

USW@Work

A Publication of the United Steelworkers

A Powerful Voice for Workers

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“It's time to review, reform and, where necessary, reject past trade agreements. We can't afford to continue on the current path.”

International President Leo W. Gerard
March 5, 2018



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ON THE BRINK

A Wisconsin paper mill considered dead after it abruptly closed while in receivership is coming back to life under new ownership with assistance from its skilled workers and the USW.



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Ron Gapsis inspects his work at Maryland Brush.
See page 04 for story.
Photo by Steve Dietz.

USW@Work

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Our Union Stood With Us

I was wrongfully terminated from my job at OmniSource Corp. in Mansfield, Ohio, on Dec. 15, 2015, for performing my duties as an elected USW representative of Local 9130-03 when management disagreed with a grievance filed on behalf of a member who felt threatened by a supervisor. Instead of discussing or denying the grievance, OmniSource decided to discharge me, the original grievant and my two fellow unit representatives.

After a long, difficult struggle, and with the leadership and assistance of my Staff Representative Donnie Blatt and our union lawyer Nancy Parker, the National Labor Relations Board ordered – and an appeals court agreed – that the company must reinstate all four of us to our rightful jobs and provide each of us with back wages in a lump sum for the duration we were out of work.

It is hard to imagine what possessed OmniSource to fire all of our unit's elected representatives for simply doing our jobs, but if management hoped to discourage union activism or divide our membership, the opposite has occurred.

As a result of the company's reckless, unnecessary and illegal actions, we are stronger, more unified and dedicated than ever. Our union stood with us and fought for our jobs every step of the way through the entire process for more than two years until we achieved justice. I am as proud as ever to be a member of the USW.

Brothers and sisters, always remember that we are most powerful when we are united. OmniSource learned this the hard way.

*Rick Dean, Local 9130-03
Mansfield, Ohio*

Resist Right to Work

As a retiree, I have seen the benefits that unions bring to workers at every stage of their lives. That's why I get so frustrated when I hear about these right-to-work (for less) laws.

These laws are cleverly disguised as "fairness" but are really designed to kill unions. They use the phrase "right to work" to trick workers into thinking that the laws are somehow good for them. They're not.

In reality, what happens is that unions end up with less money and then have to do even more work to achieve justice for their members. Before long, this will either weaken or destroy the union. That's the whole idea.

Now, there's a case before the Supreme Court this year that could put right to work in effect for public sector workers across the country. We are kidding ourselves if we don't think that they'll come for the private sector next.

The people pushing these laws won't be satisfied until they've busted every last union and taken even more of their workers' hard-earned money to line their own pockets.

*Joel Buchanan, SOAR Chapter 38-3
Pueblo, Colo.*

Why Should I Pay Dues?

In the last issue of *USW@Work*, you printed two letters saying right to work is bad. Here is why I disagree: All right to work means is that I can't be forced to pay union dues even though I don't want to be a part of a union. What's wrong with that?

Yes, I get the same benefits as a union member, and I don't have to pay for it. Yes, I know that is not fair. Well, how is it fair for me to have to go on strike or not have a contract accepted, even though I like it, because majority rules in union land?

I joined a union last year, very reluctantly, and I am done. I'm not paying dues to an organization that doesn't do what I want it to do. Right to work protects me from union bullies. This is what is wrong with unions.

*Gary Weaver, Local 5114
Mullan, Idaho*

Editor's Note: Local 5114 has been on an unfair labor practice strike at Hecla Mining's Lucky Friday mine in Idaho since March 2017. The membership voted by an overwhelming majority of 230-2 in favor of withdrawing their labor.

Buy American-made Tires

I am very proud of my more than 36 years working for Goodyear/Kelly-Springfield in Freeport, Ill. I have always bought and encouraged others to buy Goodyear tires. I recently learned that a friend and fellow Goodyear retiree purchased four Goodyear tires. Shortly after, he noticed that the tires were made in Chile!

I contacted Goodyear and the company acknowledged it has plants in several other countries, which I already knew. I told them that I will share the fact that off-shore tires are being sold as Goodyear.

Buyers beware. Ask to see any tire you purchase if you want or expect them to be American made. The plant I retired from in 2004 employed about 1,200, most times. It is now owned by another company and employs about 300.

More than 1,000 good-paying jobs are gone overseas.

*John Veer, retired Local 745
Strawberry, Ark.*

SPEAKING

Out

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

Mail to:
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Colleen Caldwell



WORKER-OWNERS KEEP MARYLAND BRUSH HUMMING

John Morant's work station at employee-owned Maryland Brush Co. is the last stop in the manufacturing process for large industrial brushes before they are shipped out to metalworking firms, glass and rubber factories and other customers.

"I put love into the brushes," Morant said as he used a lathe and other cutting tools to trim the stainless steel strands of a large rotating brush. "We believe our product is the best on the market."

Morant, 66, is part of a small crew of Steelworkers who have worked many years to make Maryland Brush and its parent, MBC Ventures, a success as an employee-owned company in a challenging marketplace. He wasn't joking about how much he cares.

"I believe to be effective in what you're doing, you need to love what you do, and I love what I do," said Morant, a football and basketball coach in his spare time. "This job, trimming at Maryland Brush, I believe is made for me. It's something I take pride in and do very well."

Operators and utility workers rotate among machines, cutting and twisting wire or synthetic strands that are pressed between stampings of various shapes and sizes to form brushes. Long roller-shaped brushes are made by tightly stacking individual circular brushes over a can-like central shaft.

The company, which traces its roots in the brush business to 1851, became an employee stock ownership company (ESOP) in 1990 after PPG Industries, its

then corporate parent, decided to divest non-core units. Brushes used to paint houses and paint accessories were key products.

With help from the USW, workers and managers made a successful bid to buy the business, beating out interested competitors and entrepreneurs. To seal the deal, employees accepted temporary concessions on wages, holidays and vacations that have since been restored.

ESOP for 28 years

Having survived for 28 years as an ESOP, MBC operates in the black with the purchase loan paid off and a small work force of just 19 worker-owners, managers and sales staff, including 14 USW members.

While there are other small ESOP companies that can match MBC in longevity, it is increasingly rare for an employee-owned company in the troubled steel industry to stay alive as long as it has, said Chris Cooper, program coordinator for the Ohio Center for Employee Ownership at Kent State University.

Deborah Groban Olson, an attorney who specializes in creating and advising employee-owned companies and cooperatives, said Maryland Brush stands out for its egalitarian approach.

"What is unique about Maryland Brush is how democratic they are," she said, noting that employees have one vote per person on shareholder issues, as in a co-op, and regularly participate in making company decisions.



John Morant



Teresa Sadler



Ron Gapsis

Photos by Steve Dietz

Workers at the plant put in four 10-hour days per week. The collective bargaining agreement with Local 12978 covers wages, health care benefits, provisions for a defined benefit pension, gainsharing and 401(k) investments.

“I didn’t know what an ESOP was when I started,” said Ron Gapsis, 37, a utility worker who was operating a vintage machine that kicks out any loose wires or strands from the brushes. “I’ve done some research, and it’s pretty cool. We own everything and we do everything by ourselves. Anything we do, it’s for us.”

Acknowledging a decline in its traditional markets, the company’s seven-member board of directors in 2010 decided to diversify. They invested in a start-up product called SkyLouver, a

combination skylight and solar thermal collector designed to fit on the flat roofs of retail stores and reduce utility costs.

But the project, which involved purchasing a patent that allowed MBC to manufacture the product, failed in 2015.

“If we had deeper pockets, maybe we could have made it work,” CEO Steve Mullan said.

But no one at MBC is pointing fingers of blame. “That’s not our style,” said Richard Benton, the local union president and a board member. “We made the decision to invest in the venture together. Failure hurts. But our focus is on moving forward, not casting blame.”

Layoffs, shutdowns and other bruising problems have taken their toll on the steel industry, a key customer base for

MBC. Downturns in steel have forced maintenance and production managers to focus more on costs alone when buying replacement brushes.

To compete, Mullan said, MBC markets itself on quality and service.

“Like every other industry, we have competitive pushes from overseas,” he said. “We’re a small player so we try to participate in niche markets where we think we can outperform others.”

Strategic planning

After some strategic planning, board members decided to re-concentrate their efforts on the core business of industrial brushes. The plan involves attracting new customers, re-connecting with older ones, training new workers to replace those who are ready to retire and possibly moving to a smaller, more efficient facility.

“I’ve never seen a company so simultaneously concerned for its employees, their welfare, the future of the company overall, and excellence in customer service,” said Todd Feuerman, a director of Ellin & Tucker, an accounting firm that has worked with MBC for 20 years.

Over the years, MBC reduced its product line and work force to stay competitive. The company today focuses on manufacturing power-driven brushes and related products used in industry.

Although MBC no longer manufactures paint brushes, push brooms, dusters and sweeps, the company still sells a full line of paint applicators and maintenance brushes to customers, Mullan said.

Clients include metal working, ferrous and nonferrous mills, tire re-tread and repair, pipeline and welding fabrication among many others. MBC’s specialties include cleaning rolls for steel coating lines.

As its work force ages, MBC faces the challenge of replacing skilled veterans with younger employees. But Mullan and the bargaining unit appear to be confident that they will find younger workers who will share their work ethic and appreciation of worker ownership.

The company moved to its present location in southwest Baltimore in 1904 after the original business burned in a Baltimore street fire that year. The

172,000-square foot factory is located on the 2.5-acre site of a former brewery.

The current work space is tucked into a small portion of the multi-story facility. Its empty floors, worn steps and hand railings are a reminder of how bustling the business had been in its heyday when hundreds of people worked there. Back then, Mullan said, the business was run much like a family company even though it had corporate ownership based in Pittsburgh.

“People walked to work,” he said. “They walked home for lunch and would come back to finish their work. You had brothers and sisters, grandfathers and grandsons – all kinds of family relationships.”

There’s a familial feel to the place even today.

ESOP brought changes

“It’s a good place to work. Everybody gets along. We’re like family,” said Colleen Caldwell, a machine operator who acts as a team leader on the manufacturing floor.

Caldwell has been with the company for nearly 46 years, 25 of them operating a “cut and bunch” machine that cuts wire or synthetic fibers to the correct length and gathers them into a bunch that will ultimately end up as a brush.

The ESOP changed how the company operated on the shop floor. Before the ESOP, each employee had an assigned job and didn’t stray from it. As work slowed and the staff shrunk, existing workers were cross-trained and now pitch in where needed.

“In the old days, before we became an ESOP, each person had an individual job and did their job. We didn’t really have a say in anything,” said Benton, 69, a 47-year veteran.

“Now, we contribute to the making of the brushes and everything else. We have team meetings and the operators give input on what we need to do to make the brushes better or what’s not working.”

Early on, not everyone who worked on the shop floor was quick to take on added responsibilities. That changed over time with attrition and training on the concepts of team work and lean management.

Union team leaders have eliminated the need for middle management.

“Decisions on whether the brushes

go out the door are made on the shop floor,” said Don Lamb-Minor, a former marketing manager and longstanding member of the MBC board. “The workers are not separated from their work. The fruits of their labor are what they will retire on.”

Every member owns a job through bidding or bumping. Some people have enough work to stay with that job 40 hours a week. Others are more flexible and can move around and work where needed.

“Being employee-owned definitely gives you a different mindset,” William Huddleston, an 11-year veteran, said as he welded the metal core of a brush. “You don’t just come to work and get a paycheck ... You try to do the extra to make the company strong.”

Keeping it going

The machinery is a mix of old and new. Harold Arnold, a team leader and the shop’s design machinist, keeps it all going, repairing or making parts that are no longer available.

“This stuff is old,” Arnold said, looking up while working on a brush making machine. “Parts are always

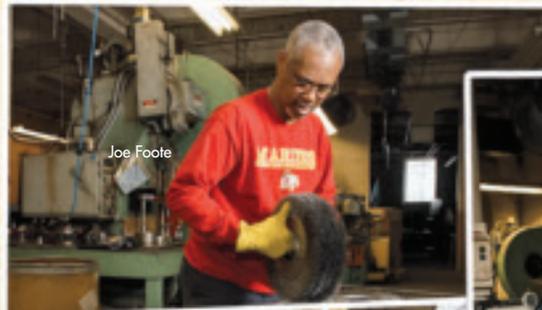
wearing out, and you’ve got to repair them.”

Arnold started working at the brush factory as a young man in 1964. He got the job through his father, who worked there for many years, as did a few of his uncles. “I had no idea I’d stay here and be a machinist, but that’s what it turned out to be,” he said.

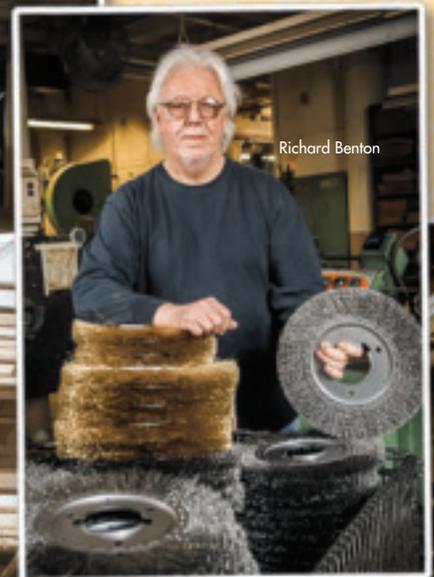
At 72, Arnold admits to thinking about retirement, but said he would be willing to work part-time once a week or so to keep the machinery humming if needed. “I enjoy what I’m doing,” he said.

Joanne Tydings, a fairly new employee who was hired in 2015, operates a brush-forming machine and is cross-trained on several other operations in the shop. She expects to move up the seniority ladder as older, more experienced workers retire.

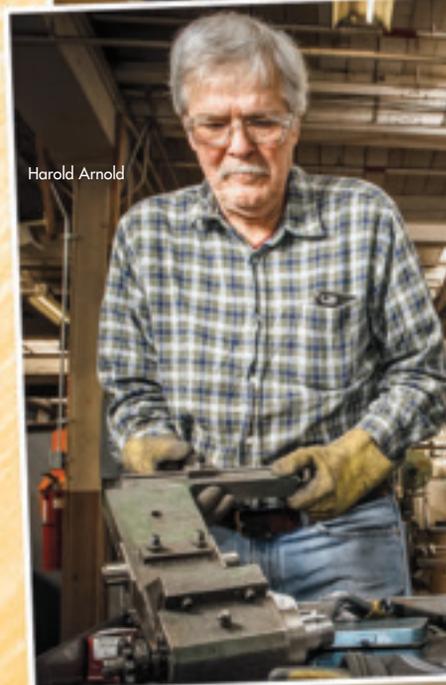
“We can grow with new hires who are fast learners, aren’t afraid of hard work and know that quality and satisfying our customers are how we will remain in the black, stay in business and keep our jobs,” she said.



Joe Foote



Richard Benton



Harold Arnold

WORKER-OWNERS KEEP
**MARYLAND BRUSH
HUMMING**

A photograph of International President Leo W. Gerard taking the oath of office. He is a middle-aged man with a grey beard and glasses, wearing a dark suit, a light blue shirt, and a blue and white striped tie. He is standing at a podium, with his right hand raised in a gesture of taking an oath. A microphone is positioned in front of him. To his left, the back of another man's head and shoulder is visible, suggesting he is being sworn in by another official. The background is dark and out of focus.

INTERNATIONAL OFFICERS, DIRECTORS TAKE OATH OF OFFICE

International President Leo W. Gerard
takes the oath of office.

2018

INSTALLATION OF

INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE BOARD

PITTSBURGH, PA • MARCH 1, 2018

Taking the oath of office for a new four-year term, International President Leo W. Gerard pledged to never give up fighting for a better life for American and Canadian workers.

“People should not forget that those of us who are privileged to serve this union stand on the shoulders of great men who built a great union, who laid a great foundation,” Gerard told some 600 USW members, family and supporters attending the constitutionally mandated inauguration of officers held in Pittsburgh on March 1.

That history, Gerard said, gives us an obligation to fight for every job in every sector every day, to stand up for trade deals that are good for workers, not just for corporations, and to make sure everybody has a right to vote and that every vote counts.

The installation was the start of a new four-year term for Gerard, who was sworn in by Canadian diplomat and politician Gary Doer, a former premier of Manitoba and former ambassador to the United States.

The son of a union miner and activist in Canada, Gerard went to work at an Inco smelter in Sudbury,

Ontario, Canada, after graduating from high school. He studied economics and political science at night before joining the union’s field staff in 1977.

Gerard was elected secretary-treasurer of the international union in 1993. He was first appointed president in 2001 by the International Executive Board (IEB) to succeed the late George Becker, who had retired. That November, Gerard was elected by acclamation. He was re-elected without opposition in 2005, 2009, 2013 and 2017.

After taking the oath, Gerard swore in top officers including International Secretary-Treasurer Stan Johnson, International Vice President Thomas M. Conway, International Vice President Fred Redmond, National Director of Canada Ken Neumann, International Vice President at Large Carol Landry, and International Vice President Jon Geenen.

Directors take oath

New terms also began for members of the IEB: District 1 Director David McCall, District 2 Director Michael Bolton, District 3 Director Stephen Hunt, District 4 Director John Shinn, District 5 Director Alain Croteau, District 6 Director

Marty Warren, District 7 Director Mike Millsap, District 8 Director Ernest R. “Billy” Thompson, District 9 Director Daniel Flippo, District 10 Director Bobby “Mac” McAuliffe, District 11 Director Emil Ramirez, District 12 Director Robert LaVenture and District 13 Director Ruben Garza.

Pittsburgh Mayor William Peduto, a grandson of steelworkers, welcomed guests to Pittsburgh. He spoke of an immigrant grandfather who was able, with the help of the union, to buy a home and join the middle class. The mayor called on the union to fight against pervasive income inequality.

“You are the keeper of the promise,” Peduto, a Democrat, told USW officers and members. “You’re that thin line right now that separates us from the society of haves and have-nots that we were in the 1920s and 30s.

“This country does not have a problem with money,” Peduto added. “We have jobs and we have opportunities and we are producing tons of money, but the money isn’t being distributed like it was at any time in our lives.”

AFL-CIO President Richard

“If you wake up in the morning and you think everything is too rosy, everything is too good, do the next best thing and quit. If you wake up in the morning, and you see what’s going on and you feel some fire in your belly and some energy gathering up inside of you, then that day figure out how you can help somebody.”

Trumka, a former coal miner and president of the United Mine Workers of America, praised the USW for its long tradition of active democracy, calling the union a beacon of hope for workers.

“You’re an example of how unions could and should be run, openly and democratically. Your democratic traditions date back nearly 75 years,” said Trumka, who called for more democracy in the nation’s workplaces.

“We need that democracy right here in the United States,” he said. “We need it in the workplace because every

worker needs the freedom to negotiate in a union with their employer about pay, about safety and benefits.”

America needs more politicians all across the nation, in courthouses, city halls and on Capitol Hill, who will put the interests of working people front and center, Trumka said.

He joined the labor movement and then union politics some 40 years ago because he believed unions were the “only institution capable of making change on the scale necessary to convert our economy into the economy we read



about in the civic books and history books.”

“The economy I knew growing up didn’t match what I was reading in the books,” said Trumka, a Pennsylvania native. “Workers got killed and crippled every single day. They took home a little bit of disease every day, and it was because of the labor movement that that began to change.”

Thea Lee, the new president of the Economic Policy Institute (EPI), a worker-oriented think tank in Washington, D.C., congratulated the union’s officers on their election and said they have important work ahead to educate, mobilize and unify the union’s members.

“Unions are the only thing standing between us and the wealthy and the corporations taking every last scrap . . .,” she said. “Unions don’t come together because we have the same religion or the same race or national origin. We come together by working together and because we share a goal of decent wages and benefits, dignity on the job and a voice on the job.”

Keynote address

In a sweeping keynote address, Gerard listed the USW’s accomplishments, including bargaining and organizing successes involving adjunct university instructors, political gains and trade case victories, along with building stronger formal and informal ties with other unions and allied groups around the world.

He touched on the union’s international work, including the founding of Workers Uniting, the global union that the USW created with Unite the Union in Great Britain and Ireland. Workers Uniting represents the USW and Unite in IndustriALL, a global industrial union.

Gerard also noted USW alliances with CNN-CUT in Brazil, the Australian Workers Union in Australia, IG Metal of Germany, the largest union in Europe, and Los Mineros, the mining and metal workers union in Mexico.

Gerard singled out for mention Los Mineros General Secretary Napoléon Gómez Urrutia, his wife Oralía Casso, Los Mineros Recording Secretary Sergio Beltrán Reyes, and Juan Linares,

who was jailed for two years and 27 days in Mexico for refusing to denounce Los Mineros.

Other important external programs include the Alliance for American Manufacturing, where the USW works with corporate partners to bolster manufacturing, and the BlueGreen Alliance with the Sierra Club.

In addition to globalizing the union to take on multinational employers, the Gerard team has worked hard within the union to build new paths of activism for members. That includes the Lynn Williams leadership program, Women of Steel, Rapid Response, Building Power and the Next Generation program for younger members and leaders.

Gerard closed by urging everyone to make a difference in the lives of others.

“If you wake up in the morning and you think everything is too rosy, everything is too good, do the next best thing and quit,” Gerard said. “If you wake up in the morning, and you see what’s going on and you feel some fire in your belly and some energy gathering up inside of you, then that day figure out how you can help somebody.”



Photos by Steve Dietz

Appleton Coated, a Wisconsin paper mill considered dead after it abruptly closed while in receivership last fall, is being revived under new ownership with assistance from its skilled workers and their union, the USW.

“This is nothing short of a miracle,” said Outagamie County Executive Tom Nelson, a USW supporter. “Rarely has a company gone into receivership, come out and lived to tell the story.”

A longtime fixture in Wisconsin’s papermaking Fox Valley, the Appleton Coated mill in the village of Combined Locks closed after being forced into receivership last fall by a lender, PNC Bank, under a state law referred to as Chapter 128. More than 600 employees, including about 450 hourly workers, were laid off.

Appleton Coated never missed a payment to PNC, but it did miss a financial benchmark that entitled PNC to impose a \$50,000 daily penalty, which greatly expanded the company’s reported financial losses. PNC also rejected an attempt by Appleton to buy out the bank financing and make PNC whole.

Management had expected to continue operations under the direction of the court-appointed receiver. Instead, the receiver made the radical decision to immediately shut down the mill and put its assets up for auction. Customers fled, and the order backlog dropped.

“We thought it was a viable operation but the receiver shut the mill down and notified all of the customers of the closing,” said District 2 Director Michael Bolton, who oversaw the union’s intervention. “This mill was dead.”

Industrial Assets, a California-based used machine dealer and liquidator, was the successful bidder for the mill at an auction held on Sept. 19. A local newspaper, the Post-Crescent of Appleton, Wis., reported the sale price as \$20 million plus \$1.5 million for a “backstop fund.”

The USW challenged the sale in court and was able to convince Industrial Assets to restart the plant, at least temporarily, while the parties sought a buyer that would keep the facility running permanently. The sale was finalized in October.

“We went to court and launched a legal fight to try and keep the company



Back from **BRIN**



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UNITED STEELWORKERS
USW
UNITY AND STRENGTH FOR WORKERS

Local 2-144 President
Michael MacDonald

running, to not let it be torn down, to basically give the new owners and the old owners an opportunity to get together and develop some kind of plan to sell the place,” said Local 2-144 President Michael MacDonald.

The USW found a potential buyer who matched the winning bid, prompting Industrial Assets to agree to work with the union, Bolton said. County Judge Greg Gill gave the union and its members a chance to survive by allowing 90 days to find another buyer who would operate the mill.

While the union looked for a buyer who would operate the mill, it entered into a temporary service agreement with Industrial Assets, which hired local union members to clean the plant and get it ready for sale. More workers were hired when Industrial Assets discovered finished paper that could be sold.

When the first 90-day period expired, Industrial Assets asked for another extension to try and run the mill. At that point, Bolton said, Industrial As-

sets realized it could increase its profit by selling an operating plant rather than one that was closed.

“They could have said the 90-day agreement was up,” said MacDonald. “They chose instead to look to the future, invest the money and give back family and community-sustaining jobs. They should be recognized for that. Their outlook is pretty aggressive and pretty bright.”

Industrial Assets started calling back USW members last October to operate its No. 6 paper machine and ran a few product trials. In November, the company started calling back support people.

Survival odds increase

In February, Industrial Assets reached out to the USW and said they would like to negotiate a contract. A union team sat down with the company, and by the end of the second week in March the parties had a two-year agreement.

The contract was ratified by an

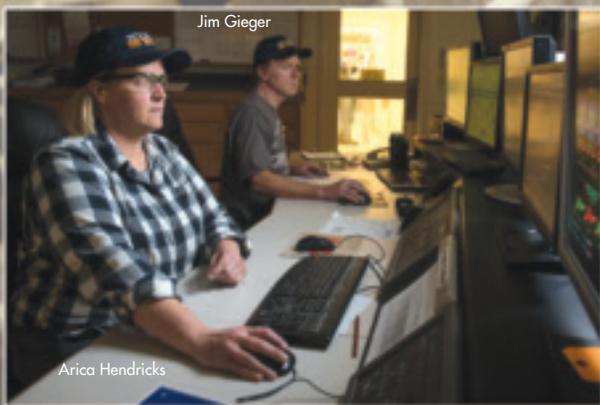
overwhelming vote. The agreement maintains wages in the first year and includes a raise in the second year. It also retains prior department and millwright seniority.

“We were able to negotiate a health care package that was cheaper and had better benefits to the members,” MacDonald said. “We got our life insurance back and our vacations.”

The two-year contract is seen as a significant sign that the operation and employment can be maintained for the longer term. If it does survive, the business will transition from traditional printing and writing papers to brown paper used in corrugated boxes and containers.

At the time of the shutdown, MacDonald said Appleton Coated was experimenting with changing its product line from white office and writing paper to brown corrugated paper used in packaging.

“We were in a trial run of brown when they shut it down,” MacDonald said. “The new owners decided to give



it a shot and see what kind of process it would be. They liked what they saw. They liked what they sold.”

The market is gradually shifting from writing paper to boxes used in packaging and shipping thanks to the explosion in online shopping and home delivery.

The plant’s third papermaking machine was restarted in March, and the company is investing in developing a waste paper processing line that will convert used corrugated containers into usable pulp.

By early April, the USW estimated some 236 union members had been recalled. When the mill is completely up and running, employment should exceed 300 hourly union workers and include about 100 management staff.

“If not for the union this (shutdown) would have been rubber stamped. Back in September, they probably would have torn those assets out and shipped them God only knows where,” Bolton said.

“But working with the owner, the people at the mill and our membership,

we’ve now got a viable operation, we believe, that’s getting orders again and has all three machines running,” Bolton said.

Union solidarity prevails

MacDonald said it’s important to understand that the mill would not have come back to life without the union.

“The USW stood up and took a hard stance and fought very hard to make this happen,” he said. “I have nothing but a lot of thanks and respect for everything the union did.”

It’s not clear if Industrial Assets plans to own the mill long-term or sell it to another concern. Either way, the odds for continued employment are better now that all of the machines are operating.

MacDonald said most people in the community thought the mill was dead once the receiver shut it down, and like the NewPage mill in Kimberly, Wis., it would never reopen.

“This is a rare situation because typically you never see a mill get shut

down, shuttered and fired back up to full capacity,” he said. “I truly believe if managed right, we’ll run for another 100 years.”

When recalls started, many idled employees were happy to return, even if they had found other jobs in the interim.

“It’s like coming home,” MacDonald said. “Most of these employees had 25 plus years. They want to come back. They want to see it run. They want to see it succeed.”

International Vice President Jon Geenen, who oversees bargaining in the paper sector, said the restart and evolution of Appleton coated is an extraordinary example of the union winning against improbable odds in a process that by design is rigged against workers.

“While we have not yet repatriated all of the workers to their rightful positions, the fact that we are building a foundation with a new innovative and motivated owner will create the foundation that could provide high end jobs for another generation. That is a win for the community and workers,” he said.

Photos by Steve Dietz



Jim Weyenberg

Michael MacDonald

Back from the
BRINK



Dennis Wood



International Vice President
Fred Redmond

Photos by Steve Dietz



Angela Willingham



BUILDING POWER

The USW’s 2018 Health Care Conference opened with clear goals: to unify the diverse sector, build stronger local unions, and expand bargaining power through organizing to improve working conditions and safety on the job.

Nearly 200 union leaders and activists came to Lexington, Ky., from April 23 to 25, energized and ready to start tackling these challenges.

“We are a health care union,” said International Vice President Fred Redmond, who oversees the health care council. “Today we have approximately 50,000 health care members, including about 6,000 in Canada.”

Members in the health care sector do a variety of jobs in a wide range of settings. They include direct patient care, pharmaceuticals, emergency first response, laboratory work, billing, dietary and more.

“Collectively, our health care members contribute to every step of the human health experience and live across the entire economic and educational

continuums of our countries,” said Mandy Hartz, USW health care workers council coordinator.

Yet despite this remarkable diversity, attendees discovered that they share a great deal in common.

Staffing top priority

“It’s important to see that no matter what district or country, everyone has the same issues with staffing and face the same things in negotiations we do,” said Renee Bacany, an RN and chief shop steward for Local 4-200 at Robert Wood Johnson Hospital in New Brunswick, N.J.

Indeed, staffing and the unsafe conditions that result from working short-handed were among the most pressing concerns delegates discussed as they attended panels and breakout sessions on health and safety, building stronger locals and negotiating better contracts.

“I came to the conference because it’s important to meet other health care workers,” said Alex Castro, a non-management laboratory supervisor in

hematology and coagulation at Norton Community Hospital. “We have a summer session at Virginia Tech each year, but it’s mostly about manufacturing. It’s the connection with other health care workers that matters.”

Castro, the recording secretary for Local 14459 in Norton, Va., said work can quickly pile up in a way it didn’t when he began 29 years ago. The hospital used to staff seven or eight technicians on the day shift, but now generally only has three or four handling the same or greater volume.

“Matching blood you have to be 100 percent perfect,” said Castro. “There’s no reversing it once it’s in someone’s body. It’s not stressful because it’s what we’ve been trained to do, but it can become stressful as the personnel becomes reduced, which is the way the health care industry has gone.”

Knowing rights

Working short staffed doesn’t just leave workers susceptible to burnout; it also leaves them vulnerable to work-



Ray White

Tim O'Daniel



Mandy Hartz



Geraldine Stella

HEALTH CARE CONFERENCE HELPS UNIFY DIVERSE SECTOR

place violence, and indeed health care workers face one of the highest rates of workplace violence of any industry.

By the nature of their jobs, many health care workers encounter patients or family members who are unstable or violent. Without the proper staff-to-patient ratios, workers can be seriously injured.

“Across the board, staffing is the biggest problem,” said Misty Lafond, an LPN and unit chair in Local 1-207, who works in the Youville Home, a long-term care facility in St. Albert, Alberta, Canada, “and in the end it’s the employee that pays the price, not the employer.”

To address this and other problems, members attended sessions to learn about their workplace rights, how to do strategic research to build stronger contracts and how to engage elected officials to press for better workplace safety laws.

Angela Willingham, unit chair in Local 9-675 in Winfield, Ala., said the most important thing she was taking

away from the conference was a better understanding of labor laws and what she’s entitled to bargain for in terms of workplace protections.

“We’ve gotten hurt before, and we didn’t know enough about our rights,” said Willingham, a CNA at a long-term care facility called Diversicare, where she said workers receive no meaningful training or preparation in dealing with violent patients, including a group who were mainstreamed after a local mental facility closed.

“We’re going to get more organized. We’re going to start having separate meetings as a unit, and we’re going to start doing regular newsletters to help with communication,” she said.

Council revitalized

This was the first Health Care Conference since the formation of the health care council’s steering committee, whose members helped set the agenda for the conference.

The coordinator position was the result of a resolution at the 2017 Constitu-

tional Convention, which charged each district director with appointing a staff and member coordinator to represent the district.

The group first met last December in Pittsburgh.

“Up until they created these (coordinator) positions, it’s not so much that we were neglected—the council just seemed sort of stagnant because we didn’t know what to do,” said Deana Hughes, a radiologic technician at Essentia Health in Hayward, Wis. “Now that we have all the districts coming together, it’s a huge step forward.”

In addition to helping outline the top priorities for the conference, several member coordinators taught classes and served on panels so that the information was truly sector specific.

“We all have to work together to come up with a solution to problems like short staffing and safety,” said Hughes, a unit chair in Local 9460. “If we don’t make a plan, nothing’s going to get done.”

NLRB ORDERS UNIVERSITY TO BARGAIN WITH PART-TIME FACULTY

The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) affirmed the right of part-time faculty at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh to organize a union with the USW under the National Labor Relations Act.

In a ruling issued on Feb. 28, the board asserted that the Catholic university violated the law by refusing to recognize the Academic Workers Association, an affiliate of the USW that is working to unionize higher education workers.

The university said it would appeal to a federal court.

“It’s simply shameful to see a university administration which carries the banner of the Catholic Church violate the teaching of the very faith they so loudly profess,” said International President Leo W. Gerard. “Hopefully, the current leadership will see the error of their ways and recognize the rights of

the part-time faculty members.”

Part-time faculty at Duquesne’s McAnulty College voted overwhelmingly to join the USW in 2012, the year the union announced a push to organize adjuncts at universities in the Pittsburgh region.

So far, the USW represents some 300 adjunct faculty members at Point Park University and 430 part-time faculty members at Robert Morris University. The USW is also involved in a broad campaign to organize some 4,000 full- and part-time faculty members at the University of Pittsburgh.

Initially, Duquesne signed a stipulation agreeing to abide by the outcome of an NLRB election. The university, however, changed course a few weeks before the election in 2012, claiming a religious exemption to the NLRB’s jurisdiction.

The NLRB denied the motion to

withdraw and held the election, which the adjunct faculty won. The NLRB first asserted jurisdiction over Duquesne in 1982, and the university has not challenged other employee unions on campus.

In late 2014, the NLRB issued a new standard to apply to claims of religious exemptions, and returned the Duquesne case to the NLRB’s Pittsburgh region for reconsideration. In June 2015, the NLRB’s regional director ruled Duquesne was not exempt from NLRB jurisdiction and must bargain with its adjuncts.

Duquesne again refused to bargain and appealed to the full board in Washington, D.C., which in February upheld the rights of adjunct faculty to form a union. The decision did allow the university to remove theology faculty from the bargaining unit.

“We won our election, a hearing at the regional board, and now an appeal of that decision,” said Adam Davis, a part-time faculty member. “When are they going to stop wasting an enormous sum of tuition dollars on this fruitless effort to strip teachers of their rights?”

Graduate student workers seeking to form a union with the USW at the University of Pittsburgh remained determined to succeed after university administrators announced in March that they would challenge the union bid.

The Academic Workers Association, affiliated with the USW, is involved

in separate but simultaneous drives to represent about 2,000 graduate student workers and approximately 4,000 full- and part-time faculty members across Pitt’s five campuses.

“The Pitt administration could have simply acknowledged our right to hold a union election,” said Abby Cartus, a Ph.D. student and graduate student

researcher in the Department of Epidemiology. “Instead they’re choosing to drag the process out in the hopes that we’ll somehow lose focus—but we are more determined than ever.”

Grad students filed for a union election in December 2017. They are seeking greater transparency in the decision-making that affects their working conditions, as well as protections against discrimination and harassment.

The administration and the graduate students will have to wait until the summer is over for a ruling. A hearing is scheduled Oct. 1 before the Pennsylvania Labor Relations Board.

If the board determines that graduate students are employees, which it has done in a case involving Penn State, the Pitt administration will submit a list of all eligible bargaining unit employees. The labor board will then verify if 30 percent of eligible graduate students have signed cards.

Pitt full- and part-time faculty began collecting union authorization cards on Jan. 22.





USW FOSTERS GLOBAL SOLIDARITY

in Brazil

When Donald Rei was illegally locked out in 2015 along with 2,200 fellow workers at Allegheny Technologies plants across the United States, the USW member got a first-hand look at the magnitude of corporate power. And he got an even closer look at the benefits and importance of global alliances.

“We were prepared not just because of the Steelworkers but because of our partnerships not only in the United States but internationally,” said Rei, a member of Local 1357 in New Bedford, Mass.

That is one of the many reasons why Rei joined a USW delegation this March to the World Social Forum in Salvador, Brazil. The annual event is the largest gathering held by non-governmental organizations and religious leaders working to create a more sustainable and equitable world.

District 5 Director Alain Croteau and Metallos’ International Solidarity Director Daniel Mallette also attended the forum and hosted a workshop focusing on lockouts and strategic campaigns.

The four-day conference, which boasted the theme “To resist is to create – To resist is to transform,” kicked off with a massive march that brought nearly 10,000 activists to the Salvador streets in support of human, women’s and workers’ rights.

The forum’s location in Brazil was significant as the country’s labor move-

ment and its black and poor communities are facing violent and unrelenting attacks from a right-wing government that seized power through a coup in 2016.

Workers are a target

Under President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva from 2003 to 2011, as well as under President Dilma Rouseff from 2011 to 2016, Brazil’s manufacturing and rural workers were a top priority. Now, they are a target.

“The situation in Brazil right now reflects what can happen when you have people in a position of power set on oppressing any movement working to lift workers’ rights,” International Vice President Fred Redmond said.

During the forum, on March 14, a well-known councilwoman and black labor and women’s activist Marielle Franco was assassinated in Rio de Janeiro after she spoke out against the increase of police and military violence. The tragedy drove home the immense challenges and systemic oppression minorities and activists in the country face.

CUT (Unified Workers’ Central) Brazil, one of the largest trade union associations in Latin America and a long-standing alliance partner with the USW, hosted panels packed wall to wall throughout the week that focused on the future of labor around the world.

CUT Secretary of International Relations Antonio Lisboa emphasized the need for global solidarity. “History tells us that without international support, we

cannot solve any situation in Brazil,” he said.

After his experience with ATI in 2015, Rei understands that reality all too well.

“Lockouts are going to happen more often, so you have to be prepared,” Rei said. “And with the economy going global, it’s more important than ever to build relationships with other international unions and social organizations.”

Global response needed

Redmond said the Steelworker relationship with workers in Brazil, particularly with CUT, began during the Goodyear strike of 2006 when the labor movement recognized the reach of multinational corporate power.

“As the world becomes more globalized, the only way to respond is to globalize our movement,” Redmond said. “We learned that with Rio Tinto, too. We discovered the advantage of linking arms with progressive unions around the world.”

A high point of the forum occurred when former President Dilma Rouseff took to the microphone during a CUT panel. She brought the assembly to its feet while emphasizing the need for global solidarity and resistance.

“In other democracies, everyone is equal. But that is not how it is here, or even in the United States,” she said. “We have to fight on all levels. We must resist everywhere, even on the factory floor.”



Unidentified workers leave U.S. Steel Corp.'s Granite City Works during a shift change on March 25, 2015, after the company announced it would temporarily idle operations. AP Photo/St. Louis Post-Dispatch, Huy Mach

TARIFF ANNOUNCEMENTS PROMPT RENEWED STEEL, ALUMINUM PRODUCTION

Years of activism by USW members and allies paid off in February when the White House announced tariffs on steel and aluminum designed to protect U.S. national security and level the playing field for American manufacturing workers.

“The USW has been in this fight for 40 years,” International President Leo W. Gerard said. “We’ve never asked for anything special. What we’ve asked for is simple – give us a level playing field.”

The tariffs were the result of concurrent investigations by the U.S. Department of Commerce, which found that illegal trade in both industries is a threat to supply lines that are vital to U.S. national defense and the nation’s infrastructure needs.

The investigations were conducted under Section 232 of the Trade Expan-

sion Act, which gives the president the authority to restrict imports through tariffs if national security is threatened.

Steel and aluminum, both essential components of military equipment, are “the foundation of our national security,” Gerard said.

Chinese dumping of those products has so drastically reduced American capacity in recent years that the nation may not be able to meet its own needs in an emergency.

The two industries responded to the trade actions quickly, with U.S. Steel announcing on March 7 that it would restart a blast furnace as well as steel-making operations in Granite City, Ill.

The company idled both of the mill’s blast furnaces and its steelmaking facilities in December 2015 and the plant’s hot strip mill in January 2016. Both moves were in response to unfair trade and global overcapacity. The hot strip

mill was restarted in February 2017.

‘Everyone is excited’

The Granite City restart could take until July and result in the recall of more than 500 workers.

Dan Simmons, president of Local 1899 in Granite City, said in March that the company had already contacted every available worker on the call-back list and was taking applications to fill an additional 150 jobs.

“We’ll be making steel again here in Granite City, and everyone is excited about it. The mood in this town is unbelievable,” Simmons said. “We’ve been waiting a long time for this.”

Simmons said the economy in the small Illinois town, which sits just across the Mississippi River from St. Louis, relies heavily on good-paying mill jobs to support local businesses and community projects.

“This is just a fraction of the jobs that will be created around here,” he said.

While one of two blast furnaces in Granite City remains idled for now, a restart “wouldn’t surprise me,” Simmons said.

Another 125 USW members could return to work at the Georgetown, S.C., Liberty House mill, formerly owned by ArcelorMittal. Operations ceased there in August 2015.

The Coalition for a Prosperous America, a labor and business partnership that supports fair trade policies, estimated that the new tariffs could eventually lead to a gain of almost 26,000 jobs in the steel and aluminum industries.

Joint venture in Lorain

Lorain Pig Iron (LPI), a joint venture of Republic Steel and ERP Iron Ore, announced in February that it was working with the USW on plans to restart a blast furnace at Republic’s Lorain, Ohio, facility, which has been idle since 2016.

LPI wants to provide pig iron for electric arc furnace steel and foundry facilities. The company hopes to begin making pig iron in Lorain by year’s end. As many as 1,000 jobs could return.

“LPI seeks to introduce a new beginning in U.S. steelmaking,” the company said in its announcement.

“Our hope is that this marks the beginning of a much-needed recovery for the domestic steel industry and for American manufacturing,” said Gerard, who spoke about the importance of the new tariffs in March before the Congressional Steel Caucus.

“Our trading partners need to understand that we must strengthen our industrial base,” he said. “We will continue to trade, but not on the same lopsided and unfair terms of the past.”

Aluminum rebounds

The aluminum industry also began to show renewed signs of life this spring when a Swiss-based company, Magnitude 7 Metals, said that it would restart two of three production lines at its facility in Marston, Mo., a site formerly owned by Noranda Aluminum.

Noranda shuttered the facility and filed for bankruptcy protection in 2016, putting about 900 people out of work. The company was one of the many

victims of China flooding the international marketplace with unfairly subsidized aluminum.

Century Aluminum CEO Michael Bless said the tariffs could lead his company to return its Hawesville, Ky., smelter to full capacity by early next year. The company has said it would invest more than \$100 million in Hawesville and restore more than 200 jobs.

“We think this action is a long time in coming,” Bless said.

In April, International Vice President Tom Conway joined Bless and Magnitude 7 CEO Robert Prusak in sending a letter to U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross and U.S. Trade Representative Robert E. Lighthizer supporting the Section 232 actions.

“The president must structure the relief in a way that strengthens our national security and ensures that U.S. workers and producers benefit, not our foreign competitors,” the letter read.

Alcoa has said it would restart three potlines at its Warrick Operations in Evansville, Ind., restoring 275 jobs. Workers also were hopeful the tariffs would improve the fortunes of Alcoa’s Wenatchee Works in Washington state, where the company curtailed operations in January 2016.

“This could start the conversation,” said Kelley Woodard, president of the Wenatchee Aluminum Trades Council, which includes 350 workers who are members of the USW and four other unions. “We’ve got our fingers crossed.”

Alcoa Wenatchee worker Bailey Olin, a member of Local 12-310A, said he’s continued to work as part of a skeleton crew at his plant for the past two years in the hopes that the company would someday restart and recall the hundreds of laid-off union workers.

“I don’t think there’s any one magic bullet,” Olin said of trade enforcement. “It’s a big-picture situation.”

Olin, a maintenance worker, said plants like his were designed to run continuously, not to be idled for years at a time.

“When you idle a plant, it’s hard on all of the machinery,” he said.

Steelworkers fight back

While critics of the new trade actions immediately began warning of a trade war, job losses and price hikes as a result of the new tariffs, many others

inside and outside of Washington called those fears overblown.

The benefits of enforcement outweigh the costs of doing nothing, Scott Paul, president of the Alliance for American Manufacturing, said in an op-ed published by *The New York Times*.

“Any price increase impact on consumers will be minimal, and it’s entirely up to the companies themselves whether to pass that cost along,” he said.

To USW members, the United States was not starting a trade war with its new policies, but instead finally fighting back by taking actions that the union has sought for years.

“We’ve been involved in a trade war ever since I started in this industry, from the very first day,” said 40-year steel veteran Calvin Croftcheck, a safety inspector with U.S. Steel whose home local is Local 1557 at U.S. Steel’s coke facility in Clairton, Pa.

“We’ve been losing that trade war,” Croftcheck said. “The Steelworkers are the only people who are pushing back.”

ArcelorMittal, the world’s largest steelmaker, which employs about 15,000 USW members, said in a statement that global overcapacity has made actions like the section 232 tariffs inevitable.

“The greater need, however, is to create a truly sustainable global steel industry, and the only way to do this is for steel-producing nations around the world to work together to address global overcapacity,” the company said.

U.S. workers have not been the only victims of unfair trade – Canadian steel and aluminum producers also have suffered the effects of dumping and overcapacity, which is why the USW argued for Canada’s exclusion from the new trade actions.

“Canada is not the problem,” Gerard said.

And while the tariffs on steel and aluminum are a good start, Washington still has plenty of work to do to ensure enforcement of any new rules and continue to level the playing field for American workers across all industries, he said.

“Today we’re talking about steel and aluminum, but we could do this on glass, on cement, on tires and rubber,” Gerard said. “We need to have a much more aggressive trade policy.”

CHINA SUBSIDIZES ALUMINUM SHEET

The U.S. Department of Commerce in April issued a preliminary determination that aluminum sheet imports from China are being illegally subsidized by that country's government.

The investigation, the first U.S.-initiated anti-subsidy and anti-dumping probes in decades, was launched last November. A final determination in the countervailing duty investigation is scheduled to be announced on Aug. 30.

The department imposed preliminary subsidy margins ranging from 31.2 percent to 113.3 percent of the value of the imported common alloy aluminum

sheet. In 2016, imports of common alloy aluminum sheet from China were valued at an estimated \$600 million.

The Aluminum Association, a U.S. trade group, welcomed the decision. Its president, Heidi Brock, said the decision "is an important first step to begin restoring a level playing field for U.S. aluminum sheet production."

The department also said it was starting new investigations to determine if certain steel wheels from China are dumped in the United States and whether producers in China are receiving unfair subsidies.

The U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) unanimously found that imports of aluminum foil from China materially injured the domestic industry, clearing the way for anti-dumping and countervailing duties.

As a result of the ITC's decision in March, the U.S. Department of Commerce will impose anti-dumping duties ranging from 49 percent to 106 percent, and countervailing, or anti-subsidy, duties ranging from 17 percent to 81 percent.

The decision is the result of an investigation begun a year ago when the Aluminum Association Trade Enforcement Group, an organization of domestic aluminum producers, filed petitions with the ITC and the Commerce Department. The petitions named 26 alleged subsidy programs and more than 230 Chinese companies. It was the first such action in the Aluminum Association's 85-year history.

Twelve years ago, U.S. production accounted for about 84 percent of all domestic aluminum foil demand. That has

U.S. GOES AFTER CHINA FOR TECHNOLOGY THEFT



It came as no surprise to the USW that the White House is accusing China of stealing U.S. trade secrets and forcing American companies to share propriety technology as a condition of doing business.

The USW and several major employers of union members were victims of a Chinese military intelligence unit that was indicted in 2014 and charged with computer fraud, economic espionage and theft of trade secrets.

That indictment by a federal grand jury in Pennsylvania alleged five Chinese military members conspired to hack into and maintain unauthorized access to computers owned by the USW and five U.S. companies in order to steal information of value to Chinese competitors and legal adversaries.

Brought by former U.S. Attorney David Hickton, the indictment foreshadowed accusations of intellectual property theft and forced technology transfers recently made by the U.S. government against China.

"Intellectual property is critical to the future of our nation's manufacturing base," International President Leo

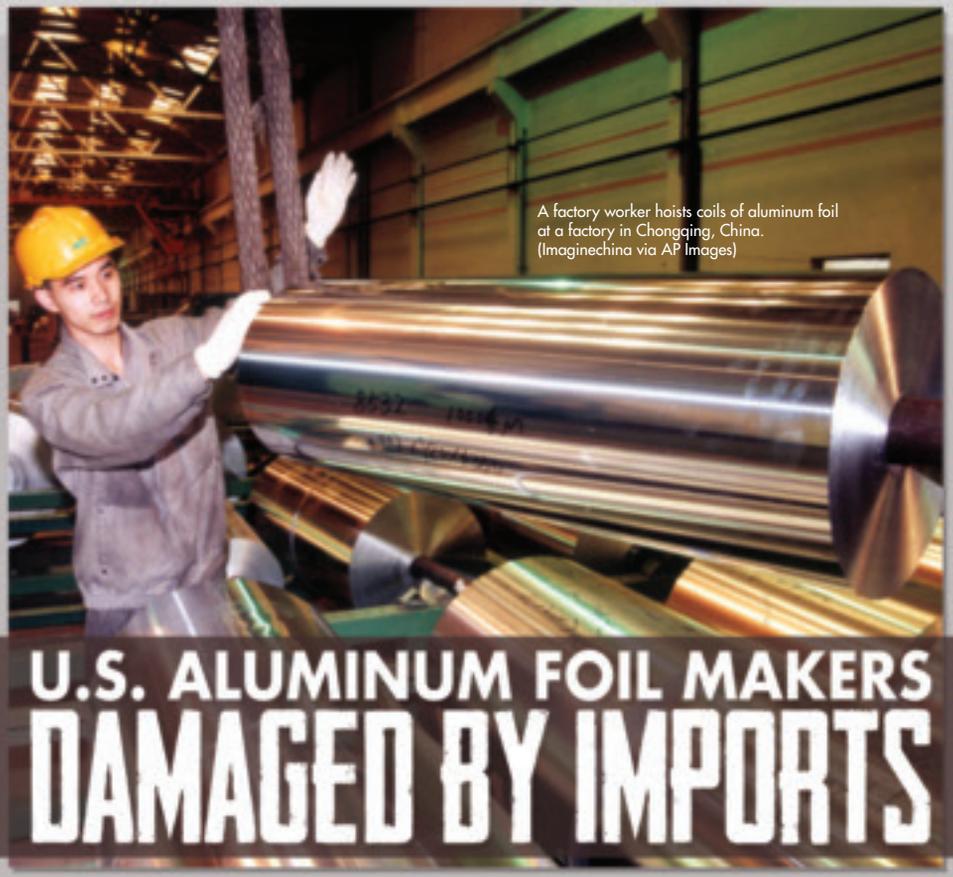
dropped to 69 percent. At the same time, Chinese imports grew from essentially zero percent of the total U.S. aluminum foil market in 2004 to 22 percent of the market today.

U.S. aluminum foil producers generate around \$6.8 billion in total economic activity and support more than 20,000 direct and indirect American jobs.

The Aluminum Association praised the ITC's vote, saying in a March 15 statement that imports of certain aluminum foil products from China "increased by nearly 40 percent between 2014 and 2016."

"The ITC's determination will move the foil industry toward a level playing field, allowing domestic producers of aluminum foil to pursue investments in their operations – investments that will further strengthen their competitiveness," Heidi Brock, president and CEO of the Aluminum Association, said.

China, as was expected, expressed its strong dissatisfaction with the decision and said it would take steps to protect its legal rights and interests.



W. Gerard said. "China's aggressive plan to buy, force transfer of, or steal our intellectual property to advance its interests is a clear threat to our national and economic security.

"For too long, the response to China's actions has been to simply complain while China continued to pursue its state-led industrial plans, its forced technology transfers and its out-right cyberespionage," Gerard added. "This has catapulted China forward in sectors ranging from advanced materials to robotics to new energy vehicles, among others. These actions threaten our future."

Last August, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer initiated an investigation into China's unfair trading practices relating to technology transfer, intellectual property, trade secrets and innovation under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, which allows for the unilateral imposition of duties in retaliation for unfair trade practices.

Strong evidence uncovered

The seven-month investigation uncovered strong evidence that China uses foreign-ownership restrictions to compel American companies to transfer

technology to Chinese firms.

"The extensive 301 investigation identified a broad set of illegal, predatory and protectionist actions that are clearly being pursued to advance China's plans to win in today's economy and dominate the industries of the future," Gerard said.

Specifically, on March 22, the U.S. Trade Representative reported that the investigation found China's actions undermined the ability of U.S. firms to compete fairly in the global marketplace by: (1) requiring or pressuring U.S. companies to transfer technology to Chinese companies; (2) imposing restrictions on, and intervening in, U.S. firms' investments and activities, including restricting the terms of technology licensing; (3) obtaining cutting-edge technology by directing and facilitating the investment and acquisition of U.S. companies by Chinese companies; and (4) conducting and supporting intrusions and theft from American computer networks.

The president then signed an executive memorandum ordering U.S. trade officials to prepare 25 percent tariffs worth an estimated \$50 billion to \$60 billion against Chinese exports to the

United States, including aerospace, information and communication technology and machinery.

Talk of tariffs escalated the rhetoric and quickly led to more back-and-forth threats of tariffs between the United States and China totaling hundreds of billions of dollars.

At press time, the U.S. Trade Representative's office was reportedly putting together another 301 complaint that would go after China for restricting U.S. trade in high-tech services such as cloud computing. Companies in that business deliver computer services, including storage and software over the internet.

China requires U.S. cloud computing firms such as Microsoft and Amazon to form joint operations with Chinese companies and license their technology to the Chinese partners.

American companies are restricted from marketing cloud computer services directly to consumers in China, which withholds licenses that would allow U.S. firms to operate independently in China. Chinese firms, such as Alibaba, are allowed to operate in the United States without restriction.

40

YEARS OF SOLIDARITY

**SHIPBUILDING LOCAL
REMEMBERS PAST,
PREPARES FOR FUTURE**

An 806-metric ton superlift consisting of 17 individual units is lifted onto the John F. Kennedy aircraft carrier being built for the United States Navy.
Photo by John Whalen/Newport News Shipbuilding



Local 8888 at Huntington Ingalls' Newport News Shipbuilding in Virginia, the largest local in the union, is celebrating the 40th anniversary of its founding by a diverse coalition of workers who overthrew an entrenched company union.

The election that brought the USW to the shipyard, held on Jan. 31, 1978, and open to some 19,000 workers, was the largest single workplace election ever held in the South and the largest election conducted by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in the 1970s.

The birth and progress of the local union and its members over the decades since have had a positive impact on the community beyond Newport News Shipbuilding, the nation's largest military shipbuilding company.

"The tenacity of the Steelworkers in the yard and our success at the bargaining table have had a huge ripple effect on the entire community, making every family, every business, every church better off because of the presence of a strong union in Newport News," said Local 8888 President Arnold Outlaw, who is retiring in June after three terms in office.

In strictly dollar terms, Local 8888 said the first six years of its tenure at Newport News resulted in more than a half-billion dollars in additional wages and benefits for shipyard workers. Its current contract, a 52-month agreement, is expected to bring Local 8888 members about \$15,000 each in new money and affordable health insurance.

Beyond money, the thousands of workers who voted to bring the USW into the shipyard "broke with southern tradition and triggered a fight for recognition and respect that struck at racial and economic inequality and transformed their lives forever," the local union said in a statement.

Forging a better life

The struggle to bring the USW to the shipyard was deeply intertwined with the civil rights movement at the time, a relationship that was explored in a new book, *Knocking on Labor's Door*, by Lane Windham. Many black workers, Windham wrote, saw the civil rights and labor movements as ways to forge a better life.

Founded in 1886 as the Chesapeake Dry Dock & Construction Co., the shipyard won its first Navy contract in 1893. Tenneco bought the company in 1968, and by 1978, when the union election was held, the shipyard was the largest employer in Virginia.

The shipyard has a history of hiring an interracial work force. The work force was about a fifth African American in the 1930s. By the end of the 1970s, when the election took place, it was about evenly split.

In 1965, employees working with the NAACP filed a lawsuit under Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act that accused the shipyard of denying promotions to blacks based on race, and barring them from higher-paying jobs.

The campaign drive began when four black shipyard workers – Edward Coppedge, Oscar Pretlow, Ellis Cofield and W.T. Hayes – contacted the USW and asked for help in overthrowing the Peninsula Shipbuilders Association (PSA), a company-controlled union in existence for 40 years.

The four men, all of whom had been involved in the PSA, were weary of company unionism and the PSA's

inaction on racial equality. It was a democracy in name only, Windham wrote.

During its time at the shipyard, the PSA defeated four attempts by outside unions to represent the workers – the CIO in the 1940s, the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers in the 1950s and the International Association of Machinists in the 1960s and early 1970s.

Tough beginning

The USW's effort in 1978 found support among new workers, African Americans and an interracial group of women hired after 1973 when the shipyard made a push to hire women for production jobs.

After the USW won the vote, it took more than two years and a bitter 11-week strike in 1979 for the company to recognize the union and bargain an acceptable first contract.

"It was rough, real rough," recalled Outlaw, who participated in the strike. "Black and white, men and women, stood together, went on strike risking everything – paychecks, homes, even marriages – to get a strong union in the shipyard. To make a decent living, we

had to win, whatever the costs."

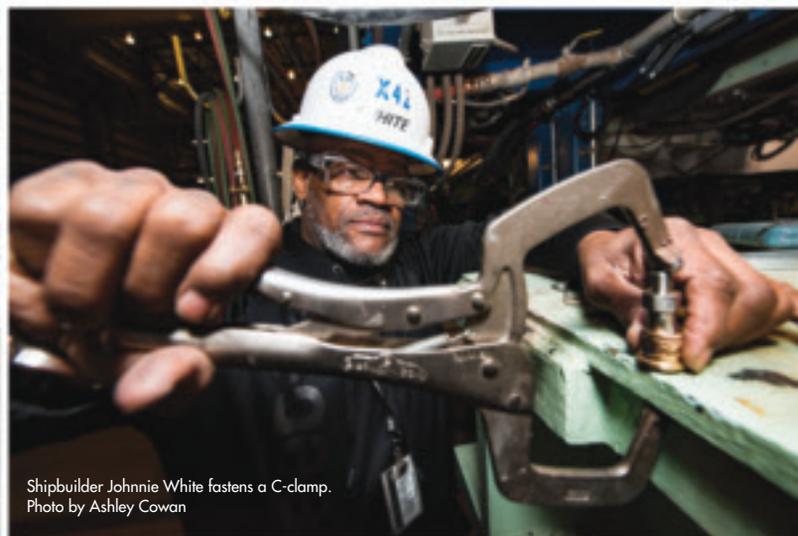
Following the election in 1978, Tenneco went to court alleging voting discrepancies. Legal delays stalled the workers until Jan. 31, 1979, when they struck, demanding that the shipyard recognize the USW as their bargaining agent.

**Today, Local 8888
represents more than
9,700 workers at
Newport News
Shipbuilding, now
operated by
Huntington Ingalls
Industries.**

On Easter Monday, April 16, 1979, strikers blocked shipyard gates when police in riot gear with dogs gathered on Washington Avenue. The police swept down the street, according to



Shipbuilder Jessie Riddick performs welding operations.
Photo by Matt Hildreth



Shipbuilder Johnnie White fastens a C-clamp.
Photo by Ashley Cowan



Photos courtesy of Newport News Shipbuilding

news reports, pushing and beating picketers away from the gates. They drove customers from shops and restaurants and chased individual strikers down alleyways and across parking lots.

“They did everything they could to stop us,” Jan Hooks, a retired crane operator, recalled. “They started breaking, running, slinging clubs, pushing people, turning dogs on people. I got beat with billy clubs.”

Today, Local 8888 represents more than 9,700 workers at Newport News Shipbuilding, now operated by Huntington Ingalls Industries. Most work in the main shipyard, but hundreds more work on temporary assignments elsewhere.

Change is coming

As a Navy contractor, the shipyard builds and refurbishes technologically advanced warships including aircraft carriers and nuclear-powered submarines. Under the federal Jones Act, their products must be built in the United States.

Local 8888 is about to undergo another transformation. More than 600 members are nearing retirement age.

At the same time, nearly 60 percent of the membership has less than 10 years of service and half were not even born when Local 8888 received its charter on Sept. 15, 1978.

The theme of the 40th anniversary observance, “Nobody Gave Us Nothing!” is aimed at educating younger members about Local 8888’s history and legacy.

Calling the new generation of union members “future history makers,” Outlaw urged them to “quickly absorb and embrace Local 8888’s legacy of solidarity and vigilance that’s being passed on to them, because nobody is going to give them anything, either.”

Events commemorating the 40th anniversary are scheduled through September. Outlaw said the celebration would be more than “a stroll down memory lane by folks with bad knees.”

“This is a moment for us, collectively, to shed the false comfort of the status quo and open our eyes and our minds to the new faces and technologies coming into the shipyard. If we do, then the best is yet to come for the Steelworkers and Local 8888,” he said.



Mary Jackson

NEIGHBORHOOD CENTER NAMED AFTER NASA ENGINEER

The city council in Hampton, Va., acting on a petition drive by Local 8888, voted to name a new neighborhood center after Mary Jackson, an aeronautical engineer who was portrayed in the Oscar-nominated movie “Hidden Figures.”

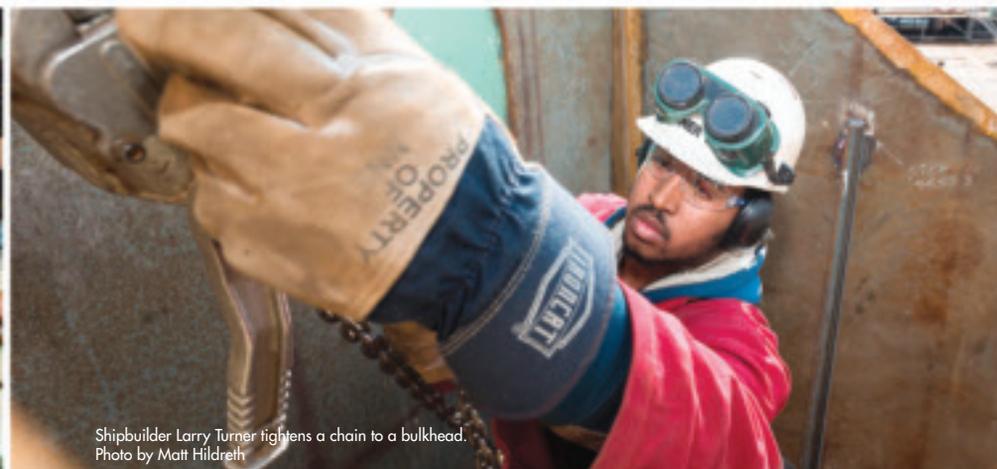
The local collected more than 2,500 signatures in the shipyard and in the community on behalf of Jackson, who was the first African-American female engineer at Langley Memorial Aeronautical Laboratory.

A native of Hampton, Jackson graduated from the Hampton Institute in 1942 with dual degrees in mathematics and physical science. She taught school and held other jobs before joining the Langley’s West Area Computing Section in 1951.

While at Langley, Jackson took graduate courses to earn an engineering degree and, in 1958, became a NASA engineer. Some 20 years later she became manager of Langley’s Federal Women’s Program, and retired in 1985.

Local 8888 described Jackson as a “beloved role model who continuously gave back to her people and her community.” Local Trustee Raymond Lewis is married to Jackson’s daughter.

“Once the Mary Jackson Neighborhood Center is built, the young people who enter, especially young girls, can feel a sense of pride and connection to the name of a strong, brilliant black woman,” said retiring Local 8888 President Arnold Outlaw. “Hopefully, it will inspire them to believe that they, too, can reach their dreams.”



Shipbuilder Larry Turner tightens a chain to a bulkhead.
Photo by Matt Hildreth



Ivette Depriest completes an order in the machine shop.
Photo by John Whalen

HEALTH, SAFETY & ENVIRONMENT

CONFERENCE



Health, Safety and Environment Director Mike Wright

Jordan Barab, consultant

David LeGrande, CWA director of occupational safety and health

International Vice President Tom Conway

USW ACTIVISTS RENEW COMMITMENT

USW health and safety activists spent a week this spring learning how to keep their workplaces safe, celebrating union successes in protecting workers on the job and renewing their commitment to the ongoing fight.

The 2018 Health, Safety and Environment Conference was sponsored by the USW, the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the USW's Tony Mazzocchi Center for Health, Safety and Environmental Education.

International President Leo W. Gerard, addressing nearly 1,500 union activists and corporate partners, said their work in health and safety is among the union's most important challenges.

"You should be very proud of the work that you do," Gerard told those in attendance. "What good is collective bargaining, what good is a raise, if you don't come home at night?"

That work included plenary sessions and hundreds of workshops over five days addressing issues such as workplace violence, hazard mapping, on-the-job stress, and increasing the effectiveness of labor-management safety committees.

Fallen brothers and sisters

As important as the conference sessions were, even more important is the work that members do with what they learned after returning home, USW Health, Safety and Environment Director Mike Wright said as he introduced the most solemn moment of the event: a video tribute to the workers who died on the job at USW- and CWA-represented workplaces since the last conference in September 2016.

"Today, we remember those who were killed on the job," Wright said. "But what's just as important is what we do tomorrow and all the days after

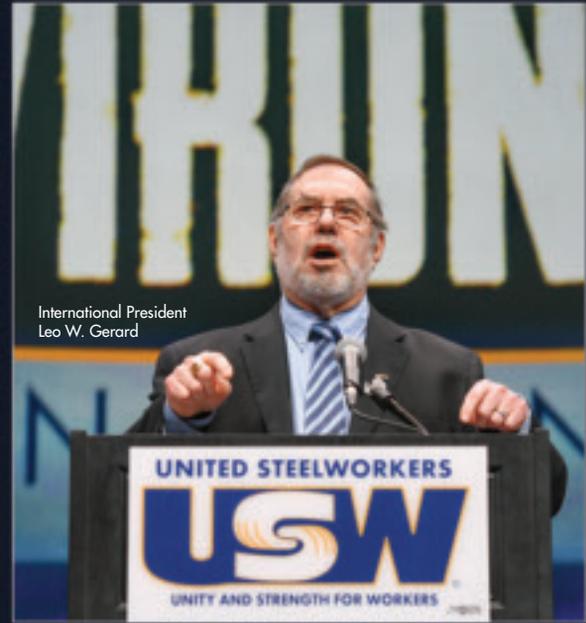
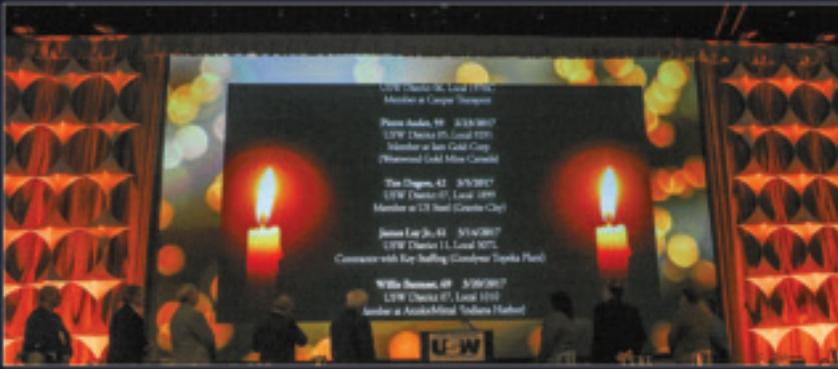
that" to prevent deaths like those from happening again.

The current political climate in Washington, D.C., makes that all the more difficult, said International Vice President Tom Conway.

"This is the largest gathering of safety and health representatives in the world," Conway told the record-breaking audience. "A lot of progress has been made, but let's be clear-eyed about where we are."

We are at a time, he said, in which the administration in Washington, beholden to Wall Street and corporate interests, has made no secret of its desire to gut health and safety protections across a wide range of industries.

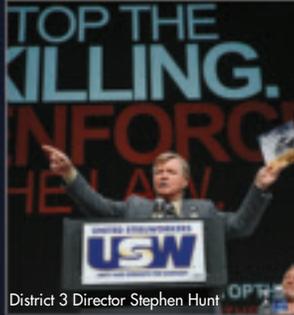
Those policies threaten not only the lives and livelihoods of working people, but also the health and safety of countless families in industrial communities, he said.



International President
Leo W. Gerard



International Vice President
Carol Landry



District 3 Director Stephen Hunt



COMMITMENT TO HEALTH AND SAFETY

Workers need to look no further than the August 2012 fire at Chevron’s oil refinery in Richmond, Calif., to see the effects that industrial incidents can have on communities. That incident injured six workers and sent 15,000 Bay Area residents to local hospitals.

That event led USW members to fight for updated process safety management (PSM) standards for oil refineries in California, which took effect last fall.

Recent victories

Other recent victories included the adoption of new OSHA standards for workplace exposure to silica and new rules addressing harassment in Canadian workplaces.

Workers must be relentless in their commitment to safety to ensure continued progress, Conway said.

“That’s your job,” Conway told the delegates.

In his remarks, Canadian National

“Workers are not the problem. Workers are the solution. Instead of constraining workers, we should be asking them what they need to do their jobs safely.”

Director Ken Neumann made a point of celebrating the activism of USW members in instituting Canada’s Westray Law and in addressing the issue of on-the-job harassment and abuse.

The Westray Law, named for a 1992 tragedy that killed 26 miners in Nova Scotia, allows for criminal penalties when workers die as a result of an employer’s negligence. The law passed after a 10-year campaign led by the USW.

“Since that terrible tragedy,” Neumann said, “we have never, ever wavered in our commitment to ensure that those workers did not die in vain.”

In her remarks, International Vice President Carol Landry spoke of the pervasiveness of domestic violence and sexual harassment across North America, arguing that the problem is not a private issue, but a workplace and a union one.

Nearly 8 million work days are lost each year due to domestic violence, Landry said. In addition, many abusive partners may find access to their victims in the workplace.

“That makes it a union issue,” Landry said. “Violence against women remains a powerful barrier against women’s equality.”

Safety experts speak

In addition to USW leaders, conference participants also heard from safety experts including Vanessa Sutherland, chairwoman of the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB), John Howard, former director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), and Todd Conklin, senior advisor at the Los Alamos National Laboratory, a Department of Energy site in New Mexico.

Howard outlined the challenges of what he called “advanced manufacturing,” a technology-driven revolution that includes advancements such as

three-dimensional printing, robotics and other processes that he said present new challenges to worker safety.

“We’re looking at this cyber-physical interface and trying to determine what the issues are going to be,” Howard said. “You all are on the front lines of this.”

Sutherland, whose agency has been threatened with closure by the White House, touted the positive changes that her organization has made to improve the lives of workers.

“This year is our 20th anniversary,” Sutherland said of the CSB. “So we are asking ourselves, how do we continue to try to reach people with new topics and lessons after 20 years?”

She urged attendees to visit the redesigned CSB web site (www.csb.gov) to gain access to the organization’s wealth of information on workplace safety issues.

“Our vision is to continue to drive change to increase protections for workers and the environment,” she said.

Conklin delivered the final address of

the conference, focusing on the dangers of “blame the worker” safety programs.

Such programs, which often focus on punishment rather than finding and eliminating hazards, don’t actually make workers safer, he said.

“Workers are not the problem. Workers are the solution,” Conklin said. “Instead of constraining workers, we should be asking them what they need to do their jobs safely.”

Conklin cited automakers attempting to design “accident-free” cars as an example of a misguided approach to safety.

“We don’t need accident-free cars,” Conklin said. “We need cars where – when they do have accidents – the occupants of the vehicles live to drive another day.”

Gerard encouraged the safety activists to return home and approach their fight for safer workplaces with renewed energy.

“Things don’t change unless you fight,” Gerard said.

CONFERENCE OFFERS MUCH TO LEARN AND SHARE



David LeGrande, CWA director of occupational safety and health, leads a workshop.

Photos by Steve Dietz

Products in Shreveport, La., started the week with workshops on health and safety committees, incident and accident investigations and industrial boilers.

There was lots of good information and too little time to absorb it all. McMillin said the workshops often ended just when the participants were getting going and looking for answers.

“I don’t think a week’s conference is near enough when it comes to this,” he said. “The two-hour courses, heck, they could be four hours, with a couple breaks.”

By week’s end, McMillin, accompanied by the local’s vice president, its top safety officer and chief steward, had plenty of information to share with rank-and-file members back home. “I’ve got enough notes for days,” he said.

Sharing lessons learned

Donna Frazier, unit chair for the USW at Precision Tube in North Wales, Pa., picked up a lot of safety materials to share with her co-workers and other members of amalgamated Local 6816.

“It’s good, very educating,” she said while rushing from one workshop to another. “I’m taking a lot of new ideas back to human resources, and I’m making copies to share at the union meeting.”

Workshops were an integral part of the weeklong conference, sponsored by the USW, the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the USW’s Tony Mazzocchi Center for Health, Safety and Environmental Education. There were some 280 sessions this year.

The workshop catalog was geared for both new and veteran safety activists with a mix of courses on broad topics including effective labor-management committees, finding and fixing workplace hazards, accident and near-miss inves-

There was so much to hear and learn at the 2018 Health, Safety and Environment Conference that Paul McMillin, a local union officer and millwright at a Louisiana refinery, couldn’t write fast enough to get it all down.

“The information available here is outstanding, just awesome,” McMillin said during a break between classes. “I wish I knew shorthand like in a courtroom where I could record word for word.”

McMillin, president of Local 245 at Calumet Specialty



Local 979, District 1 – Cleveland, Ohio

2018 SAFETY AWARDS

I.W. Abel Awards:

Brad Otto, Mike Fishler and Jeff Schumacher of Local 2-20, District 2 – Kaukauna, Wis.

Rob Wright and Matt Mosby of Local 1944, Canada

J. William Lloyd Awards:

Briana Fram and Wendy Fram, Sudbury, Ontario, Canada

Dr. David Michaels, assistant secretary of labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration

Joe Main, former assistant secretary of labor, Mine Safety and Health Administration

Falkowski/Seguin Awards:

Local 9447, District 12 – Lexington, Ky.

A.Q. Evans Awards:

- Local 979, District 1 – Cleveland, Ohio
- Local 6500, District 6 – Sudbury, Ontario, Canada
- Local 2251, District 6 – Sault Saint Marie, Ontario, Canada
- Local 53G, District 10 – Charleroi, Pa.
- Local 1024, District 10 – Elmira, N.Y.
- Local 1034, District 4 – White Pigeon, Mich.
- Local 1917, District 10 – Meadville, Pa.
- Local 689, District 1 – Piketon, Ohio
- Local 9923, District 9 – Counce, Tenn.
- Local 9-978, District 9 – Counce, Tenn.
- Local 1226, District 13 – DeRidder, La.
- Local 13-725, District 13 – DeRidder, La.
- Local 12585, District 2 – Manistee, Mich.
- Local 159, District 11 – International Falls, Minn.
- Local 361, District 9 – Jackson, Ala.
- Local 1083, District 9 – Jackson, Ala.
- Local 2-248, District 2 – Tomahawk, Wis.
- Local 646, District 9 – Valdosta, Ga.

Silkwood Awards:

- Local 487, District 13 – Sunray, Texas
- Local 5114, District 12 – Coeur D’Alene, Idaho
- Local 4153, District 6 – Hamilton, Ontario, Canada
- Local 3313-28, District 6 – London, Ontario, Canada

tigations, environmental laws, drugs and drug testing and workplace economics.

Participants could take advantage of topics more specific to their industries and work sites. Training was offered in mine safety, working with scaffolding, working in extreme heat, flame-resistant clothing, combustible dust hazards, lead exposure and many more topics.

Learning new things

Dominick Patrignani, a chemical company employee who belongs to IUE-CWA Local 81359 in Waterford, N.Y., was attending for the third time. He described the courses as informative and said it was beneficial to talk with union members from around the country who face similar issues.

“Safety is extremely important in the chemical industry,” said Patrignani, who works for Momentive Performance Materials, formerly a GE business. “I learned some new things, some rule changes, some regulation changes, some changes to work practices and some different ideas about chemical exposure.

“We are sharing best practices, other ideas and different stories from other people in the chemical, petro-chemical and the paper sector, which line right up with what we do, which is kind of cool.”

The conference was the first for Crystal Johnson, who works as a machine operator for Arconic, the Alcoa spinoff, in Davenport, Iowa. A former domestic violence counselor, Johnson was impressed that women’s issues and workplace violence were on the agenda.

“Because of my background and career before I came into factory work, I liked the speech on workplace violence and women’s issues,” she said. “It was refreshing for me to see that education and awareness were being put out there to so

many people.”

Having traded flexible daylight hours as a counselor for 12-hour overnight shifts in a factory, Johnson was particularly interested in a workshop on fatigue and its effects on workers.

“I’ve noticed working the shift I do now that my cognitive abilities have definitely declined. I’m almost always fatigued,” she said, adding that the topic was a common one among her co-workers.

“We talk about it a lot – the fatigue, the lack of family life, social life,” she said. “I definitely don’t have time to talk to a lot of my friends because I am either working, sleeping, or trying to sleep.”

Fatigue key issue

Fatigue was also a key issue for Mike Stempel, who was attending his first conference as a former member of the Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics & Allied Workers International Union (GMP), which merged a year ago with the USW.

Stempel, president of Local 233, intends to share research on workplace fatigue with his employer, Consolidated Container, where 12-hour days and forced overtime are common.

“For a while we had a lot of injuries. People were getting hurt and the company is trying to figure out why,” he said. “Fatigue is a huge thing, and we’ve got a lot of it.”

Michael Gonzalez, an activist with Local 12-5 in Martinez, Calif., works at the same Shell refinery where his father put in 36 years. Gonzalez learned about the union from his father and said it’s important to keep younger members active.

“You’ve got to get them interested. You’ve got to get them active because otherwise there is no future . . . if we hope to have one, we need strong young men and women to step up and carry the banner forward.”

Freeloaders, DUES DODGERS & PAYCHECK PARASITES

SUPREME COURT DECISION LOOMING



Mark Janus walks outside the Supreme Court
AP Photo by Jacquelyn Martin

MARK JANUS, A RECORD KEEPER FOR THE ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, IS THE LEAD PLAINTIFF IN A SUPREME COURT CASE

THAT COULD CHANGE THE LANDSCAPE OF PUBLIC SECTOR UNIONISM IN THE UNITED STATES.

Access the Janus tool kit online at:
www.usw.org/janustoolkit

Illinois public employee Mark Janus wants the benefits of a union contract but doesn't want to pay for them. With backing from right-wing billionaires, Janus is hoping to make that freeloading legal for public sector workers in all 50 states.

The U.S. Supreme Court heard arguments in late February from Janus's lawyers. The case, *Janus v. AFSCME*, will determine whether fair share fees remain a subject of contract negotiation or whether freeloading becomes the law of the land for public sector workers.

In an organized workplace, unions must represent all bargaining unit employees. To offset the cost of representation, the law in some states allows unions to negotiate union security clauses requiring bargaining unit employees who do not join the union to pay a monthly fair share fee instead of dues in states without right-to-work laws.

The fee is based on a calculation of the cost of representing each worker at the bargaining table, in grievances, arbitrations, in advocating for safe and harassment-free workplaces and in carrying out other "non-political" duties.

With its conservative majority, the Supreme Court is likely to rule in favor of Janus, which means that public sector workers across the United States could choose to stop paying dues and fees altogether, and unions would still be legally bound to represent them.

Such a decision has the potential to cripple bargaining and organizing in the public sector, which is the ultimate intention of the rich conservatives who are bankrolling the Janus case.

Conference sets stakes

The impending Janus decision was at the forefront of discussions at the USW's Public Sector Conference, which was held in February at the Wyndham Grand Hotel in Pittsburgh.

"We are here to have a very frank discussion about the challenges we face," said International Vice President Fred Redmond, who oversees the USW's public employee bargaining.

"This Janus case threatens the freedom of public sector workers to build power through collective bargaining," Redmond told some 100 USW local leaders who attended the conference. "But the labor movement has never been as united as we are on this issue."

Participants in the 2018 USW Public Employee Conference took part in a series of discussions about the possible implications of, and responses to, the Janus case, as well as workshops devoted to bargaining, organizing, labor law, member engagement, communications and other topics aimed at finding new ways to build the labor movement in what could be a new legal environment.

IF THE SUPREME COURT RULES AGAINST THE UNIONS, EVERY LOCAL IS VULNERABLE TO THE FIRST MEMBER WHO SAYS, 'I WON'T PAY!'

Attendees left the conference with a tool kit to help local unions with the Janus challenge. It includes fliers titled: What's the Union Done for Me?; Advice from Right to Work States; Winning Allies in Your Local; Building an Effective Union; and How to Build a Communication and Action Team.

All states vulnerable

Joe Smith, the president of Local 9158, the union of Boston city managers and technical staff, said the Janus case could change each individual union's dynamics – even in union friendly states.

"In Massachusetts, you could feel invulnerable to a pro-dues dodger decision, but think about it," Smith said. "If the Supreme Court rules against the

unions, every local is vulnerable to the first member who says, 'I won't pay!'"

"With less dues, each local union would have fewer resources to service our members," said Jim Williams, president of Local 8599, a public school system staff union in Fontana, Calif.

"It's exactly what paycheck parasites want. They want this Supreme Court decision to start a death spiral for unions. It's so important that each local stops that process before it starts," he said.

The key is consistent member-to-member communication and leadership that's always willing to listen.

"We already have right to work (for less) in Michigan," said Jennifer Wirrick, president of Local 9036, which represents bus transit workers in the city of Saginaw, Mich. "So the ruling won't change us internally. But what we've learned from our experience is the need to lock eyes with each marginal member each month."

Essential community work

In addition, public sector workers and those who support them must make the case that the work they do is essential to their communities, Redmond said, citing two USW members in particular who went the extra mile to serve their communities in response to recent natural disasters.

Mayra Rivera of Local 8198 in Puerto Rico and Clarence Payne of Local 9488 in St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands both went above and beyond to help people in their communities in the wake of a series of devastating hurricanes that struck the islands last fall, Redmond said.

Attacks on the rights of those workers, including teachers, utility workers, emergency service workers and others, should be a wake-up call for all union members, Redmond said, because if the anti-union movement gets its way in the Janus case, the next step likely would be for Republicans to propose a national right-to-work (for less) law.

"We have to go out and tell the story of the union, to make the case to people that it's better to be in than out," Redmond said. "We are the last thing standing in the way of the corporate agenda. Now is the time."

The Supreme Court is expected to rule in June.

2018 Rapid Response and Legislative Conference

As *USW@Work* went to press, nearly 700 USW activists were preparing to make their voices heard in Washington, D.C., on issues including trade, union rights and retirement security.

In addition to direct action aimed at specific legislative goals, the 2018 USW Rapid Response and Legislative Conference was scheduled to include addresses from legislative and labor leaders, panel discussions, training sessions and workshops.

The goal of the three-day conference, scheduled to start on May 21, was to tie the union's legislative agenda in Congress directly to the USW's bargaining goals at local unions across the country.

"Our work in Washington goes hand in hand with our bargaining agenda at home.

From health care to retirement security to work hours, to health and safety regulations – what happens on Capitol Hill directly affects every member in every bargaining unit," said International President Leo W. Gerard. "That's why the relentless activism and educational outreach we get from our Rapid Response team is so important."

A town-hall style discussion was planned with members of the Congressional Blue Collar Caucus, including U.S. Rep. Brendan Boyle of Pennsylvania.

On the third day of the conference, activist members were scheduled to lobby members of Congress on workers' rights issues, and to deliver more than 20,000 postcards calling for legislators to protect Social Security, pensions, Medicare and Medicaid.

Gómez Nominated for Mexican Senate

Napoleón Gómez Urrutia, president and general secretary of Los Mineros, the mine and metal workers union of Mexico, won the nomination of the MORENA party as a candidate for the Mexican Senate in the July 1, 2018, elections.

MORENA's presidential candidate, Andrés Manuel López Obrador, has called on the Mexican government to end its political persecution of Gómez and allow him to return from Canada, where he has lived since 2006 after the government brought false criminal charges against him.

The charges were thrown out by the Mexican courts in 2014 but Mexico has refused to guarantee Gómez's safe return.

Under Gómez's leadership, Los Mineros, which in 2005 formed an alliance with the USW, has led the fight for democratic unions and genuine labor rights in Mexico that would allow workers to earn decent wages.

Ambulance Workers Ratify

Some 45 first responders at Pistoressi Ambulance in Madera, Calif., voted in February to ratify a first contract after more than two years of difficult bargaining.

The new unit, which will join Local 12-911, represents full- and part-time paramedics and EMTs.

The group began organizing in September 2015, looking for improvements to wages and working conditions.

"It's a little company," said Kenny Contreras, who served on the bargaining committee and has worked as a paramedic at Pistoressi for more than 16 years. "They didn't have policies or procedures for anything. We had to start from scratch."

The biggest concern was inconsistency over the way the company handled pay, Contreras said. "We had no set pay scale. You'd go in and ask for a raise, and they'd give it if they felt like it."

Beryllium Delay Unjustified

The USW condemned a decision in March by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to delay by 60 days the enforcement of a new standard for occupational exposure to beryllium.

The standard had been scheduled to go into effect March 12. OSHA moved the enforcement date to May 11. In a press release, the agency said the delay "will ensure that stakeholders are aware of their obligations, and that OSHA provides consistent instructions to its inspectors."

International President Leo W. Gerard noted that the standard had been released more than a year ago. "You'd think that the stakeholders would have read it by now, and that OSHA would have time to instruct its inspectors. There's no real justification for this delay," he said.

Beryllium is used in the aerospace, electronics, medical and defense industries. However, it is highly toxic and can cause lung cancer.

"By OSHA's own risk estimate, the standard will save 90 lives a year," said Mike Wright, director of the USW's Health, Safety and Environment Department. "A 60-day delay could eventually cost fifteen lives."

Pennsylvania Bus Drivers, Aides Join USW

More than 300 school bus drivers and aides who work in Philadelphia for First Student Inc., a school transportation provider, voted in March to be represented by USW Local 286.

The organizing campaign was a cooperative effort between Local 286, the International and Pennsylvania's District 10.

The campaign began last summer after First Student opened a bus yard to service Philadelphia schools and began a mass hiring drive, said Local 286 President Carlo Simone, who praised organizers Ben Brandon, Larry Goodman and Lindsay Patterson.

Local 286 already represented some 400 drivers and aides employed by First Student in suburban Ambler, Pa., and Doylestown, Pa. In addition to Ambler, Doylestown and Philadelphia, the USW represents First Student employees in Elyria, Ohio; Saginaw, Mich.; Randolph, Mass.; Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada; Bethel Park, Pa., and Colmar, Pa.



Left to right: driver Patrick Laguerre, bus monitor Sandra Lamar, retiree Larry Goodman, driver Joyce Bell, organizer Lindsay Patterson and driver Sarah Pickett.

Steelworkers Confront Alcoa CEO

USW members from Canada travelled nearly 1,500 miles to Florida to confront Alcoa CEO Roy Harvey over the lockout of employees at the ABI aluminum smelter.

Locked-out ABI workers from Bécancour, Quebec, demonstrated in February outside the BMO Global Metals and Mining Conference, where Harvey addressed investors.

Other locked-out ABI workers demonstrated outside the Bank of Montreal (BMO) in Trois-Rivières, Quebec, where they denounced the bank's decision to invite Harvey to speak at its conference while thousands of Quebec families were affected by the lockout.

The ABI smelter in Bécancour, the second-largest of its kind in North America, is a joint venture of Alcoa and Rio Tinto. The two multinationals locked out employees on Jan. 11.

"Rather than negotiating a new collective agreement, Alcoa's balance sheet has taken a hit with each passing day," said Clément Masse, president of Local 9700, which represents the locked-out workers. "The costs associated with shutting down two pot lines at the smelter and the future restart of operations amount to more than \$100 million."

Alcoa and Rio Tinto opted to lock out ABI employees after the workers voted overwhelmingly to reject the company's attempt to impose a concessionary contract.

"We have already offered meaningful compromises on the outstanding issues," Masse said. "The employer's response has been to cut off negotiations and try to impose its will on employees, while holding an entire region's economy hostage."

USW, Highmark Honored

The TEGNA Foundation honored the USW and Highmark Health with a national award for their "Make a Difference Day" project.

The USW and the foundation teamed up last October to bring together people from around Pittsburgh to volunteer and encourage building a culture of community service.

Volunteers spent a day organizing thousands of adult and baby diapers made and donated by USW Local 2-482 at Kimberly-Clark Corp. in Neenah, Wis. The diapers were donated to the Diaper Bank of Western Pennsylvania for people in need.

Volunteers also packed more than 1,000 art kits donated to pediatric patients at various health care facilities, including Allegheny General Hospital's pediatric unit and Highmark's The Caring Place.

The group also packed hundreds of children's toiletries and school supply bags for donation to local domestic violence and homeless shelters and to the Center for Hope, a community center that provides food, clothing, education and other services to families in need.

"Our union and our incredible members are often the heart and soul of the communities where we live and work. Giving back is in our blood," said International President Leo W. Gerard. "We're proud to partner with Highmark Health in our hometown of Pittsburgh to promote doing good deeds and show the power of unity."

USW Promises Fight at Novelis

The USW is continuing to fight for better treatment at the Novelis aluminum facility in Oswego, N.Y., despite a federal appeals court ruling that lifted a previous order that the company must bargain with the workers.

"The court upheld every unfair labor practice charge the workers made against this company," said District 4 Director John Shinn. "Nobody should look at this decision as if it somehow vindicates Novelis. This court may have disagreed on the remedy, but the company is just as guilty of violating these workers' rights today as it was yesterday."

In January 2015, an administrative law judge upheld NLRB findings that Novelis interfered in a 2014 union election. The judge found the violations were severe enough to warrant a rare order for the company to bargain with the union even though the election was lost. An NLRB panel upheld that ruling in 2016.

Should the workers decide to hold another election and Novelis continues to violate workers' rights, the company could be held in contempt of court. "We're not going to walk away from these hard-working people, their families or this community," Shinn said.

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 _____

Workers Memorial Day

*In Memory of Those Who Died at USW Work Sites
April 30, 2017 to April 26, 2018*

4/30/2017	Larry Shiner, Jr., 60	Kapstone Charleston Kraft LLC
5/22/2017	Greg Latson, 47	U.S. Steel Great Lakes
6/15/2017	Dave Fiske, 57	Town of Plainville
6/22/2017	Terry Eads, 56	Hood Container Corporation
7/13/2017	Charles Bagley, 59	Motiva Enterprises, LLC
7/27/2017	Gabriel Benitez, 41	Asarco Grupo Mexico, Asarco Inc
8/27/2017	Willie Roberts, 61	Rayonier Advanced Materials
9/5/2017	Tim Underwood, 52	HollyFrontier El Dorado Refining LLC
9/20/2017	Zakery Schmidt, 28	Argos Cement LLC
10/10/2017	Albert Lozano, 64	Kennecott Utah Copper Corporation
10/17/2017	Kelvis Price, 42	Russel Metals Williams Bahcall Inc.
11/7/2017	Karey Pettway, 57	BASF
11/15/2017	Ian Fraser, 68	Timber West Forest Company
12/1/2017	Yesenia Espinoza, 31	EXXONMobil Oil Corporation
12/4/2017	Robert Klett, 60	ArcelorMittal Monessen, LLC
12/11/2017	Alfred Cadena, 61	ArcelorMittal USA LLC (Indiana Harbor)
1/3/2018	Remi Breault, 44	Vitalaire Canada Inc.
2/21/2018	David Stephens, 50	International Paper
2/23/2018	Andrew Cooper, 55	National Materials Company
2/23/2018	Eriberto Rivas, 52	Gefco Inc.
3/1/2018	Dylan Roberts, 33	Wolf Lake Logging
3/4/2018	Jaswant Singh, 42	Continuous Colour Coat Ltd (Metal Koting)
3/24/2018	Alan Johnson, 58	Constellium Muscle Shoals, LLC
3/24/2018	Jason Housel, 35	ERP Compliant Coke
3/26/2018	Michael Hartzenberg, 42	Source One Transport Ltd
4/11/2018	Tyree Turner, 45	Bonnell Aluminum
4/24/2018	Jonathon Porter, 23	InfraSource Construction
4/26/2018	Francis Lalancette, 28	Rio Tinto Fer et Titane

*Not included are those who died from natural causes while at work or in transit to and from work.
Source: USW Health Safety and Environment Department.

