**UNITY AND STRENGTH**

United Steelworkers. Unity and Strength for Workers. This is the name of our union and the words on our USW logo. Many of us proudly wear shirts, jackets and hats that have the blue and gold USW logo with these words emblazoned on them, but do we ever stop to think about what these words really mean and how they relate to us every day? Do we think about what it means to be “United” and about the strength that comes through unity? If we don’t, we should.

On March 30 of this year, our members at nine facilities of Allegheny Technologies, Inc. (ATI), began an unfair labor practice strike. There are two ATI locations in District 4. We have 45 members at Local 9436 in Lockport, N.Y., and 64 members at Local 1357 in New Bedford, Mass. There was a third ATI plant in Connecticut, but the company closed that location prior to the strike.

On May 17, 190 members of Local 4-2058 at Unifrax LLC in Tonawanda, N.Y., also went out on an unfair labor practice strike. These are different employers but many of the issues that led up to the strikes are the same. Of course, both strikes were caused first and foremost by what we believed to be unfair labor practices at the bargaining table. But as far as bargaining issues, it all comes down to employers trying to divide our membership and turn them against one another.

These are different employers but many of the issues that led up to the strikes are the same. Of course, both strikes were caused first and foremost by what we believed to be unfair labor practices at the bargaining table. But as far as bargaining issues, it all comes down to employers trying to divide our membership and turn them against one another. They often do this by proposing two-tier wage and benefit systems so new people coming in the door get less than existing employees. This has the effect of driving a wedge between employees based on their seniority. Our members at both these companies said no to selling out future generations of Steelworkers and fought back against their employers’ concessionary proposals.

Picket lines were set up at ATI and Unifrax. We had support from other USW locals, other unions and community partners as well as pressure campaigns led by our Strategic Campaigns Department. But the most important thing in both these strikes is that our members stood strong together. I’ve been out on strike. I know how stressful and difficult it is to be on strike, and when I visited those strike lines, I saw no cracks. What I saw was United Steelworkers! Our members were determined to be out one day longer.

That unity and strength paid off. On June 18, our members at Unifrax ratified a new agreement that addressed the issues that had them on strike, and they returned to work on June 21. On July 13, our members at ATI also ratified a new agreement that didn’t include the concessionary proposals and ended their three-month strike.

Both of these are examples of what can be accomplished when we put aside our differences and stand united. In today’s world, there are a great many things that separate us. People are divided by politics, religion, race, economic status and a variety of other things. It’s so easy to find topics to disagree about.

I’m not trying to tell you that you shouldn’t feel as you do about those issues. I am only suggesting that regardless of our differences on other issues, we can put those aside and come together as a union on the things that we have in common: things that affect our livelihoods and living standards like getting a good contract, maintaining and improving our benefits, tough health and safety standards and fighting for strong trade policies and labor laws that keep our jobs here. Whatever our other differences, we should be able to unite together over these labor issues that impact every one of us. The successful outcome of these two strikes shows what can be accomplished when we work together.

United we stand, divided we fall. If we as a union want to make progress and attain our goals, to improve our lives and those of our families and our communities, we must live up to our name and truly be United Steelworkers.
GREETINGS! As you receive this newsletter we hope that it finds you in good health, and time with your families. The past few months have been filled with activity, supporting our members on strike at Unifrax (Local 2058) and at ATI (Local 8433). We would like to congratulate both memberships on the solidarity that has been demonstrated during the difficult times of these strikes. It was refreshing to see our members who on a day-to-day basis might often disagree on outside issues, cast aside their differences to stand together in solidarity as one in their battle against the company. As Sub-District Director, I was greatly inspired by their unity, and the entire staff of the Buffalo office were energized by their tenacity and strength. The Unifrax strike has been settled! The attack by the company on the next generation of workers in Western N.Y. was defeated. All of our members were returned to work following an overwhelming ratification of a new agreement. I hope as the new members come in, the current members will share the story of their battle against the company on the next generation that will face the next battle that this company wages against our members.

We are also happy to inform you that ATI's tentative agreement has been ratified, and members will also be returning to work. We hope that going forward ATI will realize that the members of the USW working at ATI will only accept a fair contract.

In closing, we have settled nicely into the new Buffalo Sub-District office and invite the Western New York locals to stop by at their convenience to visit our new location. Hopefully, we will soon announce an open house where we can get together and discuss our many successes including the two referenced above. We hope to see you all at our upcoming educational conference. Safe travels between now and then.

JIM VALENTI, SUB-DISTRICT DIRECTOR

MILFORD

In early 2021, the USW began bargaining with Allegheny Technologies Incorporated (ATI), for a new collective bargaining agreement. From the start, it was crystal clear that ATI was out to break our union. The company initially proposed the closure of our wages or large layoffs notifying us that the savings could be offset by savings generated through other contract changes. Simply put, concessions.

The union’s response to the concessions the company proposed was to propose the health care plan, in which the company would only pay up to a capped amount and our members would pay for any cost over this amount. Any new hire would have to participate in the company-provided health, prescription drug, vision and dental benefits, on the same terms as salaried and non-represented employees of the company. Such plans could be changed at any time, at its sole discretion. The company wanted to dictate, not bargain, over benefits for our newly-hired brothers and sisters.

The company then wanted to contract out our work without notice to the union and without penalty. Clearly, the company wanted to eliminate our jobs. In addition, the company wanted to be able to put our members on 12-hour shifts without the right to vacation.

The union’s priorities were simple and straightforward. First, wage increases were long overdue. Our members had not received a wage increase in seven years (during which time management salaries continued to grow). The second priority was to maintain a premium-free health care plan, preserve our work, and improve layoff and retirement benefits.

On Feb. 28, after nearly two months of bargaining, the parties were unable to reach agreement on a new contract. The parties agreed to an extension of the current terms and conditions of employment. As part of the extension agreement, if the union were to call for a strike, it would give the company a 24-hour notice of its intent to do so. During this time the union filed numerous unfair labor practice objections against the company for bad faith bargaining, failure to provide information and other violations of the National Labor Relations Act. Any new agreement must also include the right of both the USW-represented local unions commenced a strike against ATI on March 30, 2021, at 7:00 a.m.

After three and a half months on the picket line, thanks to the solidarity and strength of our union, on July 13, 2021, we ratified a new collective bargaining agreement. This was a new agreement in which the company and we agreed upon any of their proposed concessions related to contracting out, the benefit changes for future hires, or the unilateral right to impose 12-hour shifts on our members. The new agreement also preserves premium-free health care for all union, and non-represented employees of the company. Such increases wages by 9 percent, as well as providing $7,000 lump sum payments over the life of the four-year agreement. We look forward to working with the support and financial assistance from the local unions in District 4. On behalf of the USW and the members of Local 1357, a big thank you to all who supported our efforts. Our members return to work without the support and financial assistance from the local unions in District 4. On behalf of the USW and the members of Local 1357, a big thank you to all who supported our efforts.

JIM BRIGGS, SUB-DISTRICT DIRECTOR

BUFFALO

Dear members,

I hope you had a safe and happy Labor Day weekend last week. With the easing of state restrictions on in-person meetings the USW has recently resolved and is a great victory. Over the past two years, a majority of employees at Cascades Container signed cards requesting USW representation. The union won the card count by a vote not contestable, conducted by an outside third party, but Cascades refused to bargain with the union. After two years of National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) charges and COVID-19 related delays, a hearing was held before an NLRB Administrative Law Judge via Zoom. His decision upholding the results of the card count was received in June, and shortly before this was written we received word that Cascades was going to appeal it. We look forward to the start of negotiations with Cascades soon. Thanks to all who played an important role in this long struggle.

The victory in Puerto Rico, where a court case involving the payment of Paid Sick Leave (2016-2017) was finally won. See the “Letter from Puerto Rico” (in this insert) for details. It was a long fight with a very satisfactory ending.

With the easing of state restrictions on in-person meetings we’ve been holding training sessions throughout the Sub-District. Recently there was a Building Power training held in Puerto Rico attended by two dozen members from nine units of USW Locals 6135, 6588, 6871 and 8198. The Edison Sub-District is currently interviewing candidates for the Sub-District office, in which stewards from Locals 318, 4-417, and 637 were present, which was facilitated by Luke Gordon, Staff Rep and Education Coordinator for District 4.

With the ongoing concerns of COVID-19 within the health care industry, there’s always an opportunity for continued support of our USW Health Care Workers. Recently, officers of Local 318 delivered personal protective equipment, in the form of gowns, to the Visiting Nurses Association, where members of Local 318 are employed in providing in-home health care.

In closing, I would like to thank all the members of our Sub-District for the work that they do!

MILFORD

JIM VALENTI, SUB-DISTRICT DIRECTOR

SYRACUSE

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In closing, I would like to thank all the members of our Sub-District for the work that they do!
Refriega. Anti-trabajador en 2016, regresaron a la recibir más ataques de un empleador un cheque de pago de cero dólares, y miembros de la USW con la mitad de trabajo, dejando aquí a cientos de fue una reducción en nuestras horas a años luchamos contra lo que al principio

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unión dijo que por no contar con los fondos, el pago de la licencia por enfermedad no utilizada no se pagaría antes del 31 de marzo como dicta la ley. Conociendo las prácticas anti-obreras de la administración y del alcalde, iniciamos la primera acción legal para reclamar lo que no correspondía por ley. Fue una batalla que ganamos en todos los foros judiciales. Tuvimos que presentar una segunda acción legal para reclamar el pago correspondiente al 2017, los dos primeros foros judiciales nos dieron la razón, sin embargo, la Corte Suprema de Puerto Rico tardó casi tres años en emitir su fallo. En 2020, se les pagó a dos tercios de los demandantes del caso de 2016, dejando a seis jefes de familia sin justicia y sin respuesta alguna para el caso de 2017. Se dice que la justicia destruida es justicia denyed. En enero de 2021 tuvimos un nuevo alcalde y una nueva administración. Hizo campaña con el compromiso de hacernos justicia. El nuevo Alcalde, Luis M. Irizarry Pabón, se reunió en abril con representantes de la USW y la Presidenta de la Unión Local poniendo acción detrás de sus palabras. El Alcalde nombró un comité integrado por representantes de su administración y de la Junta Ejecutiva de la Local (Mayra Rivera, Presidenta y Palmira Torres, Vicepresidenta) para que antes del 30 de junio todos recibirían los pagos a los que tenían derecho. El 22 de junio de 2021 llegó ese momento después de más de 6 años para más de 87 hermanos y hermanas que lo esperaban, sin perder nunca la fe en que seguiríamos luchando por ellos. Ese día frente a nuestro Representante de la USW en Puerto Rico, Yaphet Torres y miembros de la Junta Ejecutiva de nuestra local, todos recibieron su tan esperado pago del Alcalde. Junto a ello, un compromiso de que bajo su administración, los empleados municipales no son un gasto, sino una inversión, porque somos el rastro de la ciudad. Seguimos avanzando, de manera constante y con más fuerza porque #SantosSomosMasFuerzas.

Lo que nos movió a luchar por los derechos de los trabajadores que lucharon por la justicia fueron las palabras de los fundadores de la USW que al principio pensaban que su lucha no llegaría a ningún lado. Frases como “somos el rostro de la ciudad, no es justicia. Pero los fundadores de nuestra Unión dijeron que “la justicia es el pan del que comemos, pero la hambre también es justicia”. Durante siete largos años luchamos contra lo que al principio fue una reducción en nuestras horas de trabajo, dejando aquí a cientos de miembros de la USW con la mitad de su salario. Varias docenas recibieron un cheque de pago de cero dólares, y cuando pensamos que no podríamos recibir más, más ataques de un empleador, un cheque de pago de cero dólares, y miembros de la USW con la mitad de su salario. Varias docenas recibieron un cheque de pago de cero dólares, y cuando pensamos que no podríamos recibir más, más ataques de un empleador, un cheque de pago de cero dólares, y miembros de la USW con la mitad de su salario. Varias docenas recibieron un cheque de pago de cero dólares, y cuando pensamos que no podríamos recibir más, más ataques de un empleador, un cheque de pago de cero dólares, y miembros de la USW con la mitad de su salario. Varias docenas recibieron un cheque de pago de cero dólares, y cuando pensamos que no podríamos recibir más, más ataques de un empleador, un cheque de pago de cero dólares, y miembros de la USW con la mitad de su salario. Varias docenas recibieron un cheque de pago de cero dólares, y cuando pensamos que no podríamos recibir más, más ataques de un empleador, un cheque de pago de cero dólares, y miembros de la USW con la mitad de su salario. Varias docenas recibieron un cheque de pago de cero dólares, y cuando pensamos que no podríamos recibir más, más ataques de un empleador, un cheque de pago de cero dólares, y miembros de la USW con la mitad de su salario. Varias docenas recibieron un cheque de pago de cero dólares, y cuando pensamos que no podríamos recibir más, más...
HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT
IN-PERSON HEALTH AND SAFETY TRAINING RESUMES

The District 4 Health & Safety program had our first in-person training since the pandemic closed down all these important educational sessions. The class at Republic Steel in Blasdell, N.Y., was attended by ten members from Local 2003. We had great feedback from the company who said attendees received excellent information about crane safety. Republic Steel is now interested in having our Health and Safety trainers present six more trainings on forklift, lock-out/tag-out, fall protection, confined space, powered platforms, and hot work safety. If your Local is interested in health and safety training, please contact your Staff Representative or Ed Moran, the District 4 Health and Safety Coordinator, at (315) 481-4118.

Rapid Response

We recently defeated Right-to-Work (for less) legislation in New Hampshire by a bipartisan vote of 199 to 175 in the House. All of the Democrats and 20 Republicans voted to kill the legislation. The State Senate in February passed it by a margin of only 2 votes.

One USW member who played a key role was Dave Dellsola from Local 12012, who worked with the USW bat light and local union activists for the program in 2021.

Thank you to all for the tremendous work to make this a great victory.

Thank you for all the work that staff from Pittsburgh did. Lori Bookwood at the Desmond Hotel in Albany, N.Y. In attendance was Staff Representative Brigitte Womer, District Co-coordinators Brian Callow and Laura Jones, Western N.Y. regional coordinator Josh Hall, Southern Tier N.Y. coordinator Gregory Jones, Delaware/New Jersey/NYC coordinator Bradley Kolb, New England coordinator Isabel Torres, and Puerto Rico coordinator Keishla Carbo, who joined via Zoom.

The meeting included introductions, understanding the District structure, turf assignments, and regional coordinator responsibilities. Each Regional Coordinator was required to develop a training plan for use at their quarterly meetings. The coordinators then presented their plans. The District Co-Coordinators and Staff Representative provided feedback and suggestions on how to make improvements to these training plans.

The meeting was very productive. By developing and sharing individual plans, the coordinators left armed with training materials for the next 14 months in preparation for returning to holding quarterly meetings again with the downturn in the COVID-19 pandemic, which had halted the program in 2020. These training materials will assist us in the continued growth and strengthening of the District’s NextGen Program. We are extremely proud of our Regional Coordinators and look forward to the growth of the program in 2021.

Next Generation

District 4 NextGen held a Regional Coordinators meeting on June 10 at the Desmond Hotel in Albany, N.Y. In attendance was Staff Representative Brigitte Womer, District Co-coordinators Brian Callow and Laura Jones, Western N.Y. regional coordinator Josh Hall, Southern Tier N.Y. coordinator Gregory Jones, Delaware/New Jersey/NYC coordinator Bradley Kolb, New England coordinator Isabel Torres, and Puerto Rico coordinator Keishla Carbo, who joined via Zoom.

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Organizing

District 4 is excited to announce the addition of our newest members in Greenwich, N.Y. The hourly employees at this Essity facility are not strangers to the organizing process. In fact, they had two previously failed attempts at forming a union at the Greenwich facility.

Kathy Hockenberry, who called the USW to organize her workplace, said “I was actually against the union in the past. I thought the company was ok. I thought they would do the right thing. I honestly thought things would get better here, but they just didn’t. Its only gotten worse over the years. Now I have to step up and do something about it because we do need a union, and I can see that now.”

This time things were different than in the previous campaigns. The organizing committee came out of the gate swinging, ready and eager to attend meetings and organize their coworkers. They were strong, united, educated, and unstoppable. The rank-and-file employees were just as eager and ready to form their union as their committee.

Within days, the majority of employees signed union cards and headed to an election to vote on unionizing. Over a two-day period, each hourly employee was given the opportunity to cast a ballot in the facilities’ lunch room through a secret ballot election conducted by the National Labor Relations Board. At the conclusion of the second day the ballots were counted - the overwhelming majority had voted in favor of joining the United Steelworkers! The Greenwich Essity facility is a union facility that converts paper rolls into napkins for McDonalds and Dunkin Donuts along with other paper products. The paper product that is converted is made by members of USW Local 1476 at Essity in South Glen Falls, N.Y.

On behalf of District 4, we congratulate all of the hourly workers at Essity in Greenwich, N.Y., the organizing committee and organizer, Danny Iorns, on a job well done!

Veterans Council

The District 4 Veterans Council held its First Annual District-wide Veterans Council Meeting on July 14, 2021, at the Crown Plaza – Desmond Hotel in Albany, N.Y. District 4 Director Del Vitale and other distinguished guests joined members from across the District from Boston to Buffalo, and all parts in-between attended.

We were honored to have as our special guest Doctor Keita Franklin, who spoke very eloquently on veteran suicide prevention – specifically, ways we can help support our veterans and their families. Dr. Franklin was accompanied by Professor Adam Lessor. Dr. Franklin and Professor Lessor are co-founders of the Columbia Lighthouse Project which developed a program that identifies risks and prevents suicide.

In the afternoon, more than 55 members and guests participated in a very productive and interactive round-table discussion on the future of the Veterans Council in District 4. We selected local coordinators and area coordinators to provide information and assistance to all our members across the District. The area coordinators are Nathan Zonas, LU 14323-A (Connecticut), Mike Ulrich, LU 135L (Buffalo, NY), Mike Lowe, LU 4-898 (Delaware), Tara Bentley, LU 9265 (Albany, NY), Steve Mattison, LU 1000 (Corning, NY), and John Bousquet, LU 2285 (Massachusetts).

One of the important initiatives discussed led to each local union committing to enact by-laws changes to make the Veterans Committee one of the local union mandatory committees. Another was to develop a program to prevent workplace discrimination against our members currently serving in the National Guard and Reserves. It was also agreed that each region of the District will develop a list of resources for veterans and their families which could be distributed or posted at each Local’s workplace.

The next District Veterans Council meeting has been set for July 14, 2022 – hope to see you there!
WOMEN OF STEEL

WOMEN OF STEEL/RAPID RESPONSE WE SUPPLY AMERICA PROJECT

Several District 4 sisters were asked to be a part of a joint Rapid Response/Women of Steel Zoom training event recently. This Zoom training was held in anticipation of a serious effort to pass an infrastructure plan in the United States, as well as additional policy decisions regarding infrastructure.

In this effort the USW is looking to partner with our employers who should, like our members, be a part of this conversation. Rebuilding our nation’s infrastructure is a significant opportunity to strengthen domestic manufacturing and supply chains. Rebuilding our infrastructure for the modern era will require millions of workers—not only in construction, but also in engineering and clean tech manufacturing.

District 4 WOS have been aggressively working on this project by working on a letter-writing campaign encouraging Congress to act quickly to make it a reality.

USW Local 134L Women of Steel worked diligently to get 160 letters to Brian Deese, Director of the National Economic Council and Shalonda Young, Deputy Director, Office of Management and Budget. These letters were cc’d to all Connecticut members of Congress.

NEW ENGLAND WOMEN OF STEEL

The New England Council of the District 4 Women of Steel recently had our first in-person meeting since the onset of COVID-19 last year. Everyone was happy and excited to be back together again. We held a short meeting where the council members heard how our sisters got through the pandemic and what activities they and their locals did for the communities they live and work in. After that, we went as a group to support our union sisters on strike at St. Vincent’s Hospital in Worcester. The nurses there, members of the Massachusetts Nursing Association, have been on strike for over three months! The issues that sent them to the street include staffing levels and the effects on patient safety and quality care. It was an extremely hot and humid day but our WOS’s discomfort paled in comparison to what these nurses and their families have been enduring every day of this strike. Our council members also donated $300.00 in grocery gift cards to the nurses. We only hope that we were able to lift their spirits for a little while and that they will remember we are not alone in this fight. Unions stick together. The New England Council will hold our next meeting in September.

NEW JERSEY WOMEN OF STEEL

We have not returned to in-person meetings, but we have a member who is doing great work in her community.

USW Women of Steel sister Susan Espusito, who is a shop steward for Local 4-397, has done a great deal of volunteer work throughout the entire pandemic. She volunteers at the Crest Community Church (CCC) Soup Kitchen and More Than Enough Food Pantry in Wildwood Crest, N.J. Every Monday night, food is prepared for anyone in need of a meal, and pantry items given to anyone in need of food. The pandemic exposed food insecurity in her community.

Susan also volunteered at a fundraiser for the Living Waters Veterans Memorial Chapel (LWVMC) in Wildwood, N.J. The American Legion and MudHen Brewery named Deb Moore Ministries - LWVMC the benefactor of a fundraiser to help raise funds for steeple repairs and chimes. The chimes play each branch of the military’s theme song and other patriotic songs that can be heard all the way down the boardwalk!

Susan works for the New Jersey Work Environment Council and is the percussionist with the CCC Worship Team, which plays uplifting music for patrons to enjoy!

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