

GMP

JULY/AUGUST 2017

Horizons

Serving Workers in the Glass, Metal, Pottery and Plastics Industries

SUMMER SCHOOL

at Lakerview



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— NOTICE OF —
NOMINATIONS
P. 9



Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics & Allied Workers, AFL-CIO, CLC
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In an effort to **GO GREEN** and become more environmentally conscious, we are offering **HORIZONS** online by visiting

GO GREEN
www.gmpiu.org

Change of Address — Please use above address or email and include the following information:

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- New Address
- Union Number
- Are You a Retiree?
- Your Signature
- Effective Date

DEATH BENEFIT DUES

In the event you leave employment seeking permanent and total disability, YOU MUST CONTINUE PAYING YOUR DEATH BENEFIT DUES until such time as permanent and total disability status is established. As a general rule, disability determination routinely takes from 6 to 8 months. Please inform our office of such status and any overpayments will be refunded.

Do not permit your DEATH BENEFIT DUES to become delinquent over 90 days. All GMP members are responsible for making payments to maintain death benefit eligibility. All early retirees are responsible for payment to age 65. If you are self-paying, indicate your local union number and forward your check to:

Claude Beaudin, International Secretary-Treasurer
608 E. Baltimore Pike, Media, PA 19063

Persons wishing to report a death or discuss the death benefit may call the Death Benefit Department at 610-565-5051 ext. 4963. Remember to update your beneficiary card as needed. The beneficiary of record is solely entitled to the Death Benefit.

All claims must be filed within five (5) years of death.

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International President

CLAUDE BEAUDIN
International Secretary-Treasurer
Director of Research and Education

RICKEY HUNTER
Vice President

BRENDA SCOTLAND
Vice President

JERRY L. COTTON
Vice President

608 East Baltimore Pike
Media, PA 19063

DAVID DOYLE
Executive Director-Canada

P.O. Box 20133
Woodstock, Ontario N4S 8X8
Canada

EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

BRUNO CYR

RICK VITATOE

DONALD CARTER

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THOMAS GALLAGHER

CARLOS CONTRERAS

CELEBRATING 175 YEARS

It is with great pride that the GMP celebrates its 175th Anniversary this year. Our roots extend back to 1842, when John Tyler was the tenth President of the United States. Few, if any, American unions can rival the distinguished history and accomplishments of the GMP and its predecessor unions. One extraordinary aspect of our Union's history is the fact that our leadership and our membership have always acted in unison to fight for better wages, benefits and working conditions. We are of a single mind and single goal. At this moment in our history we are proud to honor our founding leaders: Albert Hughes, Denis Hayes and William Sylvis. Their sacrifices built the foundation for all of the successes we have enjoyed as a Union. We also wish to honor and thank all our sisters and brothers who, over the past 175 years, saw the wisdom in merging strong and unique unions such as the Glass Bottle Blowers, the Brotherhood of Operative Potters and the International Molders and Allied Workers International Union into the present day GMP and who with a legacy of activism and selfishness joined together in local unions across the United States and Canada to bargain together to improve wages, benefits and working conditions, ensure justice and dignity on the job and to build a better future for our families.

In 2018 we begin a new chapter as the GMP Council of the USW. The GMP's merger with the USW represents for us a sustainable future worthy of those whose struggles and sacrifices over the past 175 years built this special Union. We look forward to serving today's membership and our next generation of members as the GMP Council of the USW.

One initiative we have undertaken to continue to build our strength and vitality is the volunteer organizers program with the USW. In this issue of Horizons our first class of volunteers share with you its letter to local unions. We are very proud of this first class of volunteer organizers and look forward to great accomplishments from them in the future.

Finally, as you know, NAFTA has been a failure for working families across the US and Canada. NAFTA is now up for renegotiation. This presents an opportunity to agree on a treaty with Canada and Mexico that benefits Americans. Organized labor calls on President Trump and members of Congress to work tirelessly to make sure new NAFTA priorities are higher wages and benefits, better safety requirements on the job and the freedom to join together to negotiate for a better life. We don't want talk — we want action that fulfills the promise of prosperity and security for working families. We must make sure our elected leaders know that working families demand and deserve a trade agreement that places working people first.



Bruce R. Smith

INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

We are proud to honor our founding leaders. Their sacrifices built the foundation for all of the successes we have enjoyed as a Union.

SUMMER SCHOOL *at Lakeview*



The GMP International Union Summer School has once again held at Lakeview Spa and Golf Resort in Morgantown, West Virginia June 4th through the 9th, 2017. There were 70 first-year participants and 49 second-year participants attending from GMP Local Unions across the United States.

The first year curriculum consisted of Leading the Local Union, Steward Training, Collective Bargaining and OSHA and You.

The Second year participants took part in Representation in Right to Work, Strategic Mobilization, The Leader in You, and Labor Law.

As usual, West Virginia University provided top-notch instruction under ILRS Director Tony Michael and his staff consisting of Sam White, Jessica Ice and Aaron Ondo. Secretary-Treasurer Beaudin and ILRS Director Michael

shared the opening of the 2017 GMP Summer School with a welcome plenary and remarks.

Evenings provided the participants to enjoy some Trade Union fellowship to talk shop and to just enjoy one another's company. The traditional baseball game between 1st year and 2nd year was won by 2nd year.

President Smith was the keynote speaker on Friday addressing the 2017 GMP Summer School on current concerns of labor. President Smith also handed each participant their certificates on Friday at the conclusion of the 2017 GMP Summer School.

There will be one final GMP Summer School held in 2018 at Lakeview in West Virginia.

All second year participants will be invited back as has been the history of the GMP Summer School along with a full first year participant opportunity.





2017/2018 SCHOLAR

The GMP is proud to offer the GMP Memorial Scholarship Program to children of GMP members entering college. The GMP Memorial Scholarship Program is funded by donations in the memory of GMP officers, staff and members. The program offers four \$4,000 scholarships to students entering a 4-year degree program and two \$2,000 scholarships to students entering 2-year degree programs and are awarded for each year of their curriculum. For more information, visit our website—<http://www.gmpiu.org/Resources/scholarships.aspx>.

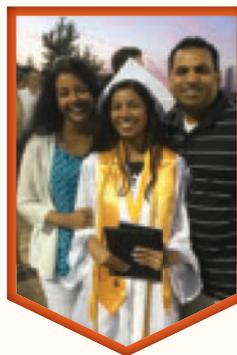
- **Tiara Munhall**, \$4,000 scholarship – daughter of James Munhall, GMP Local Union 169 in Milford, MA
- **Nicolette Nand**, \$2,000 scholarship - daughter of Pranil Nand, GMP Local Union 17, Modesto, CA
- **Alexandria “Alex” Pannell**, \$4,000 scholarship – daughter of Arlin Pannell, GMP Local Union 65B Boaz, AL
- **Avery Cantu**, \$2,000 scholarship – son of Arnold Cantu, GMP Local Union 201, Waxahachie, TX
- **Alyssa Hemann**, \$4,000 Scholarship – daughter of Robert Hemann, GMP Local Union 9B, Keokuk, IA
- **Maddie Barnhart**, \$4,000 scholarship – daughter of Jay Barnhart, GMP Local Union 38, Marion, IN
- **Guadalupe Piceno Lopez**, \$4,000 scholarship – daughter of Juan Piceno, GMP Local Union 164B, Oakland, CA
- **Paige Beaver**, \$4,000 scholarship – daughter of Franklin Beaver, GMP Local Union 419. East Liverpool, OH

TIARA MUNHALL



I will be majoring in Chemistry at UMass Lowell in the fall. As an advocate for the sciences, I will also be a part of the W.I.S.E. (Women in Science and Engineering) LLC my freshman year. After college, I plan on being a researcher or possibly a teacher. Wherever my educational career takes me, I hope to eventually educate others on the importance of balancing environmental sustainability and industrial growth.

NICOLETTE NAND



In order to pursue my dream job of becoming a radiologic technologist, I am starting at community college where I am completing my general prerequisite classes. The completion will take two years following a period of time where I do nothing but apply to multiple colleges with a radiologic technologist program. Once being accepted into a program, it will take about two years to complete. Since high school, I have been in love with anatomy and have been naturally drawn to the study of the human body. I've also always wanted to contribute to helping society, so being a radiologic technologist allows me to do both since I can study the body and help patients who have been injured. This is my dream job, but I never want to stop learning and expanding my knowledge. I eventually want to work my way up to radiation therapy and work with cancer patients. The possibilities are endless; I could work as a radiologic technologist and take classes at the same time to become a radiologist. No matter where I end up, I know anatomy and x-rays will be the founding base of my career. I am so thankful for this scholarship's purpose of financing my future ambitions.

SHIP WINNERS

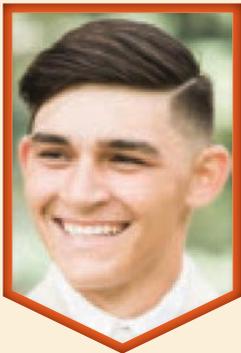
ALEXANDRIA PANNELL



Alexandria Pannell will be attending the University of Alabama where she will be majoring in Pre-Medical studies. She hopes to return to rural communities and give aide to those in impoverished areas. While attending Susan Moore High School Alexandria

participated in numerous activities academically and was a two season athlete. Class salutatorian, Class Vice President, FCCLA President, and Local Hospital Shadow as well. Alexandria was also a BETA club member, FCA officer, Student Government Official, and a County Ambassador.

AVERY CANTU



Education has always been an important aspect of my life. My educational goal is to obtain a Master's Degree in Business and minor in Landscape Architecture. In high school I played Baseball, Basketball and was involved in Fellowship of Christian Athletes.

I work part-time as a Lifeguard for the City of Corsicana. After graduating from college, I plan on owning my own Landscaping business.

ALYSSA HEMANN



In high school, I participated in a competing dance team through my local dance studio where I was also taught and worked with young dancers. I took part in my school's dance team all 4 years of high school, and was named captain of the team my junior and senior year. I also partook in band, choir, tennis, speech team, and bowling. I have succeeded in bowling throughout my high school career with the Keokuk Bowling Team. I plan to keep teaching at my local dance studio to encourage young dancers to keep reaching for their dreams. I plan to attend Southeastern Community College in the fall of 2017 for one year. In May of 2018, i will graduate from SCC with my AA degree, and transfer to Western Illinois University, to major in Elementary Education with an endorsement in Special Education. I can't wait to make a difference in children's lives with my teaching.

MADDIE BARNHART



I will be attending Indiana University-Bloomington this fall to major in Psychology and minor in business. I will also be on the Women's Rowing team. After I graduate I plan to go to law school and become a lobbyist.

continued on next page

2017/2018 SCHOLARSHIP WINNERS

GUADALUPE PICENO LOPEZ



I plan to major in Finance at CSU Stanislaus to combat the financial illiteracy that I see within the Latino community. As a Chicana, I see many injustices done to those close to me and to the community I find most comfort in. But in this process, there is lots of exploitation that Latinos face and many in the community are forced to silence it due to a vulnerable position; financially or circumstantially. Because of this, my pursuit of education is emotionally charged towards eventually becoming a financial adviser. Depending on the job opportunities after I get my Bachelor's degree, I hope to get my Master of Business Administration, whether I have a job in the field or not, during my studies. While it may not be exactly required, I would like to earn it to show my skills and to attain more knowledge that is useful towards my career. After securing a career job, I would like become a certified nail technician. It would not be a secondary job, but more of a profitable hobby on the side. With my eventually-attained experience, I would like to start it, fund it, make the appointments, the artistry itself that is required, and the bookkeeping all on my own.

PAIGE BEAVER



I am a 4 year member of marching, concert, and pep band. I served as section leader and secretary of band council for 2 years. I was a member of National Honor Society. I was selected to be a part of the pottery festival court for 2 years. I volunteered at a local veterinary clinic and animal shelter. I am attending Youngstown State University in the fall and will be majoring in Pre-Veterinary Medicine.

We are happy to celebrate this year's recipients in this issue of *HORIZONS*.

Together with all of the students currently receiving an annual scholarship from the GMP Scholarship Program,

we salute you!



VOLUNTEER ORGANIZERS ADDRESS THE LOCALS

The GMP/USW Volunteer Organizer Training was held at the USW Headquarters in Pittsburgh during the week of July 17–July 21, 2017. The following is a message from your GMP Volunteer Organizers.

We recently completed extensive training in organizing provided by the USW and GMP. We believe that this training will serve as the foundation for a committed, energetic and successful volunteer organizing program at the GMP.

As you know, organizing is a very difficult job, but also a very necessary one. It is the lifeblood of the labor movement. Organizing is essential for us to build the negotiating power necessary to confront ever more hostile employers and to maintain our wages and benefits, enhance our standard of living and improve our working conditions. Organizing helps unorganized

workers participate in the prosperity their work helps create while at the same time protects the hard earned wages and benefits that labor unions have fought for. We know that organizing a non-union company is not an easy undertaking. It requires a substantial expenditure in money, resources, staffing and time. It requires extraordinary commitment from both the workers and the labor organization.

The GMP International Union, in partnership with the USW, is committed to dedicate the necessary resources and efforts to organize workers at non-union facilities and to grow our membership at our union facilities in Right to Work states.

As Volunteer Organizers, under the direction of Area Vice Presidents and with the support of the Organizing Department, we will assist in the GMP Council organizing efforts by seeking leads at non-union facilities in all areas of the GMP International Union.

By volunteering for this training, we have committed to take this responsibility seriously. Together with our local union leaders we will work hard and provide the International Union with bimonthly activity reports regarding leads for organizing and membership recruitment and will work towards our goal of having effective organizing committees in each local union with active organizing efforts.

We need your support and efforts if we are to be successful with our organizing efforts. It starts with you and your local union organizing committees. Sisters and brothers, the time has come for all of us to step up and help. The time is now to make a difference.

We are the GMP Voluntary Organizers, in solidarity,

VOLUNTEER ORGANIZER SIGNOFF

Area 1 — East Coast

Deana Allen, Local 291
Brendan Bohan, Local 36
Jeffrey Dubois, Local 169
Marshall Evans, Local 45B
William Kennedy, Local 101

Area 2 — Midwest

Steve Butler, Local 201
Michael Keck, Local 182B
Kevin Lowe, Local 121
(James Anthony) Tony Moran, Local 244
Larry Smith, Local 248
Robert Torkelson, Local 63B
Rick Wayman, Local 96

Area 3 — West Coast

Tahinna Aguayo, Local 137
Anthony Arceneaux, Local 17
Mark Keire, Local 139B
Armando Verduzco, Local 177

Canada

Garry Power, Local 28B



The GMP International Union proudly participates in the AFL-CIO Next Up Young worker Program, whose mission is to empower the next generation of labor leaders to challenge, inspire, build and organize around issues that directly affect young working people like student loans and good-paying jobs. GMP Member Robert Torkelson (Local 63B) was appointed to the AFL-CIO's Young Worker Advisory Council by President Bruce R. Smith and submits the following report.



GMP

YOUNG WORKER COMMITTEE

The Young Worker Advisory Council meeting was held April 17–20 in Washington DC. Rob Torkelson Local 63B Minneapolis, MN attended as GMP's representative on the Council. During the meetings there was a strong importance put on healing from our loss in the presidential election and focusing on looking to the future, especially on 2018, and organizing toward winning back seats to even the playing field in Congress. This will be an uphill battle. The GOP will be defending just 8 senate seats while Democrats will be fighting to hold on to 23. What is worse is the fact that many of these states were won by Donald Trump. The governors races are equally important. The GOP holds a historically wide edge of 33-16 but the good news is that the GOP will have more governorships to defend over the next 2 years with 27 GOP seats to 10 Democrats. The time to organize for door knocking and canvassing is now.

Day 1 was spent on introductions as well as some of the restructuring being done at the AFL-CIO as well as the state of the AFL-CIO. There was also time to reflect on the election. What could have been done differently, why did Donald Trump win and how do we prepare and look towards the future?

On Day 2 we dug into the future for the Young Worker Advisory Council with Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler where

she committed to the program and discussed the important role of Young Workers into the future. The AFL-CIO is committed to the program and expressed that we need to continue building the program through our communities and Unions to build a solid network of activists and organizers. This network can be utilized to organize to fight back against the policies that attack working families and stressed the important political races in the future to fight back against the Trump policies. Policies which we can all assume will include a national "Right to Steal from Unions" (RTW) bill. If/When that comes up, we will have to educate, organize and agitate our members, young, old, and retirees, to make phone calls to their legislators to express our displeasure and to put pressure on them to oppose any RTW laws. Especially when they are disguised as something that is good. The term "Right to Work" sounds good to the average person who does not understand what it truly means. It is all of our jobs to not only educate our members about what it actually means, but to educate everyone we come in contact with to explain why Right-to-Work is not good for American workers. If we work together we will defeat it.

We also worked on effective ways to use messaging more successfully. We discussed what works, what doesn't work, and what options there are available to use such as Facebook, Snapchat, Instagram, etc. The key is to



have posts that are short and quick to the point because in this world where there are so many options available for people to get information. It is easy to skim over something quickly or to just ignore it completely if it is too long. People don't want to take the time to read something that looks like it will take too much time to read. This can result in your message being missed or deleted as unread. In order to remain in their news feed, you will also have to generate likes and commenting on your posts. The more activity on a post, the higher up someone's news feed it will be. Keep that in mind when you see something on Facebook that you think needs to be seen by more people. If you like, comment or share it, that in a way boosts the post higher on someone else's news feed therefore getting more visibility. If it is post asking for someone to contact their legislator, maybe more people see it and more calls are made. It may not seem like much but the more activity on a post, the more likely it is to be seen by someone not as knowledgeable about an issue that may affect them.

There was a discussion about the upcoming AFL-CIO convention about what to expect at a typical convention as well as what kind of presence that young workers would like to see or have at the convention. It was determined that the Young Worker Advisory Council will ask and encourage the Executive Council to support attendance of young workers, make it known when a young worker steps to speak at the mic, possibly giving responsibility to the YWAC to plan and organize some of the events and to highlight why young worker groups are important and how they are effecting change within their own respective unions and communities. We will also be proposing a possible day of action focused around young workers and possibly a place for all young workers or people interested in forming a young worker group to meet and network as well as introduce new people to what a young worker group is and what it does and how to get involved with one or start a new one in their respective areas.

The final day of the Advisory Council meeting was spent on team building and creating a more solid group of people on the Young Worker Advisory Council. The discussion was

led by Tony Richard of The Bennae Group. It was a lot about privileges that individuals have and I enjoyed it thoroughly. The best part of the discussion was the one on one conversations where we learned to listen effectively and respond accordingly. I was moved by the discussion to be a better communicator and always listen to a person before you respond to them as it is more effective more often than not.

In closing, the time is now to organize, agitate and motivate the young workers within our organization. There are amazing young leaders out there that just may need a mentor to become the change that this necessary to change the direction of the labor movement. I challenge you to find someone young within your shops to mentor them to become great. We have a lot of great leaders in this organization whether they are in shops or in leadership roles already that need to look towards the future and grasp onto young leader to keep them active and to give us fresh ideas and a young person perspective on the certain issues we face in the shop and issues we face in the current political scene. I hope at the next conference or convention to see a lot of you that I have seen in the past but also some new young faces as well. They have to be a part of our future if we would like to succeed.

— *In Solidarity, Rob Torkelson*

For more information on the Young Worker Advisory Council, visit <https://aflcio.org/about/programs/next-young-workers/young-worker-advisory-council>

NOTICE of NOMINATIONS

NOTICE: Any Local Union advertising its nomination and elections in *Horizons* must submit it 120 days prior to the nominations date with an up to date member list to include addresses and the notice of nomination form. Please send these notices via mail or email to gmpiu@gmpiu.org. All nominations shall be submitted orally at the nominating meeting. In accordance with Article 20, Section 2, of the GMP Constitution, Local Presidents shall, by virtue of their election to that office, also serve as delegates to the Quadrennial Convention.



Front row: Bill Baldrige, Local 14, Kevin Hardee, Rick Vitatoe, Geoff Paddock, Councilman
 Second row: Scott Grau, Ardagh, Scott Brownfield, Local 207, Connie Gibson, Local 207
 Third row: Tom Forker, Local 178

CENTRAL STATES PROTECTIVE LEAGUE MEETS

On Friday, July 14, 2017, the Central States Protective League Meeting was held in Ft. Wayne, Indiana. The attendees enjoyed an evening reception at the Don Halls Guesthouse Hotel that offered plenty of good food and refreshments. In attendance were Indiana Local Unions 14, 42 and 207; Illinois Local 3; Ohio Local 178 and

Minnesota Local 63B. In addition, GMP Executive Officer Rick Vitatoe attended the meeting to hear speakers Kevin Hardee from Glass Awareness and Gayle Goodrich for the Northeast Indiana Workers Project. Geoff Paddock, the 5th District City Councilman in Ft. Wayne and Scott Grau from the Ardagh Group also addressed the meeting.



Geoff Paddock addressed the elections, Right-to-Work and how his proposal that Ft Wayne be included in a possible high speed rail track between Chicago, Illinois and Columbus, Ohio.



Gayle Goodrich talked about how surveys and getting people involved in helps the unemployed in the Ft Wayne Indiana area.

CLEAN:

A FREE Tool That Helps You Buy Local and Healthy Energy-Efficient Products

By Lauren Asplen, Director of Healthy Sustainability Programs at the BlueGreen Alliance

BUILDING

Building Clean—found at www.buildingclean.org—offers a free-and-easy-to-use interface to access its one-of-a-kind database of energy efficient products manufactured in the U.S., including appliances, heating and air conditioning equipment, insulation, lighting, plumbing, roofing, sealants, and water filtration.

Housing consumes more than 20 percent of U.S. energy. Union members stand to gain a lot from investments and policies that promote energy efficiency in single-family and multi-family homes, as well as businesses and government buildings.

When investment in energy efficient retrofits is linked to the purchase of U.S.-made goods, demand increases, jobs follow and we all can share in greater economic prosperity.

This is especially true for members of the Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics and Allied Workers who work in such key energy efficiency industries as insulation and HVAC. GMP contracts with Certainteed, Johns Manville, Knauf and Owens Corning cover some of the premier insulation manufacturers. Likewise, members working ECR International and Weil-McLain produce some of the country's most advanced boilers.

Other GMP contracts cover both components and final products in such energy efficient categories as sealants, plumbing, windows, appliances and lighting.

But some energy-efficient products can have a dark side—toxic chemicals—and it is vital to the health of occupants and installers that those selecting products understand the dangers some may pose and safer alternatives that can be used in place of them.

For example, nearly 40 percent of childhood asthma is linked to residential risk factors. But most building products with hazardous chemicals can be avoided.

Building Clean is designed to make it easier for architects and designers, consumers, contractors and developers, and manufacturers—to find American-made, healthy products so they can capture the benefits of energy efficiency retrofits.

Those benefits include lower utility bills, improved occupant health, and good jobs for the workers.

The site allows both searches for products and manufacturers in energy efficient building sectors and includes information about toxic chemicals commonly found in some product categories. In addition, you can search for products certified with third-party health certifications and that promote transparency by listing the chemicals they contain.

Before Building Clean, there was no single location to source domestic products or locate healthy ones. The website fills that void and serves as the basis for a new initiative to create procurement requirements and incentives promoting local, healthy building products.

We want to see investment dollars work overtime to not only improve energy efficiency but increase local jobs and community health at the same time.

Building Clean is an initiative of the BlueGreen Alliance Foundation, an organization that conducts research and educates the public and media about solutions to environmental challenges that create economic opportunities for the American people.

The BlueGreen Alliance Foundation works with the BlueGreen Alliance—a national partnership founded by the United Steelworkers and Sierra Club in 2006 that unites America's largest labor unions and its most influential environmental organizations to identify ways today's tackle environmental challenges in ways that create and maintain quality jobs and build a stronger, fairer economy.

Union members, including GMP members, are at the front-line when it comes to making America's building stock more energy efficient. We created Building Clean as a free tool to help make sure we're doing this the right way by making it easy to find safer, American-made products to use in retrofits and construction.

I urge you to go to www.buildingclean.org and check it out today!



GMP

LOCAL UNIONS 96 & 121 CELEBRATE GLASS DAYS IN DUNKIRK, INDIANA

On Friday, June 2nd and Saturday, June 3rd, Executive Officer Rick Vitaoe attended the annual Glass Days festival in Dunkirk, Indiana, known as the Glass Capital of Indiana.

This is the 51st year of Glass Days and Local Union 96 has been involved every year for this event.

Spectators enjoy event filled days including a parade, crowning the Queen and Court of Glass Days, demonstrations of glass making and fellowship of family and friends in the glass industry and community. This is an annual celebration enjoyed by hundreds of people.



Pictured here are LU President Rick Wayman, Lisa Pelo, Owner of Glass Furnaces, Executive Officer Vitaoe and Matthew Vitaoe, Local 96.



Executive Officer Rick Vitaoe and Local Union 96 President Rick Wayman at the Local Union's concession stand.



Here is Executive Officer Vitaoe with Retired Member Sharon Hopkins who retired from Local 96 after 43 years in the glass plant.



GMP Local 96 & 121 Parade Float. Pictured here are LU President Rick Wayman and Executive Officer Rick Vitaoe standing, and on the float are Jerry White, FS Local 121, Tom DeWitt, VP Local 121 with Abigail and Libby Vitaoe. Lots of candy was passed out from the Union's float!

Holley Smith

20 April 2017

American Cultural Heritage

Grover Plunkett



The **UNIONIZATION** of **AMERICA**

The GMP is proud to share this paper written by the daughter of GMP Member Larry Smith, Local 248 Anniston, Alabama.

There are many things that greatly affected American culture. Slavery, the removal of slavery, either of the world wars, women's right to vote, and the civil rights movement are all things that greatly affected American culture and the way we live today. In my opinion, though, the one that affected every single working class American regardless of sex, race, or religion is the beginning and continuation of the American union. Unions have affected the everyday American for a very long time and will continue to do so as long as the working class people of the United States America have a voice.

Labor unions have been a part of American culture since the mid nineteenth century. The most effective union then (and today still) was the American Federation of Labor. It was led by creator Samuel Gompers. This union became a force in politics, usually on the democratic side. Unions majorly benefitted from the New Deal of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. The Wagner Act (also known as the National Labor Relations Act of 1935) was very beneficial for labor unions. This came about after the National Industrial Recovery Act was struck down as unconstitutional. This act gave unions the right to organize into trade unions, engage in collective bargaining, and take collective action. With collective bargaining it gave workers the

power to push for better work conditions and better terms such as pay. It also made sure workers could do all of this through their labor representative without obstruction from their employers. A lot of people have a misconception about unions. Major employers have a negative view point of unions and often have negative ad campaigns that discourage workers from joining their local union. Why do these employers do this? Because unions are for the people, not just the company. One major reason that employers are against unions is that it does cost more money to run a unionized workplace. Unions demand for higher wages thus making the operating costs for that company higher. Another reason is that it can lead to strikes. When companies don't take note and negotiate with unions strikes are possible. This is bad publicity for the company and does not look positive to consumers. Another reason employers may think that unions are bad is it may put some strain on the human resources department. In some cases, it is harder for employers to promote workers based on merit. This is because unionized workplaces often promote on the basis of seniority first. All of this comes down to one point: in a unionized workplace, employers and managers feel as though they don't have as much control as they would if it were a non-unionized workplace. The crux of this century long tug-of-war comes down

to one issue. Control. Employers and union organizers have been fighting for control of wages, hours, and conditions since labor unions were started.

One instance that really pushed the need for unions was the burning down of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. In New York City in March of 1911, the factory fire ended up killing 146 people. The majority of them being young women. The youngest being two immigrant girls who were only fourteen years old. The owners of the factory locked the doors to the exits and stairwells to reduce the risk of theft and unauthorized breaks. This was a common practice during that time. Since there was no safe way to exit, many decided to try and jump to their escape and eventual death. Reporter William Shepard of the United Press noted the horribleness of the situation and the aftermath stating, "I learned a new sound, a more horrible sound than description can picture. It was the sound of a speeding, living body on a stone sidewalk."

This fire is one of the main reasons that labor unions even exist in the way that they do now. It regulated the need for safety standards in factories and other work places. Frances Perkins, a social worker, who was on the scene that day ended up becoming President Franklin Delano Roosevelt's secretary of labor Perkins pushed New York legislator Robert Wagner and Tim Sullivan to

push the Wagner act into place. Without the tragic events of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory burning and the persistence the Wagner Act may have never come into place. And without this act there would be no minimum wage, eight-hour days, workers-compensation, unemployment, or safety standards.

All of the previously mentioned benefits that came out the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory burning would not have been possible without unions. It helped start and boost the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU). This union was one of the first that centered around women workers and one of the first unions that had majority female membership. The Uprising of the 20,000 once again involved the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory. In 1909, a walkout of about twenty percent of workers encouraged a majority of the rest of the workers to walk out as well. This caused the owners of the factory to lock the workers out of the factory. All of this spurred about 20,000 of the 32,000 female garment workers in the garment district of New York City to also participate in a walkout. This organized walkout challenged conservative thoughts that immigrants and women could be organized. These protests often ended up being violent with police arresting picketers for trivial offences and factory owners hiring thugs to attack and beat down the protesters. Once again Frances Perkins, among other wealthy women such as Anne Morgan and Alva Vanderbilt Belmont, supported the rights of working class women by supporting the protests. This particular protest, which including the actual walkouts and picketing that lasted fourteen weeks, was only partially successful. While it gave these women improved working conditions, hours, and wages, it did not give formally give them the right to organize. The ILGWU became involved more in politics after the factory burning. It was a middle ground for people who were willing

to vote for democrats such as Franklin Delano Roosevelt but not actually join the Democratic Party.

The Weingarten Rights majorly effected the way unions and common workplaces interact today. These rights insured that if a worker was going to be disciplined or terminated during any sort of investigatory interview, they could request to have union representation. This is a right that the worker must request. It is NOT the obligation of the boss to offer it to the worker in question. If not requested, the employee basically waives their Weingarten rights. However, an employer is not allowed to discourage an employee to waive these rights by saying something like "You are only making it worse for yourself if you insist on having union representation present." These rights allow union representation to be present and be aware of the situation, proactively speak during questioning, and counsel the employee who is being questioned. However, these rights are only allowed to union employees. From 2000 to 2004, the National Labor Relation Boar extended these rights to everyone but retracted their decision and once again decided that these rights were only available to employees that happened to be in the union at their work place. This once again reiterates the importance of unions and the benefit of being in a local labor union.

Now is the point in which many would be asking "Why are unions important today? Are they really still needed?" It is evident that labor unions were very important in the early days of America, but are they still necessary? The answer is ABSOLUTLEY! They are still totally necessary and needed. Workers' rights matter just as much now as they did in early American history. Unions now help to provide health insurance, pension coverage, reasonable work hours, and job safety protections. Today, companies try to take away

workers' rights by downsizing, contracting jobs out, and sending jobs off shore. Unions help to make sure that history doesn't repeat itself. It removes the risk of work places becoming like sweat shops again. It also enforces the immorality of child labor and helps it from ever happening again in the United States of America. Another big ticket item that unions concern themselves with is the efforts to make sure that people are not working seventy-hour work weeks without proper overtime pay. Livable wages are also still being fought for by unions.

A recent case in which a union majorly won was 2016. Verizon Wireless workers from Virginia to New York City to Massachusetts held a strike that lasted for about a month and a half. The Communications Workers union and Electrical Workers brought this forty-five day strike about. Verizon had their workers working without a contract for nearly eight months after the previous contract had expired. The problems that these union workers began their strike over was the threat and the large possibility of outsourcing call center jobs overseas to workers who would accept lower wages. If Verizon would have followed through with this threat, thousands of American workers would have lost their jobs. Another major issue that was going that invoked the strike was the Quality Assessment Reviews that often took several hours to do and would give workers thirty day suspensions without pay. These quality assessment reviews were meant to micromanage work days past their normal duties. Verizon also threatened to cap pension contributions at thirty years. This infuriated Verizon workers for months before the strike actually occurred. Before the strike actually occurred, the unions had conceded on over \$200 million in health care benefits which would bring about higher co-pays and out of pocket expenses. This strike resulted in a ten percent increase in pay and pension

benefits. One Verizon worker, Pat Fahy of Electrical Workers (local 827), said “They could have done it [when the contract expired] in August ... and we would have taken it.” This strike was not an easy one. It was financially draining, caused some anxieties and fears to run high. With as long as the Strike lasted, some union members worried that workers may have crossed to the other side. But they David stood up against Goliath and David won. The company ignored the power of the unity. This once again proves that with strength of numbers in unions, which fighting for worker rights is possible and the people can win. Even when fighting a company as big as Verizon Wireless, it is possible for the people to win.

One of the biggest unions in the United States today is the National Education Association (NEA). It was founded in 1857 as the National Teachers Association. It formally became the National Education association in 1870 when it merged with the American Normal School Association, the National Association of School Superintendents, and the Central College Association. This union supports public school teachers and staffers, faculty and staff at colleges and universities, retired teachers, and college students trying to become teachers. In 2012 this union had nearly 2.8 million members. The NEA has taken on many political agendas such as women’s suffrage in 1912. In 1968, the NEA lobbied for the Bilingual Education Act which would federally fund Spanish-language education. In 2000 to present day the NEA continues to lobby and support the No Child Left Behind Act. While this union started out as a conservative entity, it now leans more closely to modern liberalism. One major role the NEA has taken on is the role of lobbying state legislators for school funding. They also seek to influence education policy and file legal actions when necessary. The NEA actively use their right

as a union to organize and join unions and continue to fight congress on this issue. Second Lady, Jill Biden, is an advocate for the NEA and has spoken in favor of them many times.

A large union merger that has happened in the past year is for The Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics & Allied Workers International Union (GMPIU or GMP) to merge with the United Steelworkers Union (SWU). This is a historic merger between two historic and storied unions. GMP primarily works with glass work, foundries, and pottery. This merger brings together the 25,000 GMP members with the SWU 850,000 members. GMP President Bruce R. Smith stated that “The GMP is itself the product of many mergers, and each one made the GMP stronger and better.” Smith hopes that this will be a fruitful merger for the GMP to the SWU. This merger is key to the survival of GMP. With diminishing membership, GMP was faced with a hard decision and chose to keep these local unions and the overreaching international union alive. This kept the possibility of these skilled labor workers alive and with someone to continue to fight for them.

The reason that this particular instance is important to me personally is that my dad, Larry Smith, is the president of his local union 248 in Anniston, Alabama. Without this merger, the fate of his union member’s rights for who he fights so hard for everyday would be in danger. This merger will provide the organization and the continuation of his local union’s rights to organize. “The life blood of a union is organizing,” says Smith The merger will have growing pains; for the local unions and the international union. It will not be an easy time and many changes will take places but it will be worth it to keep this union alive. The fight for smaller unions is becoming increasingly more difficult as membership rates continue to decline.

In conclusion, unions affect the daily lives of nearly all Americans. Unions fight for so many things. Without unions, there would be no one to fight for safety standards. Along with that, there is a large chance workers would not be paid fair wages. There would not be as strong as a fight for health care coverage. Without unions there is the fear of the tragedy of The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire being repeated. Modern day unions stood up for Verizon workers. Unions still fight for people and the issues today. Without them the American workplace would be in much different shape. Unions are for the people and they fight for people every day. My dad is one of those people who fight and I could not be more proud and supportive.

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HERMAN

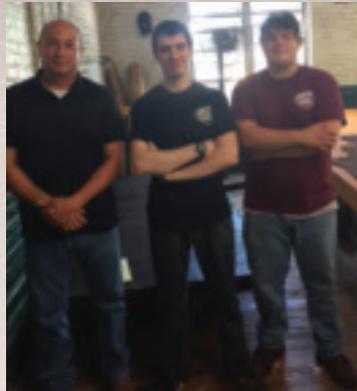
OAK LEATHER PLANT TOUR

International Representative Tom Gallagher went had a plant tour at Herman Oak Leather, GMP Local Union 182B in Belleville, IL.

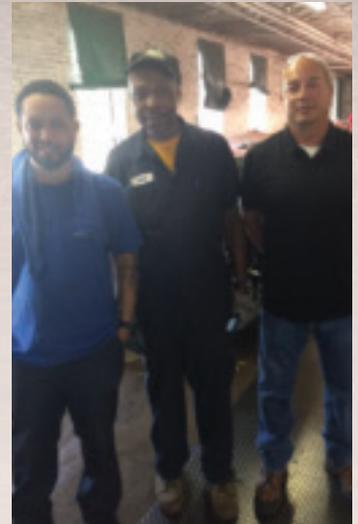
Here are some pictures from a plant tour at Herman Oak Leather Company in St Louis, MO.



Lydell Ransom, Carlos Perkins



International Representative Tom Gallagher, Robert Paluck, Brendan Price



Cory Johnson (shop steward) John Martin, International Representative Tom Gallagher



Earl Taylor, Leon Lockhart, International Representative Tom Gallagher



Damon Honeywood (shop steward), International Representative Tom Gallagher, Ray Johnson (shop steward)



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