For decades, Hillary Clinton has stood with us when we needed her help. I believe we should stand with her now.

International President Leo W. Gerard
Workers Make America Great

American workers are more productive than ever, but too many families are struggling to make ends meet. So-called right-to-work legislation has made it harder than ever for workers to organize and bargain collectively, and unfair “free” trade has decimated entire industries that for generations provided stable incomes to support families and sustain communities.

As a result of Citizens United, the voices of ordinary citizens have been drowned out of the political system by obscure campaign contributions from super PACs funded by the wealthy and powerful special interests. Overturning the decision could require a constitutional amendment and will definitely need leadership from public servants instead of spineless politicians.

Union workers certainly did not create these problems, but we must be part of the solution. We need to continue pushing for fair trade policies to reverse the flow of good jobs leaving the country and infrastructure investments to rebuild our roads, bridges, cities and towns with American-made materials, including clean and renewable energy production, and training for the high-tech jobs of the future.

In the meantime, we cannot stop fighting for fair wages, affordable health care, safer workplaces and retirement with dignity. Our contracts are the most effective tool we have to protect each other from discrimination, harassment and other violations of civil and human rights, and we cannot allow divisive politics to threaten the unity and solidarity that make our union — and our country — truly great.

Dave Harvey, Local 8042
Cabot, Pa.

ASARCO Struggle

My husband retired from ASARCO Mission Mine a few years ago and passed away last year. The union was always such a big part of his life, even after his retirement. His brothers and sisters were a big support for me.

I was so glad to see the summer edition in my mailbox. I love keeping in touch with the battles the USW takes on to support the members. I have continued health insurance and a pension because of the contract Bill and Local 937 members fought and went on strike for. It means a great deal to me.

His brothers and sisters at ASARCO/Grupo Mexico are engaged in another protracted contract battle. I wish my health permitted me to be more active in their ongoing struggle, but I am assured when I read USW@Work to know that the International is still with them.

Laura Hogan
Vail, Ariz.

ATI Struggle Not Over for All

I was happy to see the article in USW@Work about the ATI/USW contract ratification and had to comment about it. I was the president of Local 1196-1 O&T unit, which represents salary union members in several ATI locations, during the negotiations. I retired shortly after ratification and the return to work.

I can’t say enough about the USW and International Vice President Tom Conway and his staff – not only fighting and working throughout the negotiations, but supporting us and bringing us through the difficulties we faced.

We stood up to the company’s outrageous demands and concessions, and brought back a contract we can be proud of. We truly are blessed to be part of the USW.

Everyone, however, needs to be reminded that the fight continues. My local was decimated by ATI. There are still members laid off. ATI cut the salary-union staff by more than half under the cover of shutting down locations, attrition, outsourcing, automation and protecting salary supervisors and other personnel.

ATI continues to fight every attempt to get members back into their union positions. They continue the threat of more job losses, do not fill positions and outsource work. The officers and members of 1196-1 continue to fight and need your continued support to get those positions back.

Mark Miecznikowski, Local 1196-1 retired
Home, Pa.

Remember the United Way

For more than 125 years, United Way Worldwide has worked for the common good by improving education, financial stability and health in nearly 1,800 communities and more than 40 countries and territories around the world.

United Way Worldwide is making a huge impact with programs to ensure that children from the poorest neighborhoods have the tools they need to succeed in life; providing vocational training for men and women who desire to work but lack specific skills; standing up for human rights by confronting issues like human trafficking and child labor; identifying and addressing public health and safety concerns like access to clean water; and bringing relief to victims of floods, earthquakes and other disasters.

The limitless dedication the United Way has shown to giving our communities the resources that families need to improve their quality of life gives me confidence and pride to endorse their 2016 campaign and invite all USW members to join the nearly three million volunteers and more than ten million individual donors who share our values and enthusiasm about helping others, especially when they need it most.

Leo W. Gerard
International President
USW members at Veritas Steel in Eau Claire, Wis., are part of a small, close-knit work force who together help to build some of the biggest and most complex structures in the United States.

About 125 members of Local 2138 at the Veritas fabrication plant create huge girders, trusses and other bridge components out of steel, piece them together to make sure they fit, then disassemble and prepare them for shipment to construction sites across the country.

“Sometimes we don’t even realize how big things are until we see them out in the field,” said Pete Tio, president of Local 2138, who spends his work days in the massive Veritas yard where the workers assemble their finished creations.

The factory includes about 300,000 square feet of indoor space as well as about 60 acres outdoors, where USW members like Tio work in rain, snow and sometimes below-zero temperatures under fairly strict deadlines.

“We make sure everything fits like a glove before it gets shipped out,” said Dennis Wagner, Local 2138 vice president, who has worked at the plant for nearly 31 years.

In the nearly three years with Veritas at the helm, the local has only had one contract-related complaint (Tio hesitates to even call it a grievance), which was resolved after a meeting of less than a half-hour.

Another change Veritas made was to pay its hourly workers bonuses – outside of the USW collective bargaining agreement – each time the company reached quarterly production goals.

The overall result has been a new workplace culture – one with better employee morale, increased efficiency, and a safer, more productive work environment for USW members.

“People did come in and said, ‘the workers are our number-one asset,’” said Jeff Bauer, a 31-year veteran who was working alongside Cole Olson in the factory’s assembly shop during a recent visit to the plant by USW@Work.

‘A lot of changes’

Carlo Van Heertum has seen “a lot of changes” since he started working for PDM 41 years ago. In its early days, the company made bridge parts as well as structural steel for use in skyscrapers and other large-scale projects.

PDM workers produced the stainless steel triangles that make up the Gateway Arch in St. Louis, as well as the forked columns at the bottom of the original World Trade Center in New York City.

Today, the workers in Eau Claire are exclusively dedicated to bridge-building, a field that has seen a significant increase in competition over the years.

“Everybody and their brother is making bridges now,” Wagner said.

Veritas produces all types of spans, from pedestrian and railroad bridges to arch and truss bridges that carry highway traffic. What sets the company apart from its competitors is its ability to customize each project and make it unique.

“Every bridge we make is different,” said USW member Bob Rybka. “That’s what makes it fun. Not every company does that. These aren’t ‘cookie cutters’ like some companies make.”
As an example, in 2004, as Detroit was preparing to host Super Bowl XL, local officials also were making plans for construction of the Gateway Bridge and wanted parts of the structure to resemble footballs. Veritas was able to fulfill that unusual request.

“That’s one reason why we get so much business,” Wagner said. “We can do the complex stuff.”

Investing in equipment

Workers at Veritas do a variety of jobs — from smoothing and shaping large pieces of steel to make sure they fit together perfectly, to welding pieces together, painting them and preparing them for the often long journey to their destination.

Some of the bridge components produced at Veritas weigh as much as 232,000 pounds, and some pieces require as many as three massive lifts, equipped with cranes, to position them into place.

Dealing with such giant pieces of steel makes safety and health a top priority both for the company and for the union.

“One slip up and it could kill you,” Bauer said.

Veritas has helped improve safety and health by investing millions of dollars in modern equipment and other updates at the plant, which had fallen into disrepair before the takeover.

“It’s hard to do the job right without the right tools and equipment,” Wagner said.

While safety at Veritas has made major strides over the years, there is always room for improvement, Wagner said. “Nobody comes to work to get hurt,” he said.

Despite the updated equipment and the ever-increasing size of the products they make, much of the work USW members perform at Veritas is still intricate enough that it must be done by hand.

“This is skilled work. There’s nothing automated about it,” Shaver said. “We don’t do the same thing twice.”

Even in the facility’s paint shop, workers must be meticulous, making sure to brush each one of the hundreds of bolts on a girder with at least three coats of paint to make sure that the piece will pass inspection.

State safety inspectors from around the country regularly visit the Veritas facility to review the company’s finished products, sometimes spending as much as a week at a time to make sure the products meet their rigorous standards.

Besides dealing with state-by-state inspection standards, Veritas grows its business by developing relationships with contractors throughout the United States who bid on public projects and then hire Veritas to complete the fabrication portion of the work.

In addition to the Eau Claire facility, Veritas operates fabrication plants in Wausau, Wis., and Palatka, Fla., where workers are not represented by the USW.
The workers in Eau Claire recently completed a bridge in Cleveland and are now working on spans that will be erected in Minnesota, Illinois and Kansas. The Veritas employees are planning a bus trip to a construction site in nearby Virginia, Minn., so they can get a first-hand look at one of their finished products.

“We don’t receive any foreign steel. If it does show up, we ship it right back.”

While it’s not always possible for the workers to personally visit construction sites, Veritas provides a closed-circuit video feed on a television in the employee lunch room so the workers can monitor the progress of their various bridges as they are built.

“These guys should be proud of what they do,” Shaver said.

One thing both labor and management in Eau Claire are equally proud of is the fact that no foreign steel is permitted on the company’s property. Even the equipment, down to the chains workers use on their cranes and lifts (there are more than 1,000 chains on the property), is made in the United States.

“We don’t receive any foreign steel,” Tio said. “If it does show up, we ship it right back.”

That dedication to American workers is a value Shaver shares with the USW membership.

“We’re here to do one main thing, and that is to create jobs and to create livelihoods for people,” Shaver said.

“Our number one goal is to create manufacturing jobs in this country.”

Meeting halfway

Wally Kirkham, who has worked at the plant for 43 years, is the company’s most senior employee.

While he said he has lost track of the number of bridges he’s been part of building over the years, one of Kirkham’s most memorable projects was the Blue Water Bridge, connecting Michigan with Ontario, Canada. Workers in Eau Claire produced one half of the bridge, while Canadian workers made the other half. The two sides met in the middle.

That team effort is similar to the kind of partnership that has taken hold between labor and management at Veritas. That kind of teamwork is essential to get such large, intricate and important work done efficiently, Kirkham said.

“You need everybody working together to get this done,” Kirkham said.
After Buddy Stemple took over as CEO of the Constellium-Ravenswood rolled aluminum facility in the spring of 2014, he was looking for ways to make the West Virginia plant a safer place to work.

Stemple was considering implementing a behavior-based program when a USW representative introduced him to the union’s brand-new comprehensive health and safety initiative known as Looking for Trouble.

As a result of that exchange, the Ravenswood plant became the first pilot program for the USW initiative, and a new labor-management relationship took hold.

“The biggest task is that everyone has to see that this is here to stay, that this is the way things are going to be going forward,” said Local 5668 President David Martin. “Safety must be the priority.”

The new approach has meant a cultural change at the plant, where many of the workers have been employed for decades, both in the union and in management.

It is a shift that began in March of 2015, when the USW held its health and safety conference in Pittsburgh. Stemple attended the event and came away impressed with the union’s plans.

Involving everyone

“What I liked about the Looking for Trouble program is that I saw it as a way to get every employee involved,” Stemple said. “You’ll never be as safe as you can possibly be until you get everyone involved.”

In that sense, the USW and management at the Ravenswood facility share the same goal. And it’s a goal that Mark Lynch, USW safety chairman at Ravenswood, said will take a full commitment from both sides to achieve.
“It’s up to everyone to make this work,” Lynch said. “There are still some people on the shop floor who haven’t bought in and until they do, there’s work to be done.”

Mike Wright, the USW’s Health, Safety and Environment director, said it’s important for members to remember that the Looking for Trouble program is still in its early stages.

“This is very much a work in progress,” Wright said. “It has not always gone smoothly, and we’ve made some mistakes, but that’s how you learn.”

John Scardella, a program administrator with the Tony Mazzocchi Center (TMC), a health and safety partnership between the USW, the Labor Institute and the Communications Workers of America, has worked with both USW members and management at Ravenswood to help get the program off the ground.

A year ago, Scardella and other USW safety experts began touring the facility, observing members at work, interviewing and surveying employees and searching for common ground with management on improving safety.

Through that process, the USW identified several areas on which to focus, including lockout/tagout, fall protection, safe operating procedures (SOP), ladder use, and labeling and communication about hazardous materials.

Passion and commitment

The Looking for Trouble program led USW members at the plant to view their daily operations in a new light, one that is now focused on constant improvement, Scardella said.

“The passion and the commitment are there,” he said. “We are going to gain some serious momentum now.”

At its heart, the Looking for Trouble program is about finding potential hazards in the workplace and fixing
LOOKING FOR TROUBLE

Photos by Steve Dietz

Jim Miller
Zach Casto
Kenny Workman
Jim Chapman
Dirk Smith
James Maze

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them before they cause injury. With that overarching idea in mind, the workers at Ravenswood have been engaging in a process known as hazard mapping to identify potentially dangerous situations.

Once hazards are identified, management then works to mitigate or eliminate as many as possible. As of this summer, more than 800 hazards had been identified and contained at the Ravenswood plant, Scardella said. Also, management has trained nearly half of the workers, who are creating hazard maps within each department.

The local union and management have also agreed to a temporary assignment for health and safety committee members to work exclusively on the day shift to create the hazard maps and address other safety-related issues, which Scardella called a “huge step forward.”

While the Looking for Trouble program is still in its early stages, it wouldn’t be as successful so far without management’s cooperation, Lynch said. Management has invested in training programs, adjusted schedules to allow for regular health and safety meetings, and made it clear to employees from top to bottom that safety is the company’s priority.

The arrival of Stemple as CEO helped to improve the once strained relationship between the USW and management at Ravenswood, while also paving the way for the changes necessary to improve safety, Lynch said.

“I’ve worked for a lot of managers,” he said. “And Buddy is the best thing that has happened to us in terms of safety.”

Health and safety conference

Stemple, who once worked on the shop floor at the plant, said he would make a point of attending the USW’s health and safety conference in the future.

“If the company and the union can’t work together on safety,” Stemple said, “then we’re probably not going to be able to work together on anything.”

That commitment is one factor that led to the USW choosing Ravenswood as a pilot location for the Looking for Trouble program. Because the program is designed to be applicable to every type of workplace, the USW is also in the process of rolling it out at the Tata Chemicals facility in Green River, Wyo.

“What I liked about the Looking for Trouble program is that I saw it as a way to get every employee involved.

You’ll never be as safe as you can possibly be until you get everyone involved.”

While the program in Green River is not as far along as Ravenswood, Ken Ball, who serves on the safety committee for Local 15320 at Tata, said management there is “all in” on making it a success.

“We’re taking little bites at a time,” Ball said. “We’ll keep working until we change the culture of health and safety here at Tata.”

Besides building safer workplaces, Lynch said, the Looking for Trouble program can help build the union by serving as an organizing tool, particularly in right-to-work states like Wyoming and West Virginia, where RTW just became law this year.

And while it can still be effective without management participation, the program works best when USW members and their bosses are all on the same page.

“We’re both working toward the same target,” Lynch said. “Before, they were going down one road, and we were on another. Together, we’re going to get there a lot faster.”
Cameron Redd, a laid-off aluminum worker in Missouri, knows the harm unfair trade can do to a family and so does Linda Deane, a paper worker from Maine.

They are among the USW members who speak in these pages about the upcoming November election and its importance to the future of America, the labor movement and their own well-being.

With the presidential campaign in full swing, USW@Work reached out to members and activists from around the nation to hear what issues are motivating them to support the USW and its endorsed candidates in this election.

Redd, vice president of Local 7686, is one of 830 members laid off from Noranda Aluminum as a result of China dumping aluminum on the American market.

“Trade is a huge issue. They call it free trade. It’s not free trade,” he said. “It cost us our jobs.”

Redd has no doubt that Donald Trump is the wrong candidate for union workers. “Trump makes all of his stuff overseas,” he said. “He is an off-shorer … If he wanted to create jobs here, he could have manufactured his products here.”

In addition to trade, Deane is concerned about equal rights and equal pay for women and raising the minimum wage to help workers not fortunate enough to have a union.

“I believe Hillary will address all of those things,” she said.

Rodney Crow, a paper worker from Colorado, said Trump is a union buster and criticized the reality show star and real estate developer for making his clothing and other signature products overseas when he could have created jobs in the United States.

Joe Smith, 54, of Fayetteville, N.C., is worried about what the future will bring for his 26-year-old daughter, who is struggling with family obligations and college debt.

“Hillary understands working people deserve a fair shot. Hillary understands we are entitled to good wages, safe working conditions and Social Security that we paid into all of our lives. She wants to end college debt, and that is really important to my daughter.”

Army veteran Joe Swilley remembers Hillary Clinton from Chicago and believes she will be good for union workers and their families. “We know her,” he said. “We know what she’s all about.”

USW members see the need for investment in the nation’s infrastructure and believe our country can and should promote manufacturing in America again.

Emir Hinojosa, 28, of Houston, likes Clinton’s plan to rebuild roads, bridges and other infrastructure. “It will put money back into the workers’ pockets and into the community.”

Trade is a huge issue. They call it free trade. It is not free trade. It cost us our jobs. China was allowed to dump all this aluminum on our market. We have 830 members laid off. I myself am laid off. You map out your kid’s college. But because of this, you don’t know what will happen.

“For the first time in my life I bought a new car for myself a couple of years ago, then I got laid off, so I started cutting back, I traded down, cut down on cable, and so on. There are a lot of people who had to make some hard choices, even about whether they could stay in that community. Some had to move to other states.

“Trump makes all of his stuff overseas. If he wanted to create jobs, he has had the opportunity to do that for a long time. There is what he says and what he did. Now all the sudden he wants to be president and he says he is going to bring jobs back, but all of his stuff is made someplace else. I hope Americans do not fall for that. He is an off-shorer. He has gone so far as to bring foreign workers in to work on some of his projects. If he wanted to create jobs here, he could have manufactured his products here.”

Cameron Redd, 48, of Portageville, Mo., is vice president of Local 7686, where he has been a member for 14 years. His employer is Noranda Aluminum.
Trump will just say anything to get elected. He does not have the values I have tried to instill in my daughter over the years. He has brought out the worst in people. His message is popular because he says he will bring back jobs, but he doesn’t have a plan. He says all kinds of things, but he has no plans. His products are all made in other countries. He said he could shoot someone in Times Square and still get elected. He can say anything, and then brag about it.

Hillary has already been a senator and secretary of state. All Trump has done is been a businessman and work for his own personal benefit. If people did something he didn’t like, he would just fire them. Hillary has worked with all kinds of people and for the benefit of all kinds of people.

I have worked hard all my life and paid my taxes. Hillary understands working people deserve a fair shot. Hillary understands we are entitled to good wages, safe working conditions and Social Security that we paid into all our lives. She wants to end college debt, and that is really important to my daughter.

Donald Trump wants to do away with Social Security and wants to get a national right-to-work law that would destroy the unions that raise wages and living standards. He has no plan at all for college debt.

I feel like electing Hillary Clinton is really important for future workers and the country. It is vital to the future and my daughter and her children.

Jennifer Wirrick, 40, Saginaw, Mich., has been a Steelworker for 21 years and for the past 11, president of Local 9036. She works for Saginaw Transit Authority Regional Services.

My community was a good-paying auto jobs community. We had seven General Motors factories at one time. There were more than 8,000 workers. Now we have only one General Motors factory and another auto plant with about 2,000 employees.

That is partially because of bad trade. And if the TPP gets pushed through, we will lose the two factories we have left. We want to keep those two factories with good jobs and pensions and benefits that support our community.

We don’t want more low-paying jobs. Hillary Clinton has made a commitment to the state of Michigan. She will give us the help we need, the funds we need, at the federal level and the state level. We need a candidate for working people.

A lot of things Trump says are offensive. As a woman of color, it is a double hit. It is a stab in the gut. He alienates a community on every issue. He tears us apart as a country on every issue. That is heartbreaking for me. We came very far as people of color, and now he comes and tears us apart all over again. All those years of work, and he comes and rips it all apart. I can’t imagine a president with that type of rhetoric.

Black people took on the fight of all people of color. We feel that same pain. That is personal for us when he attacked Hispanics. That is a union value. As a Steelworker, no matter what color your skin is, not matter your industry, a hurt to one is a hurt to all. We protect each other.

We are fighting for equal rights, human rights, worker rights. Human rights and worker rights go hand in hand.

Joe Swilley, 47, of Rosemount, Minn., a member of Local 418, is an Army veteran who works for 3M in Cottage Grove, Minn.

Joe Smith, 54, of Fayetteville, N.C., has been a union member for 31 years. He works for Goodyear in Fayetteville and is a member of Local 959.

I remember Hillary Clinton from Chicago. My dad was a pastor on the West Side of Chicago. Back in the day, she would go to places in Chicago that nobody would go to whether you are black, white or whatever, and talked about it taking a village to raise a child.

From time to time her message has gotten convoluted and a little watered down. It seems like she became a little corporate, but the Hillary Clinton that we know, that we understand, still reverberates. We know her. We know what she’s all about.

There are a lot of opportunities that were created by Hillary Clinton behind the scenes. She has always championed a lot of things that a lot of people didn’t see as important.

I remember something she said at a rally. She said that stuff about pulling yourself up by your bootstraps is real good, but what if you don’t have the straps? What if you don’t have the boots?

And then she paused. Everybody in the room was looking. She said that’s what they say to you when they don’t want to give you the opportunity. I later went to Fisk University, a black college in Nashville, and one of my professors said that exact same thing.

I think Hillary Clinton will be good for union workers and their families. That’s the best way I can say it. I think she will reorient trade to benefit the American worker, which will benefit the American family. Stronger families make a stronger nation.

I think she is going to empower the middle class. I think she was always going to do that.
I can tell you from personal experience that when Hillary Clinton was the senator representing New York, there were lots of times that the Steelworkers had to go see her for help on something. And I can say this with my hand over my heart - rarely in those six years did she ever say no. She would say, “I can do that but you need to give me time,” or “this is how I am going to do it, but I need your help.” She stood up for our members.

For six years, she went out of her way to help. That’s how you measure someone. The USW has filed literally hundreds of trade cases defending our jobs in this country. Hillary was always willing to testify to save our jobs. Not once has Donald Trump ever called up and said, “I’m really upset that you guys are losing these steel mills to the Chinese. Is there anything I can do to help?”

We need a president who understands that our infrastructure is critical but is too old and too frail – literally crumbling beneath our feet – and who will fight like there is no tomorrow to rebuild our infrastructure and in the process create millions of jobs. Hillary Clinton has a proposal to do that. She has a five-year, $275-billion infrastructure improvement plan, and she’s willing to tax the 1 percent to pay for it. Imagine the steel and aluminum and oil and glass and all of the other commodities that we make that will be necessary for such a massive project! Imagine the good, family-supporting jobs that will create!

Remember when Hillary Clinton fought for national health care, and she got stabbed in the back by Republicans? Remember when she stood up to defend our members’ pensions? For decades, Hillary Clinton has stood with us when we needed her help. I believe we should stand with her now.
For me, the most important difference between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton is that he thinks working people make too much money while she wants to raise our wages. Trump has said again and again that Americans make too much money. He doesn’t even want to raise the minimum wage, which at $7.25 an hour leaves workers in poverty after they’ve labored 40 hours a week. Hillary Clinton wants to increase the minimum wage, and she will do everything she can to make sure workers get a raise.

One sure way to raise wages is to form a union, but Donald Trump supports right-to-work legislation, which kills unions because it allows workers who benefit from union services to skip out on paying union dues. Hillary Clinton opposes right to work. She believes that if a worker benefits from a union, then the worker should not be allowed to freeload.

Donald Trump is so anti-union that he’s fighting the workers at his hotel in Las Vegas who voted to be represented by the union Unite Here. The hotel is refusing to negotiate a labor agreement with the workers, even though workers at many other hotels and casinos in Las Vegas are represented by unions.

Hillary Clinton doesn’t run a hotel, but here is what she says: “I’ve always believed that when unions are strong, families are strong and America is strong.” And I know talk is cheap, so let’s look at what she has done. One thing that stands out for me is that she was an original co-sponsor of the Employee Free Choice Act, which was legislation that would have strengthened unions. Corporations condemned it. But Clinton sided with workers from the very outset. That took guts.

I want a president who has the guts to side with workers.

Look, I have seen the closed steel and aluminum and paper and tire plants. The lost jobs. The crushed communities. I have been there.

I have testified too many times at the trade commission seeking punitive actions against countries like China that violate international trade regulations. I swear I have scuffed the marble floors at Congress seeking better, faster trade action and some kind of penalties, any kind of penalties, for currency manipulation.

So, for me, trade is a crucial issue in this election. Now you have one candidate who says he will impose across-the-board tariffs on Mexico and China, although a president does not have the power to do that. At the same time, he continues to manufacture his own branded products in Mexico and China. If he wanted to bring jobs home, why didn’t he manufacture those suits, ties, slippers, bathrobes and other products in the United States to begin with? Why doesn’t he bring back those jobs now?

Hillary Clinton has pledged to oppose any trade deal unless it creates new U.S. jobs, raises wages and improves national security. That means putting U.S. workers and our wages first.

Labor leaders persuaded Hillary Clinton that the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership, the TPP, was bad for workers, and she changed her position on it. She has said that she opposes it now, opposes it in the lame-duck session of Congress after the election, and would oppose it after inauguration.

That means she is willing to listen to our concerns. And that is a good sign for us. We would have a leader in the White House who would care about what we have to say.

In this country that is founded on the words “all men are created equal,” that prides itself on allowing people of all ethnicities to pull themselves up by their bootstraps, it’s essential to have a president who respects all people, all races, religions, sexual orientations, abilities and disabilities.

I have seen the ugliness of disrespect and discrimination. I know how it degrades and injures. Think about what would happen to this country if that kind of behavior were openly encouraged and modeled by the person at the top, the president. Can you imagine having a leader who mocked a disabled person? Can you imagine a leader who tweeted vulgarities to women? Can you imagine a leader who labeled an entire ethnic group as criminals? It’s not, to say the least, statesmanlike.

Also less than statesmanlike was Donald Trump’s accusation that Hillary Clinton was using the mythical “woman card” to score points with voters. She responded by calling Trump’s bluff. She produced untold millions of official Hillary for America woman cards describing some of the “perks” of being a woman, such as lower wages.

Of course, I want to feel that I respect my president. But it’s essential that the people of the United States, all of them, feel that the president respects them as well. For that reason, Hillary Clinton is the only choice.
During a discussion of the new biography, The Making of Donald Trump, International Vice President Tom Conway asked Pulitzer Prize-winning investigative journalist and author David Cay Johnston a simple question.

“Why are so many poor and working class men and women supporting Trump for President?”

Johnston, who has been following and writing about Trump for 28 years, gave an equally simple and clear answer. “Because they don’t know who he truly is.”

Despite years of seeking public attention and appearing in headlines nearly every day since June 2015, when he announced his Republican presidential campaign, Trump has disclosed little about himself, even while creating the persona of a man who “says what he thinks.”

Johnston compiled three decades of study and research into The Making of Donald Trump, and in just over 200 fast-moving pages gives readers an unusually complete and honest view of the man behind the image that candidate Trump presents to the public.

The book chronicles how Donald Trump rose to the forefront of American public life through a combination of greed, intimidation, ignorance and his own massive ego and shows how his hypocrisy knows no limits.

Trump insists that his wealth, which he grossly exaggerates, was earned through hard work, but he has benefited mostly from inheritance, exploiting workers and manipulating government agencies, including law enforcement.

He professes to study the Bible but exhibits no understanding of the most basic Christian concepts in his personal relationships or business ventures.

He denies biases against African Americans, Hispanics and women, but his record of racism and sexism is long and public.

He denigrates those who settle lawsuits as “losers,” but has settled numerous cases to avoid prosecution, often without disclosing the terms.

Johnston’s record of the Trump family history in America begins in 1885, when grandfather Friedrich fled Germany at age 16 to avoid compulsory military service. After settling in Seattle, he opened a restaurant with a back room for prostitutes to entertain customers. He sold the business for a profit and headed north where he made a fortune in Canada’s Yukon Territory providing liquor and prostitutes to prospectors during the Klondike gold rush.

Drive for money and power

Graduating from high school in 1964, during the escalation of the Vietnam War, Trump attended Fordham College and transferred to the University of Pennsylvania as a junior, where he completed a degree in economics, receiving four student deferments and a medical deferment to escape the draft along the way.

In 1973, the federal government sued Trump, his father and their company for refusing to rent apartments to African Americans, Puerto Ricans and other non-whites. Trump settled the case to avoid admitting wrongdoing. He was represented by Roy Cohn, whose other clients included high-ranking Mafiosi who owned New York City demolition and construction companies.

Trump exploited these relationships in various projects, including the construction of the Trump Tower, built on the site of a former department store. He employed about 150 Polish immigrants for its demolition who later sued him, his partners and others over unpaid wages and working conditions.

Although it took 18 years of court

Rodney Crow, 55, of Aurora, Colo., has worked for WestRock Packaging for 35 years. He’s a member of Local 8031.
battles, Trump eventually settled the suit. Instead of building the midtown skyscraper with a steel frame, he used ready-mix concrete supplied by mob-owned companies. During a 1982 Teamsters strike, construction continued without interruption.

After bullying and manipulating casino regulators into allowing him to operate in Atlantic City without disclosing his organized crime ties or unapologetically, “I can’t help that. It’s cold when someone sues my father.”

The real Donald Trump?
So, who really is Donald Trump? Johnston points to two stories that may help readers put the character, priorities and values of the Republican candidate into perspective.

Trump’s older brother, Fred Jr., died in 1984, and was survived by his wife Linda and children, Fred III and Mary. Trump’s father, Fred Sr., died at 93 in 1999, and the following day, Fred III’s wife, Lisa, went into labor. The baby, William Trump, was born with serious medical problems, including seizures.

The Trump family assured Fred III and Lisa that their child’s escalating medical expenses would be covered and even had the family lawyer instruct their insurance company in writing to pay all costs associated with infant William’s care, regardless of coverage limits.

However, when Fred Sr.’s will was filed, it was discovered that Fred Jr.’s family had been all but excluded from inheritance, leaving Donald, his surviving brother and two sisters the bulk of the family fortune, easily worth hundreds of millions. Linda, Fred III and Mary challenged the will in a lawsuit in March 2000, seeking what would have been Fred Jr.’s share of the estate.

A week later, on March 30, Trump notified his nephew, Fred III, via certified letter that all medical benefits would be terminated effective May 1, a potential death sentence for sickly William. When asked if he was concerned that it would appear calloused to cancel the medical insurance of his desparately ill grand-nephew, Trump said, unapologetically, “I can’t help that. It’s cold when someone sues my father.”

The book chronicles how Donald Trump rose to the forefront of American public life through a combination of greed, intimidation, ignorance and his own massive ego and shows how his hypocrisy knows no limits.

Like other lawsuits before and after, Trump settled the dispute with Fred Jr.’s descendants over the estate, though the terms have not been publicly disclosed.

Johnston also examines Trump’s relationship with Joey Weichselbaum, convicted of felonies for grand theft auto in 1965 and embezzlement in 1979, whose company Trump hired to shuttle high rollers to and from his casinos in 1984. In 1985, Weichselbaum was indicted by a federal grand jury in Cincinnati on charges of drug trafficking and tax evasion. After he made a deal to plead guilty to one of 18 charges against him, his case was transferred out of Ohio. His lawyer sought to have the case moved to either Miami, Fla., or Manhattan on the basis that it would be more convenient for “the defendant and witnesses.”

However, inexplicably, the case was moved to New Jersey and assigned to Trump’s older sister, Judge Maryanne Trump Barry. Several weeks later, Judge Barry, having regularly flown with her family in helicopters provided by a drug trafficker, recused herself.

The case then landed in front of Judge Harold A. Ackerman, to whom Trump sent a letter asking for leniency in Weichselbaum’s sentencing, praising him as “conscientious, forthright and diligent.” In the end, Weichselbaum served only 18 months in prison while his underlings, who were also indicted in Cincinnati, received sentences of up to 20 years.

Staying out of jail
Johnston provides many examples to familiarize readers with Trump’s self-aggrandizing schemes, usually to the detriment of others and often at the expense of taxpayers. It seems that Trump’s genius is not that he is better, smarter or works harder than anyone else, but that he has managed to stay out of jail while intimidating and manipulating his way to the forefront of American public life.

Trump’s ignorance about the rules of table games led to his casinos being among the first to fold. His campaign promises to back out of treaties and trade agreements or build a wall and prohibit followers of Islam from entering the country reveal a similar ignorance of how our government works and the president’s role in it.

USW members should not feel obligated to vote for anyone on the basis of blind loyalty to the union. All citizens, however, should make an effort to learn everything possible about the candidates seeking to lead the free world. Based on everything Johnston says about Trump, it remains hard to imagine how electing him would benefit anyone, except for Donald himself.

There are two reasons this election is important to me. One is Social Security. The Republicans keep wanting to privatize Social Security, which I think would be a disaster.

“Equal rights and equal pay for women are also very important to me. It’s a problem I never had because I worked with a union and I didn’t have to worry about equal pay. But I know of other industries where you don’t have a union, and it’s a big, big issue and it’s not right.

“I would also like to see the minimum wage improved. Raising the minimum wage will help the middle class and allow people to move into the middle class. It would bring back the American dream. Improving trade laws and getting good trade deals would definitely help the middle class.

“I believe Hillary will address all of those things.”

Linda Deane, 64, has been a union member for 28 years. She works for Catalyst Paper in Rumford, Maine, and is a member of Local 4-900.
I don’t see a future if Trump is elected. With Hillary, there is a track record. We know she can produce. “Hillary has credibility for working with labor unions and looking out for young people. I love her ideas for investing in infrastructure. Because she will require American-made products, that will support American manufacturing and create American jobs. That shows she is looking out for the future.”

Terra Samuel, 43, of East Chicago, Ind., a member of Local 1010 for two years, works for ArcelorMittal.
Donald Trump likes to talk a tough game on trade, but when it comes to putting his money where his mouth is, Trump has shown that his talk is just that – talk.

Trump’s own products, including his branded shirts, ties, suits and cuff links, are manufactured in at least a dozen other countries, among them Bangladesh, China, India and Mexico. Trump vodka is distilled in the Netherlands. His crystal barware comes from Slovenia.

Trump also stocks his luxurious hotels with foreign-made goods.

A Steelworker with a camera checked out the pricey Trump International Hotel and Tower in New York City and found many products in just one room that could have been purchased domestically but were instead sourced by Trump from overseas.

If Trump wanted to rebuild America like he says, he could have started by buying American-made products.

To see a USW-produced YouTube video on the foreign-made products used in Trump hotel rooms, use this link: http://usw.to/trumphotel

Donald Trump says people earn too much. Does he include himself in that or just me?

“Donald Trump does not speak for me. He does not treat people fairly and equitably. I accept diversity and Trump rejects that.

“Donald Trump’s promises are false and not fulfillable. He is an illusionist.

“Hillary Clinton will make sure people have a decent chance to get ahead. She opposes right to work and has a loyalty to labor. She doesn’t turn her back on people.”

Sam D’Orazio, 46, of Bentleyville, Pa., has been a member of Local 3403, Unit 25, for a decade. He works for All-Clad.
Julie Searle knows what it takes to succeed in a man’s world. A union member for 22 years, Searle has worked in a steel mill and for a paper products company, both USW shops. Those experiences, at Crucible Industries and Packaging Corporation of America, have made her a passionate Hillary Clinton supporter.

“I have never thought that there was a job I couldn’t do, and it appears to me that Hillary has the same perception,” said Searle, who is a co-coordinator for the Women of Steel’s Central New York chapter. “We don’t let people tell us we can’t do things.”

As a gay woman, Searle, of Syracuse, N.Y., lives in a society that has told her she doesn’t belong. Marriage equality and family planning, as a result, are rights that Searle doesn’t take for granted, and she believes Clinton is the right candidate to fight for those causes.

“I want someone in the White House who will protect my rights,” said Searle, who married her partner seven years ago. “I believe Clinton will help on these issues, particularly since she will be potentially choosing Supreme Court justices who will decide on these issues for years to come.”

Women represent over half of the electorate in America and vote at higher rates than men. They hold more voting power than many other groups in the country, yet they also often face the brunt of gender stereotypes and inequality that affect their livelihoods.

Because of this, it is vital to have someone in office to represent that significant portion of the population, said International Vice President at Large Carol Landry.

“We need a voice in Washington who is going to put women’s issues on the table and actually invite women to participate in the decisions affecting their lives,” Landry said. “We need someone who won’t just pay lip service, but will actually give women the voice and support they need to resolve the many issues facing women today.”

While in the U.S. Senate, Clinton was a defender of the Equal Pay Act and a key supporter of the Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2009, a bill named for the women’s equality activist and signed into law by President Obama.

Kristia O’Brien, a mother of two young women and a tire builder at the same Goodyear plant in Gadsden, Ala., that employed Ledbetter, supports Clinton because she is an advocate for equal pay for equal work. She also believes a vote for Hillary Clinton is a vote for further advancement for female workers.

“A mother can be a sailor or a CEO and do all these things and do it well,” O’Brien said. “My girls have a say in everything they do rather than it being dictated to them as it was 60 years ago. I want it to stay that way.”

In August, the AFL-CIO announced it was launching a mobilization of millions of women to get out the vote for Clinton and other democratic, labor-friendly candidates this election season to reinforce the federation’s commitment to advancing the rights of all working women and men.

“It is time that our nation’s policies reflect our values and lift up working women, and all working people,” AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Schuler said.

There are many reasons why women in labor support Hillary Clinton. For Jodey Elekes, of Local 4-729, it’s the former Secretary of State’s commitment to sustainable pay and benefits.

For Heidi Puhl, of Local 9460, it’s her experience in public service fighting on behalf of disadvantaged women and children, and for Jennifer Knotts, of Local 979, it’s her solid infrastructure and manufacturing plans that will help bring jobs back to America’s middle class.

“She cares about families. She cares about workers,” said Knotts, who works at the steel and mining company ArcelorMittal. “Hillary believes in supporting our unions, protecting Social Security, and opposing right-to-work legislation. Her opponent does not.”

This is an historical election. Having the first African-American president maybe followed by the first female president shows how much growth we’ve had as a country. It really does.

“Hillary Clinton has some things that Donald Trump doesn’t have: experience and a proven track record.

“I like that she supports working class people. That’s really important. “We’re losing jobs left and right in manufacturing. We need someone to step in there and really curb foreign trade policies. We need to get people working again and able to send their kids to college again.”

Ric Ramirez, 40, of Bettendorf, Iowa, a veteran with the U.S. Marines, is a member of Local 105 at Alcoa’s Davenport aluminum facility.
For Steelworker Chris Kujawski, it was bad enough Donald Trump said U.S. Senator John McCain was “not a hero,” despite his being captured in Vietnam and tortured as a prisoner of war.

But Kujawski, a paper worker from Wisconsin and proud Marine Corps veteran, was deeply offended when Trump criticized the parents of Army Capt. Humayun Khan, who died in 2004 while serving our country in Iraq.

“You know, the things Donald Trump has said about prisoners of war are absolutely disgraceful,” said Kujawski, 32, who served during Operation Iraqi Freedom.

“What’s even worse is he attacked a Gold Star family, a family that sacrificed their only son in defense of this country, simply based on their religion,” he said. “When he attacked them, he attacked every single military family who’s ever made the ultimate sacrifice.”

That attack motivated Kujawski to knock on doors this election season and persuade voters to support Trump’s opponent, Hillary Clinton.

“I couldn’t be more upset. I couldn’t be more disgusted, so I’m going to get out there, and I’m going to talk to every single person I know. In my opinion, Donald Trump is completely unfit to be commander in chief.”

Brash and offensive

On matters of foreign policy and national security, Trump has been consistently brash and offensive. He is openly dismissive of America’s NATO allies.

He has suggested that he is willing to toss aside the Geneva conventions to bring back waterboarding and more extreme methods of torture, and he has repeatedly said that it is important to be “unpredictable” with nuclear weapons.

No wonder 50 of the nation’s most senior Republican national security figures, many of them former top aides or cabinet members for President George W. Bush, have signed a letter declaring that Trump “lacks the character, values and experience” to be president and “would put at risk our country’s national security and well-being.”

The rhetoric of isolationism may sound appealing to some, said Joe Swilley, a member of Local 418 in Rosemont, Minn., and an eight-year Army veteran. But anyone who has truly served the country knows that there must be more to foreign policy than posturing and tough talk.

“America is the only beacon of hope in the world, and if you don’t take care of these problems, they will come home. I guarantee it.”

“From a major party nominee, the most important quality a leader must possess is grace,” Swilley said. “Mr. Trump has no grace, and if you lack grace, then there’s no hope.”

“The guy gets freaked out over a tweet. Forget the nuclear codes,” said Scott Mathie, treasurer of Local 1123 in Louisville, Ohio.

Mathie, who served in the Navy, said that there is a profound disconnect between the values he learned while in the armed forces—discipline, self-sacrifice and honor—and the self-serving vitriol Trump espouses.

“When we went out to sea, we went out with 105 guys,” said Mathie. “I would have given my life for any of one of them because that’s what you do. There’s no way that a guy who inherited millions of dollars, who’s never had to really work a day in his life, could understand that.”

There are thousands of U.S. veterans and military families in the USW, all of whom appreciate how crucial it is to have a commander in chief who takes seriously the responsibility of leading the most powerful armed forces in the world.

“Clinton was secretary of state. She was in the situation room when bin Laden was killed. She understands there are lives at stake,” Mathie said.

“Trump is so arrogant. One of my fears is if Trump manages to pull this thing off in November, he’ll want to prove to everyone how big and strong he is, and we could get ourselves into a real skirmish that will end up being life and death for the real people on the ground.”

Jennifer Knotts, 48, of Olmsted Falls, Ohio, has been a member of Local 979 for eight years and works at ArcelorMittal.
When NewPage Corp. closed its profitable paper mill in Kimberly, Wis., in 2008, then state Rep. Tom Nelson stood with the USW and its members in urging the company to “run or sell” the facility.

Today the USW is standing with Nelson as he competes for the U.S. Congress in the 8th district of Wisconsin, a papermaking region where thousands of USW members live and work.

“Tom Nelson is a rare individual who has never lost sight of the plight of American workers and has kept himself well connected to them throughout his political career,” International Vice President Jon Geenen said.

Until it closed, the 600-employee paper mill in Kimberly was an economic engine in the community for more than a century after its founding by the Kimberly-Clark Corp. in 1889.

“Tom was a mainstay in helping drive that campaign from a political standpoint,” Geenen said. “It didn’t end well, but Tom became popular in the labor movement as a grass-roots candidate for whom workers’ issues mattered.”

The Nelson campaign is one of several down-ballot races in battleground states where the USW is backing labor-friendly candidates running for the U.S. House of Representatives, the U.S. Senate, and governor, in addition to Hillary Clinton for president.

“Everything is on the line in many of the key races,” said Political Director Tim Waters. “So, we’re using all of the tools at our disposal, and our most important tool is our members going out and talking to their fellow members.”

In his first state race, Nelson, now the elected executive of Outagamie County, often worked out of Geenen’s home local union hall in Kaukauna, part of the Appleton metropolitan area. Currently, Nelson is featuring USW paper workers in his political advertising.

“When an issue comes up that affects Steelworkers, Tom Nelson is the first one to call and ask what he can do to help us,” said District 2 Director Mike Bolton. “With the current political climate, an opportunity for Tom to represent us in the House is something we really need to support.”

Once solidly Republican, the 8th district, which includes Green Bay and Appleton, is seen as a swing district this year. Nelson is running against Mike Gallagher, a former aide to Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker, for a seat being vacated by retiring U.S. Rep. Reid Ribble, a Republican.

USW members are leafleting plant gates and knocking on doors for Nelson, for former U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold, a Democrat who is trying to win back his old seat from Republican Ron Johnson, and for Clinton.

Member Sam Plass, who works for Neenah Paper in Appleton, said co-workers responded positively to all three candidates during plant-gate campaigning.

“I feel good about all of them,” said Plass, a second-generation paper worker. “I feel good about their chances of winning and how they are going to work to help us in the middle class.”

Boots on the ground

Trained USW activists will be pounding the pavement until Nov. 8, Election Day, in battleground states from Maine to California where they can make a positive difference.

As Democrats fight to take back control of the U.S. Senate, the USW in Pennsylvania is supporting challenger Katie McGinty, a Democrat, against incumbent Republican Pat Toomey, a

Gov. Scott Walker came into office in Wisconsin in 2010 and said he was for working families and then passed right to work. And now we have Donald Trump running on that same platform, but it is even more extremist. He is attacking working families and minority families and veteran families.

I am a Steelworker and proud Marine Corps veteran also. Many veterans are looking for another family. And the Steelworkers union is that family. And when Trump is supporting right to work, he is trying to destroy that family.

Chris Kujawski, 32, of Rome Wis., works for WestRock packaging. He’s been a member of Local 131 for five years.
Wall Street favorite who voted for a budget that would have cut taxes for millionaires while increasing taxes for working families.

“The USW is proud to endorse Katie McGinty for U.S. Senate,” said International President Leo W. Gerard. “Pennsylvania needs an honest, hard-working senator with high ethics and principled positions to represent us in Washington.”

In Minnesota’s Iron Range, hard hit by the steel industry’s downturn, the USW is supporting the re-election of U.S. Rep. Rick Nolan, a relentless advocate for Steelworkers since taking office in 2013.

“We know that Rick Nolan will fight for mining jobs and to rebuild the middle class in Congress. Rick supports our mining industry and knows how to get things done,” said Bob Ryan, the Rapid Response coordinator for District 11. “He is someone we can trust to fight for jobs and work to preserve pensions, health care benefits and Medicare.”

With miners in his district unemployed, Nolan has testified on the USW’s behalf at trade cases the union has filed on foreign steel dumping. He has called for an immediate halt to Chinese steel imports.

All of the House seats in Minnesota are up for election. Nolan, whose district is typically Democratic, is running against first-time candidate and wealthy businessman Stewart Mills.

In Summit, Ill., a Chicago suburb, Justin Willis, a trustee and Next Generation coordinator for Local 7-507, has been knocking on doors, making phone calls and visiting local union halls.

He is eagerly stumping for former U.S. Rep. Brad Schneider, who stood up for working families when he represented Illinois’ 10th district in Congress from 2013 to 2015.

Schneider is in his third head-to-head battle with Republican Bob Dold, who was first elected to Congress in 2010. Schneider won the seat in 2012 and Dold reclaimed it in 2014.

Local races important

Local races like Schneider’s can be as important as statewide and national elections. Because congressional districts are relatively small, get-out-the-vote efforts can make a huge difference.

“When you can show people how issues affect their family lives, you can really get our members to turn out,” Willis said.

Willis, who has volunteered in past campaigns, said the key to this election cycle is making sure voters are educated on key issues affecting working families.

“There are good reasons as to why certain candidates are better than others,” Willis said. “Trade is number one. Every other day, we hear about lost jobs because of bad trade policies.”

The district in which Schneider is running is evenly divided between the two major parties, Willis said, but voters of all political stripes respond when the issue is jobs.

“That hits home,” said Willis, who works for an energy infrastructure company that operates pipelines and storage terminals.

The most important thing to remember, he said, is that the USW’s political work won’t be over after the election. Union members must remain aware of political issues affecting workers.

“Elections are not just important for one cycle,” Willis said. “We have to do this work all year round, to make sure we get the results that we need.”

Emir Hinojosa, 28, of Houston, Texas, works for Shell Oil. He is a steward with Local 13-1 and has been a member of the USW for three years.

Listening to the things Donald Trump says, I find them to be poisonous to our communities. He brings out the worst in a lot of people, and we don’t need that.

“Trump’s position on unions would be a disaster for the union movement as a whole in this nation. His policy on right to work would put unions at a great disadvantage. If we have to represent people without funding, that could break us financially. I live in a right-to-work state, and we have free riders that we must represent even though they don’t pay union dues.

“I really like Clinton’s plan to rebuild our infrastructure and bring jobs back here. It will put money back into workers’ pockets, and into the community.”
The USW is growing through merger again.

Delegates to a convention of the Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics and Allied Workers International Union (GMP), one of the oldest labor unions in America, voted overwhelmingly to merge with the USW.

The vote, taken in August at the GMP’s 75th quadrennial convention in Las Vegas, unites two historic international unions with complementary membership in the United States and Canada.

“The merger will undoubtedly strengthen and benefit our members in the glass industry and beyond,” International President Leo W. Gerard said. “The GMP shares our goals and will be a vital part of the USW.”

Headquartered in Media, Pa., the GMP represents some 25,000 craft and industrial workers primarily in glass, foundries, molding, plastics and pottery, ceramics, china, fiberglass, insulation, and other industries.

Like the USW, the GMP has a long history as an industrial union. Its first predecessor locals were formed in 1842 by skilled glass blowers in the Philadelphia area under the name Glass Blowers’ League.

“The GMP is itself the product of many mergers, and each one made the GMP stronger and better,” GMP International President Bruce R. Smith said. “We expect history to repeat itself with the USW merger.”

GMP Council

The GMP will eventually become the GMP Council of the USW and will continue to serve workers in the industries it has historically represented, the GMP said in a statement.

The USW, the largest industrial union in North America, has established councils and conferences for USW members in specific industries including atomic, glass, health care, paper, rubber, steel, plastics, chemicals and oil.

“We are all committed to building a better, stronger union,” said International Secretary-Treasurer Stan Johnson, who was involved in the merger negotiations. “We want our members to enjoy the best possible wages, benefits, workplace safety protections and retirement in their industries and workplaces.”

The USW’s Glass Industry Conference currently represents thousands of glass and related workers, many of whom became members through mergers with the American Flint Glass Workers Union in 2003 and the Aluminum, Brick and Glass Workers International Union (ABG) in 1996.

The GMP merger will improve the
union’s density in glass, foundries and other related industries, and in some cases will give the combined union wall-to-wall coverage where the two unions had previously existed side by side.

“It’s a positive thing for our members across the board,” said Tim Tuttle, chairman of the USW’s Glass Industry Conference and a former president of the American Flint Glass Workers union.

The GMP leadership chose the USW after considering many potential partners and built support for the merger during a year of discussions with its membership.

Growing through mergers

Like the USW, the GMP grew over the years through mergers. In 1895, half a century after the glass blowers first organized, the Glass Bottle Blowers Association (GBBA) was formed in the United States and Canada. The GBBA affiliated with the American Federation of Labor (AFL) in 1899.

Glass bottle blowing machines began to hurt the craft-oriented union in the 1900s. By 1916, hand-blowing operations were all but eliminated and the GBBA abandoned craft unionism and began organizing all workers in glass factories, including bottle sorters, helpers and packers.

The Volstead Act led to nationwide Prohibition in the 1920s, and the need for glass dropped precipitously. Industry economics, however, improved with the repeal of Prohibition in 1933 and the advent of World War II. By 1945, the GBBA had organized 90 percent of its jurisdiction in the glass industry, and its membership had risen to more than 35,000.

The postwar era saw more pressures on the glass industry. Beer began to be sold in cans, and milk was packaged in waxed cardboard cartons instead of glass. In response, the union began to organize in the fiberglass and plastics industries.

In 1952, two years after the American Federation of Labor (AFL) and the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) merged, the GBBA combined with the CIO’s United Glass and Ceramic Workers of North America. In 1975, the GBBA merged with the Window Glass Cutters League.

Additional mergers followed in the 1980s. The International Brotherhood of Pottery and Allied Workers merged with the GBBA to form the Glass, Pottery, Plastics and Allied Workers Union (GPPAW).

In 1988, a union of iron molders, the International Molders and Allied Workers, merged to form the Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics and Allied Workers International Union. Barrel makers, the Coopers’ International Union of North America, followed in 1992.
In a huge victory for Steelworkers, the U.S. government has authorized a wide range of tariffs to stop illegally subsidized and dumped cold-rolled steel products made in seven nations, including China, from crippling the U.S. industry and stealing jobs.

The trade enforcement actions are welcome news to Steelworkers who work at 16 domestic facilities that produce cold-rolled steel in Indiana, Ohio, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Alabama, and Kentucky, as well as to USW taconite miners on the iron ranges of northern Minnesota and Michigan.

“Te USW will fight for every American job. Steel is the backbone of our economy and our national security. We cannot allow unfair trade practices to put our future in jeopardy,” said International President Leo W. Gerard.

The tariffs cover cold-rolled products that are widely used in appliances, automotive products, containers and construction. They were authorized in two sets of decisions by the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) and the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC), which acted on complaints filed by the industry in 2015 and strongly supported by the USW.

By law, the duties will remain in effect for five years to address predatory dumping, or selling below cost in order to gain market share and injure domestic producers, Gerard said.

Final duties set

On July 21, the DOC set wide-ranging final duties on cold-rolled steel worth hundreds of millions of dollars from five countries – Brazil, India, Korea, Russia and the United Kingdom. Those duties were affirmed in September by the ITC, which determined that the domestic industry was injured by the unfair trading.

Establishing fairer prices on cold-rolled steel products from the five countries followed similar actions earlier in the summer on the same steel products from China and Japan.

On June 22, the ITC unanimously voted that dumped and subsidized cold-rolled steel from China and Japan were injuring domestic producers and workers. That action authorized tariffs set by the DOC at 522 percent on Chinese-made products and 71.35 percent on products made in Japan.

The DOC set antidumping duties ranging from 10 to 32 percent on Brazil, 8 percent on India, 6 to 34 percent on South Korea, 1 to 13 percent on Russia, and 5 to 26 percent on the U.K.

It also set additional countervailing duties meant to counteract illegal government subsidies of 11 percent on Brazil, 10 percent on India, 4 to 58 percent on South Korea and 1 to 7 percent on Russia.

The tariffs against China included 265 percent to counteract dumping, the selling of products in the United States at less than fair value, plus 256 percent in countervailing duties meant to offset illegal government subsidies. Antidumping duties of 71.35 percent were imposed on cold-rolled flat steel products from Japan.
Conway said the year-long investigation shows "our trade laws need a rewrite in today’s world of steel overcapacity that’s putting American manufacturing workers and miners on layoff in their own market, while foreign producers keep shipping illegally subsidized and dumped products."

More work to do

Even with some relief in steel, industrial workers still face massive imports of other subsidized and dumped products, including pipe and tube. China’s overcapacity in steel, aluminum, paper and many other products continues to damage world markets, undermining jobs and wages.

“While we will persist in fighting for every job, a comprehensive approach to trade policy is what’s really required,” Gerard said, noting that winning a trade case means jobs are first lost.

“We have to experience injury in the form of permanently lost jobs and shuttered facilities to qualify for relief,” he added.

New proposed trade agreements like the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) will only make things worse, Gerard said, noting that the TPP fails to address industry overcapacity.

In fact, Gerard said the TPP would actually allow Vietnam’s plans to build substantial new capacity in steel, while protecting from review any state subsidies put in place prior to the agreement’s effective date.

“What’s worse, Vietnam was granted 13 years of tariff protection to enable all of this to occur,” he said.
In a major victory for the U.S. steel industry and its workers, the International Trade Commission (ITC) affirmed antidumping duties against hot-rolled steel products from Australia, Brazil, Japan, the Netherlands, South Korea, Turkey and the United Kingdom that the Department of Commerce (DOC) had earlier determined were sold below market value.

In final determinations issued on Sept. 12, the ITC also affirmed antisubsidy or countervailing duties against hot-rolled products made in Brazil and South Korea. A countervailing duty investigation against Turkey was terminated.

The ruling “levels the playing field with imports to provide fair and sustainable market prices for American steel, a critical step in restoring balance to the market,” International President Leo W. Gerard said.

U.S. steelmakers, with support from the USW, asked for the tariffs last year from the seven countries after a record glut of unfairly priced imports roiled the domestic industry.

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The industry was largely successful. The ITC’s rulings allowed the DOC to issue antidumping orders on hot-rolled steel products from seven countries, and countervailing duty orders on hot-rolled steel products from two – Brazil and South Korea.

Countervailing duties, or antisubsidy duties, are trade import duties imposed under World Trade Organization rules to neutralize the negative effects of government subsidies.

Petitions the steel industry filed last year said illegal trade practices caused imports from the seven countries to rise 73 percent from 2012 to 2014.

The DOC set antidumping margins in a range of 3.97-7.33 percent for South Korea to 49.05 percent for the U.K., indicating that imports were sold at a price below the cost of production, or below that producer’s domestic price.

Ready to work

“Our members have the skills and are ready to mine the iron ore and to make the steel for cars, appliances, high speed rail, skyscrapers and America’s infrastructure,” said International Vice President Tom Conway, who oversees steel sector contract bargaining.

“Dumped and unfairly subsidized foreign imports destroy those jobs and destabilize our country’s manufacturing and mining sector,” he said.

Produced at 16 U.S. facilities, hot-rolled steel is used in automotive applications and in tubing, as well as in the manufacture of construction and transportation equipment, appliances, heavy machinery and machine parts.

In testimony before the ITC, Conway said USW members and retirees sacrificed much over the past 30 years to make American steel manufacturing the most competitive in the world.

“We agreed to company consolidations, work force reductions and changes in workplace rules to increase productivity,” Conway said. “We negotiated agreements that encouraged companies to put money back into the mills.”

The current crisis, however, threatens what the USW worked so hard to preserve. Steelworkers have suffered job losses, fewer hours and lower wages – losses that accelerated in the past year.

Last year, U.S. Steel permanently closed part of its Fairfield facility in Alabama, leaving about 1,100 Steelworkers unemployed. AK Steel idled operations in Ashland, Ky., leading to some 600 layoffs. ArcelorMittal idled a hot strip mill in Indiana Harbor, displacing 300.

The situation is particularly dire at Granite City, Ill., where U.S. Steel has idled its plant, affecting 2,000 Steelworkers whose unemployment benefits have expired.

Bedrock of manufacturing

“These Steelworker jobs – good, family supporting jobs – are the bedrock of U.S. manufacturing,” Conway said. “Do we want to be dependent on imported steel because there are no American steelmakers left?”

Retirees, he said, are barely hanging on to pensions and health care benefits. The VEBAs, voluntary employment benefit associations established to offset the losses of the past decades, are at risk because they depend on the financial health of a much smaller industry.

Gerard and Conway said the situation is not going to get better on its own. China continues to produce steel at a record pace, using its excess capacity to squeeze other countries into exporting steel to the United States at any price.

“The hot-rolled steel trade case and others like it are vital to saving steel jobs and our communities,” Gerard said. “But they’re only part of the solution. Chinese excess steel overcapacity is causing terrible injury worldwide and remains a long-term threat.”
The domestic market for USW-made truck and bus tires should improve thanks to Commerce Department rulings that open the way for tariffs the union is seeking against dumped and subsidized products from China.

“Our members can compete against any producer in the world, but it is simply unacceptable to ask us to compete against the deep pockets of the Chinese government’s state-owned enterprises,” said International President Leo W. Gerard.

Reacting to a petition filed by the USW last January, the DOC on Aug. 29 found that truck and bus tires from China were being dumped in the United States at below-market prices, a major step toward the imposition of duties. Dumping margins were set at 20.9 percent to 22.6 percent.

In a related preliminary finding in June, the DOC found China was unfairly subsidizing bus and truck tires and set countervailing duty margins from 17 percent to 23.4 percent.

“We have fought back against China’s predatory trade practices in nearly every part of the tire industry, including tires for passenger cars, light trucks, off-road vehicles, and now truck and bus tires,” said International Secretary-Treasurer Stan Johnson, who chairs the USW’s national rubber tire bargaining conference.

“Again and again China has been shown to benefit from massive subsidies and engage in widespread dumping in order to gain market share at the expense of American jobs,” Johnson said.

Cash deposits taken
When combined, the antidumping and countervailing duties against the truck and bus tires are nearly 40 percent. The DOC directed U.S. Customs and Border Patrol to begin collecting cash deposits from importers pending final decisions.

The DOC is expected to make final rulings in the antidumping and antisubsidy cases by January. The International Trade Commission (ITC) must then find the industry was harmed by the unfair trade practices for final duties to be imposed. That determination is expected by next March.

The USW initiated the case in January 2016 by asking for an investigation into unfairly dumped and subsidized truck and bus tires from China, saying they were damaging good USW jobs and the U.S. manufacturing base. The complaint relies on Sections 701 and 731 of the Tariff Act of 1930.

Gerard called the trade case initiated by the union on behalf of tire workers “massive” and said it involved more than $1 billion worth of imported truck and bus tires in 2015 alone. Government investigators and the union’s trade council have been diligent in handling the case, he added.

“The United States imported over $1 billion of truck tires from China last year, and each of those Chinese tires means one tire less made here in the U.S. by USW members,” Gerard said.

Market share increased
Using the unfair tactics confirmed by the DOC, Chinese-made tires increased their share of the U.S. market in each of the last three years at the expense of American manufacturers and USW-represented production workers, Gerard said.

“Unfair truck and bus tire imports from China have denied our domestic industry the opportunity to share in job increases during a period of robust demand growth,” he added.

China is by far the leading source of imported medium-sized truck and bus tires. Johnson said Chinese truck tire imports “have grown from 6.3 million in 2012 to 8.9 million in 2015 with an increased share of consumption of more than 36 percent by 2014.”

“We will not rest until these unfair trade practices are remedied and our members have the chance to compete on a level playing field,” he added.

The USW represents some 6,000 workers at five facilities in the United States that account for more than two-thirds of the domestic capacity to produce truck and bus tires.

The tire production facilities are operated by Bridgestone-Firestone, Goodyear and Sumitomo, and they are located in Laverne and Warren County, Tenn., Buffalo, N.Y., Danville, Va., and Topeka, Kan.
series of recent independent reports confirm what USW members in the steel sector have known for a while: The massive growth in China’s steel industry, fueled by illegal practices, is costing American steelworkers their jobs by the thousands and distorting the market around the world.

In September, Duke University’s Center on Globalization, Governance and Competitiveness published a report entitled “Overcapacity in Steel: China’s Role in a Global Problem.”

The report detailed an international crisis that has led to the loss of as many as 19,000 jobs in steel and related industries in the United States. More than 13,500 USW members in the steel industry held layoff notices from their employers due to the crisis.

“The Duke University study highlights how China’s steel sector has fueled the international steel crisis,” said International President Leo W. Gerard. “By producing too much steel, then shipping and selling its overcapacity overseas below market prices, it bankrupts companies following free market rules and costs tens of thousands of workers their jobs.”

China has increased its steel capacity so dramatically that it is now producing 800 million metric tons more steel than is necessary to meet global demand. Chinese government policies, including state subsidies, currency manipulation and dumping of products below fair-market prices, have hurt workers in steelmaking countries across the world, according to the Duke report.

“Despite China publicly admitting that it had an overcapacity problem, since 2007 it added 552 million metric tons of new capacity,” Gerard said. “That is seven times the amount of all steel produced in the United States. This study should end the debate about what the problem is and what caused it.”

Subsidies revealed

The Duke study came only a month after a report from five leading steel trade associations revealed the extent of Chinese government subsidies and other market-distorting policies.

That report, from the American Iron and Steel Institute (AISI), the Steel Manufacturers Association (SMA), the Committee on Pipe and Tube Imports (CPTI), the Specialty Steel Industry of North America (SSINA) and the American Institute of Steel Construction (AISC), analyzed subsidies the Chinese government provided to the country’s 25 largest steel companies.

The 264-page industry report reached similar conclusions – that China’s illegal practices have directly resulted in the devastating problem of global overcapacity.

“The Chinese government has supported the country’s steel industry primarily through cash grants, equity infusions, government-mandated mergers and acquisitions, preferential loans and directed credit,” and other subsidies, the report said.

“Domestic steel producers are not competing with private enterprises but with sovereign governments that do not need to use free-market principles to operate.”

In addition, the report found that China’s steel mills are, on average, far less efficient and environmentally friendly than mills in the United States and other Western nations.

China has “created a highly fragmented domestic steel sector in China made up of many inefficient, and heavily polluting, companies,” the report said.

The loss of thousands of good-paying jobs, along with lax environmental regulations, lower-quality products, and national security concerns all should motivate the U.S. government to take stronger action against Chinese trade, both in the steel sector and with other vital products, Gerard said.

“America’s steelmakers and workers can’t afford more business as usual when it comes to China’s unjust and predatory trade practices,” he said. “Action is needed now.”
AFTER A YEAR OF INVESTIGATION, the U.S. government imposed duties on its allies and adversaries alike, including China, India, Italy, South Korea and Taiwan.

The final authorization came June 24 when the U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) voted to impose antidumping and antisyndy or countervailing duties ranging from 3 percent to 450 percent when combined.

The ITC determined unanimously that the domestic industry was materially injured by imports from the five countries and directed the U.S. Department of Commerce (DOC) to implement the tariffs.

U.S. Steel, ArcelorMittal, AK Steel, Nucor Corp. and other American producers supported by the USW asked the ITC to find injury. On the other side, producers in Italy and Korea, as well as Ford Motor Co., had asked the ITC to find the U.S. industry not injured by the imports.

International President Leo W. Gerard said the ITC vote extended fairer pricing conditions to the American market for corrosion-resistant steel used in a wide range of applications.

The U.S. steel industry and its workers are starting to see relief as a result of affirmative decisions in trade cases involving corrosion-resistant steel, cold-rolled steel and hot-rolled steel products, which together account for 60 percent of the U.S. market.

“Our efforts are helping as prices are beginning to stabilize, but we need to do more to restore the market and the jobs that have been lost,” Gerard said.

“It’s been a long battle – this petition was filed at the beginning of June 2015 – and we still face massive subsidies and dumping of other products. Pipe and tube producers and workers are suffering. China’s overcapacity in steel, aluminum and many other products continues to damage world markets and undermine jobs and wages.”

$17 BILLION MARKET

The United States consumed $17.1 billion worth of corrosion-resistant steel in 2015, and unfairly-priced imports took a 21.1 percent share of that market, according to the ITC.

In May, the DOC set the dumping rate for most Chinese producers at 209 percent. Subsidy rates for Chinese producers ranged from 39 percent to 241 percent.

Dumping margins for producers in India were calculated by the DOC to range from 3 percent to 4.4 percent depending on the producer. Subsidy rates were set at 13 percent for most Indian producers.

In the Italian investigations, the DOC found dumping ranged from 12.6 percent to 92 percent for one firm, Marcegaglia SpA. Subsidy rates for most producers were set at 13 percent.

The DOC found the dumping rate for Korean producers ranged from 8.75 percent to 48 percent. Subsidy rates for Korean companies were mostly 1.2 percent or lower.

In the Taiwan investigation, the DOC calculated a dumping margin of 3.77 percent for most producers. Contervailable subsidies were not found in that case.

Gerard called for a new comprehensive approach to illegal trade, saying it’s unfair that the industry and its workers must experience injury in the form of lost jobs or closed facilities to qualify for relief.

ITC REINSTATES U.S. STEEL’S CHINA TRADE CASE

The U.S. International Trade Commission (ITC) has reinstated a temporarily suspended trade case brought by U.S. Steel to block all Chinese carbon and alloy steel products from entering the U.S. market.

In July, Administrative Law Judge Dee Lord suspended U.S. Steel’s case, saying some of the company’s allegations fall under the purview of antidumping and countervailing duty laws administered by the U.S. Department of Commerce.

That order was overturned in August after review by the ITC, setting the stage for a continuing legal battle that some experts believe could take a year or longer to decide.

In the complaint filed with the ITC on April 26, U.S. Steel urged trade regulators to investigate dozens of Chinese producers and distributors for stealing trade secrets, conspiring to fix prices and circumventing import duties.

U.S. Steel filed its petition under Section 337 of the Tariff Act of 1930, which allows trade sanctions for intellectual property theft, including banning all unfairly traded products named in the complaint.

The statute protects U.S. companies from patent infringement and theft of intellectual property and is commonly applied to medical devices and technology. It was last used by the steel industry in 1978 to curb imports of welded stainless steel pipe from Japan.

The allegation regarding stolen trade secrets stems from a 2014 federal indictment against members of the Chinese military for hacking into the computer systems of U.S. Steel, Allegheny Technologies, Westinghouse, Alcoa and the USW. U.S. Steel claims China stole decades of research on high-strength steel.

The complaint also accuses 11 Chinese steelmakers of anti-competitive pricing and false labeling, or unlawfully sending shipments through intermediate countries to skirt U.S. restrictions.
Cory Sands has worked in the coal industry for 12 years, spending weeks at a time on the job with his fellow USW members moving barges along rivers throughout the eastern and southern United States.

“It’s what our region thrives on,” said Sands, who lives in Paducah, Ky., and serves as president of Local 14269. “This is our livelihood.”

Local 14269 represents about 120 members who work as captains, pilots and chief engineers on three-week-on, three-week-off cycles, moving coal and other products for Crounse Corp. Local 8158 represents about 180 members who serve as boat operators, deckhands, wheelhouse workers and cooks. The two locals bargain jointly.

Besides the 300 members at Crounse, the USW represents workers in coal transport, power plants and other coal-related industries in Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Louisiana, Kentucky and elsewhere.

In those locations and across the country, the coal industry is facing perhaps its most difficult crisis. A glut of natural gas has led power generators to move away from coal. The resulting drop in demand has forced at least eight domestic coal-related companies to file for bankruptcy over the past two years.

That has led coal workers, their families and communities to wonder what the future holds.

For Sands, it’s important that the USW and the country as a whole continue to fight for and recognize the importance of the coal industry, not only as part of our overall energy policy, but especially to small communities like his.

If the industry were to disappear, Sands said, the pain would spread far beyond just front-line coal industry workers like him. “I think the impact could be far greater than just coal, it could shut down entire cities that thrive on the other industry that it brings in,” he said.

To make sure that doesn’t happen, the USW will continue to support an “all of the above” energy plan that includes all sources, including coal, oil and natural gas, as well as the expansion of renewable energy sources, said International President Leo W. Gerard.

Union’s first priority

“Our union’s first priority – always – is to fight for our members and to protect their lives and livelihoods,” Gerard said. “We must also fight to ensure that all of the workers affected by the transitions in our economy and our energy policy have an opportunity to continue to make a good living and support their families. They should not be left behind.”

The USW has been working directly with the U.S. Department of Energy for several years to promote and expand the use of “clean coal” technologies, said Roxanne Brown of the USW’s Legislative Department in Washington, D.C.

Those processes include carbon capture and storage and other methods to mitigate the environmental effects of burning coal and to make the fuel more efficient. “We’re really working hard to look at the technology so that coal can still be a part of our future,” Brown said. “We’ve been on record for a long time as supporting these technologies, but now it’s finally getting a lot of attention.”

Bills the USW supports include the Carbon Capture Act (H.R. 4622) from U.S. Rep. Mike Conaway (R-Texas) and the Carbon Capture Utilization and Storage Act (S.3179) introduced by U.S. Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.), which would help to spur commercial deployment of technologies that would capture carbon dioxide emissions from power plants and industrial facilities for use in enhanced oil recovery and other applications.

All of this should be good news for USW members like harbor boat operator Kelly Alan Graham, vice president of Local 8158.

Graham said that while he and his co-workers support environmental causes, he believes scientists, environmentalists and government leaders must focus as much energy on making coal cleaner as they do on other clean energy initiatives.

Many of the vessels on which Graham works haul limestone, which power plants use in the “scrubbing” process to help reduce harmful emissions. More support for that kind of technology would make his job and those of his
fellow USW members more secure.

“Coal is one of the most abundant resources in this country, and it seems like our instinct is to run from it instead of finding a cleaner solution,” Graham said.

Still, environmental concerns are not the chief factor driving the coal industry crisis; cheap and abundant natural gas has resulted in a dramatic shift in the coal market, Brown said.

“Natural gas has become king, and as that happened, it has edged out coal,” she said. “It’s a harsh reality, but it is the reality.”

That transition has been a difficult one for Graham, Sands and other USW members like them.

Graham has worked in the coal industry for 12 years. When he started business was steady. Now, even after a number of workers were called back after a lengthy layoff, day-to-day operations are still not running at 100 percent.

“I know what a full day looks like, and we’re still not there,” Graham said. “When I first started, it was very busy. It’s not very busy anymore.”

Graham said that when he started his job 12 years ago, there were at least six manufacturing facilities in the region. Now, there are two.

“Most of the best paying jobs in this area are left to the coal industry,” he said. “People are depending on these jobs.”

Better jobs mean a trickle-down effect that helps all working families in the region, Graham said.

That’s why, in addition to advocating the expansion of clean coal technology, the USW has also been aggressively pushing retraining and other investments in the coal communities, Brown said.

The USW worked alongside government officials to create the Power Plus Program, which provides more than $55 million in grants to make sure that workers in coal and related industries continue to have access to good-paying, family-supporting jobs.

**Transition is difficult**

Graham said that while those efforts are important, it’s hard for workers who have done the same job for decades to make such transitions.

USW members aren’t the only workers facing such difficult questions as a result of the shifting energy economy.

Mike Langford, president of the Utility Workers Union of America, which like the USW is a member of the BlueGreen Alliance, said fighting climate change and helping workers must go hand-in-hand.

Gerard and Langford agreed that rebuilding infrastructure, bringing manufacturing jobs back to the United States, and retraining displaced employees must all be part of the effort to support workers, and to fight climate change.

“It’s all of the above. These things go hand-in-hand,” Langford said. “Coal plants are shutting down, but it’s not because of the EPA, it’s because of the low price of natural gas, and we have to have some sort of just transition, not only for the workers in these facilities, but for these communities.”

Still, for Sands and his co-workers, concerns about the future of the industry have in some cases led them to take issue with the USW on political and environmental issues.

Sands said he’d like to see a greater effort to curb pollution in developing countries, where efficiency and emissions standards are much less strict than in the United States.

“I feel like we all breathe the same air,” he said. “If we need to be attacking pollutants, we should start with other countries. China is polluting so much more than we are.”

Gerard defended the USW’s membership in the BlueGreen Alliance and said that the union and its allies “have fought harder than anyone” to crack down on Chinese pollution, through carbon taxes and other measures.

Sands, who usually works six hours on and six hours off during his stints on the water, pointed out that moving coal and other products on the river, as he and his co-workers do, is more environmentally friendly than trucks, rail cars or other modes of transport.

And while Crounse occasionally hauls products other than coal, the fossil fuel does make up more than 90 percent of its freight.

“The river industry is the best and most efficient way to move product,” he said.

Graham said he understands the need to regulate industry, but that it’s wrong for some Americans to want to rid the country of coal when there is still a market and a need for the product.

“There’s a difference between managing an industry and trying to get rid of an industry. If you’re inside the industry, that’s surely what it looks like,” he said. “I believe in the future of this industry.”
No one can blame the 1,400 USW-represented workers at Carrier’s furnace factory in Indianapolis for being angry and stunned that their jobs are moving to Mexico in a corporate chase for lower wages.

It’s the kind of situation that should never happen.

“Our members are losing their jobs due to no fault of their own,” said Local 1999 President Chuck Jones. “Carrier was making record-breaking profits, and our members had earned every quality award you can get for manufacturing furnaces.

“So the move isn’t for poor quality or bad profitability. The move to Mexico is because of corporate greed and unfair bad trade deals,” Jones said.

Like everyone else, Vickie Burrus, who works second shift on a Carrier assembly line, is concerned about her family. Carrier encouraged family members to apply for open jobs, so several of her relatives work there too, including a son, daughter, nieces, nephews and cousins.

“We are feeling anxious about our future, and there are many other working families like mine,” said Burrus, who described her family as hard working and proud to give back to church and community.

National notoriety

Carrier gained national notoriety last February when a worker used a smart phone to record a manager announcing the company would close the Indianapolis factory and send the work to Mexico. At the same time, its parent corporation, United Technologies (UT), told 700 employees of its electronics controls factory in Huntington, Ind., that it would also move their jobs to Mexico.

“With the video button on his smart phone, one brave Hoosier gave us a first-hand look at the wreckage of our failed trade policies,” said AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka.

“Unfair trade is a national catastrophe. It’s real. It’s mothers and fathers who wonder how they will pay the bills. It’s communities that lose their soul. It’s schools and business who must do more with a whole lot less. Sadly, what happened in Indianapolis is just the tip of the iceberg.”

The company said the move was “strictly a business decision” to enhance shareholder profitability. Carrier will save $65 million a year by paying $3 an hour wages in Mexico, compared to an average of $21 in Indianapolis.

To meet Carrier’s Mexican advantage, the workers in Indianapolis would have to accept a wage so low that it is illegal under federal and state minimum wage statutes.

“I am tremendously proud of our members at Carrier for...
the quality work making furnaces to the highest standard,” said International President Leo W. Gerard. “They shouldn’t be rewarded with a plant closure. They should be rewarded with good wages, good benefits and lifetime security.”

**Profits on the rise**
Not only was the company making money in Indianapolis when it announced the closure, its profit margins per sales dollar were on the rise, said U.S. Sen. Joe Donnelly (D-Ind.). “Their margins had increased. Sales were great. Everything was going well,” said Donnelly. “But what happened is they were in the middle of a stock buyback of almost $16 billion.

“This is an extraordinarily profitable company doing really well that’s also trying to pay a stock buyback so they can keep the hedge funds happy, and who are the losers at the end of the day? The workers at this plant.”

In July, Carrier and Local 1999 reached a settlement on severance benefits and extended the existing contract to cover all union employees until their last day on the job.

In addition to severance pay and extended medical benefits, the agreements include education or technical training assistance, job transfer rights, performance bonuses and wage increases for 2018 and 2019, the last two years of the plant’s scheduled operation.

**TPP must be defeated**

With effects bargaining concluded, the local intends to maintain its campaign against Carrier and to persuade Congress to pass legislation that would penalize companies for moving manufacturing jobs to other countries and reward those that create and sustain jobs in the United States.

“We know it’s a tough battle,” said District 7 Sub-District Director Wayne A. Dale. “But we’re going to keep our campaign alive. We’re not going to give up until the last round.”

As part of the campaign, labor intends to push its message that bad trade deals lead to job cuts and that the pending Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) must be defeated if it comes to a vote in Congress in a lame duck session after the election.

“Clearly, we must defeat the TPP, and we’ve got to do it before, during and after the election process,” Gerard said. “Basically, what the TPP would do is give away our future so we’re going to work like crazy in this election.”

The USW is supporting legislation backed by Donnelly that would deny corporations like Carrier tax deductions for the costs of moving factory equipment offshore and recover any tax incentives given to fleeing companies that promised to create jobs at home but didn’t.

“We don’t intend to give up the fight. We don’t intend to let Carrier just walk away,” Gerard said. “We intend to work with Sen. Donnelly and others to put the brakes on what has led Carrier to betray their workers, their community, their state and country.”

Donnelly also wants the government to consider a company’s offshoring when granting federal contracts. UT, Carrier’s parent firm, is a large defense contractor and has received billions of dollars over time in government contracts.

“We currently consider factors like cost, past performance and technical quality,” Donnelly said. “We should also consider whether a bidding corporation trying to get a federal contract has pursued cheaper foreign labor at the expense of our own workers.”

Donnelly accused Carrier of being a free rider – getting the benefit of the absolute lowest wages they can find in Mexico and then shipping finished products back into the United States under NAFTA for sale to families that are still paid decent wages by other corporations.

“They are trying to get it both coming and going,” Donnelly said. “It’s incredibly unfair and incredibly wrong.”

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**CARRIER BETRAYED US**

**BETRAYAL**
is the breaking or violation of a presumptive contract, trust, or confidence that produces moral and psychological conflict within a relationship.

To see a video of USW members talking about Carrier’s betrayal, go online at: http://usw.to/kR
Sumitomo Rubber Industries has retaken full ownership of the former Goodyear Dunlop tire plant in Tonawanda, N.Y., and announced investments and increases in production capacity at the factory.

The moves are good news for the more than 940 USW members who work at the plant, where employment is expected to increase in the coming years as the company rolls out its improvements.

“Most of us have worked for them before, and we have a good relationship,” said Tom O’Shei, president of Local 135L, which represents hourly workers at the plant.

After taking over the facility, the Japanese company assumed the USW’s current contract, which runs through July 2017.

93 years making tires

Sumitomo, which originally bought the factory in 1986, entered into a joint venture with Goodyear in 1999, retaining a 25 percent stake in the plant, before paying $271 million to re-take full ownership.

The Dunlop plant is one of the largest and oldest employers in the Tonawanda region, first built to produce munitions during World War I. The factory marked its 90th anniversary as a tire plant in 2013.

Sumitomo said the Dunlop plant would double production capacity for car and light truck tires to 10,000 tires per day by the end of 2019. The company also promised to spend $87 million on equipment upgrades aimed at increasing productivity and efficiency at the factory.

“We plan to continue moving forward with expanding tire production in North America for local consumption,” Sumitomo said in announcing its plans.

The investments will put the factory, already a leader in world-class motorcycle tires, “on more of a level playing field with other plants” when it comes to producing commercial and passenger vehicle tires, O’Shei said.

Local officers visit Japan

In late June, O’Shei, along with Local 135L Next Generation Coordinator Josh Hall, traveled with managers from the Dunlop factory to Japan to tour other Sumitomo facilities and meet with company officials.

The group also participated in the company’s global safety conference and met with Sumitomo’s CEO.

O’Shei said Sumitomo’s ongoing commitment to safety will mean a better work environment for USW members.

“You can already see the difference,” he said. “They don’t just talk safety, they live it. It’s at the top of their priority list.”

O’Shei also said that while USW members at the Dunlop plant have seen their share of difficult times, including Goodyear nearly shutting the factory down during the 2008-2009 recession, Sumitomo’s long-term plans for growth in North America should put the plant on solid footing for the foreseeable future.

The long-established track record of hard work and efficiency by USW members will be the key, he said.

“It’s up to us to make the most of this opportunity,” O’Shei said. “If we do this right, this is not going to be the last investment. We’ll keep this going as long as we show them that their money is well spent.”
A federal case brought by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) against U.S. Steel over three USW members who were disciplined for late reporting of injuries has been favorably settled.

The settlement, announced by the USW on July 20, replaces the U.S. Steel injury reporting policy with a new company-wide policy that provides for reporting only after an individual is aware of an injury. It also establishes a similarly reasonable policy for reporting incidents like near misses, and rescinds the discipline issued to the three workers and provides them full back pay with interest.

In a side agreement with the union, U.S. Steel pledged not to make use of any discipline issued under the old policy in any future proceeding involving anyone in any of the company’s plants, not just the three workers who were named in the DOL lawsuit.

“This is an excellent settlement,” said International Vice President Tom Conway, who heads the union’s U.S. Steel Bargaining Committee. “Not only does it give justice to three brave union members who stood up for their rights, but it will lead to more complete and accurate injury records and improved safety. This will benefit both the workers and the company.”

In 2014, U.S. Steel disciplined the members for alleged late reporting of injuries suffered at work in separate incidents at plants in Pennsylvania near Pittsburgh and in Ohio.

The members alleged and the USW agreed that the three workers did not initially know they were injured and reported the injuries as soon as they did know.

**Splinter infected finger**

In one instance, on Feb. 12, 2014, a utility technician at U.S. Steel’s coke manufacturing plant in Clairton, Pa., part of the corporation’s Mon Valley Works, found a small splinter lodged in his thumb and extracted it himself, according to the DOL. He completed his shift without further incident.

Two days later, however, the member’s thumb and hand were swollen noticeably, and he received medical treatment for an infection. When he reported the incident to a supervisor, U.S. Steel imposed a suspension without pay for violating company policy.

Separately, on Feb. 15, a laborer at the company’s Irvin plant in West Mifflin, Pa., also part of the Mon Valley Works, bumped his head on a low beam. The worker was wearing a hard hat and didn’t feel any pain or notice any discomfort at the time.

Several days later, however, he experienced stiffness in his right shoulder and sought medical treatment, which was reported to U.S. Steel as a possible worksite injury, the DOL said. The worker was suspended without pay when he met with a U.S. Steel representative to discuss the issue.

On Feb. 26, an employee working overtime in the shipping department at the U.S. Steel Lorain Tubular Operations slipped and fell inside a rail car while hammering a wedge into piping.

At the time, the temperature was near 20 degrees below zero with wind chill. The worker did not notice any pain or injury and continued working for several more hours.

He noticed the following morning that his wrist was swollen and his left knee was stiff. He arrived at work early in order to report the injury before being assessed at the plant and at the local hospital.

On Feb. 28, U.S. Steel issued a five-day suspension subject to discharge for failure to report a safety incident in a timely manner. Local 1104 grieved the discipline.

**OSHA complaints filed**

With the help of the USW, the three workers filed complaints with the DOL’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). After a lengthy investigation, OSHA sided with the workers and filed a lawsuit against U.S. Steel on Feb. 17, 2016, in federal court in Delaware.

Even before the case was filed, the company and the union entered into settlement negotiations, which the DOL later joined.

The case has important ramifications beyond the three disciplined union members, the USW said in a statement. Workers who believe they will be unfairly punished for late reporting of an injury may choose not to report at all. OSHA and the USW maintained that the effect of the policy was to impermissibly discourage injury reporting and to retaliate against workers who did report.

The DOL filed the lawsuit last February.
U SW-represented oil and chemical workers know from experience that standing together is the best way to successfully confront some of the biggest and most powerful corporations in the world.

The National Oil Bargaining Program (NOBP) brought some 200 local union leaders in the oil industry together in Pittsburgh this summer to review the state of the industry and begin working together to prepare for the next round of bargaining in a few years.

“We’ve got a lot of work to do,” International Vice President Tom Conway told the delegates. “But we can get there, and the key is to get organized and strong and moving together.”

International President Leo W. Gerard paid tribute in his remarks to the local unions, members and international leaders who participated in last year’s historic unfair labor practice (ULP) strike.

“We should never ever take for granted, no matter how much pressure is put on us, the importance of our union, the importance of solidarity, and the importance of knowing that if something is wrong we have to try and fix it,” Gerard said.

Thousands of USW members seeking a national contract took on the industry with a series of selective ULP strikes and ultimately won four-year agreements covering some 35,000 workers at 65 domestic refineries and plant locations, as well as pipelines and terminals. At its peak, the actions involved 7,000 workers at 15 facilities.

“The strike that we had and the units that we had in it sent a signal that the days of the industry ignoring us were over,” Gerard said. “They needed to understand that.”

Nibarger new chairman

The conference was led by Kim Nibarger, a former refinery worker and union safety representative who is the new chairman of the NOBP. He succeeded Vice President Gary Beevers, who retired last December.

Nibarger, who worked for 17 years in refinery operations before becoming a union safety program coordinator, urged the delegates to revitalize and strengthen oil industry councils in preparation for the next round of negotiations. Having strong councils, he said, will help the union address local issues and foster solidarity in bargaining.

“For me, the most important part of this conference is making an impression on the locals and the councils to strengthen the councils – a union within a union,” Nibarger said. “We can accomplish way more if we’re working together, rather than
each local struggling alone.”

Most of the councils within the NOBP are organized around employers such as BP, Chevron, Citgo, Marathon, Shell, Tesoro and Valero and include local unions whose members work for that employer.

There is also a 40-unit Pipeline, Terminals and Drivers Council and a Multi-Refinery Council, a combination of about 14 single-site refineries. Lubes, Waxes and Coatings are new councils. So are PBF Energy, Holly Frontier and CHS Inc.

Delegates elected a rank-and-file Oil Policy Committee and alternates who will work closely with the membership and with International union leaders and staff to develop bargaining proposals.

The new Oil Policy Committee members are: NOBP Region A (Districts 1, 2 and 7), Steve Bohney; Region B (Districts 4, 8, 9 and 10), Jim Savage; Region C (District 11), Robert Cammarn; Region D (District 12), Ryan Anderson; and Region E (District 13), Larry Burchfield.

Alternates are: Region A, Eric Sweeney; Region B, Devon Crawford; Region C, Robin Tokach; Region D, Casey Wardell; and Region E, Clay Bonin.

Policy committee’s role

The policy committee members and alternates will assume a greater role in communicating with the membership and leadership on issues affecting the union and the industry than in the past.

“I want the policy committee to get the pulse of the membership, know what they want and get this information back to me,” Nibarger said.

Traditionally, the committee takes bargaining proposals from the union’s oil councils and works with the NOBP director to draft the union’s official bargaining positions. It will also vote on whether to accept the lead company’s proposals.

Between now and the next round of bargaining, the union’s Strategic Campaigns Department will conduct training programs, and the Policy Committee will work with local unions, Gerard said.

“We’re going to make sure our rank-and-file leadership is well versed in all of the issues,” he said. “We’re going to go into the next round of bargaining looking at a constructive approach to a collective agreement.”

While the delegates addressed many topics of concern in refineries including staffing and overtime, it was too early to develop specific bargaining goals. That will come as negotiations near.

“We are a ways from bargaining,” Conway said. “We’re certainly going to come back together and develop specific bargaining goals and where we are going. But the key to us going forward is to rebuild and strengthen our council system.”

There were workshops and educational opportunities in addition to the plenary sessions. Organizing Director Maria Somma, Strategic Campaigns staff member Patrick Young and Roy Houseman of the USW’s legislative office in Washington, D.C., discussed the industry, pending legislation and strategies for the future.

USW analyst Keith Romig gave an extensive presentation on the industry, its history and current situation.

International cooperation

Because oil workers are employed by multinational corporations, Nibarger is coordinating with other international unions who share the same employers as USW members.

As part of that cooperative effort, Leif Sandi, president of the Industri Energi Union in Norway, and Tony Devlin, a national officer in charge of oil bargaining for Unite the Union in the United Kingdom and Ireland, spoke to the delegates about their negotiations and common problems.

Devlin noted that oil workers are under attack in his country and said the solution to dealing with the global oil industry is to work internationally with the USW, other unions and international federations.

“Oil companies work globally so we need to start doing this quickly,” Devlin said.
As the second day of the USW/CWA Health, Safety and Environment Conference got underway, Walt Hill stood before an audience of 1,700 and slowly, solemnly rang the union’s memorial bell.

The bell represents the seriousness of the USW’s commitment to workplace safety and health. For Hill, it also offers a personal reminder of why that fight is so important.

Hill shared his memories of Feb. 5, 2005, when an early morning phone call woke him out of a sound sleep. On the line was a distraught union brother informing Hill, then president of Local 1196, that a tragic incident had occurred at their workplace, the Allegheny Ludlum plant in Brackenridge, Pa.

Brother John Novick died that morning when he was crushed between two railroad cars. On one of those cars was the bell, which the local union reconditioned and donated to the USW International to be used each time it remembers workers who have died on the job.

“You always know about the incident that you didn’t prevent,” Hill said. “But you never know how many you did prevent.”

Preventing such tragedies was the core mission for 1,100 USW activists, as well as hundreds of members of the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and representatives from management, who spent a week in Pittsburgh in mid-September at the

Health and safety activists show their support for changes the USW has proposed to new Process Safety Management regulations under consideration for refineries in California.
The conference included speeches, panel discussions, educational workshops and member surveys.

**Building solidarity**

For Mike Wright, director of the Health, Safety and Environment Department, the most important aspect of the conference’s union-only first day was building solidarity and power to fight for positive change.

Finding and fixing potential hazards before they harm workers is the foundation of any good workplace safety program, Wright said.

That process, known as “hazard mapping,” was the basis for a number of conference workshops. But the union also needs to impose good safety programs on reluctant employers.

“All of this took decades,” she said. “And it was only possible because of a labor movement that never gave up.”

Perez cautioned that too many Republicans in Washington still want to roll back protections that working people have fought for years to gain.

In his remarks, he paid tribute to Local 593 member Alan White, who suffers from the debilitating lung disease silicosis due to years of working in a foundry. White was instrumental in pushing for stricter silica standards.

The key to achieving safer workplaces lies in organizing more workers into unions, Perez said.

**Workplace safety**

Local 7655 safety coordinator Lori Foster, who was attending her first conference, works at the Carrier air conditioner and heat pump plant in Collierville, Tenn. Foster said she attended workshops that touched on issues such as food safety and bullying, demonstrating that health and safety issues don’t stop at plant gates.

She said workplace bullying “happens every day” in ways both big and small, and that more training for rank-and-file workers as well as management would go a long way toward combatting the problem.

“The key is training for new people as well as for employees who have been around for a while,” she said.

Robert Prieto and Victor Salinas, both of Local 675 in Carson, Calif., said they were pleased to see management at their Tesoro oil refinery in attendance.

“The only way these safety programs are successful is if you work together,” said Prieto, who serves as his local’s process safety representative. “You have to have an open and honest dialogue.”

For Salinas, Local 675 vice president, the conference was a reminder that, despite the diversity of the USW membership, the union has one goal in common – no fatalities or injuries.

“We’re all from different backgrounds, but we all have the same concerns,” Salinas said. “Zero fatalities and injuries is the only acceptable number.”

Subjects included Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) rules, lockout/tagout, workplace violence, emergency response, incident investigation, legal issues, ergonomics, occupational disease, and other topics.

For International President Leo W. Gerard, the more than 150 educational workshops were the most important aspect of the conference.

“The work that you do there is more important than any speech you’ll hear,” Gerard said. “When you go back to your workplace, you’ll be working with knowledge that will make our workplaces safer and healthier.”

Other USW officers addressing the conference included Secretary-Treasurer Stan Johnson and Canadian National Director Ken Neumann, as well as Vice Presidents Tom Conway, Fred Redmond and Carol Landry.

Participants also included U.S. Labor Secretary Tom Perez, CWA President Chris Shelton, OSHA Director David Michaels, MSHA Director Joe Main, U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board Chair Vanessa Allen Sutherland, AFL-CIO Health and Safety Director Peg Seminario, NIOSH Director John Howard, and Jeff Parr, Alberta deputy minister of labour.

**USW victories**

Seminario noted a series of victories USW members have achieved on health and safety in recent years. Among those were the adoption of new standards for workplace exposure to silica dust, a proposal to limit exposure to beryllium, new rules making it easier for workers to report injuries, and another rule recognizing the rights of unorganized workers to designate representatives to participate in OSHA inspections.

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The United Steelworkers Press Association (USPA) marked its 50th anniversary by honoring the best work of its volunteers and emphasizing the power of social media to communicate with and mobilize the union’s membership.

“Fifty Years of Telling Our Story” was the theme of the USPA’s 2016 triennial conference, which drew some 120 USW communicators to Pittsburgh in June for training, networking and recognition.

Since 1966, the USPA has encouraged volunteer editors, writers, photographers, and now webmasters and social media coordinators, to inform USW members, retirees and the public about the union and its work. The organization is governed by an elected board of rank-and-file directors and supported by the USW’s New Media department.

“The USPA has been a tremendous force for good in our union over the last 50 years, whether it has been local union publications or new social media commentaries,” International President Leo W. Gerard said in opening remarks.

“Communication tools have evolved from rotary telephones, manual typewriters and mimeograph machines over the half century since the USPA was founded to today’s internet-enabled smart phones, computers and social media networks.

Likewise, paper newsletters and printed fliers today share the communicator’s toolbox with electronic media platforms - Facebook, Flickr, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, YouTube and the like. Despite format changes, USPA’s goal of helping to improve local union communications has remained unchanged.

“The USPA has not only lasted, but it is growing in a way that is more and more committed to the safe delivery of information, the honest delivery of information, to our members,” Gerard said.

Working conference

The days of the conference were filled with workshops on strategic communications, creating content for various networks as well as writing, editing and photography for new and traditional media.

Monica Mable and Pam Thompson, members of Local 1066 at U.S. Steel’s Gary Works in Indiana, praised the classes and workshops for giving them the background to restart the local’s newsletter and maintain a website and Facebook page.

“We have volunteers here and they seem eager,” said Thompson, who was recently appointed by her local president to oversee the local’s new media program.

USPA Coordinator Corey Ingram of Local 7687 in York, Pa., said he appreciated both the workshops and the ability to learn from the experience of other volunteers.

“It’s good to get together with people from all over the country and share,” he said. “You gain so much from hearing what other people are doing – what works and what doesn’t work.”

While social media is popular with younger workers, Ingram said older members of his local continue to appreciate face-to-face personal contact and printed materials.
To meet that diverse need, Local 7687 utilizes a combination of old and new media including a newsletter, one-page flyers and online social media.

Butch Robinson, of Local 831 at the Goodyear Tire & Rubber Co. in Danville, Va., has progressed from using pen and paper to learning more about computers and social media programs with the hope of making the union message relevant to a younger generation.

“I’m learning how to make what appeals to me about unionism palatable for people who don’t know a lot about unions,” said Robinson, a union volunteer and a trainer at the tire plant.

The USPA training, he said, should help him with his work in the union and his outside work as an associate pastor at his church. In both cases, he is exploring new methods of communicating to deliver old messages of union solidarity and the gospel.

“I’m probably going to start a Twitter account,” he said. “I’m starting to believe that some of the things I’m taking home from here are going to help me in other avenues. I need to start using some of these tools.”

Like many of this year’s attendees, Andrao Crawford of Local 202 at the Delek US Holdings refinery in Tyler, Texas, is new to the USPA. He got involved in setting up a website after the local’s president heard he knew something about computers.

After trying to build a website from scratch, Crawford learned about the USW’s LaborWeb and, with the authorization of his local officers, signed up and began building a local site. He also has plans for Facebook and Twitter accounts. At the same time, another USPA volunteer, Monica Davis, is working on the local’s newsletter.

At the refinery, Crawford said new employees come in the gate more adept at using their smart phones to communicate with their family and friends than the older generation.

“We’ve got the older generation and we’re getting the younger generation in too,” Crawford said with a laugh. “So, we’re trying to be the bridge that brings them together.”

T
he USPA’s 2016 Howard J. McCartney Award for the advancement of labor journalism was presented to Doug May, the longtime editor of the Mettle Post at Local 1899 in District 7, and Jim Coleman, a former USPA president and retired webmaster for the USW.

Over a long career as a USW member and activist at U.S. Steel’s Granite City Works, May is perhaps one of the union’s most decorated local union communicators, having received USPA awards in almost every available category.

May over decades put in countless hours reporting, writing, editing and disseminating the union’s stories at Granite City, said International Vice President Fred Redmond, who presented the award.

“He took the time to teach the next generation and always understood the value of quality, fair and timely communications,” Redmond said of May.

Coleman, who started his union career in 1978 at Algoma Steel in Canada, served as editor of his local union’s quarterly newsletter, the Unionist, after helping to revive it in 1996.

He was elected Canadian vice president of the USPA in 1998 and president of the USPA in 2000. He came to Pittsburgh to coordinate the 2002 USPA Conference and became the USW’s webmaster in 2004.

Coleman served as the staff liaison with the USPA executive board and was credited with working hard to keep the program going, even during tough times. Until retirement, he continued to train USW members in the importance of communications.

“Since day one, Jim has worked tirelessly to tell the union’s story and to teach others how to do so,” Redmond said. “He was relentless – never stopping even during off hours or weekends. When something needed posting to the web, or an article or clip dug up from the black hole of the internet, Jim was on it in a flash.”
A doctor has honored his Steelworker mother by helping to fund an obstetrical simulation laboratory at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) and naming it after the Women of Steel.

The Women of Steel Obstetrical Simulation lab, named by Dr. Howard Grundy in memory of his late mother, Mildred Grundy, was dedicated at the university’s College of Medicine on July 13. He donated $180,000 of the lab’s $500,000 estimated cost. Fundraising continues.

“Women like Mildred led the way for women in the industry and in our union,” said International President Leo W. Gerard, who spoke at the dedication.

The new lab will enable medical students, residents and fellows to gain experience with uncommon, yet critical, obstetric events as well as increase their experience with basic labor and delivery skills. Those who participate in simulation training are believed to make fewer mistakes and deliver better care.

“Part of what’s wonderful about delivering babies is that their whole life is ahead of them. They’re our future,” said Dr. Grundy, who specialized in complicated pregnancies and prenatal diagnosis during his career. He has retired as an associate professor at UIC and now works part time.

Dr. Grundy credits his mother, herself a hard worker, for pushing him to succeed and giving him work ethic. The doctor remembers detassling corn and hoeing asparagus and tomatoes alongside Bracero migrant families when he was young for 60 cents an hour.

“She was a big motivator for me,” he said of his mother. “She was the one who kind of kicked my butt to study.”

Born Smiljana Eror (СМИЉАНА ЕРОР) to Serbian immigrant parents from Croatia, Mrs. Grundy was an original Rosie the Riveter during World War II and one of the first Women of Steel, an activist arm of the USW.
that evolved from early women’s caucuses and leadership courses in the union.

**Rosie the Riveter**

American women entered the work force in unprecedented numbers during World War II as widespread male enlistment in the military left gaping holes in the country’s industrial labor force.

Those women workers, nicknamed Rosie the Riveter from a government recruitment campaign, worked in factories and shipyards during the war, producing munitions and other war supplies.

“Our Women of Steel program was built on the shoulders of those women brave enough to enter the male dominated factories and stay long after they were supposed to leave and become homemakers,” Gerard added.

Mrs. Grundy was born in 1915 and went to work for U.S. Steel’s Cyclone Fence factory in DeKalb, Ill., in 1930 when she was 15, eight years before the federal government initiated child labor regulations.

Her mother, Sofia, had died when Mrs. Grundy was four from postpartum pneumonia following childbirth. As a teenager, she left school to work at her father’s urging.

A time card from 1930 shows Mrs. Grundy worked 123 hours over 16 days with only 3 days off, and was paid 18 cents an hour for the effort. Those long job hours continued until President Franklin D. Roosevelt signed the Fair Labor Standards Act in 1938, which established regulations governing youth employment, minimum wage and overtime pay.

She worked through World War II. A local newspaper article described Mrs. Grundy as a home-front patriot who “knows her way around machinery and can handle any job assigned her.” At the time, she was teaching other women workers how to operate spooling and bobbin department machines used to produce insect screen cloth that protected soldiers from malaria in the Pacific region.

Although occupied by her war work at Cyclone, Mrs. Grundy once a week found time to put on a Red Cross nurses’ aide uniform and volunteer for duty at the local hospital. She donated blood for the war effort and supported war bonds.

That’s much like today’s Women of Steel members, Gerard said. “They go to work. They care for their families. They are leaders in their local unions and yet they find time to assist with causes in their communities.”

**Women paid same as men**

Mrs. Grundy was a member of Local 2722, which was organized in 1942. By 1945, the local’s contract guaranteed that women be paid the same as men for performing the same work.

In 1947, Mrs. Grundy married Army Air Force veteran Howard M. Grundy, who worked at a Wurlitzer piano factory in DeKalb. Mrs. Grundy stayed at Cyclone for 37 years, retiring in 1967 after learning her son had earned a full scholarship to the University of Illinois. She died in 1995 at age 80.

The piano factory and the Cyclone Fence factory both eventually folded. “Both my parents were factory workers, and they both got wiped out by foreign competition,” Dr. Grundy said. “It’s a true rust belt story.”

District 7 Director Michael R. Millsap, a second-generation Steelworker, said he was honored to attend the dedication with Gerard and several Women of Steel members from his district.

“It is great to see that the legacy of one of our pioneer members and the Women of Steel program live on for future generations,” he said.

Left to right: Dr. Mary D. Stephenson, Dean Dimitri T. Azar MD, Sandra Grundy, Dr. Howard Grundy, International President Leo W. Gerard, Local 6787 member Sarah Dolph Smith, Women of Steel Coordinator Charva Jones and District 7 Director Michael Millsap.

Photo courtesy of the University of Illinois College of Medicine
**USW Calls on Novelis to Bargain**

In response to yet another National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruling that Novelis committed unfair labor practices during a 2014 union election at its Oswego, N.Y., plant, the USW is calling on the aluminum maker to recognize the union and bargain a fair contract.

In August, a three-person NLRB panel issued a unanimous ruling upholding a judge’s order that found Novelis interfered so severely in a union election in February 2014 that a fair outcome would have been impossible.

“The best course of action for Novelis to take now is to accept this ruling, drop any further legal challenges and get to work bargaining a fair contract,” said International President Leo W. Gerard. “Workers trying to make their voices heard to improve their workplace should never face threats and intimidation.”

**New Contract for 2,400 BF Goodrich Workers**

USW members at BF Goodrich facilities in Tuscaloosa, Ala., and Fort Wayne, Ind., voted overwhelmingly in August to ratify a new three-year contract for about 2,400 workers.

The agreement, which covers members of Local 351L in Tuscaloosa and Local 715L in Fort Wayne, includes the first general wage increase in 16 years for workers at the two plants.

“This is certainly industry standard, plus,” said Secretary-Treasurer Stan Johnson, who oversees the USW’s Rubber/Plastics Industry Conference (R/PIC). “We were successful not just in gaining wage increases, but in preserving quality, affordable health care and other benefits for workers and their families.”

The company opened negotiations in June with a long list of demands for unnecessary concessions that would have affected nearly every part of the contract, including job security, retirement, wages and benefits.

BF Goodrich also demanded the right to contract out union jobs and proposed changes in health care coverage that would have resulted in dramatically higher out-of-pocket costs for USW members.

“These proposals were disrespectful to the years of work these members have put into the plants,” the USW’s policy committee wrote to members.

As the July 30 contract expiration date approached, the company presented the bargaining team with a “last, best and final offer” still containing a number of unacceptable demands, which the committee unanimously rejected.

After agreeing to extend the existing contract on a day-to-day basis, the two sides returned to the table and reached an agreement on Aug. 2. Overall, the USW represents about 18,000 workers in the tire industry.

**USW in Tentative Pact with Cliffs**

The USW has reached a tentative agreement on a new contract with Cliffs Natural Resources on behalf of about 2,000 members of four local unions at the company’s U.S. iron ore mines.

If ratified, the proposal, negotiated in late August, would be retroactive to Oct. 1, 2015, and expire on Oct. 1, 2018.

District 11 Director Emil Ramirez, who chairs the union’s negotiations with Cliffs, praised the bargaining committee for standing together and resisting management’s attempts to divide them with concessionary proposals.

“We are proud to bring this tentative agreement to the membership for ratification and put the past year of uncertainty behind us,” Ramirez said. “Thanks to the solidarity of USW members and retirees … we have negotiated a fair agreement that preserves our wages, benefits and other longstanding rights and protections without lowering the standards of living of current workers or retirees.”

District 11 Assistant Director John Rebovich said resolving the contract should allow Cliffs management and hourly union workers to focus on building a more secure future by working together.
Variety Helps Steelworker Family

Variety - the Children’s Charity gave a new adaptive stroller to the 14-year-old son of a member from Local 11-38, one of the locals locked out by Allegheny Technologies, Inc. (ATI) for seven months in 2015 and 2016.

Keith Beavers’ son Vinnie grew out of his old stroller around the time of the lockout, and the new adaptive stroller that replaced it was expensive.

“Vinnie wants to be in school, but he has seizures,” said Vinnie’s mother, Rachelle. “The stroller enables him to stay at school safely after he bounces back from a seizure.”

Variety’s mission is to “provide children with disabilities with unique programs, experiences and equipment so they may live life to the fullest.”

USW Calls for Aleris Sale Review

International President Leo W. Gerard wrote to U.S. Secretary of the Treasury Jack Lew in September asking that the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) reject the proposed acquisition of Aleris Corporation by Zhongwang.

Zhongwang is a company with a history of evading and circumventing U.S. laws, and its chairman is a member of the Chinese Communist Party. Aleris is a manufacturer of aluminum rolled products and an employer of USW members.

“This proposed acquisition should be closely scrutinized and then rejected because of its potential impact on national security as well as the pattern of activities of its press-identified owners,” Gerard wrote.

Some 900 USW members at Aleris produce leading-edge aluminum items, including products for the aerospace and automotive industries, which also have defense applications.

“Aleris has done significant research, development and design of products such as ballistic-resistant aluminum, which is used as armor plate. These kinds of products could clearly advance the national security capabilities of the Chinese at a critical time in our bilateral relations,” Gerard wrote.

USW Organizes Recycling Plant

Workers at Ultimate RB, a rubber recycling factory in McMinnville, Ore., have voted to join the USW.

Ultimate RB, formerly RB Rubber, is a subsidiary of St. Louis-based Accella Performance Materials. The company’s McMinnville plant turns recycled rubber into mats for truck beds and horse stalls, rubber flooring for athletic facilities and playgrounds and ballistic tiles used in shooting ranges.

The new bargaining unit will include about 60 production, maintenance and shipping employees.

Republic Steel Contract Ratified

USW members voted in September to ratify a three-year contract with Republic Steel that covers about 1,000 hourly production, maintenance, office and technical workers at five U.S. locations.

International President Leo W. Gerard commended workers in Lorain, Canton and Massillon, Ohio; Lackawanna, N.Y.; and Gary, Ind. for their unity and dedication throughout the bargaining process.

“Through no fault of their own, too many of our brothers and sisters have dealt with the uncertainty of an industry downturn brought about by decades of misguided trade policies,” Gerard said. “We are looking forward to a more secure future with ratification complete and a fair collective bargaining agreement in place.”

District 1 Director David McCall, who chairs the union’s negotiations with Republic, said that the newly ratified agreement, retroactive to Aug. 15, 2016, preserves wages, benefits and other longstanding rights and protections without lowering the standards of living of current workers or retirees.

Scholarship Applications Now Open

Now is the time to apply for the 2017 Union Plus Scholarship Program for students of working families who are starting or continuing post-secondary education.

Applications for the 2017 scholarship program are available online at UnionPlus.org/Scholarship.

Completed applications must be received on or before midnight Jan. 21, 2017.

The scholarships are one-time cash awards ranging from $500 to $4,000 for school study programs beginning in the fall of 2017. Winners will be notified in June 2017.

The program is offered by the Union Plus Education Foundation, which is supported in part by contributions from the Union Plus Credit Card provider. Students or their parents do not need to be card holders to apply.

The program is open to members of the USW, their spouses and dependents.

For the 2016 fall semester, Union Plus awarded $150,000 in scholarships to 104 students from 32 unions.
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 _________