting the finished products is done the way it was 100 years ago, partly because the finished products are too large for automation.

"This is all very old-school style artisan type work from molding to grinding and our machine shop," Bowers said, his voice rising to be heard above the din of foundry work and the beeping of forklifts. "It's all done very meticulously by hand. It's very intense physical labor."

Buy America important

The "Buy America" provision on steel and iron in the federal highway laws is very important to the continuing survival of Spring City because many of the streetscape projects that the company supplies are funded by state depart-

ments of transportation using federal highway funds.

Company President Alan Brink is proud that there have been no layoffs in the past 20 years.

"Three years ago, we were involved in getting legislation that requires company of origin markings on all imported lamp posts," Brink said, noting that he appreciates union work after having been a member of the United Paperworkers, now part of the USW, while working during college.

Like many foundries, Spring City is loud and gritty. Yet it seems to be a satisfying place to work where many union members are second-generation and most are proud of their craft and what they make.

Today the company employs 110-plus workers, more than 80 of whom belong to Local 132, which came to the USW through the 2017 merger with the Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics and Allied Workers Industrial Union (GMP).

Now a council within the USW, the GMP is transitioning into the USW with the goal of full integration by January



Tim Manley Jr.

2021, said GMP Council Vice President Bennett Sallemi, who has worked with the local for 17 years.

Being a union company is often helpful to marketing efforts. “If you can walk a local government official through our plant and they see the people making the product and know that those people have good wages and benefits, they almost always buy from us,” said Chris Rosfelder, vice president of sales and marketing.

Constructing sand molds

Spring City’s lamp posts are made in large sand molds assembled on the factory floor. Molds constructed during the day are filled with molten metal over the night shift to take advantage of lower electric power rates.

While most of the company’s products look like antiques, their lighting is modern and can be retrofitted onto older poles. Almost all of its new fixtures, made in house, include green LEDs, or light-emitting diodes.



Tremaine Jeffcoat

The first step in manufacturing a lamp post is to fashion a full-scale replica or pattern of the final product, exact in every way, using aluminum, wood or plastic. The company has some 6,000 patterns warehoused on the property, allowing for a wide range of designs.

New patterns and light fixture parts are made on computer numerical control (CNC) machines from computer-assisted drafting (CAD) drawings.

One of Spring City's most recognizable products is the Bishop's Crook lamp post, named for the fanciful staff that bishops carried. Decorated with a garland that wraps around the staff, it has been used in New York for more than a century. Keen-eyed Spring City workers often spot it on TV and in movies. Hanging in the company's office building is a photograph from Sept. 11, 2001, with the World Trade Center in rubble and a Bishop's Crook lamp post made from ductile iron still standing.

Making patterns in sand

The pattern is cut in half vertically on the shop floor. One half is laid flat side down on a "pattern board." A flask, or solid steel fence, is locked around the pattern and filled with green or wet sand that is tightly compacted to ensure detail survives.

The flask is then flipped and the pattern board removed. The other half of the pattern is then placed onto the first half with workers making sure the two are perfectly aligned. A second flask is placed on top of the first one. Sand is again tightly compacted around the pattern.

The two flasks are then separated and laid open-face on the floor. The pattern halves are removed, revealing an impression in the sand that has all the details of a finished product.

On the September day when *USW@Work* visited the plant, veteran foundry worker Wayne Hunter was using a pneumatic tool similar to a jackhammer to compress sand in a flask big enough for a 16-foot light pole. He

worked around the flask at a jogger's pace, stopping only briefly to acknowledge that his hard work catches up with him physically at the end of his shift.

Internal cores

Since a solid cast-iron lamp post would be too heavy to move, workers insert a core that is smaller than the pattern, leaving a void on all sides. When molten cast iron is poured into the finished mold, it takes the shape of the pattern. The core ensures hollow but uniformly thick walls.

Ahkeen Ford-Bey, a 10-year veteran molder, was finishing smaller sand-packed molds for parts and drilling holes in them to allow for drainage.



"We all can't sit at a desk," he said as he worked.

Using chemically treated sand that hardens, Alex Roseo, 22, was assembling cores, smoothing them and making sure no holes were present that would allow molten metal to escape. "It's not that difficult, but it keeps you busy," he said.

At night, iron is melted in an electric furnace, turning from red hot to white hot to molten before it is poured into the mold and allowed to slowly cool. The flasks are then separated and the core is removed.

Finishing and painting are next. Sand

left over from the mold is removed from the pole. Air-powered grinders are used to define detail and smooth the exterior of the castings.

Michael Warrick, 35, uses a plasma torch to cut away excess material including flashing at the seams and gates, where the hot metal enters the mold, before the pole moves to the next step.

"It's hard work and it's good work. It keeps me in shape," Warrick said. "I like to do a good job. I like to do quality work. It's artwork, good art."

Art in grinding

Farther down the line, Chris Hohl literally puts his back to the job. Leaning his body toward a grinding wheel with a large casting in both hands, he deftly turns the piece until it is smooth and gleaming. He tosses it into a pile of finished parts, wipes his brow, and picks up another.

"There's an art to cutting this stuff," said Hohl, 61, stopping to talk shop.

"Oh, yes, I'm very tired when I go home, but I've done this since I was 17 so I'm used to it. You can see how fast and how nice I can go through these," he said before returning to the grinder. "I've got plenty of work to do here, so I better get back to it."

The finishing department crew works to ensure the quality of the product is up to par before it is sent to the paint room and ultimately the customer, said Justin

Pfeiffer, the department's lead man.

"It is good work," Pfeiffer said. "We all work well together. Everything comes out the way it's supposed to and everyone does a good job."

The Spring City foundry has survived for 175 years by utilizing a skilled work force, changing products and going high-tech when necessary while nurturing and preserving vintage artisan skills. It's a pattern for success.

For more information on Spring City Electrical, visit www.springcity.com. Search youtube.com for factory tour videos.

"I LIKE TO DO QUALITY WORK.
IT'S ARTWORK."

- Michael Warrick



Alex Roseo



Aneudi Manzanet



Tim Manley, Jr.



Robert Manley



Michael Needling



Wayne Hunter



Albert Dever



NEARLY 2,000 WORKERS STRIKE ASARCO

After a decade of no wage increases, a coalition of nearly 2,000 union workers led by the USW struck copper producer ASARCO, a Grupo Mexico subsidiary, in mid-October over unfair labor practices.

“We cannot allow ASARCO managers – even when directed by Grupo executives in Mexico City – to pick and choose which U.S. labor laws and standards apply to them, and the company can’t expect to roll back generations of collective bargaining progress without a fight,” said District 12 Director Robert LaVenture.”

Strike votes were held on Friday, Oct. 11, after union members rejected a “last and final” offer from the company that included no wage increases for a majority of the union work force and a freeze of the existing pension plan.

LaVenture said workers who sacrificed to sustain the company during past downturns earned and deserve a fair contract with better and more secure earnings, benefits and pensions, but ASARCO proposed the exact opposite.

“Working 12-hour shifts in an open-pit mine, smelter or refinery is difficult and dangerous, and ASARCO employees have not had a wage increase in 10

years,” LaVenture said. “These workers deserve a contract that reflects their contributions.”

The last time wages rose for hourly employees was Sept. 30, 2009. In 2010, wages were frozen under a one-year extension. In 2011, wages were again frozen, benefits were cut and the pension plan was closed to new hires.

LaVenture said ASARCO’s most recent four-year contract proposal insulted union members by including no wage increase for nearly two-thirds of workers, freezing the existing pension plan, and more than doubling the out-of-pocket contributions individual workers already pay for health care.

Coalition unions

In addition to the USW, the union coalition includes Boilermakers, the International Association of Machinists, Teamsters, the United Association (UA), the International Union of Operating Engineers, and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW).

The strike involves workers at four locations in Arizona – the Mission Complex, the Silver Bell Mine, the Hayden Complex and the Ray Mine – and a refinery in Amarillo, Texas.

At issue is a master agreement covering workers from all ASARCO locations and bargaining units with local supplemental agreements for each work site.

Strike votes were held after the USW, acting on behalf of its members and the other coalition unions, provided management with a 48-hour notice of intent to terminate a contract extension that had been in place since Dec. 1, 2018. The strike began in Arizona at 11 p.m. local time Oct. 13 and at 1 a.m. Oct. 14 in Texas.

LaVenture said that the USW is willing to resume bargaining and ready to meet as long as necessary to negotiate a fair contract, and urged his management counterparts to make resolving the labor dispute an urgent priority.

“Management has tested these employees for years, and we’ve met their challenges each step along the way,” LaVenture said. “When we march together for fairness and justice at ASARCO, we are delivering a unified message that the company’s attacks on our livelihoods must end and that we are standing up for respect and dignity from this employer.”

The U.S. Supreme Court declined to review lower-court rulings requiring copper producer ASARCO, a subsidiary of Grupo Mexico, to pay millions of dollars in disputed copper price bonuses to a coalition of union workers in Arizona and Texas led by the USW.

The decision, issued on Oct. 7, means ASARCO has exhausted all of its appeals and must comply with an arbitrator's order to pay the bonuses to hundreds of employees hired after June 30, 2011.

Eight international unions representing more than 2,000 hourly workers at five ASARCO mines and processing facilities have been fighting to enforce the award since December 2014, when Arbitrator Michael Rappaport determined the company wrongly withheld

from newer employees bonuses based on copper prices.

District 12 Director Robert LaVenture said the company's attempt to divide the union membership by withholding the bonus payments backfired, uniting rather than dividing workers in the two states.

"Although ASARCO has delayed and postponed paying the millions of dollars it owes for years, we never stopped fighting to ensure justice for these workers and their families," LaVenture said. "The company's constant attempts to undermine our contracts have truly united us in solidarity."

ASARCO owes more than \$10 million in copper price payments to about 750 current and former employees. The company filed a petition for a Supreme Court ruling last May, asking the high

court to hear its case for overturning the district court ruling that was twice affirmed by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

LaVenture said the union is gratified with the Supreme Court's decision, but warned that the struggle for justice with ASARCO and Grupo Mexico will likely continue.

The union will work hard to make sure the company finally pays what it owes to eligible current and former employees, LaVenture said, promising to provide updates to workers when a payment timetable becomes available.

"Management has proven it is willing to go great lengths to avoid paying employees, but the company has finally run out of room to run from this obligation," he said.



ASARCO *exhausts* COURT APPEALS *on copper bonus*

CONTRACT TECH WORKERS AT GOOGLE CHOOSE THE USW

Tech workers at Google contractor HCL Technologies in Pittsburgh voted overwhelmingly in September to join an affiliate of the United Steelworkers that was formed to help and protect technical workers.

"I'm honored that HCL workers chose to join our union and our fight on behalf of all working people," said International President Thomas M. Conway. "They deserve to have their voices heard. Together, we'll make sure they are."

The HCL employees, who work alongside Google employees at the search engine company's office hub in Pittsburgh, voted 49 to 24 despite a company-led anti-union campaign, which included mandatory captive audience meetings and the use of a controversial anti-union consultant.

"Over the past few months, management has implied – and in some cases outright told us – that it's better to just be quiet than fight for what's right," HCL worker Johanne Rokholt said after the vote count. "Today we proved that we are not willing to do that."

Contract workers like those at HCL are part of a second-tier shadow work force at Google of tens

of thousands of temps, vendors and contractors, referred to as TVCs. They make up over half of Google's total staff and report receiving less pay and benefits than permanent Google employees.

"We deserve more respect, dignity and democracy in our relationship with our employer," said HCL worker Joshua Borden. "We fought for a seat at the table, and today we won. We look forward to bargaining a contract that reflects our important contributions."

Technical professionals

The organizing effort began earlier this year through the Pittsburgh Association of Technical Professionals, a project sponsored by the USW aimed at helping Pittsburgh and Southwestern Pennsylvania

workers in high-tech fields connect and communicate with each other about their working conditions, as well as providing support in organizing and collective bargaining.

It is believed that this is the first or one of the first times that white-collar workers sought to unionize at Google, the search engine giant. Tech workers by and large have been reluctant to organize and have a reputation of being paid well with good benefits and flexible workplaces.

HCL, founded in India in 1976, employs 143,000 workers in 44 countries and boasts annual revenues of \$8.9 billion. It resorted to anti-union tactics during the Pittsburgh campaign, hiring Eric Vanetti of Vantage Point Alliance, self-described experts in union avoidance. The firm gained notoriety in defeating a union campaign at Fuyao Glass in Moraine, Ohio, that was documented in the film "American Factory."

"We have vast experience after negotiating fair contracts for many thousands of members who work for multinational corporations," Conway said in a statement criticizing HCL's anti-union stance. "But in its drive to avoid bargaining in good

faith with its employees in America, HCL, like Fuyao, is resorting to the same tactics employers have used for 100 years."

Conway said captive audience meetings – like those HCL coerced employees into

attending – typically begin with managers talking about how they prefer solving conflicts "within the family" and without a union to advocate on the workers' behalf. Generally, the company's behavior evolves into bullying individuals or groups of workers if support for the union persists.

"We are a modern, international union with strategic partnerships around the world and members in every sector of the economy, including a variety of professional workers, from pharmacy technicians to university professors," Conway said. "We are proud of the respectful and productive relationships the USW has established with employers and various industry groups through almost 80 years."



From Left to Right: Stefan Sidelnick, Andrea Savatt, Johanne Rokholt, Joshua Borden, Ben Gwin, Mary Zuzack, Renata Nelson, Isabel Mills

CARNEGIE LIBRARY WORKERS IN PITTSBURGH JOIN USW

Cheers, hugs and applause greeted the announcement that 321 full- and part-time librarians and related staff at the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh overwhelmingly voted in August to become new members of the USW.

Librarians, library assistants, clerks and IT professionals who work for the library at 19 branches and a support center launched their organizing campaign last June and can now begin the process of bargaining a first contract.

"We are honored to welcome these vital community builders into our growing union," International President Thomas M. Conway said. "This is a big step toward making the library more fair and equitable for the workers that keep it thriving."

The Carnegie Libraries in Pittsburgh, founded in 1895, were the first of 2,500 libraries across the country funded by industrialist and union-buster Andrew Carnegie.

The vote count, conducted at the library's main branch on Aug. 14, was 173 for the union and 106 against. Some 321 employees were eligible to vote. A small number of ballots were challenged.

Library's third union

The USW is the third union to represent Carnegie Library workers in Western Pennsylvania. The Teamsters represent drivers and the Service Employees union represents environmental service workers.

The United Library Workers of the Carnegie Library of Pittsburgh began the campaign with hopes of gaining a voice on issues that affect the library, the communities they serve and their own working conditions. Organizers expressed a desire for a more inclusive and democratic work environment and a say in decisions about pay, benefits, hiring and promotions.

The new unit joins a growing number of white-collar Steelworkers. About 340 adjunct faculty members at Pittsburgh's Point Park University were bargaining a second contract with the school, and the union also represents about 430 adjuncts at Robert Morris University, about 15 miles northwest of Pittsburgh.

NEW VOTE ORDERED FOR PITT GRAD STUDENT WORKERS

Graduate students at the University of Pittsburgh are ramping up their campaign to become part of the USW after a state labor official ordered a new election for the group due to the university's unfair labor practices that affected their first vote in April.

A Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board (PLRB) officer ruled in September that the university violated the students' rights in its effort to affect the outcome of the graduate students' vote in April to join the Academic Workers Association of the USW. Pitt appealed the ruling on Oct. 8.

In his decision, Hearing Examiner Stephen Helmerich said Pitt committed "coercive acts" to convince graduates to vote against the union, and those acts "potentially affected a large enough pool of eligible voters for the effect on the election to be manifest due to the extreme narrowness of the result."

The ruling stated that Pitt's anti-union actions included intimidation and misinformation, including creating the impression through emails that it was keeping specific track of who voted.

"Sadly, the university has done everything it could since day one to stand in the way of its own graduate students having a voice, including engaging in unlawful conduct," said International President Thomas M. Conway said.

"This time around, Pitt must allow these workers to exercise their rights under the law and allow the democratic process to proceed without obstruction," he said.

Pitt grad employees filed for a union election in December 2017, seeking a voice in decisions that affect their working conditions, as well as greater transparency and increased protections against discrimination and harassment.

The April 2019 election followed an

extensive anti-union campaign by the university, which included paying hundreds of thousands of dollars to Ballard Spahr, a Philadelphia-based law firm that specializes in "union avoidance." The final tally showed 675 workers voting for the union and 712 no votes.

"Graduate students have known for a long time that we needed to join together in a union," said Olivia Enders, a graduate student employee in the Department of Instruction and Learning in Pitt's School of Education. "The recent unexpected increase in the already steep health care costs for our families is just one more example of our need for a collective voice."

If successful, the new unit would include about 2,000 teaching assistants, teaching fellows, graduate assistants and graduate student researchers.

The grad students' campaign is just one part of the USW's effort to organize higher education workers.

Faculty blasts chancellor

In January, Pitt's faculty also filed for a union election, citing the university administration's failure to focus resources on the school's core mission of teaching and research. The university has also waged a legal battle to resist that unionization effort.

This summer, members of the Pitt faculty condemned university

Chancellor Patrick Gallagher's refusal to fully comply with a PLRB subpoena requesting information regarding the list of faculty eligible to be in a potential bargaining unit that the Pitt administration provided to the PLRB earlier this year.

"Given the depths to which Chancellor Gallagher has already sunk in order to thwart our efforts to form a union on campus, it's unsurprising that the administration is pursuing this course of action," said William Scott, an associate professor in the English department. "It's clear that he knows a majority of faculty members want a union and is willing to do anything to keep us from voting."



From Left to Right: Geneveive Newman, Rahul Amruthapuri, George Borg, Kim Garrett, Donald Joseph



SETTLEMENT AT POINT PARK

Adjunct instructors at Pittsburgh's Point Park University reached a tentative agreement on a new contract in September.

The three-year contract includes wage increases each semester through spring 2022, along with other contractual improvements. This is the second contract for the Point Park adjuncts, following a three-year agreement reached in June 2016.

The new contract settlement came after several high-profile public events in support of the instructors, including the distribution of educational leaflets to students and family members when they arrived on campus on Aug. 19.

"The faculty owes a debt of gratitude to the wonderful students and families of Point Park, as well as the full-time faculty for their unwavering support," said Damon Di Cicco, president of Local 1088 and an adjunct faculty member.

Adjunct faculty members teach roughly half of the classes at the university. The full-time faculty is also unionized, represented by the Communications Workers of America (CWA).

"This contract represents a victory for the faculty, but more importantly for quality education," said Local 1088 Vice President Sharon Brady.



Elise Bryant



Members Mobilize

FOR CIVIL, HUMAN RIGHTS



Int'l Vice President Fred Redmond

Elise Bryant, president of the Coalition of Union Women, kicked off the 2019 USW Civil and Human Rights Conference in Minneapolis by leading 500 attendees in song. Their collective refrain – “Ain’t No Stopping Us Now, Forward as One” – set the tone for the rest of the meeting.

District 11 Director Emil Ramirez then spoke to the audience on the importance of educating and mobilizing members to fight for the soul of our country together.

“We are a better nation than what we are witnessing today,” he said.

The conference featured dozens of inspirational leaders and speakers including Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, Robin Williams of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), British Columbia’s Minister of Labour Harry Bains, and Valerie Castile, mother of Philando Castile, who was shot and killed by a Minnesota policeman in 2016.

After her son’s tragic slaying, Castile moved to keep her son’s legacy alive by starting the Philando Castile Relief Foundation. “It would have been so easy for me to withdraw,” she told a panel discussion. “But I love my son and I love my community. I had to do something.”



Photos by Steve Dietz



Mayson Fulk



Sabrina Liu



Int'l President Thomas M. Conway



Doug Ward

Lively, moving plenaries were punctuated by workshops that focused on immigrants' rights, Islamophobia, LGBTQ+ equality, the Black Lives Matter movement, and more.

Health care worker Marketa A. Anderson, a Local 9439 member in Minnesota, attended a class on workplace violence, which has increased by 30 percent since 2012 and accounted for 18,400 injuries and 458 fatalities in 2017 alone, according to the National Safety Council.

To Anderson and others, much of the problem stems from understaffing and lack of training. Management, of course, has different ideas.

"We're told it's just part of the job," said Anderson, a home health aide.

Thomas "Tas" Starks of Local 560 in Gwinner, N.D., a first-time attendee, found value in the workshops, especially the seminar on Islamophobia.

"We are working on building solidarity with some of our Muslim brothers and sisters ... I gained a lot of insight," said Starks, a shear operator at Bobcat Co., the maker of compact loaders and excavators.

Starks is passionate about civil rights and was emboldened by the atmosphere and education. "I learned a lot, but mostly it affirmed much of what I already knew, making me feel less crazy, which encourages me to get out more and organize more," he said.

A large group of revved-up activists marched to the Minneapolis City Hall in support of comprehensive reform of the broken U.S. immigration system, and legislation to prevent wage theft.

"Everywhere we go we want to make it perfectly clear that the United Steelworkers stand in solidarity with our brothers and sisters at the southern border and we will not be quiet until justice prevails," International Vice President Fred Redmond said to a storm of cheers and chants.

International President Thomas M. Conway also addressed the border crisis, calling on the labor movement to stand with immigrants and their families as ICE raids terrorize communities.

"We've got to be a part of that

resistance," he said. "We are a nation of immigrants."

In a video address, retired International President Leo W. Gerard reiterated the union's responsibility to call out the crisis and fight to make it right.

"There's a violation of human and civil rights staring us right in the face," he said. "The best thing we can do is mobilize our membership and educate our membership and tell them this isn't the kind of union we are.

"This union stands for justice for everybody. Everyone is welcome into our union as they should be in our society."



International Vice President at Large Roxanne Brown, the International Executive Board's first black woman, spoke to the conference about unity and the bigger picture her appointment paints.

"It's not about me," she said. "It's an opportunity for all of us to lead this union. It's about what I represent for the present and future of this union. It's about what you represent."

The union took another leap forward by introducing attending members of the LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee. The committee is working to advise the USW on how to improve working conditions for the LGBTQ+ community.

Mayson Fulk, a production worker at Leggett and Platt Automotive in London, Ontario, has been active in the labor movement since he joined the Steelworkers in Canada after leaving the United States, where harassment-free employment was becoming impossible for him.

Fulk eventually came out as trans and now serves as the District 6 trans liaison.

"I've been able to educate other people, and the union has been able to educate me as well," Fulk said in a video showcased at the conference. "It's an exciting position because I get to help people."

Fulk, a member of Local 2699-09, was instrumental in creating a handbook for Canadian members on how to deal with gender transitioning in the workplace. With other committee members, he also conducted two workshops that focused on the anniversary of the Stonewall riots in New York, anti-discrimination contract language and tips on how to be allies to the community.

"I am so proud of the amazing welcome that our first-ever LGBTQ+ Advisory Committee received," Fulk said. "I can't wait to see what we will accomplish before our next civil rights conference."

"This committee symbolizes the expansion and diversity of our union," Redmond said. "We must move forward and help uplift our most vulnerable, and that includes the LGBTQ+ community. The movement will only grow stronger by being inclusive to all and reaching out to traditionally underrepresented activists."

Redmond closed the conference by honoring the legendary William "Bill" Lucy, a prominent labor leader who was vital in organizing the 1968 Memphis sanitation strike. The strike caught the attention of Dr. Martin Luther King, who was shot and killed in the Tennessee city while supporting workers.

Redmond also reminded the attendees of the earnestness required in the many fights the movement must take on moving forward.

"We're living in a time that Dr. King referred to as 'the fierce urgency of now,'" said Redmond.

"We need to vigorously, and with a vicious sense of completion, make sure that we take action now. We need to move outside of our comfort zone so we as a union and as a movement can make real change."



E.J. Jenkins

Guillermo Perez



MEMBERS RATIFY CONTRACT AT BFGOODRICH

Members voted by a wide margin in August to ratify a new three-year contract with BFGoodrich that covers about 2,500 workers at facilities in Tuscaloosa, Ala., and Fort Wayne, Ind.

The new collective bargaining agreement includes annual wage increases and bonuses, maintains quality, affordable health care coverage, and strengthens retirement benefits.

“The hard-working members at these locations, along with tire workers across the industry, have faced a number of challenges in recent years, first and foremost the threats of foreign competition and unfair trade,” International President Thomas M. Conway said.

“They should be proud that they were able to reach an agreement that maintains family-supporting jobs while ensuring the long-term com-

petitiveness of their facilities.”

The USW’s previous three-year agreement with BFGoodrich expired on July 27. The two sides began talks for a new contract this spring. The new agreement runs through July 30, 2022.

Solidarity key

Kevin Johnsen, the new chairman of the USW’s Rubber/Plastic Industry Council, said the agreement was a testament to the strength and solidarity of the union’s membership.

“It was only by standing up with one voice and confronting these challenges together that we could reach a fair and equitable agreement,” Johnsen said.

Overall, the USW represents more than 18,000 workers in the tire industry at companies including BFGoodrich, Goodyear, Bridgestone-Firestone, Titan, Cooper, Sumitomo and Uniroyal.

The USW represents more than 7,000 workers at Goodyear plants in Topeka, Kan.; Fayetteville, N.C.; Danville, Va.; Gadsden, Ala.; and Akron, Ohio.

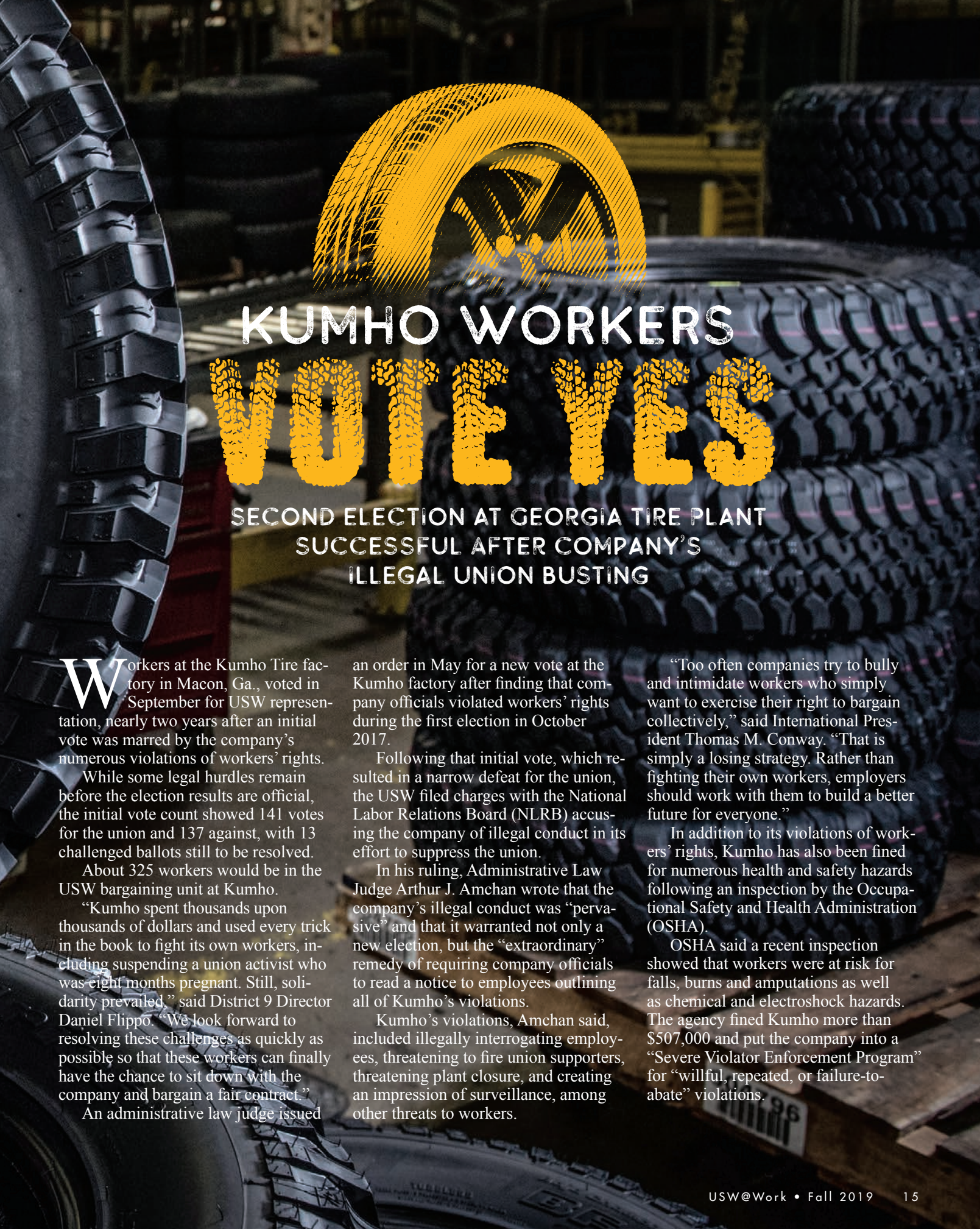
Although the USW’s contract with Goodyear runs through July 2022, the company is implementing a restructuring plan that has already resulted in layoffs and changes to work schedules at the Danville and Gadsden plants.

In September, the Akron, Ohio-based company began

offering voluntary buyouts to some workers at the Gadsden plant. Eligible employees were required to submit applications for buyouts by Nov. 1, Goodyear said.

Goodyear also announced earlier in the summer that it would invest \$180 million to expand capacity at the Fayetteville, N.C., facility to increase production of larger-rim passenger tires and to “modernize and improve operations and efficiency.”

RESTRUCTURING AT GOODYEAR IN DANVILLE AND GADSDEN



KUMHO WORKERS VOTE YES

SECOND ELECTION AT GEORGIA TIRE PLANT SUCCESSFUL AFTER COMPANY'S ILLEGAL UNION BUSTING

Workers at the Kumho Tire factory in Macon, Ga., voted in September for USW representation, nearly two years after an initial vote was marred by the company's numerous violations of workers' rights.

While some legal hurdles remain before the election results are official, the initial vote count showed 141 votes for the union and 137 against, with 13 challenged ballots still to be resolved.

About 325 workers would be in the USW bargaining unit at Kumho.

"Kumho spent thousands upon thousands of dollars and used every trick in the book to fight its own workers, including suspending a union activist who was eight months pregnant. Still, solidarity prevailed," said District 9 Director Daniel Flippo. "We look forward to resolving these challenges as quickly as possible so that these workers can finally have the chance to sit down with the company and bargain a fair contract."

An administrative law judge issued

an order in May for a new vote at the Kumho factory after finding that company officials violated workers' rights during the first election in October 2017.

Following that initial vote, which resulted in a narrow defeat for the union, the USW filed charges with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) accusing the company of illegal conduct in its effort to suppress the union.

In his ruling, Administrative Law Judge Arthur J. Amchan wrote that the company's illegal conduct was "pervasive" and that it warranted not only a new election, but the "extraordinary" remedy of requiring company officials to read a notice to employees outlining all of Kumho's violations.

Kumho's violations, Amchan said, included illegally interrogating employees, threatening to fire union supporters, threatening plant closure, and creating an impression of surveillance, among other threats to workers.

"Too often companies try to bully and intimidate workers who simply want to exercise their right to bargain collectively," said International President Thomas M. Conway. "That is simply a losing strategy. Rather than fighting their own workers, employers should work with them to build a better future for everyone."

In addition to its violations of workers' rights, Kumho has also been fined for numerous health and safety hazards following an inspection by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

OSHA said a recent inspection showed that workers were at risk for falls, burns and amputations as well as chemical and electroshock hazards. The agency fined Kumho more than \$507,000 and put the company into a "Severe Violator Enforcement Program" for "willful, repeated, or failure-to-abate" violations.

BUILDING UNION SOLIDARITY AT THE RACE TRACK



There's nothing like the sights and sounds of squealing tires and racing engines to build union solidarity.

A Saturday at the drag races is one of the events Local 1066 in Gary, Ind., used this year to get its members and their families to meet outside of work and build the unity and solidarity that can make a good union powerful.

"This is great. This is really great," retiree Bill Burt said on Sept. 14 as he took his beaming granddaughter for her first ride on a regulation drag strip in northwest Indiana.

The idea for regular away-from-work events came after Local 1066 attracted a huge crowd to its union hall for a strike

authorization vote in the run up to last year's contentious contract bargaining with U.S. Steel Corp.

"I've never seen our hall so full or everyone so united as when we took that strike authorization vote," said Local 1066 President Mark Lash. "A fight and hard times bring our members together."

Lash and the local's Executive Board decided, "we're not letting this go away," he said. "We're going to do everything in our power to keep people energized and working together."

That led to a series of weekend events including a summer day at a local water park, a barbecue and bean bag tour-

nament, a chili cook-off, an afternoon watching the Chicago Bears and an annual Christmas carnival.

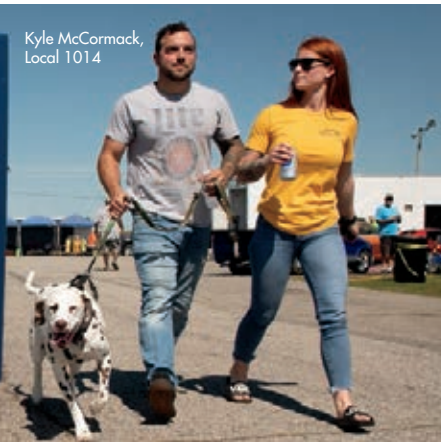
Amazing feedback

"We started holding these events to promote solidarity. Let's work together, let's be what the union is meant to be," said T.J. Piccirilli, the event coordinator. "We've had such amazing feedback."

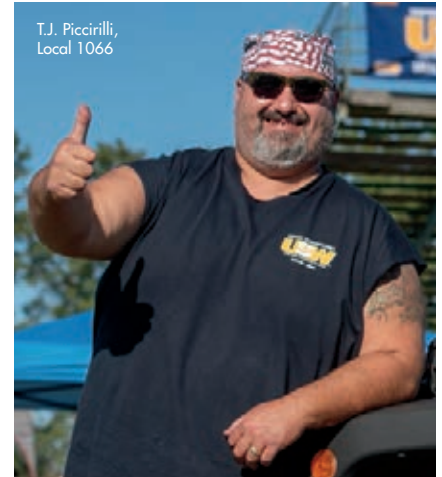
Many of the local's members enjoy cars, so the events committee set up a drag race day in September. Racing and a car show, plus food and activities for



Kyle McCormack,
Local 1014



T.J. Piccirilli,
Local 1066



Dan Hessling and David Nathan Hoyt,
son of Dave Hoyt, Local 1066



Dave Swisher,
Local 1066



Sharnell Smith,
Local 1066

Photos by Steve Dietz

We're family

the kids, attracted some 300 members and family to a local track sanctioned by the International Hot Rod Association. The event also attracted hundreds of other enthusiasts from Volkswagen clubs to drag racers who run on corn ethanol.

What are the benefits? "Getting to know each other outside of work, getting to know each other's wives, husbands and kids – things that really make you want to stick together with that person you're working with," Lash said.

"In the plant, all I know is someone is a crane man. Out here I see a father. I see a mother, the children. I see aunts and uncles. Out here we're a family," said local Financial Secretary Duane "Vern" Joyner.

Sitting in a lawn chair in front of his muscle car, Local 1010 retiree Ken Adair said he came to the track for the solidarity. "I was a member for 35 years," he said. "There are a lot of things in life that you have to go through; sometimes you have to do it by yourself. But you're

never alone when you're with the USW, with the solidarity of the union."

Maybe, just maybe, Local 1066 started something that will last.

"In 20 years from now, hopefully, it will be our kids planning this same union event," Joyner said. "Tying the community into what we do, it's a win-win for all of us."

Visit <http://usw.to/usw1066> to see a USW video on the drag race day.

USW URGES CONGRESS TO PASS PRO ACT

*Restore Rights
for American
Workers*

A photograph of Victoria Whipple, a woman with dark hair, wearing a dark t-shirt with the USW logo. She is standing in front of a white railing, with the Georgia State Capitol building visible in the background. The image is overlaid with a white outline of her figure.

Victoria Whipple

Victoria Whipple supported the United Steelworkers during an organizing campaign at Kumho Tire in Macon, Ga., and it landed her a two-week unpaid suspension.

It was the worst possible time. Whipple was eight months pregnant, and she'd been putting in overtime to make extra money before the baby's birth. She and her husband, Tavaris Taylor, have seven other kids ranging in age from 10 to 1.

None of that mattered to Kumho, which suspended Whipple on Sept. 6, the day workers wrapped up an election in which they voted 141 to 137 to join the USW. Thirteen challenged ballots were unresolved at press time.

The retaliation against Whipple shows why workers need unions, especially at Kumho, which waged a bitter fight against the USW's organizing campaign. It also shows the need for the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act, which the USW is urging Congress to pass.

The PRO Act (H.R. 2474, S. 1306) would fine employers up to \$50,000 for retaliating against workers during organizing campaigns. It would require the National Labor Relations Board to go to court to seek reinstatement of workers who are fired or face serious financial harm because of retaliation, and it would give workers the right to file lawsuits and seek damages on their own.

Comprehensive legislation

International President Thomas M. Conway called the PRO Act the most comprehensive labor bill undertaken by Congress in many years. The bill received its final markup by the Committee on Education and Labor Sept. 25.

"Despite being more productive than ever, American workers are further behind than they have been in generations," Conway said. "CEOs with the help of corporate lobbyists have been trying to hobble unions for decades with right-to-work and other anti-worker laws. Yet organizing remains the only viable means to rebuild a strong American middle class and ensure workers receive an honest day's pay for an honest day's work."

For decades, corporations have been exploiting weaknesses and loopholes in labor law. The PRO Act, which so far has the support of 208 Democrats in

the House and 39 Democrats and one Independent in the Senate, would help to level the playing field for workers.

"The PRO Act will help restore the balance of power between employers and their workers and hopefully begin to address the epidemic problem of income inequality," Conway said.

Conway urged representatives of all political parties to co-sponsor the PRO Act and rally their peers in support, especially if they plan to seek union votes, volunteers or endorsements.

"Steelworkers across the country will know which of their elected public servants voted to support their union, good jobs, access to quality, affordable health care and retirement with security and dignity," he said. "As always, we will educate and encourage our members to let their representatives know where they stand as constituents throughout the process."

No real penalties now

Although retaliating against workers for union organizing is a violation of federal labor law, employers don't face any real penalties right now. So they feel free to suspend, fire or harass anybody they want.

The PRO Act would prohibit employers from holding mandatory anti-union presentations like the "town hall" meetings Kumho forced Whipple and her co-workers to attend before a union election.

And if an organizing campaign fails because of an employer's illegal interference, as happened with the USW's 2017 effort to organize workers at Kumho, the employer would have to bargain with the union anyway.

The bill also would provide protections once workers voted for representation. If, for example, a company dragged its feet during bargaining for a first contract, a regular ploy to lower worker morale, mediation and arbitration could be used to speed the process along. And the PRO Act would prohibit employers from hiring permanent replacements for striking workers.

After decades of steadily eroding labor rights, employers now hold most of the cards. That's wrong. The PRO Act would help workers stand up to the corporations that are using every dirty trick in the book to hold them down.



USW MEMBERS RATIFY NEW ALCOA CONTRACT

PACT COVERS 1,600 AT FIVE U.S. LOCATIONS

USW members at Alcoa overwhelmingly ratified a four-year master agreement that improves wages and maintains quality health care coverage for about 1,600 production and maintenance workers at five U.S. facilities.

The contract, which runs through May 15, 2023, is the first since Alcoa split into two companies in November 2016. Alcoa retained smelting and refining operations and spun off downstream products into a new company, Arconic.

“This is a challenging time for these workers, with unfair trade and declining prices taking their toll on the U.S. aluminum industry,” said International President Thomas M. Conway. “Thanks to their strength and solidarity, they were able to achieve a fair agreement, one that makes sure they can continue to care for their families and also positions the company for future success.”

Bargaining went beyond the expiration of the previous contract in May. Workers voted to authorize the USW bargaining committee to call a strike if necessary, but stayed on the job while talks continued under the terms and conditions of the expired previous agreement.

“Our members have earned and deserve fair wages, benefits and working conditions,” said District 7 Director Mike Millsap, who chaired the union’s bargaining committee. He said the gains, both economic and non-economic, were hard fought.

“These hard-working union members contribute a tremendous amount to the company’s success, and they stood up and demanded a contract that recognized those contributions,” Millsap said. “This agreement is a victory for the workers and for the company.”

The ratification was announced on Sept. 19 after voting that week. The contract covers Local 104 at Alcoa’s Warrick, Ind., facility; Local 420-A at Massena, N.Y.; Local 5073 at Gum Springs, Ark.; Local 4370 at Point Comfort, Texas; and Local 310A in Wenatchee, Wash.

Conway said the union went to the bargaining table months earlier to negotiate in good faith for a contract, but “management made us fight for it every step of the way.”

Talks were particularly challenging because they were the first since the old Alcoa was split in two. Adding to the difficulties were declining aluminum prices, signs of slowness in the economy and manufacturing, and the company’s unjustifiable insistence that it get its way on certain items.

The bargaining committee praised the support, strength and solidarity of the membership as instrumental in getting the agreement. Also important to the settlement were membership actions and demonstrations, including building volunteer communication action teams (CAT) to distribute information to rank-and-file members and take back ideas and input to the committee.

General wages increase by 3 percent this year, 3.25 percent in 2020, and 3 percent in 2021 and 2022. The settlement includes a \$1,750 ratification bonus and a lump sum bonus of \$600 in lieu of retroactively applying the 2019 increase because of payroll system limitations.

Pension plans

There were no changes in pension plans covering current employees. The company demanded that pension plans be closed to employees hired after ratification, a change that the union resisted for months.

Rather than risk a potentially long and divisive strike over the defined benefit plan for new hires, the bargaining committee made the difficult decision to bargain the best possible defined contribution plan for new hires.

Alcoa began bargaining by demanding substantial increases in employee health care contributions, but the solidarity and actions of the membership forced the company to back down. There were no increases in deductibles, out-of-pocket maximums or coinsurance. Premiums remain at the current levels until 2022 with small weekly contributions of \$2 to \$4 in the final two years.

As previously reported, USW members at Arconic voted in July to ratify a three-year agreement covering more than 3,000 members at four U.S. facilities: Local 309 in Alcoa, Tenn.; Local 105 in Davenport, Iowa; and 420A in Massena, Iowa.

In both instances, negotiations ended in a completely different tone than when they began last spring when the companies demanded excessive and unnecessary concessions.

The Arconic contract included annual wage increases. It maintained or improved existing benefits, such as supplemental unemployment, health insurance and retirement provisions for current active employees. The contract also included a ratification bonus of \$1,750.

The 40 million people who visit the “Sin City” each year may not know it, but when they make their way along the famous Las Vegas Strip, they’re surrounded by thousands of square feet of glass made by USW members.

About 220 members of Local 9465 at the Pilkington Glass plant in Laurinburg, N.C., produce massive panes of architectural glass, much of which becomes part of skyscrapers and other high-rise buildings around the globe, including iconic Las Vegas hotels.

“We ship glass all over the world,” said Local 9465 President Brandon Pighet, who has worked for more than 18 years at the factory, which dates to 1973 and is located just a few miles from the South Carolina border.

Pighet and his co-workers have been USW members since 2001. Before the workers formed a union, the company got by with a work force made up largely of temporary employees. The workers’ membership in the USW prompted management to promote many to full-time status and led to more competitive wages and improved working conditions.

“A lot of good things came out of that,” Pighet said.

One of the many good things to come out of unionization was an increased focus on health and safety, said Elizabeth Jones, who like Pighet has worked at the plant since 2001.

“We’ve come a long way,” said Jones, who noted that she spends about half of her work time focusing on improving health and safety at the factory.

Equal partners

The union has worked hard since 2001, Jones said, to ensure that the shop floor is as clean as possible, that members have all the necessary person-

al protective equipment (PPE), and that the union is an equal partner with the company in incident investigation and safety-related planning.

“We are very safety-driven,” Pighet said. “You can never do too much.”

For workers like Robert Cooper and Bradley Lewis, who use machines to cut, pack and ship heavy loads of sharp, potentially dangerous glass every day, health and safety will always be a priority. Many workers at the Laurinburg facility must wear clothing made of Kevlar for protection.

employ to produce glass is much the same as it has been for centuries.

Production begins with the raw materials sand, sodium and calcium, which are melted together at a temperature of more than 1,000 degrees. The molten mixture is then poured onto large tin baths as it gradually cools. As it cools, the glass is then rolled to a specific thickness, then cut and inspected.

Working around the clock

Local 9465 members work in shifts at the 24/7 operation to produce about 300,000 tons of architectural glass per year.

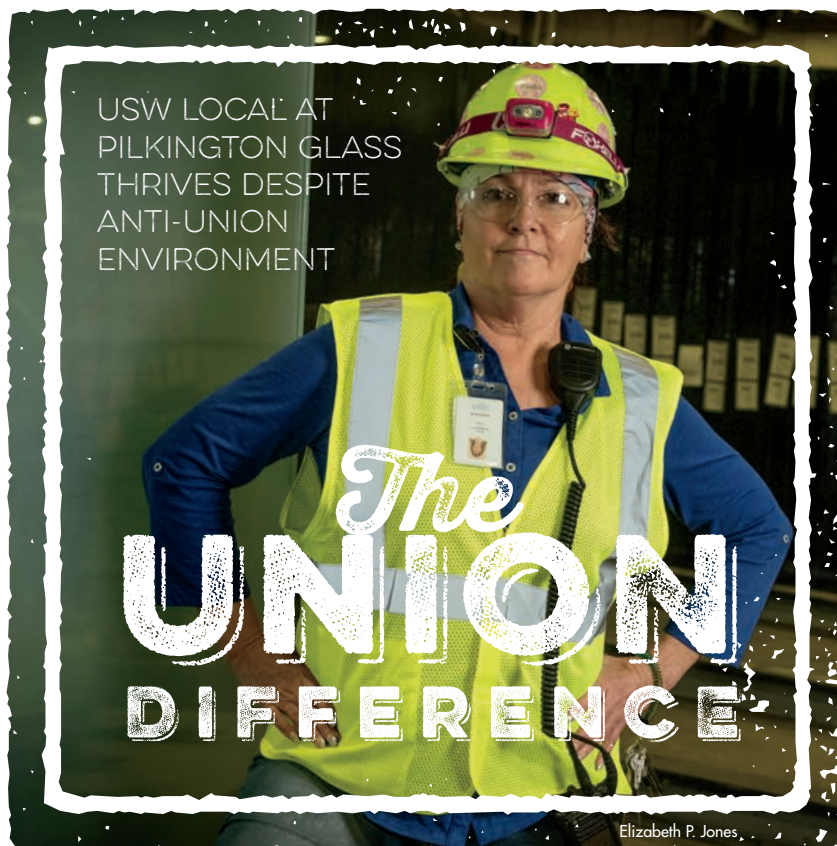
Pilkington’s products range from 3 millimeters to 19 millimeters thick, with various coatings, including two-way mirror finishes and tints of various colors to meet customers’ specific needs. Some of the glass that Pilkington produces even has the ability to block signals from cellular phones and other devices. That glass is used in buildings that require high levels of security.

The company boasts a customer-satisfaction rate of nearly 99 percent, in part thanks to the diligent work of Local 9465 members like Jamie Jones and

Darrel Steen, who use massive, ceiling-mounted cranes to move the glass onto trucks so it can be shipped far and wide without cracking or breaking.

That focus on customer satisfaction has helped the factory to continue running and the company to thrive, even during the depths of the Great Recession when new construction in the United States hit historic lows.

The local union has also helped to maintain continuity, Jones said, by regularly planning family and community events, ensuring that co-workers get to know each other outside of the bustle



“You can never be too safe,” Cooper said.

In addition to the inherent dangers of working with a sharp, fragile material, workers employ chemicals and other potentially hazardous materials as part of the factory’s regular operations, Jones said.

Making the kind of glass that workers produce at the 1.3-million-square-foot Laurinburg plant also requires the use of heavy machines. While the work is largely a “hands-off” process, the basic “float” method that the workers

of the plant. That's been especially important for a local that spans two states and draws members from across six counties.

"We have a diverse work force," Pighet said. "But everyone's core values and principles are very much the same."

That consistency and togetherness at Pilkington has been good for the USW, as one of the only local unions in a region of largely unorganized workplaces.

Union advantage

Dealing with a prevailing anti-union sentiment in the Carolina region can present challenges, but it also provides a silver lining. New employees who have held jobs elsewhere quickly recognize the advantages the union provides compared to nonunion jobs, said Pighet.

"Our members do a fantastic job of taking new members under their wing," he said. "Most people can see the difference right away."

That stark difference makes it easier to get new hires to sign union cards and get them involved in the local union, which can be difficult in anti-union environments like North Carolina, said Jones, who has served as Local 9465 vice president since 2012.

"Knowledge is power," Jones said. "Without the union, the company can do whatever they want to do."

Having a work force with a large number of younger workers also makes internal organizing an important priority for the local, Pighet said.

"There's not a huge amount of union density in the area," he said. "Some people only know what they hear on TV."

District 9 Director Daniel Flippo said the active, hands-on approach that Local 9465 uses to build the union can be a model for other locals, especially those in the southern United States that have to organize in the face of right-to-work (for less) laws.

"The key to building our union is to be active and to communicate – both to members and nonmembers – the difference that the union makes in the lives of workers, families and communities," Flippo said. "When we can do those things effectively, we win. Staff Representative Kenn Nettles, Brandon, Elizabeth and the entire local demonstrate this every day."



Robert Cooper



James G. Jones



Brandon Pighet



Shaqueta Graham



Bradley Lewis and Robert Cooper

WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION ON THE RISE

IN THE USW

This summer brought sweeping changes to the USW International Executive Board when the retirement of International President Leo W. Gerard and other officers opened doors to the largest group of women to have ever held leadership positions in the union.

This is all happening at a moment of great growth for the Women of Steel (WOS) Leadership Course, which is witnessing increased participation across the districts. To Ann Flener-Gitlen, who heads the Women of Steel program, this is no accident.

"Women across the country and across the globe have been stepping up in greater numbers recently, and that includes women in unions," she said. "They're becoming empowered and taking ownership of their lives."

A fresh slate of leaders, led by new International President Thomas M. Conway, has stepped up to succeed Gerard, International Vice President at Large Carol Landry, Secretary-Treasurer Stan Johnson and Vice President Jon Geenen.

As the union's first black woman to serve as an International Officer, Vice President at Large Roxanne Brown acknowledges the significance of her appointment and touched on what it signals during her appearance at the USW Civil and Human Rights Conference.

"It's not about me," Brown said. "It's an opportunity for all of us to lead this union."

The union has also seen shifts in

its political and legislative arenas with Anna Fendley named director of regulatory and state policy, and Kim Miller appointed as assistant to the president. She will advise the officers at International Headquarters about policy issues with Amber Miller (no relation) assuming her former post as director of the Rapid Response program.

"The laws and policies enacted at both the national and state level have a huge impact on nearly all of the diverse sectors where our members work," said Brown, who previously served as legislative director. "Our union is lucky to have this new team leading these fights."

Gerard, before stepping down, noted the importance of this expansion for women in leadership, and applauded the union's commitment to diversity.

"We represent more different kinds of workers in more and more sectors, and our board is changing to reflect that growth," said Gerard. "The USW is committed to bringing forward the next generation of labor leaders and to provide the tools, training and opportunity they will need to succeed."

The next generation doesn't begin or end at the union's headquarters. Many of the women who are leaders today began their journey at the local level, like Amber Miller, who got her Steelworker start at Chase Brass and Copper Co. in Montpelier, Ohio. There, she served in a variety of leadership roles, including local union president.

For Amber Miller, leadership is in the

family. When she took office, she actually closed out the minute book her mother started as recording secretary. She approached the role with vigor and purpose right off the bat, helping send the local's first group of activists to the district's WOS leadership course. Among those women were her mother, proud member of Local 7248 and current Rapid Response Coordinator Jill Stough.

Photos by Steve Dietz and Chelsey Engel

Color photo: Jen Radwanski Fischler and her daughter Sarah. Below, left to right: Assistant to the President Kim Miller, Int'l Vice President at Large Roxanne Brown, Director of Rapid Response Amber Miller, Int'l Vice President Leann Foster, Associate Legislative Director Anna Fendley, Assistant to District 1 Director Teresa Hartley, Assistant to District 11 Director Cathy Drummond



Paying it forward

Teresa Hartley, the recently appointed assistant to District 1 Director Donnie Blatt, attended all five years of the WOS program in the same district and loves to pay the experience forward.

“This union gave me a voice,” Hartley said. “I have been afforded the opportunity to work closely with the sisters, brothers and siblings in our district, and to provide the same opportunities and education to them that I have had for myself.”

Earlier this year, in District 11, avid Woman of Steel Cathy Drummond was named assistant to Director Emil Ramirez.

Drummond, who has served as the district’s WOS coordinator since 2011, has been working hard to build the program and is planning to roll out a Level 2 module early next year.

“Our district’s program has really grown with the number of women who have stepped up,” Drummond said. “And I’d say at least 75 percent of the participants this past August were women new to their facilities and new to the union.”

The ability to join a union and collectively bargain is more important than ever for women, who still get paid, on average, 73 cents on the male dollar. Unions help narrow that gap, and their leaders help by fighting for policies that promote gender equity along with workers’ rights.

“Women’s rights are workers’ rights, and workers’ rights are women’s rights,” said International Vice President Leann Foster. “The Steelworkers understand that and will continue the fight to make sure everyone else does, too.”

FANNIE SELLINS: FIRST WOMAN OF STEEL

USW HONORS ORGANIZER SHOT AND BEATEN TO DEATH 100 YEARS AGO

On August 1919, union organizer Fannie Sellins was walking a picket line with striking workers at the Allegheny Coal and Coke Co. outside of Pittsburgh. When she saw guards brutally beating a picketing miner, she rushed to his aid. Deputies opened fire, hitting Sellins four times, and beat her until they crushed her skull.

Both Sellins and Joe Strzelecki, the miner she tried to help, died that day. Although there were dozens of witnesses to the crimes, none of the deputies involved was ever convicted.

“Fannie Sellins gave her life in the attempt to put an end to the suffering of miners and their families, to lead them out of wage slavery,” International Vice President Leeann Foster told a crowd attending a memorial event in Sellins’ honor at the Local 1196 union hall in Brackenridge, Pa., not far from the site where she and Strzelecki were murdered.

Local 1196, in conjunction with other USW members, the Battle of Homestead Foundation, local historical societies and other activists, held a daylong series of events on Aug. 26, the centennial of Sellins’ death.

The day included a ceremony at the site of the killings, a luncheon featuring tributes to Sellins, and finally a twilight memorial at the cemetery where the labor martyr was laid to rest.

“Fannie Sellins was a proud union woman. She fought for a better life for herself, her family, her sisters and brothers, all workers and union members,” said Foster, who oversees the union’s Women of Steel program.

Inspiration to all

Although Sellins’ death came more than two decades before the founding of the USW, her activism and dedication to the cause of labor helped lead to the founding of the USW, and continues to serve as an inspiration for Steelworkers everywhere.

Through her activism, Sellins built a close personal relationship with Philip Murray, then president of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) District 5, who went on to serve as president of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee and as the first president of the USW.

Murray hired Sellins to help him organize mine workers and to help them support steel workers in their own fight to form a union.

Sellins was “the heart of the local labor movement,” said William Z. Foster, national director of the 1919 campaign to organize the steel industry. Foster helped lead the 1919 steel strike, which began only weeks after the murders of Sellins and Strzelecki.

Keli Vereb, a member of Local 2227-01 outside of Pittsburgh, who served as a longtime Women of Steel coordinator in District 10, worked with organizers to help plan the centennial events. She said that until she got involved, she wasn’t fully aware of Sellins’ impact on the USW and the labor movement as a whole.

“I was very moved by the whole event. It was overwhelming,” Vereb said. “I’m still surprised at how many of us don’t know the story of Fannie Sellins. We should all know what she did.”

Organized garment workers

After losing her husband at a young age with four children to support, Sellins went to work in a St. Louis garment factory. There, she organized her co-workers into the International Ladies’ Garment Workers’ Union. Her success caught the attention of the UMWA, which hired her in 1913.

“Fannie Sellins was a trailblazer in every sense of the word,” said District 10 Director Bobby “Mac” McAuliffe. “She helped build the foundation for our movement.”

Sellins became a national heroine to struggling American workers when she was arrested in 1916 for defying an anti-picketing law.

“I am free and have a right to talk or walk any place in this country as long as I obey the law,” Sellins said at the time. “I have done nothing wrong.”

Labor activists waged a national campaign for her release, printing thousands of postcards with a photo of Sellins in her prison cell and asking workers to mail them to President Woodrow Wilson, who eventually pardoned her.

Sellins’ willingness to stand up to injustice is a powerful lesson for Americans even 100 years later, said Women of Steel Director Ann Flener-Gittlen.

“History shows us the many sacrifices others made so we can have a better life,” Flener-Gittlen said. “We owe her and others like her our dedication to keep the union movement strong.”

Courageous public speaker

Vereb noted how courageous Sellins was for speaking out so publicly in the early 20th century, before women even had the right to vote, adding that it was fitting that precisely one year after her death, on Aug. 26, 1920, American women gained voting rights with the adoption of the 19th Amendment.

“Talk about a strong woman,” said Vereb. “Imagine what she went through. She did so much for women, so much for workers.”

Today, a stone sits at the very spot where Sellins was killed, though the site is now part of an elderly couple’s yard in a residential community. The family that owns the land recently granted Local 1196 permission to excavate the stone so members can preserve and display it for future generations of Steelworkers.

“I think people will appreciate what that symbolizes,” said Local 1196 President Todd Barbiaux.

Maintaining her legacy

Maintaining Sellins’ legacy and continuing to share her story is important, especially at a time when the political environment for union members and immigrant workers so closely mirrors the one Sellins and her fellow organizers faced 100 years ago, Foster said.

Anti-immigrant and anti-union rhetoric was as rampant in 1919 as it is today. Employment rosters at mines and factories in those days included large numbers of immigrant workers, and union organizers faced an intense backlash from corporate and political foes, as well as the company-controlled media.

“In thinking about the future of our important work to build and defend working people and build our movement, we can look at Fannie Sellins and take our cues from her fights,” Foster said. “Fannie’s leadership and bravery in the face of overwhelming corporate power and abuse inspires us to follow in her footsteps.”

There’s no better way to remember Sellins than to continue those fights, said USW Civil and Human Rights Director Amanda Green-Hawkins.

“We honor the legacy of Fannie Sellins when we continue to work and fight for justice and equality every single day of our lives,” Green-Hawkins said.

Barbiaux said the Local 1196 family takes special pride in preserving Sellins’ memory and legacy.

“What she lived for and what she died for, that’s what led to all of this,” former Local 1196 President Walt Hill said as he gestured to a crowd of USW members inside the union hall. “None of this would have happened without her courage.”



Sally Feistel

Photo by
Steve Dietz

USW MEMBERS TACKLE HEALTH AND SAFETY

When a fire and series of explosions rocked a Philadelphia oil refinery this summer, the training and expertise of Local 10-1 members helped them avert a tragedy that could have killed thousands of people.

For their efforts, USW members honored the 650-member Local 10-1 at September's Health, Safety and Environment Conference, presenting them with the prestigious Falkowski/Seguin Award for environmental protection.

"The work that you're doing is crucial to the union," International President Thomas M. Conway said in opening the five-day conference, which was attended by 1,623 union members and management guests.

In addition to wages and benefits, improving workplace safety has been a goal of the USW since its founding in 1942. Conway noted that Pittsburgh at the beginning of the 20th century lost more than 500 workers every year in the steel, coal and railroad industries. Thousands more were injured.

"In many ways, the work that you do this week grows out of that history," he said, adding that the work of making facilities safe goes hand-in-hand with organizing and growing the union.

"The foundation of our union is the safety and health work that we do," Conway said. "We're not going to leave that work undone."

Significant damage

While the June 21 incident caused significant damage to the Philadelphia refinery, the quick work of USW members prevented the fire from spreading and protected the refinery's supply of hydrogen fluoride, a highly toxic acid. Unfortunately, management later announced it would shut down the refinery.

The award was one of a dozen made to local unions and individuals that highlighted activism and heroism, as well as the union's deep commitment to making workplaces safer.

The conference is one of the union's largest regular gatherings of rank-and-file members, second only to the triennial constitutional convention. It attracted safety activists from hundreds of USW locals, along with members of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and management representatives.

Bobby "Mac" McAuliffe, director of Pennsylvania's District 10, welcomed the delegates by reminding them that the knowledge they gained belongs to every USW member.

"Take what you learn back to your locals," McAuliffe said. "You learn more sometimes after the workshops are over by talking to each other."

There were 284 workshops covering 125 topics and 37 breakout meetings, some in Spanish. Subjects included long and irregular working hours, shift work and fatigue,



Photo by Steve Dietz

accident investigations, active shooters, safety committees, occupational health and stress, aging work forces and the opioid crisis.

Good information

The workshops proved to be a valuable source of information and discussion. That was especially true for first-time attendees like Local 7687 members Erik Gundy and Wes Moomaw, who work for BAE Systems in York, Pa.

"We learn so much more together," Gundy said, pointing to a pad filled with pages of notes from workshops. "There is something that you can draw out of every session."

Moomaw, a welder at BAE Systems, said meeting members from across the continent and sharing stories about health and safety issues made him understand the importance of solidarity.

"The union is so much bigger than just your local," he said.

International Vice President Leeann Foster led a popular panel discussion on successes in safety and health. Panelists were Local 1329 President Keith Frazier, Local 51 President Darren Kirby, Local 738 Steward/Safety Steering Committee



Violence at work

Another panel focused on on-the-job violence against health care workers, an issue the USW has been pushing Congress to address.

International Vice President Fred Redmond, who oversees the USW's 50,000-member health care sector, said health care workers are three times as likely as others to be victims of violence at work. He asked members to urge their congressional representatives to vote for the Workplace Violence Prevention for Health Care and Social Service Workers Act (H.R. 1309/S. 851), which would require employers to implement violence-prevention plans.

"The health care industry needs to get this message," he said.

The most somber moment of the event came as the delegates paid tribute to 46 co-workers who lost their lives since the last safety conference in March 2018.

The audience stood in silence as the names of fallen workers slowly scrolled past on video screens. The memorial included a moving poem and rendition of "Amazing Grace."

Coming to a consensus on health and safety issues is a good foundation on which union members and bosses can build a collaborative relationship that extends to other issues, Conway said.

Immediate response

When a worker dies or suffers a catastrophic injury, it doesn't matter whether that worker was union or non-union, management or contractor, said ERT Coordinator Al McDougall, whose team responds immediately when a USW workplace suffers such an event. McDougall encouraged locals to contact the ERT as soon as they experience a tragic incident using the **24-hour ERT hotline: (866) 526-3480.**

Secretary-Treasurer John Shinn has seen firsthand why preventing life-altering tragedies must be the

union's top priority, recalling witnessing his best friend lose his life while working in a glass plant.

"When you experience that, you never forget about it," Shinn said. "That's why we are so dedicated to what we do."

Collaboration necessary

Redmond said he was glad to see management at the conference because coming up with solutions to safety issues is easier when management takes a proactive role. He cited as an example the 40-year battle the USW waged to implement stricter federal standards for workplace beryllium exposure.

Companies opposed a new standard for decades. Then the USW partnered with Materion Brush, one of the world's largest producers of beryllium, and change became a reality. New standards began taking effect in 2017.

"Collaboration isn't easy, but it is absolutely necessary," Redmond said.

Cindy Wiegenstein of Local 646 at Packaging Corp. of America in Valdosta, Ga., knows how important those labor-management safety partnerships can be. She attended with a member of her company's management team.

"We need to instill in everyone the importance of safety," Wiegenstein said, noting that many locals are experiencing large numbers of baby-boom generation retirements and need to ensure new workers are committed to safety and health.

Ultimately, the most successful workplace health and safety programs involve every member, International Vice President David McCall told the delegates.

"We are our co-workers' and our brothers' and our sisters' keepers," McCall said. "This is work that can never stop."

member Alexis Clemmons and William Holden, director of health, safety and industrial hygiene at Bridgestone.

Topics included training for green or new and inexperienced members; the Right to Act, a pro-active approach to identify unsafe work; the increasing effectiveness of labor-management safety and health committees; and labor-management areas of collaboration.

A panel discussion on climate change reminded attendees that health, safety and environmental issues extend far beyond USW workplaces. The discussion included USW members, scientists and environmentalists, all of whom agreed that workers must be an integral part of the discussion on climate policy.

Brandi Sanders, a refinery worker and member of Local 13-1 in Texas, said that the USW and its allies must focus not just on combatting the effects of climate change but also on making sure that the transition to a green economy includes good-paying union jobs.

"That's why we need you in this fight," said Health, Safety and Environment Director Mike Wright, the discussion moderator.

BANKRUPT REFINERY PAYS \$4.6 MILLION TO EXECUTIVES

Less than three months after an early-morning fire damaged a Philadelphia oil refinery and resulted in layoffs of hundreds of USW members, those workers learned that the facility's owner, Philadelphia Energy Solutions (PES), paid \$4.6 million in bonuses to eight top executives just before filing for bankruptcy.

Since then, the company agreed, through a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Local 10-1, to set up a \$2.8 million "transition fund" to help the 640 union workers who were laid off at the end of August. If distributed equally, the transition fund would amount to only about \$5,000 for each laid-off worker. About 83 workers were kept on the PES payroll as "caretakers."

The U.S. Bankruptcy Court in Delaware approved the MOU with the union in September.

Then, in October, the bankrupt company sought to pay out an additional \$400,000 to managers, but this time it wanted to keep the amounts and recipients of the bonuses a secret. The USW filed an objection to this motion. A hearing was scheduled for Nov. 1.

Local 10-1 President Ryan O'Callaghan said

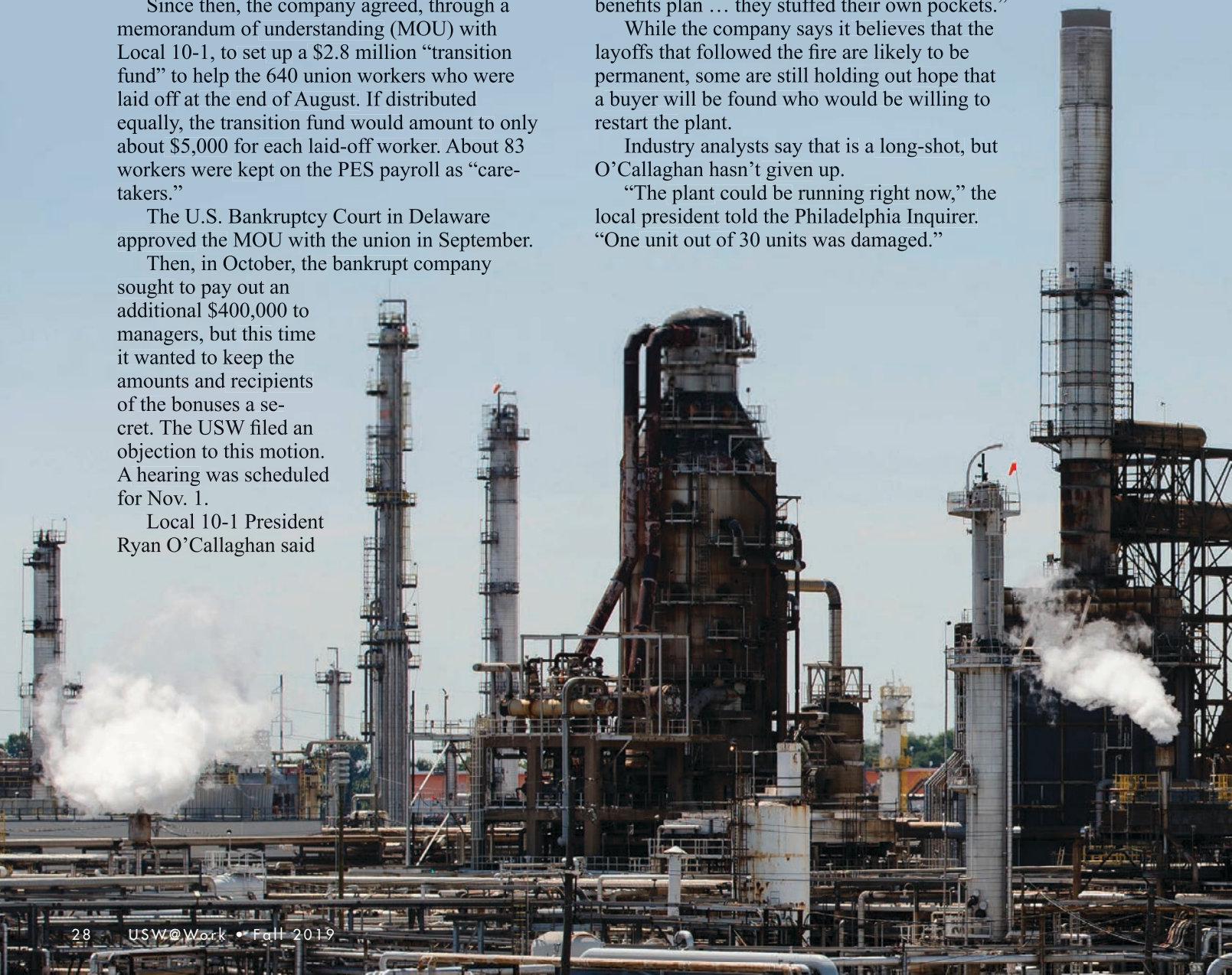
that when the local was at the table for effects bargaining with PES, the company continuously said it was "broke."

"Obviously they are only broke after they stuff their pockets," he said. "While they're telling everybody else they're poor, bankrupt, had nothing for severance and canceled the medical benefits plan ... they stuffed their own pockets."

While the company says it believes that the layoffs that followed the fire are likely to be permanent, some are still holding out hope that a buyer will be found who would be willing to restart the plant.

Industry analysts say that is a long-shot, but O'Callaghan hasn't given up.

"The plant could be running right now," the local president told the Philadelphia Inquirer. "One unit out of 30 units was damaged."



MIKE SMITH

NAMED

NOBP CHAIR

KIM NIBARGER RETIRES



International President Thomas M. Conway appointed Mike Smith, a USW health and safety activist and former refinery unit operator, to lead the USW's more than 30,000-member National Oil Bargaining Program (NOBP).

In taking over as chair of the NOBP, Smith succeeded Kim Nibarger, also a health and safety advocate and refinery operator, who retired in September after leading oil industry bargaining since 2016.

"We are grateful for all of Kim's ardent activism and commitment to safety throughout his career and wish him all the best," Conway said in announcing the appointment. "We know our oil workers will be in good hands, and we look forward to all of what Mike will bring to the union's work in the sector."

Through the NOBP, the union negotiates industry pattern wage agreements that govern wages and benefits at oil refineries and chemical plants around the United States where USW members work.

Smith worked as an operator in the hydro-processing unit at the Chevron Refinery in Richmond, Calif., where he was a member of Local 5, an amalgamated local whose members also work for Tesoro, Shell and other refineries.

He came to Pittsburgh during preparation for national oil bargaining, worked with Nibarger through the fall and was at the bargaining table with Nibarger and Conway.

"Mike has a solid oil background, with experience in both health and safety and bargaining, and he is committed to continuing the success we have enjoyed in the oil sector," Nibarger said. "He has a deep understanding of the refinery operations, experience bargaining locally and at the national table, as well as a strong health and safety background."

Like Nibarger, Smith was dedicated to worker safety and served in multiple roles with the local's health and safety committee. In 2012, he began working with Local 5 full time as a rep, assigned to the Chevron group to assist with grievances, bargaining and political work.

Smith was also a labor representative on the CAL/OSHA Advisory Committee before coming to Pittsburgh in the summer of 2018 to work with Nibarger and participate in national bargaining.



Kim Nibarger

USW Cares

2019 JEFFERSON AWARD WINNERS

Stacey Goodman, a USW member from District 1 who lost her daughter to drug addiction last year, is the 2019 champion of the USW Cares Jefferson Awards for her efforts to help others.

For her relevant work in taking on the opioid epidemic after her daughter, Jordan Bladel, became a victim of it, Goodman is the 2019 USW Champion Volunteer.

"She was my fighter," Goodman said of her daughter, who was 24

and a mother of two young children when she died. "She would fight for anybody that she loved, and I am going to continue to fight for her and everybody else."

Since 2015, the USW has partnered with the Jefferson Awards Foundation, recently renamed Multiplying Good, to celebrate Steelworkers who do amazing works of community service, and to show the world that Steelworkers have big hearts.

The USW is proud to have gener-

ous and compassionate members who foster a culture of giving back in our union. Don't forget to nominate members who are active in their communities for the USW Jefferson Awards and encourage your brothers and sisters to do the same.

Goodman was chosen as this year's USW champion from a select group of volunteer winners from every district, SOAR and the USW staff. The champion award went to the volunteer with the highest overall score.

SOAR

ELEANOR GATTAFFONI-ROBINSON, DISTRICT 3

Gattafoni-Robinson organizes the annual Terry Fox Run; fundraises for Relay for Life; is heavily involved with her church's service and philanthropy; cooks and serves food for junior hockey teams and fans at Cominco Arena; provides service and support to struggling community members at Trail Association for Community Living; is serving her fourth consecutive term as a city councilor, and does so much more. She is truly devoted to building her community. Friends say her impact is priceless.



USW STAFF

KAREN SHIPLEY, DISTRICT 8

Shipley raised tens of thousands of dollars for West Virginia flood relief and \$5,000 for 4-H. She volunteers at soup kitchens, donates to women's shelters, and delivers "blessing bags" to the homeless and backpacks to children. She is active in her church and is always doing something to help people in need.



DISTRICT 1

STACEY GOODMAN, LOCAL 700T

Goodman lost her daughter in 2018 to opioid addiction and decided to help other families with addicted loved ones. She got involved with FACT, Families and Addicts Coming Together.

Through FACT, Stacey conducts mock overdose trainings and raises money for addiction services. She works with her local union and district to encourage employers to treat addiction as a health and safety issue at work.



DISTRICT 2

DONNA DAMS, LOCAL 2-21

Through involvement in her local's Women of Steel committee, Dams has volunteered more than 100 hours, helped raise thousands of dollars and collected hundreds of donations for a variety of community service efforts. They include a back-to-school backpack drive and a pancake breakfast for fellow workers who were ill or going through cancer treatment. Dams also made over 100 blankets by hand and collected pajamas to donate to local nursing homes and a veterans hospital.



DISTRICT 3

BRIAN ARNOLD, RETIRED FROM LOCAL 7619

Over the nearly 30 years he worked in a mine and over the course of his lifetime, even after he retired, Arnold has devoted his life on a daily basis to the sincerest service and care of everyone around him. He visits hospitals to check on friends and co-workers. He volunteers as a pastor to those who are sick or otherwise afflicted, and he has participated in countless community events and fundraisers for worthy causes.



DISTRICT 4

BUFFALO BLACK LABOR WEEK COMMITTEE

Started in District 7 by 2017 Jefferson Awards winner Ephrin Jenkins, Black Labor Week is a program dedicated to educating, empowering and uplifting Buffalo, N.Y.

The Buffalo Black Labor Week committee plans and executes the annual program. USW members teach labor history and social justice courses in schools, cook breakfast for veterans, host panel discussions, and lead community service projects.





**DISTRICT 5
GILLES BORDELEAU, RETIRED FROM LOCAL 6887**

Bordeleau remains active in his local as a member of its retirement committee. He meets with workers and their families to explain the defined benefit pension plan and other benefits.

Bordeleau is founder of a breakfast program for the children of St-Octave school of Montréal-East. He organizes the collection of Christmas baskets for disadvantaged people in Montréal-East and Pointe-aux-Trembles, and he created a soccer league for people with trisomy, a genetic disorder.



**DISTRICT 7
JERRY COPPINGER, LOCAL 6103**

Coppinger and his wife have adopted five children out of foster care. In an effort to thank the organization that helped them build their wonderful family, they fund a “party” for the community that raises donations to pay for Christmas gifts for children in foster care. The party is known as the Forever Family Festival.



**DISTRICT 9
BILL POWERS, LOCAL 90**

As an active member of Local 90, Powers has led his local to participate in projects that better their community. He has helped raise more than \$300,000 in member donations for United Way of Greater Knoxville over the past several years. He took the lead on two Habitat for Humanity homes and has personally donated more than \$10,000 to the United Way. He is also a longtime volunteer at the Cerebral Palsy Center.



**DISTRICT 11
LOCAL UNION 444 WOMEN OF STEEL COMMITTEE**

Because of their hard work over the last few years, the Women of Steel in Local 444 are recognized in their community for helping disadvantaged children, veterans and people in need.

Local 444 WOS is involved in an Easter egg hunt for children with special needs, a bake sale and raffle to purchase adult bikes for a sober-living house, a backpack drive for foster kids and veterans, a collection for a union sister injured on the job, a fundraiser for Quilting for Warriors, and many more causes.



**DISTRICT 13
LOCALS 1226 & 13-725 WOMEN OF STEEL COMMITTEES**

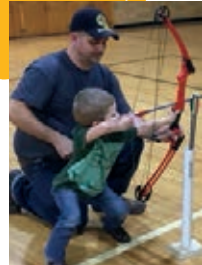
The two committees collaborated to plan and execute fundraising projects to benefit two different groups of community members: the Great Adventure Camping Trip Group (GACT) and the Rosepine Nursing Facility.

The WOS sisters raised \$1,100 for GACT, which provides a no-cost weekend camping trip to single parents and their kids, and convinced their employer to match that contribution. Members from both locals help with activities for campers and talk to young adults about millwork and unionism. For the Christmas holiday, they collected personal items for a nursing home and volunteered at a party where they distributed gifts and spent time with residents.



**DISTRICT 6
ALEX PATTERSON, LOCAL 6500**

Patterson is on the Health Sciences North Foundation Board in Sudbury, Ontario. He dedicates much of his spare time and energy to the board, which funds a variety of projects for the hospital ranging from raising money for equipment to donating to other causes that serve hospital patients. Most recently, the board has raised funds to purchase two badly needed MRI machines.



**DISTRICT 8
DAVE RIFFLE, LOCAL 477**

Riffle supports the youth of Upshur County in West Virginia as a middle school archery coach, 4-H camp leader and fundraiser for the Buckhannon Upshur High School band.

Although he has a wife and three children and works overtime often, he finds the time to be a strong youth leader in his community, even if that means using more than two weeks of his vacation time to do it.



**DISTRICT 10
JUSTIN CALDERONE, LOCAL 2227**

On top of working full time and helping the union grievance committee, Calderone runs the Calderone Caring Foundation, which he started in memory of his son who died at age 2.

The Calderone Caring Foundation aims to help families with children who encounter health problems by offering paid hospital parking, food vouchers, gift bags and date nights for parents who are staying at the hospital. The foundation also assists families with medical supplies that are not covered by insurance.



**DISTRICT 12
XOCHITL COBARRUVIAS, LOCAL 675**

Cobarruvias has tirelessly helped the communities of Carson and South Los Angeles, Calif., by collecting money, food, and school supplies for those in need.

She started a popular monthly food bank that has delivered more than 10,000 bags of groceries to the needy. Because of her, 2,000 families were able to have a Thanksgiving meal and 500 children received backpacks with school supplies last year. She raised over \$7,500 for families involved in area sports programs to buy uniforms and cover fees.





COMMERCE INVESTIGATES UNCOATED PAPER ROLL IMPORTS

The U.S. Commerce Department has agreed to investigate imports of uncoated paper to determine if Australia, Brazil, China and Indonesia are circumventing existing duties meant to protect American jobs.

The investigations will determine if imports of coated paper in roll form, which are converted into sheets after entering the United States, are circumventing existing duty orders initiated in 2016 to counteract illegal subsidies and dumping at below fair prices.

The request for the inquiry was made by the USW and a group of paper companies – Domtar, Packaging Corp. of America, the North Pacific Paper Co., and Finch Paper.

“Too many foreign companies and governments seek to avoid playing by the rules and will do whatever they can to undermine our producers and steal our jobs,” International President Thomas M. Conway said.

“The USW has fought for decades to see that our laws provide a level playing field for our members but, despite promises of a new approach to trade, workers continue to have to fight for their own jobs and for enforcement of our trade laws,” he added. “Handling circum-

vention promptly is an important part of effective enforcement.”

In 2016, acting on a trade case brought by the USW and four domestic producers, the United States levied antidumping and countervailing duties against pre-cut uncoated office and copy paper from Australia, Brazil, China, Indonesia and Portugal.

The duties targeted free sheets of uncoated paper in standard letter sizes, the kind of white paper used in offices equipped with copiers and printers. The International Trade Commission (ITC) found that all of the countries named in the 2016 complaint sold certain uncoated paper at less than fair value and that imports were subsidized by the governments of China and Indonesia.

Impact devastating

International Vice President Leann Foster, who oversees the USW’s paper sector, said the dumping of paper rolls is having the same devastating impact on domestic producers and workers as do imports of cut sheet paper.

“The domestic paper sector has been under attack for more than 20 years as foreign producers seek to take advantage of our market, putting our members’ jobs

in jeopardy. Thousands of jobs have been lost to foreign unfair trade practices,” Foster said.

“Our trade laws are supposed to defend American workers and industries by addressing foreign unfair and predatory trade practices,” Foster added. “We need our government to stand up for domestic jobs and stop the assaults on our workers.”

While overall demand for uncoated paper has been declining over the long term because of the shift toward email and other electronic communications, that problem was accelerated by a rush of aggressively priced imports.

Making office paper is highly capital intensive. Paper machines are massive – as big as a football field – and expensive. They are made to run continuously and can’t be turned on and off easily without significant costs and risk of damage. For most companies, it’s critical that the machines keep running.

When imports increase, companies are forced to make less efficient or less profitable uses of equipment by switching to different products or by taking unscheduled down time for lack of orders.

Domtar, like other paper companies, has made adjustments to its product mix and work force. In October, Domtar announced the permanent shutdown of two paper machines, one in Ashdown, Ark., and the other in Port Huron, Mich.

Company President and CEO John Williams blamed the shutdowns on increased imports and declining demand. About 100 union jobs and 204,000 short tons of uncoated freesheet capacity will be eliminated.

Ashdown will continue to operate one paper machine with an annual production capacity of 200,000 short tons and employ 725 people. It also operates one of the world’s largest fluff pulp machines used in the production of diapers, feminine hygiene and adult incontinence products. Fluff production will increase.

Earlier this year, Georgia-Pacific announced it was leaving the office paper business entirely and laying off about 700 people, including 650 USW members, at its paper mill in Port Hudson, La., near Baton Rouge. A portion of the mill dedicated to producing toilet tissue and paper towels remains open with about 300 employees.

Court Sides with USW on School Bus Case

One of the nation's largest school bus operators unlawfully changed wages and benefits of USW-represented workers when it took over bus operations from a school district in Saginaw, Mich., a divided federal appeals court ruled.

In a 2-1 ruling on Sept. 3, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit agreed with a National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruling and found that First Student Inc. was obligated to bargain with the USW as a "perfectly clear" successor of the school district.

Until 2012, when it hired First Student, the school district directly employed more than 50 school bus drivers and bus assistants, or monitors, represented by Local 8410 to provide student transportation.

During the process of subcontracting bus services in 2011, the Saginaw County Board of Education asked potential contractors to partner with the district and commit to transitioning existing employees at the same rate of pay with comparable fringe benefits.

Before being awarded the contract, a First Student representative said the company typically hires 80 percent to 90 percent

of employees from the prior employer. First Student also said it would recognize the union if it hired 51 percent or more of the applicable employees if they met the company's hiring criteria, which was virtually identical to district requirements that the employees had met. The company repeatedly said it was union friendly and would maintain wages.

After the \$9.5 million contract with the school board was signed, First Student met with the district's bus employees and announced there would be unilateral changes in employment terms, including the introduction of two-tier pay rates for driving and non-driving work.

The company ultimately hired all but a few district employees out of a unit of 50 to 55 employees, and refused to bargain with the union over the new terms and conditions.

The legal wrangling may continue. The company may petition the full Court of Appeals to hear the case, or petition the Supreme Court to hear it. Otherwise, the case would move to a compliance stage at the NLRB, where the agency will consider how to remedy the company's unlawful and unilateral changes.

From Left to Right: Larry Shoop, JD Wilson, Jose Loya, Vince Harris, Travis Lohmann, Deanna Hughes, Kevin Key, Rick Fritschka, Chris Smith, Chris Youngmark, Scott Casey, Will Attig, John Dugger, International President Thomas M. Conway, Cary Eldridge, Jim Norris, Maurice Cobb, James Mason, Jeff Wright, Josh Keirse, Cole Mason, Nellie Caraballo



Veterans of Steel Hold Inaugural Meeting

Several dozen USW members who served in the armed forces and who share the goal of improving the lives of their fellow veterans came together for the union's first Veterans of Steel Council meeting in October.

The veterans' council, established at the union's most recent constitutional convention, brought a wealth of experience and ideas to the discussion, which included topics such as ideal contract language for veterans' issues, increasing funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs, placing qualified veterans in good union jobs and publishing a resource guide for vets who are union members, among other topics.

Will Attig, executive director of the AFL-CIO's Union Veterans Council, spent the day with the USW group and helped it

strategize for the future.

International President Thomas M. Conway, who served as a sergeant in the U.S. Air Force before he began his union career, welcomed the delegates to Pittsburgh for the meeting and reminded them that the Veterans of Steel program was intended to grow from the local level, rather than being a top-down project.

Conway urged the council members to reach out and connect with other veterans as much as possible "both inside and outside" of the USW.

Veterans who are interested in participating in the program should visit usw.org/vetsofsteel to sign up and receive a free Veterans of Steel sticker. Members can also text VET to 47486.

NEWS BRIEFS

Former Head of USW Atomic Sector Dies

James Kermit “Kip” Phillips, Jr., a former international vice president of the USW, OCAW and PACE, died on Sept. 12 at Marshall County Hospital in Benton, Ky. He was 77.

Phillips headed the USW’s atomic sector for many years and retired in 2014. He worked his way up through the union ranks after beginning his career in 1969 at Air Products and Chemicals, Inc.

“Kip was an amazing mentor and friend,” said retired International Vice President Carol Landry, who led the USW’s nuclear sector after Phillips retired.

A member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) Local 3-727, Phillips served as recording secretary, operating vice president and president. He was a member of the Kentucky State AFL-CIO executive board, a vice president and president of OCAW District 3 council. He also served on the OCAW International Members Committee.

In 1989, the OCAW membership elected him to its International Executive Board. In 1994, he was elected International Vice President. After OCAW merged with the United Paperworkers to form PACE in 1999, Phillips was international vice president/director of governmental affairs. When PACE merged with the United Steelworkers in 2005, he became international vice president in charge of the nuclear sector.



Next Generation Conference Set

The first-ever International Next Generation Conference will be held on Nov. 18 to 22 in Pittsburgh at The Westin Pittsburgh hotel.

The conference is intended to educate and inspire young workers to be union activists. The four-day event will include group sessions, workshops, an entire day dedicated to community service, and more.

Local unions are encouraged to send members who are 35 or younger, or new to the union with a lot to learn. Everyone, young members or union veterans, is welcome.

Newly involved members can learn union basics. More experienced activists will have the opportunity to participate in workshops that will focus on mentoring, a fundamental part of the Next Gen program. Participants are asked to register online at usw.org/ngconference.

Solvay Workers Vote Union Yes

Production employees at Solvay’s Tulsa, Okla., plant voted overwhelmingly on Aug. 8 to join the USW. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) certified the election 10 days later.

The USW represents 79 workers at a plant that makes high-performance composite materials that are used in automotive and sports products including yachts, helmets and vests.

District 13 organizer Dionisio Gonzalez said the organizing campaign took about 40 days. He attributed the win to a “great in-plant committee.”

Two major issues prompted workers to seek union representation: harsh discipline through a point system and favoritism.

Communication and education were essential since the group didn’t have a lot of union experience, said Gonzalez. He was able to provide information about union topics, like the right to organize, through handbills.

Another important part of the success was Solvay’s Global Framework Agreement (GFA) with IndustriALL, a global union federation that includes the USW. Solvay agreed to respect the rights of employees to organize and join a union.

Local Ratifies Contract with Dow in Texas

Members of Local 13-1 voted in October to ratify a new contract with Rohm and Haas, a subsidiary of Dow Chemical, covering 235 workers at the company’s facility in Deer Park, Texas.

The contract runs through March 1, 2023, and contains annual wage increases and other improvements.

“This contract is a testament to the strength and solidarity of the members of this local union, their families, and the entire community of Deer Park, who stood beside them throughout this fight,” District 13 Director Ruben Garza said.

Bargaining on a new agreement began in February. The company imposed a seven-week lockout of the workers that began on April 22 after USW members voted overwhelmingly three times to reject unacceptable proposals. The company ended the lockout in June and negotiations continued.



Left to right: Jeremy Ollanketo, Dan Cox, Gilbert Elementary School Principal Marci Paulsen, Next Gen Coordinator Michael Grondz and Tyson Butorac. Not pictured: Dave Drummond and Jeremy Bowen.

Next Gen Supports Schools

The Next Generation committee of Local 4950 in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula iron ore range donates the proceeds of an annual raffle to local elementary schools in Marquette County. This year, the local distributed \$13,000 to nine schools. Since starting the project in 2016, more than \$30,000 has been donated. Each school uses the money for a special project that helps prepare students for the future. Local 4950 is an amalgamated local that includes the Tilden Mining department of Cleveland Cliffs.

Union Plus Scholarships Awarded

Union Plus, the benefits program for union members, awarded scholarships this year to four students whose parents are USW members.

Kaci Bradish, a kinesiology major at Grand View University in Des Moines, Iowa, was awarded \$1,000. After graduation in April 2020, Kaci plans to attend graduate school and become a pediatric physical therapist. Her mother, Rebecca Bradish, is a member of Local 310L in Des Moines.

Nicholas Brennan of South Glens Falls, N.Y., was awarded a \$4,000 scholarship. A 2019 high school graduate, Nicholas began college this fall as a physics major with aspirations of pursuing a doctorate in astrophysics. His father, Aaron Brennan, is a member of Local 4-002.

Melissa Ertl, of Albany, N.Y., was awarded \$2,000. A 2015 graduate of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, Melissa is a fourth-year counseling psychology doctoral candidate at the State University of New York at Albany. A 2011 and 2012 Union Plus scholarship recipient, Melissa hopes to pursue a career as a professor after completing her studies in 2021. Her father, John Ertl, is a member of Local 00445 in Park Falls, Wis.

Taylor Kellogg, of Tewksbury, Mass., an early childhood education and psychology dual major at Hofstra University in New York, was awarded \$3,000. She hopes to become a teacher and join a teacher's union. Her father, John Kellogg, is a member of amalgamated Local 12012 in Massachusetts, one of two locals locked out last year for several months by utility giant National Grid.

Union Plus is a brand of benefits offered by Union Privilege, a nonprofit organization founded by the AFL-CIO in 1986. Its volunteer board of directors is made up of leaders from more than 60 international unions and chaired by AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka.

In total this year, Union Plus awarded \$170,000 in scholarships to 108 students representing 34 unions. Over 7,100 applications were received from 65 unions, an increase of 20 percent from 2018.

The deadline for next year's applications is Jan. 31, 2020. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered. Go online to unionplus.org/scholarship for applications and eligibility information.

2019 Rapid Response Conference

Hundreds of USW activists were on their way to Washington, D.C., as *USW@Work* went to press, preparing to delve into key issues affecting workers and to learn how better to discuss those issues with their fellow members.

About 600 members were registered to attend the union's annual Rapid Response, Legislative and Policy Conference and to visit their legislators to push for laws to aid working Americans and their families.

The conference was scheduled to kick off on Oct. 28 with two days of workshops and discussions on topics including safeguarding retirement plans, ensuring workplace safety and expanding the right to organize.

On Oct. 30, the delegation was set to visit lawmakers' offices on Capitol Hill to lobby in favor of legislation on those and other issues of importance to working Americans.

Look for full coverage of the conference in the next issue.

Oil Worker Honored for Safety Advocacy

The Philadelphia Area Project on Occupational Safety and Health (PHILAPOSH) gave its 2019 Leadership in Health and Safety award to Local 10-234 member Matt Birney.

Birney, the union health and safety representative and an operator at the Monroe Energy refinery in Trainer, Pa., helped get the USW's Triangle of Prevention (TOP) program started at the site. He also served as a TOP representative and alternate. He was a member of the joint labor-management health and safety committee for four years.

Prior to his refinery work, Birney was a municipal firefighter for the city of Chester, Pa., for 20 years and a member of Fire Fighters LU 1400.

Local 10-234 President Jonas Dauber nominated Birney for the award. "Matt is real dogged in his pursuit of safety. He has such a wealth of knowledge and experience and is better rounded than most safety representatives because of his emergency response and operator background," Dauber said.



USW Stands with UAW

International President Thomas M. Conway pledged the USW's support to the United Auto Workers (UAW) on Sept. 16, the opening day of the UAW's strike against General Motors.

The strike idled 50,000 UAW members at factories across the Midwest and South to secure fair wages, affordable health care coverage, a share of profits, job security and a defined path to permanent seniority for temporary workers.

"The USW stands in total solidarity with striking UAW members, as they undertake this fight with GM. It inevitably falls to workers themselves to protect and advance their interests from runaway corporate greed and the continued abandonment of working-class communities," Conway said.

"When it comes to corporate self-interest, management at General Motors has displayed the worst possible behavior, including plant closings and a complete failure to share the rewards UAW members made possible.

"UAW members had no choice but to stand up for themselves and their families. The USW, at every level of our organization, is prepared to offer assistance and support as they begin this struggle. They have our complete backing and commitment," Conway said.

The UAW announced a tentative agreement with GM on Oct. 16 as *USW@Work* was going to press.

Have You Moved?

Notify your local union financial secretary, or clip out this form with your old address label and send your new address to:

USW Membership Department,
60 Blvd. of the Allies, Pittsburgh, PA 15222

Name _____

New Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____



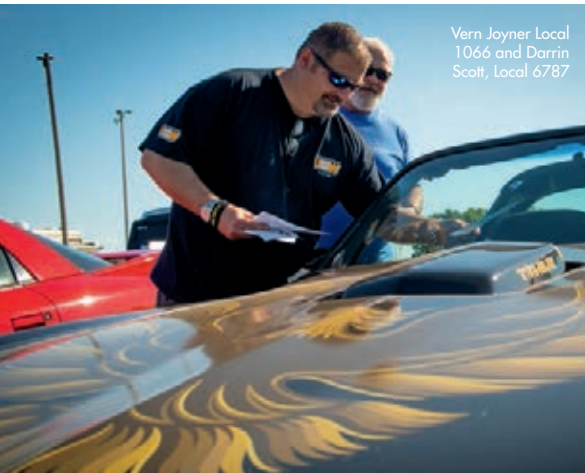
Photos by
Steve Dietz



Greg Garcia,
Local 1066



Bill Burt, retired Local 1066
and granddaughter Theadora



Vern Joyner Local
1066 and Darrin
Scott, Local 6787



BUILDING UNION SOLIDARITY
AT THE RACE TRACK

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