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Volume 2/3

Summer 2007

USW@Work

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// It is from (the) convergence of struggles and enlightened ideas that a new frontier of democratic sovereignty will emerge from this new era of globalization. //

Luis Inacio Lula da Silva

President of Brazil, in a message to the 2005 USW Constitutional Convention



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Speaking Out

USW active and retired members and their families are invited to "speak out" on these pages. Letters should be short and to the point. We reserve the right to edit for length. Mail to *USW@Work*, Five Gateway Center, Pittsburgh PA 15222 or e-mail to *editor@usw.org*.



Merger positive

I just read about the USW reaching across the pond for a possible merger.

The American Flint Glass Workers joined forces with the Steelworkers a few years back and I believe it has been a positive move for us all.

Now, the USW has proved to me we are ahead of the curve. With leaders such as International President Leo W. Gerard, I think things are looking good for labor unions.

William Braun

Local 892-1, Burlington, Wis.

Buy American, drive American

As I watch American car dealerships closing all over the United States, I wonder why we do not patronize our own car manufacturers.

We as Americans should patronize our own auto, clothing and electronics companies. Doing this would create more jobs and income for our people.

Gust G. Douglas

Canton, Ohio

I'll never scab

Thank you for putting the steelworker wearing the "I'll never scab" hardhat on the cover of our magazine, *USW@Work*.

Since Goodyear/Dunlop won't let us wear "anti-scab" shirts at work to get our message across, we leave the magazine in the break room with the cover up for all to see. We figure the USW is too big for them to mess with.

Mark J. Cullens

Local 135, Buffalo, N.Y.

Fight back

I am a retired Steelworker from Local 2243 in Warren, Ohio. In the U.S. Mail, at taxpayers expense, I received a large envelope from U.S. Sen. David Vitter, a Republican from Louisiana, encouraging me to complete a questionnaire and support his "Right to Work" movement. The content slammed our rights to unionize, condemned the actions of our union, and faulted the Democratic Party.

I am appalled that any member of our government would take such a stance, and I am furious that he would use tax dollars to send such propaganda to voters across the country.

It seems to me that we, as members of a Democratic society and a union that has brought so much economic gain and safety to this country and its workers, should wage a national campaign against this senator, these expenses and tactics.

Michael G. Vsnich

Conway, S.C.

Stop jobs giveaway

We must help our young people find proper paying jobs. We need to stop sending jobs overseas. President Bush, our politicians and bankers are the only people who want or need foreign aid.

I retired from U.S. Steel's Waukegan plant, Local 1115, and encourage our brothers and sisters to be members of SOAR, the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees. If it wasn't for our union, I wouldn't be getting a pension and health benefits.

Richard Vogt

Waukegan, Ill.

For us or against us?

Why don't we use the President's own words against him?

This spring, when the courts ruled that carbon dioxide could be regulated, Mr. Bush complained that the undue burden on industry would lead to job loss.

I laughed out loud when I heard President Bush say he is "concerned about the working men and women of this country". If he's so concerned he should back the Employee Free Choice Act.

At the onset of the war on terror, President Bush said to the rest of the world, "You are either with us or against us." So with the 2008 political season upon us, I propose a slogan to get our point across to the politicians who are courting us, "American Unions: For Us or Against Us."

James Schneider

Local 2-0187, Wisconsin Rapids, Wis.

Working hard at 80

I worked for a company for 39½ years until they sent the factory overseas, knocking hundreds of people out of work. I had enough years to retire but many did not.

There are no jobs here. It sure does upset me. I'm 80 now and have been back to work for the past two years. I work in a café four days a week. It is hard work.

Dorothy Coffey

Charleston, Mo.

Romney's background

The main reason for this letter is simply to point out to not only Steelworker members nationwide but to their families, friends and anyone within hearing distance, what kind of a guy (former Mass. Governor) Mitt Romney is. When Mr. Romney gets his (Republican) Presidential campaign in full swing, we don't want him telling lies about all the good things he did for the state of Massachusetts. In our opinion, the actions we describe below, are just a small sample of the little regard he has for working people.

In the spring of 2006, Massachusetts put \$25 million into the budget for the Massachusetts Water Resources Authority rate relief and debt services assistances. Gov. Romney vetoed the line item.

Through a lot of hard work by the unions, we were able to get the legislature to override the veto. But then, on Nov. 10, 2006, Gov. Romney invoked a little-used law to take back \$425 million of budgeted money, including funds for the authority. Just a month later, a newly-elected Democratic governor, Deval Patrick, restored \$383 million.

We've dodged a bullet this time, but the actions of Mr. Romney need to be pointed out. This was a purely politically motivated act with little regard for the authority and the effects of his actions on the working people.

Bob Roussel

Local 9360, Boston, Mass.

In a daring response to the growing power of global capital, the USW is taking steps to create a truly international trade union capable of representing workers around the world.

On April 18, the USW signed a formal agreement to explore a merger with Unite, a new creation of two merged British unions, Amicus and the Transport and General Workers Union (T&GWU).

The merger would create the first trans-Atlantic labor union, representing more than 3 million workers and retirees in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean Basin, the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Global Solidarity

**USW Takes First Steps to Create
International Trade Union**

Challenge multinationals

As the world's largest union, a merged USW and Unite is expected to attract other unions into membership with the aim of creating a single global trade union movement capable of challenging multinational corporations.

"The time for global unionism has arrived," said International President Leo W. Gerard, who signed the agreement with Amicus and T&GWU leaders during a USW National Policy Conference in Ottawa, Canada.

"We need cross-border organizing strategies to protect workers against the mobility of capital that knows no borders,"

Gerard added.

"Workers want their unions to develop labor contracts that encompass global employers. We must meet the challenge and defend human rights standards for all."

Ken Neumann, USW national director of Canada, also signed the agreement as did Derek Simpson, general secretary of Amicus and Tony Woodley, general secretary of T&GWU.

"Someone has to take the first step," said Simpson, who noted that working people in different countries have common problems. He said the need for a global union was pressing.

Amicus and T&GWU

merged on May 1. Together as Unite, they represent an estimated 2.1 million workers and retirees. The USW represents 1.2 million active workers and retirees.

The USW already has alliances with mining and manufacturing unions around the world in which we share research, discuss common bargaining strategies and support one another during strikes.

Before it merged with T&GWU, Amicus had such agreements with the International Association of Machinists in the United States, as well as Germany's IG Metall labor union. The T&GWU also had close working relationships with other U.S. unions.

The merger talks come at a time when unions around the world are struggling to respond to globalization, which is pushing down wages and benefits for workers in many Western countries. At the same time, union density has been on a slow decline throughout much of the industrialized world.

"One of the main reasons for merging," Simpson said, "is the desire to create an international trade union that would be able to deal with multinational companies on an equal footing."

Resist by banding together

"Multinational companies are pushing down wages and conditions for workers the world over by playing one national work force off against another," he said. "The only beneficiaries of globalization are the exploiters of working people, and the only way working people can resist this is to band together."

The USW has a network of strategic alliances with foreign unions that date to the early 1990s. As metals production became a global enterprise, the union formed alliances with mining and manufacturing unions in Brazil, South Africa,

Australia, Mexico, Germany and Britain.

In part, the alliances emerged because of shared common employers such as Alcan Inc. and Alcoa in metals, Bridgestone/Firestone in tires and, now, with the USW and Amicus having grown to include paperworkers, Georgia Pacific and International Paper.

But the purpose of the proposed merger is broader.

"We determined that the best way to fight financial globalization was to fight it globally," said Gerald Fernandez, who oversees international affairs and global bargaining operations for the USW. "Exploring a merger is the necessary first step to building a global union or federation of metal, mining and general workers."

Combining the organizations will be complicated. As a result, the Ottawa agreement calls for an exploration committee to study legal, constitutional and structural issues and suggest a framework for the merger within one year.

At a news conference, the union leaders said it was too early in the process to discuss what will be the name or ultimate structure of the new organization.

"Don't ask me to tell you what the end is going to be the day we start the conversation," said Gerard, who promised the deliberations on those issues will be thoughtful and creative.

"This is not a corporate consolidation," he said. "We're coming to this as equals with a common vision ... There are going to be hurdles, but we are going to work on them."

Exploration committee

The unions will set up a committee of five principal individuals from each union to be supported by technical staff as needed. The committee will meet regularly over the next 12 months beginning in June.

U



The unions will explore how technology can be used to facilitate communications between Pittsburgh, London and other locales.

"How we use technology will be an important part of our ability to build a Trans-Atlantic global union," Gerard said.

The agreement also calls for a regular exchange between senior officers every quarter to monitor and develop joint work, to find ways to integrate common programs and enhance the understanding and culture of the unions.

During the exploration process, which is expected to take a year, the unions will engage in coordinated bargaining with common employers and common approaches to collective bargaining with multinational unions.

Solidarity fund

The potential partners have also agreed to establish a "substantial" jointly-administered fund that will be used for conducting international solidarity projects beyond the unions' traditional geographic borders.

"If we don't raise the standard of living in the developing world, they will be used as cannon fodder against us," Gerard said in discussing the fund. "They will be destroyed as we will be."

Projects might include, but are not limited to, the joint exploration of trans-national corporations in China and support of the trade union movement in Columbia, where there have been continued attacks on labor and human rights. Also under consideration are capacity-building projects with partner unions in Africa and solidarity work with ship breakers of India.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney praised the proposed alliance as a "bold and innovative approach" toward addressing the effects of globalization on workers and their communities.

"These unions clearly understand that workers' organizations must forge new paths to ensure that all working people can earn decent wages, provide for themselves and their families, and work under safe, healthy conditions," Sweeney said.

The text of the Ottawa accord can be accessed from the USW homepage, <http://www.usw.org>.



Photo by Unite

Workers in U.S. and Britain Face Similar Challenges

Graham Goddard, deputy general secretary of Amicus, and Amicus International Officer Ben Richards attended the USW Rapid Response conference in Washington, D.C. to borrow ideas and meet some of the USW's most active members.

"What we've learned is that across the Atlantic, the problems that we face in Great Britain and the problems that workers face in America are very similar — wages, manufacturing job losses, pension issues, health and safety issues, recognition at companies for union membership, people getting sacked for trying to organize — all the things that we face on a daily basis is exactly the same position for the union over here and the workers they represent," Goddard said.

Their attendance at the April conference was an example of how the unions can learn from each other's best practices, Goddard said. International President Leo W. Gerard plans to attend an Amicus conference in London this summer.

Goddard called the possibility of a merger exciting because it would mean a more powerful way "to defend pensions, wages, jobs — everything that you get involved in the union for." The possibilities are endless, he said.

"Bringing people together across the continents has got to be a good thing," Goddard said. "Management does it. Globalized companies do it. And now unions are starting to do it, and that's got to be good for working people."

Cross Border Strategy

Mergers and International Cooperation: Part of Our History

Mergers, diversity and international cooperation aren't anything new to the USW. They are traditions as old as the union itself.

In its first strategy without borders, the USW developed jointly in the United States and Canada with the birth of the Steelworkers Organizing Committee (SWOC) in 1936.

Today, more than 70 years later, the 850,000-member USW has alliances with other trade unions on five continents and is working to develop the first global super union to keep pace with the increasing globalization of capital.

"The Steelworkers have understood international unionism since our birth," International President Leo W. Gerard said.

SWOC had organized 700,000 workers in North America by 1942, when delegates to a founding convention held in Cleveland voted unanimously to adopt a constitution and the name, United Steelworkers of America.

Wave of mergers

Just two years after our founding convention, the Aluminum Workers of America voted to unanimously join the union and the USW wasn't just for steelworkers anymore.

The Aluminum Workers was the first of at least a dozen major unions to join the USW and there were many other smaller combinations. Each brought a new wave of variety among the membership to make the USW the most diverse union in North America.

USW members do much more than produce ore in our nation's mines and steel in our mills. We are the largest industrial union in North America and engaged in manufacturing, mining, health care and pharmaceuticals, transportation, trades and numerous other services.

PACE largest merger

In 2005, the USW grew substantially by merging with PACE, the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union, a move that brought some 250,000 members into the USW fold. PACE was itself the merger of two large unions, the United Paperworkers

International Union and the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers.

There has been growth in recent years from mergers with the United Rubber Workers, the American Flint Glass Workers, the Industrial, Wood and Allied Workers of Canada, the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way employees in Canada, and other small independent unions.

The most recent combination came in April with the merger of the 1,200-member Independent Steelworkers Union, which had represented workers at the Mittal Steel plant in Weirton, W. Va.

"It's about bargaining leverage," USW District 1 Director Dave McCall said at the ISU merger ceremony. "It's about making sure our members get what they deserve for their blood, sweat and tears."

Working Locally, Uniting Globally

Uniting globally can build bargaining power locally.

Both the USW and the newly-formed Unite represent workers in about 12 major industries including metals, chemicals, paper, rubber, glass, shipyards and in the service sector.

We are both members of Global Union Federations such as the International Metalworkers Federation in Geneva and the International Federation of Chemical, Energy, Mine & General Workers Unions in Brussels.

The USW also has strategic alliances throughout the world with unions in our core industries such as IG Metall, the German metalworkers' union, and SNTMMSRM, the National Union of Mining, Steel and Allied Workers of the Republic of Mexico.

But we need a stronger response to the economic globalization that is pushing down wages, benefits and retirement security while sending jobs to lower-cost countries that exploit workers.

The next compelling step is to create a true global union that can mobilize both locally and across borders to protect wages, benefits, employment rights and job security for all.

The USW has many of the same trans-national corporations under labor contracts in the United States, Canada and the Caribbean Basin that are represented by Unite in Great Britain and Ireland. Among them are Alcoa Inc., Georgia-Pacific LLC and Alcan Inc.

We both have a record of cross-border union membership mergers that make us stronger and building power strategies that go beyond the typical cooperative agreements involving sharing research and supporting each other's organizing efforts.

Together we can make global unionism a reality.



Pearl

Film Celebrates Work and Life
of Retired Local President and
Self-taught Topiary Artist

For many years, Pearl Fryar would end his shift at the aluminum can factory in Bishopville, S.C. where he was the local union president and go to work on the garden in his back yard.

"All I wanted to do was have a nice yard and win the Yard of the Month award from my home town," recalled Fryar, retired president of USW Local 8634, which represents production workers at the Rexam Beverage Can Americas plant.

He won the garden club award and more. Today Fryar is the subject of an award-winning documentary film and is nationally recognized for his self-taught skills in topiary, the art of cutting trees and shrubs into imaginative shapes. His work has been displayed in museums across the South and on television shows including *CBS Sunday Morning* and *Home & Garden Television (HGTV)*.

The full-length documentary film, *A Man Named Pearl*, last October won a Crystal Heart Award at the 15-year-old Heartland Film Festival in Indianapolis as well as the festival's Audience Appreciation Award.

To see a preview or trailer of the film, go to the following site and click on View Trailer:
www.tentmakersentertainment.com.
Fryar also has his own site, www.fryarstopiaries.com.

Photo Courtesy Scott Galloway



Bill's Garden

Film-goers gasped at an opening shot showing Fryar as he climbs a 15-foot ladder and turns on the gas-powered trimmer he uses to trim shrubs and trees into squares, circles, whimsical coils and abstract designs with a centerpiece reading "Peace, Love and Goodwill."

Tucked neatly among the more than 400 topiaries in his yard are metal sculptures designed from junk and scrap metal he collects from the can plant and from a friend's machine shop.

Audience response amazing

Scott Galloway, who directed the film with Brent Pierson, said audiences, after watching the documentary about Fryar's life and garden, reacted to him as if he were a rock star.

"It was like meeting the Beatles," Galloway said. "People were jumping out of their seats. It was just amazing."

Fryar's topiary influence is in the center of Bishopville, along local highways and on the lawns of his neighbors, said Floyd Ison, current president of the local.

"He's a busy person," Ison added. "It's something to see."

Galloway said Fryar worked out a deal with a local nursery, which gave him access to a pile of throwaway plants that nobody wanted to buy. He planted them, shaped them and turned them into a work of art that is now a bona fide tourist attraction.

Fryar started trimming the bushes outside his home in 1984. His neighbors took notice and as word spread, more and more visitors began touring his yard. Eventually, the road to his house was widened to allow for tour buses and the heavy traffic that his beautiful plants attracted.

Tour buses stop regularly. Local students take field trips. And while there is a donation box, there is no fee to visit the grounds and no one is turned away for inability to donate.

Fryar enjoys working with young people and is a frequent motivational speaker at high schools, colleges and universities — opportunities that developed from his garden work. He is an artist-in-residence at nearby Coker College.

Galloway met Fryar while filming a project on fabulous gardens for the regional cable network Turner South and its Blue Ribbon series.

"When I first met Pearl he didn't talk to me about his garden," Galloway said. "He talked about his love of kids, trying to help those who were disadvantaged or from broken homes and considered to be high risk."

The film then is an allegory about overcoming obstacles. Fryar takes plants that nobody wants and turns them into works of art and he devotes time to children who are often also overlooked.

Life's obstacles

As Fryar says, "In this life you're gonna have obstacles. The thing about it is, don't let those obstacles determine where you go."

In an interview, Fryar also noted the obstacles he overcame as president of a local union in South Carolina, a right-to-work state.

A native of North Carolina, Fryar moved to Bishopville in 1976 after working at a union-represented company in New York. He helped to

persuade local workers that the union was a good idea.

"At the time people didn't really understand what the union was about," he recalled. "I told them about the benefits and convinced enough of them to vote."

The journey was sometimes rocky. Union membership dipped at times to very small numbers. But Fryar and the union held on. Today the plant employs 85 and 77 belong to the union.

"People now realize what a difference the union makes," he said.

Fryar has never stopped dreaming. He would like to set up a foundation to make sure his garden is preserved and use any proceeds he eventually gets from the movie to establish scholarships for kids who need a lift.

"I feel everyone has a God-given talent," he said.



Photos by E. Ray Bryant

Work in Prog

Rapid Response Conference Celebrates Success, Push

It would have been easy for the group from North Carolina to stay home and leave the lobbying to someone else, to push aside the hours of studying legislative policy at the USW Rapid Response conference and instead look for new jobs.

But here they were in Washington, D.C., members of locals 1025 and 850 in Charlotte, walking the halls of the U.S. Capitol, armed with manila folders filled with questions about national health care, international trade and workers' rights and carrying their personal stories to members of Congress.

There was no way Joe Smith, Christine McGuire, Jerry Bullard, Ginnie Watson and Pamela Foxx would miss the conference, especially not the day of lobbying legislators about issues critical to unions and other American workers. They are all long-time Continental Tire AG employees who have been laid off and stripped of health insurance and retiree benefits.

The Conti contingent was among more than 700 of the USW's most active members who gathered in the nation's capitol for the four-day conference. They heard from a variety of speakers and attended workshops on key issues such as the Employee Free Choice Act (EFCA), universal health care; scaling back unfair trade and anti-sweatshop legislation.



ress

es for More Progress

"If we don't do something now, there's really no one to blame but us," Local 850's Jerry Bullard said moments before meeting with Rep. Brad Miller, a North Carolina Democrat. "Now is the time to gain back what we've lost."

Looking ahead to 2008

International President Leo W. Gerard and Secretary-Treasurer Jim English said the 2006 elections were proof that union's Rapid Response program works. The new U.S. House promptly passed a raise to the minimum wage and okayed EFCA, which is pending in the Senate.

Rapid Response educates members who get others involved in advocating workers' issues or helping lead actions to impact Steelworker issues on Capitol Hill or State Houses, often at a moment's notice. There are campaigns to write personal notes to legislators, hometown meetings with representatives, email campaigns, phone drives, lunch break meetings and other grass-roots efforts.

Rapid Response issues typically affect a worker's wallet or family budget and include trade, health care coverage, overtime pay and loss of jobs or unemployment.

Gerard encouraged members to keep pushing lawmakers from both political parties to work on issues vital to the union. It's not too early to start preparing for the 2008 presidential election.

"What happens if we don't fight for what's right? What happens to us if we know what the right thing to do is and we don't do it?" Gerard asked. "What we do from today until November of '08 will determine the kind of future we leave for our kids and grandkids."

Making a difference

After three days of intense workshops, Christine McGuire and other members from Local 1025 were ready to talk to lawmakers face to face about health care, job creation and other concerns.

"Definitely this is a way to make a difference," McGuire said as she waited for an appointment at the Capitol. "I represent a lot of people back home and I have a responsibility to them."

Bob Parker, a member of Local 979 in Cleveland, feels the same kind of responsibility. He spends several hours a night after work at Mittal Steel scouring the Internet, phoning lawmakers and voters and attending meetings to help educate and empower his co-workers.

"One guy at the plant, I talked to 25 times about calling his senators and encouraging them to vote for the Employee Free Choice Act," Parker recalled before heading to a meeting with Ohio Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones, a Democrat. "He finally called."

As more than a dozen USW members crowded into Jones' office for a teleconference, Parker was just as tenacious in talking about the union's desire to see an end to so-called Fast Track trade

approval. Fast Track gives the president authority to push through international trade deals without Congressional approval.

"These trade deals that are currently in front of us, we don't really want to compromise. We don't want any president to have Fast Track authority," Parker said.

Trade unionists in Colombia are being assassinated at a record pace as the Administration pushes for a trade agreement with that country and Parker said that's an example of why Fast Track is a bad idea.

“I represent a lot of people back home and I have a responsibility to them.”

Christine McGuire

"We don't like Fast Track," Local 979 member Jim Ciomek piped up, reminding Jones that as a member of the money-wielding Ways and Means Committee she had the power to influence the debate.

"I'm opposed to Fast Track," Jones said as Steelworkers scribbled notes for member reports detailing their visits. "This is an easy one to say no to. There is no reason to negotiate."

Ciomek made the same argument when he and Parker visited Ohio Rep. Steve LaTourette, a Republican who promised the pair that he was against Fast Track.

"But will you vote against it?" Ciomek pressed.

"You can't vote for something if you're against it," LaTourette said.



"This is the U.S. Congress," Ciomek said. "Yes you can."

The congressman assured Ciomek that yes, he would vote against Fast Track.

Lawmakers listen

Among the highlights of the conference was a Capitol Hill rally attended by several lawmakers, including U.S. Rep. Michael H. Michaud (D-Maine), who was honored with the USW's Wellstone Award for his commitment to causes important to working people.

Michaud told the Steelworkers to keep being involved in the nation's policies, particularly the anti-sweatshop bill (H.R. 1992) and the fight for fair trade. Michaud is the original sponsor of H.R. 1992 that would prohibit goods made in sweatshops and with child labor from being imported into the U.S. marketplace.

"Your calls and your letters do matter and I ask you to continue to do the great work," Michaud said. "The Steelworkers have shown tremendous leadership on this fight. You have incredible influence on the Hill."

U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio) reminded visiting USW members that details matter, regardless of what political party is in power.

"It's going to be really important that all the Democrats who are running for president are challenged on trade," he said. "All these trade agreements have to be taken down and renegotiated. Put those labor rights in there. And anyone who says anything else, frankly they're not representing America's working people."

'Steelworkers don't give up'

Outside of Rep. Betty Sutton's office (D-Ohio), the USW Ohio contingent crossed paths with fellow members from North Carolina. They exchanged notes and spoke about the wealth of knowledge they had gained at this year's conference.

Someone asked the laid off Continental Tire workers how they found the strength to be so involved with the union during such tough times.

Lots of prayer, the group agreed.

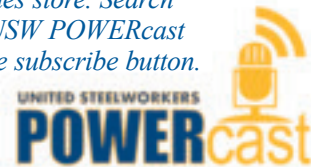
"And Rapid Response helps because it helps get the word out," said Foxx,

who is also active in Women of Steel. "The Steelworkers have been there for us. We don't give up. Steelworkers don't give up."

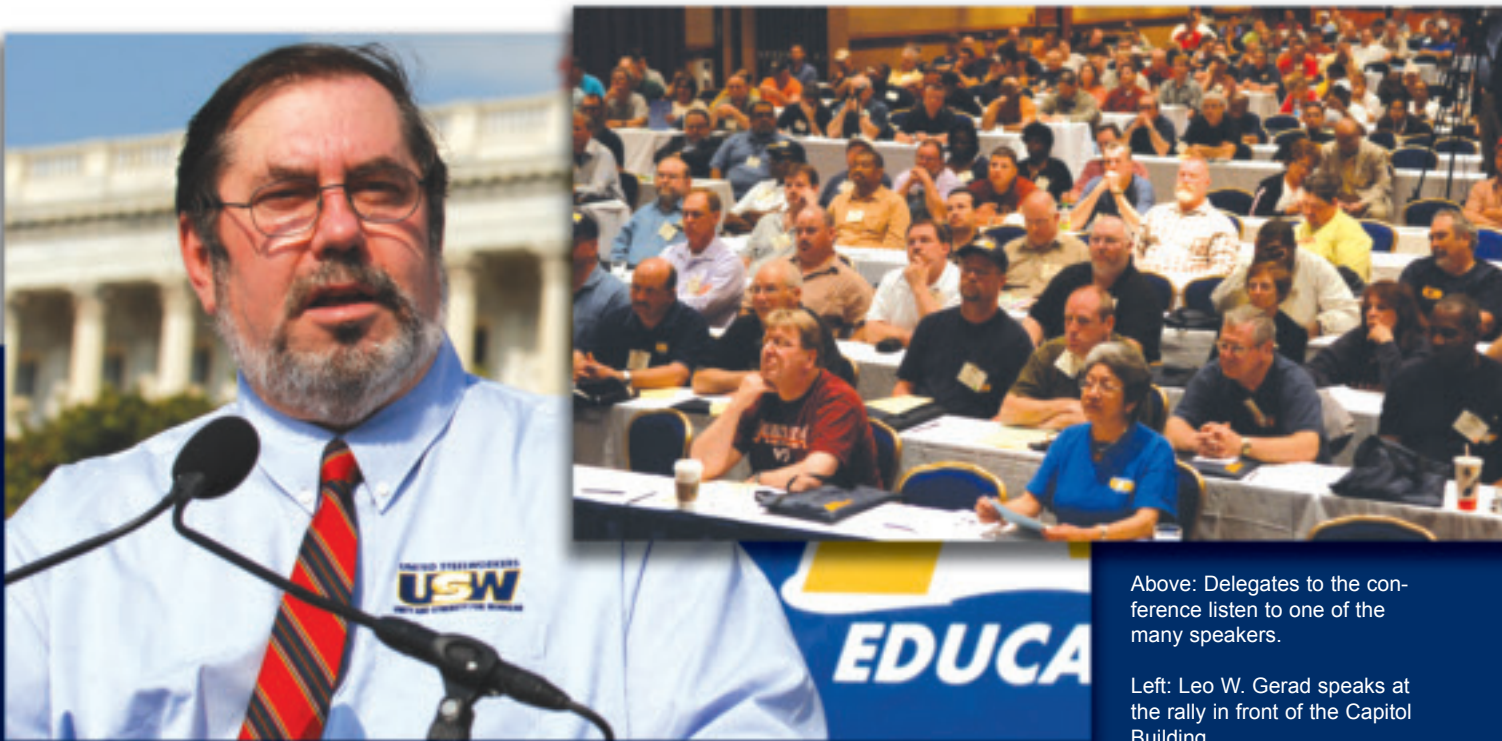
To see highlights of the 2007 Rapid Response conference, including USW interviews with guest speakers and photos of members, go to www.usw.org, click on the Rapid Response link and go to the conference highlights page.



You also can hear a report on Rapid Response on the USW's POWERcast, episode 14. To download a weekly podcast, go to www.usw.org and click on the POWERcast logo, or you can receive free automatic downloads through Apple's iTunes store. Search iTunes for USW POWERcast and click the subscribe button.



“What we do from today until November of '08 will determine the kind of future we leave for our kids and grandkids.”



Above: Delegates to the conference listen to one of the many speakers.

Left: Leo W. Gerad speaks at the rally in front of the Capitol Building.

Political Crossroads

Time for Change: Toxic Trade Deficit Hurts America and Workers

William Greider, national affairs correspondent for *The Nation* magazine, was the keynote speaker at the opening of the Rapid Response conference. The veteran journalist is the author of several best-selling books, including "Secrets of the Temple," a critique of the U.S. Federal Reserve. Before his speech, Greider spoke with USW@Work:

Q: Your body of work stands out for many reasons, perhaps most notably for challenging mainstream thinking in economics. Was that by design?

A: "I started out as a reporter knowing nothing about anything. But I learned very quickly that business and finance were at the core of everything... What I found out was how lopsided the economy is, how very unfair it is to average people — how they're cut out of the decisions. Then I discovered labor. My work is to go against the conventional wisdom and I feel very comfortable with that."

Q: Is it frustrating to have exposed some of the injustices you have over more than three decades but see little progress?

A: "Yes, in some ways. But one of the things that labor unions do is educate people. They do that very well. It's part of their importance. Ordinary people aren't dumb. In most cases, they get to the truth. Trade is an example. For many years, the people down below knew what was happening. They may not have had the data in their hands, but they figured it out."

Q: And what many working people said all along about "free trade" and globalization -- that it's costing good jobs, feeding a toxic trade deficit and so on — is being discussed by some corporate leaders, right?

A: "I can see very clearly that the establishment, having preached that free trade is a win-win situation — nobody loses, etc., for decades — is now overwhelmed with evidence to the contrary. Workers, unions and

others have known this for years. Voices are now coming forward that say, 'You know what? We have to reform globalization in pretty serious ways, partly because the U.S. is losing.'"

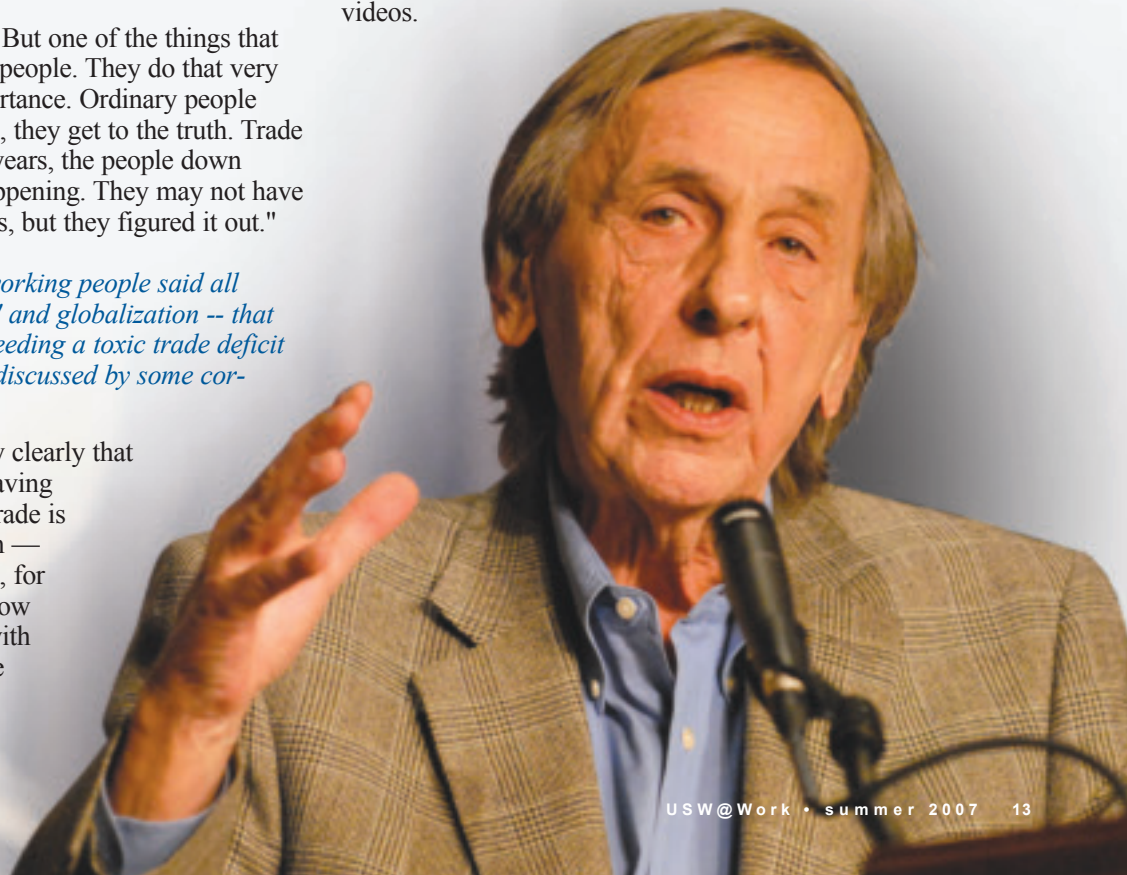
Q: Why is that an important development?

A: "That's an important addition to the debate because it's not coming from workers, myself or labor unions. It's coming from people who were on the other side, who were in management, who saw it happen and now recognize that their assumptions about how this was going to be good for everyone are simply wrong. That's a great help in arguing for political change."

Q: You've talked about the country being at a political crossroads. Why is it important for USW members to be involved in having a voice in deciding the direction of our country?

A: "If we don't change fast, we're going to go down as a first-rung economy, and if that happens, the whole global system goes down. I'm putting that starkly, but that's really what I believe. It's a historic opportunity to reform, change and prevent that from happening. But if we don't move rather seriously, the worst may happen."

To see a video interview with William Greider go to the Rapid Response page on usw.org and click on conference videos.



Building Power One Member at a Time

Two District 1 Locals Turning Adversity into Strength

What would happen if your employer was so determined to break your union that it stopped collecting dues through payroll deduction, a procedure known as dues check-off? How would your local union respond?

Aside from any legal recourse the local may have, its leaders are responsible for collecting dues the old-fashioned way by hand – going person-to-person and manually keeping track of who pays and who doesn't pay.

The top officers from Local 7L and Local 14919 in Ohio's District 1 can speak from experience about how their employers' attempts to undermine our members' solidarity backfired.

They recently told their stories to International Secretary-Treasurer Jim English, District 1 Director Dave McCall and Assistant Director Dave Caldwell. Both English and McCall praised the local leaders for their hard work and for the solidarity the members of both local unions showed. Many members paid their dues in advance.

Payroll deductions stopped

Bridgestone/Firestone stopped payroll deduction from last July until this April while USW members worked under the terms of an old contract and negotiations for a new contract slowly proceeded. During that time, our union fought to negotiate a fair agreement with Goodyear, a struggle that involved a three-month strike.

Since their contract expired in December 2006, workers at Sherwin-Williams' production facility in Bedford Heights, Ohio, have been fighting the company's best efforts to break their union including, once again, cutting off payroll deduction.

The USW reached a tentative agreement with Bridgestone/Firestone on April 4 that has since been ratified. At press time, we continued to fight for fairness at Sherwin-Williams, but the outlook remained bright.

Bridgestone/Firestone management made it as hard as possible to collect the dues, said Local 7L President Mike O'Connor.

"The company did its best to prevent our members from talking and refused to allow any dues collection during work hours," he said. "It didn't work."

Most members complied

Local 7L managed to collect dues from over 98% of its 160 members, thanks to a system designed by Financial Secretary Rick Wright and implemented by the local leadership. The grievance committee col-

lected dues from workers in their departments with support from O'Connor and the local's Vice President, Bill Crooks.

At Sherwin-Williams, Local 14919 President Sandy Scherma developed her own methods for collecting dues and keeping records, and with Treasurer Renee Jones and the stewards' support, found that the increased contact and communication with members of her local improved morale.

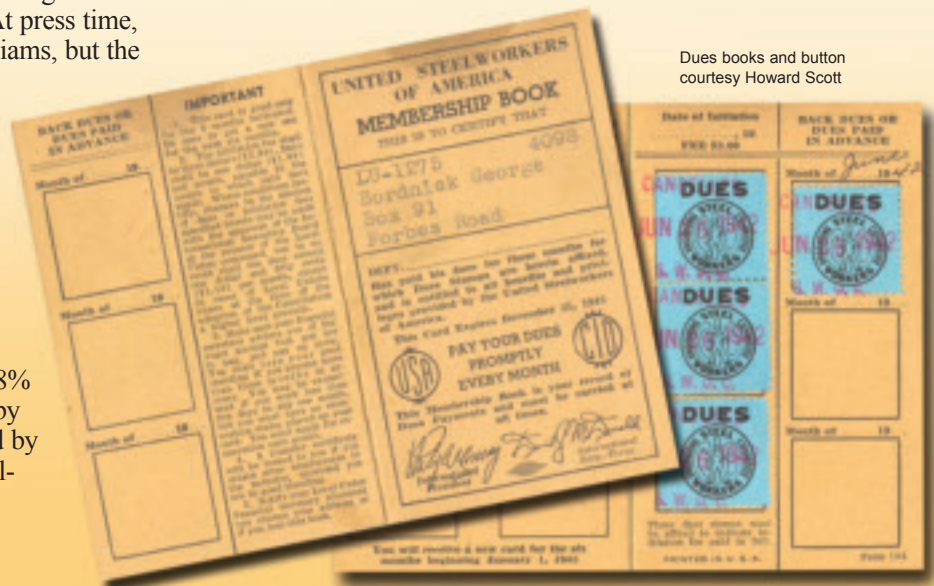
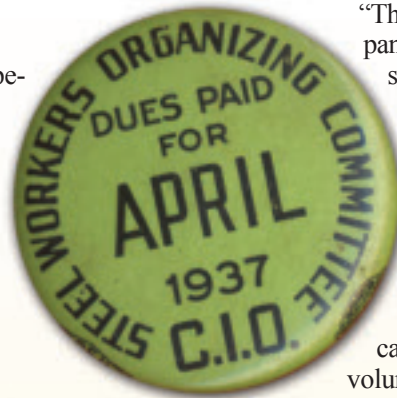
"This attempt to keep us apart backfired on the company," Scherma said. "I'm seeing people that I rarely saw before from the other side of the shop when they bring in their dues, and the increased contact gives them more confidence in our union."

Scherma publishes a monthly newsletter to keep the 115 members of Local 14919 informed about the progress of negotiations. It includes a reminder of dues payments to help keep collections at a high level.

Both companies were counting on a significant number of members failing to pay their dues voluntarily. English urged the locals to continue building power by engaging their memberships on a daily basis.

Toward that end, District 1 has begun visiting plants to discuss one-on-one with members the important issues they and their families face. Visits will be made by Assistant Director Caldwell, District 1 Rapid Response Coordinator Donnie Blatt and International PAC Coordinator Mike Scarver.

"Our union has tried to develop and implement programs to communicate with our members. What you have accomplished here meets an even greater challenge," English told the local unions. "Don't stop when the current crisis is over. Build on this solidarity to keep moving forward."



Dues books and button courtesy Howard Scott

The Fight Goes On

Remembering the Memorial Day Massacre

Seven decades ago 10 striking Steelworkers were killed by police bullets and dozens others were brutally injured during a protest outside Republic Steel in Chicago. The cause for which they made the ultimate sacrifice lives on today.

The United Steelworkers remembered the Memorial Day Massacre of 1937 at a ceremony held at the site of the battle, Sam's Place, where Local 1033 now has its union hall.

"The Fight Goes On" event was attended by dozens of people including International Vice President Fred Redmond, District 7 Director Jim Robinson, Director of Civil Rights Maxine Carter, President of the Chicago Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees Ed Sadlowski, District 7 Executive Board member Steve Skvara and ReUnion's Chicago coordinator, Vic Storino.

Stirring re-enactment

Women of Steel members performed a skit about the slain workers' lives and 15-year-old Chelsea Farmer from Lincoln Park High School, Chicago, gave a stirring, one-person re-enactment of the massacre.

The massacre occurred in 1937 as members of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee were protesting Republic Steel's refusal to sign a contract.

Supporters had gathered on Memorial Day at the strike headquarters and marched towards the mill. Police stopped them midway, firing into the unarmed crowd, beating people with clubs and throwing injured people into police paddy wagons.

The tragedy and the Senate investigation that followed helped to pave the way for passage of the Wagner Act, historic New Deal legislation that gave unions' rights to organize.

The rights granted by the Wagner Act have over the years deteriorated, which is one of the reasons the theme, "The Fight Goes On," remains appropriate.

Those rights could be restored by passage of the Employee Free Choice Act, said Scott Marshall, coordinator of SOAR District 7, whose Chapter 31-9 organized the event.

"Over the years big business has managed to chip away at the Wagner Act to reduce these basic rights for workers. Labor and our union today are fighting for passage of the Employee

Free Choice Act to restore those basic rights," Marshall said.

International President Leo W. Gerard wrote in a special book remembering the massacre that in the global marketplace, the assault and murder of trade unionists continues in places like Colombia.

"Here in America corporate behavior has become less violent, but no more respectful," Gerard said.

The Senate investigation of the massacre, led by Robert LaFollette Jr. of Wisconsin, found that the police had violated a federal law that guaranteed workers the right to strike and that Republic and other "Little Steel" companies were behind the violence, supplying weapons, ammunition and tear gas.

But the workers continued fighting, and the union was recognized in 1941.

"The best way to honor their sacrifice is to continue their work," Gerard said.

"As we pay tribute to those who sacrificed their lives and their security to win a measure of justice for their sisters and brothers, let us recommit ourselves to the struggle for a more just and progressive society — one in which workers' rights are honored as the cornerstone of a more humane civilization," he said.

Honoring Those Who Died in the Republic Steel Massacre

Hilding Anderson, 29
Alfred Causey, 43
Leo Francisco, 17
Earl Handley, 37
Otis Jones, 33
Sam Popovich, 50
Kenneth Reed, 23
Joseph Rothmund, 48
Anthony Tagliori, 26
Lee Tisdale, 50

Community M

Public Sector Conference Draws Delegates for U.S.,

After years of unfair employment policies at the government-operated nursing home in Illinois where she was a licensed practical nurse, Pat Shatlain threw herself into a USW organizing campaign.

“We were treated (at first) like a bunch of weak women. They tried to push us under and they almost did,” Shatlain told delegates to a USW International Public Employee Conference held in Pittsburgh. But the USW “showed me how to be strong, to hang in there and win.”

Shatlain had a receptive audience. The conference drew more than 100 delegates from diverse USW-represented workplaces in the United States, Canada and the Caribbean, who shared victories and struggles and learned from each other’s experiences.

A better world?

“No matter the industry or the location throughout the union, the question is the same: Will I be able to leave my children a better world than I was given?” International Vice President Fred Redmond, the conference chairman, said in opening remarks. “Will I be able to save enough to send them to college or to plan for a secure retirement? Will my job even be there?”

The USW represents 25,000 public sector members.

“You are an important part of the union and a growing segment of the union,” International President Leo W. Gerard told the delegates. “If we are going to take on the challenges that we face in the North American labor movement, we are going to have to do it by all of us working together.”

In workshops and panel discussions held over three days in May, the dele-

gates covered issues including organizing, workplace restructuring, technological change, outsourcing, privatization of government work and dispute resolution.

Card check recognition

Shatlain’s story, told as part of a panel discussion on organizing, goes back to 2003 with the passage in Illinois of a card check recognition law for public employees. A majority of 150 employees at the Monroe County Nursing Home quickly signed authorization cards and the union was recognized by the state.

It should have been a happy ending right then and there, but it was instead the start of a long, painful fight for a first contract that shows why the Employee Free Choice Act and its first contract arbitration provisions are needed on a federal level.

The employer complained that the union didn’t really represent the employees because there was no vote and delayed bargaining for a first contract, hoping to force a decertification.

Since public employers are susceptible to pressure, the USW began a community campaign backed by an interfaith group of clergy who spoke at public meetings and from the pulpit on behalf of employees and the union.

Reaching out for help

“We reached out to the community, to local Democrats and to other Steelworkers,” Shatlain said. “We organized a campaign, held rallies and wrote letters to the editor. There was a lot of community involvement.”

Staff representative Robin Rich, who helped the local committee organize, called the clergy’s effort on behalf of the employees remarkable.

“They created an atmosphere of morality that was very hard for the county commissioners to get over,” she said. “They became the bad guys and the clergy represented the voice of justice.”

“The union went to the Illinois attorney general to force management back to the table, and even then they did not bargain in good faith,” Rich said.

In the end, the USW sought an election to prove the union had support. On the eve of the vote, Shatlain



“No matter the industry or the location throughout the union, the question is the same: Will I be able to leave my children a better world than I was given?”

Vice President Fred Redmond

atters

Canada and Caribbean

was fired. But the union won the election and went on to negotiate a successful working contract. Shatlain's firing will be the new contract's first arbitration and she expects to win.

Rights vary widely

Rights to organize vary widely in the public sector. Federal employees are covered under federal collective bargaining laws but local and state employees are not.

Some two dozen states have passed comprehensive public sector labor relations laws, extending collective bargaining to public employees at the state and local levels. Another 15 states have passed limited public sector laws that restrict the scope of bargaining or limit coverage and occupations.

Nearly 65 percent of public employees whose collective bargaining rights are guaranteed by state law are covered by agreements. But where state law protections are lacking, only 20 percent of public employees are involved in some sort of labor-management relations. These public employees have

been negotiating under local government labor relations ordinances or functioning without legal protection.

Municipal workers in Texas, for example, are legally barred from collective bargaining or striking. But local labor codes can authorize dues check-offs and allow public employees to be represented by a labor organization in grievances and other matters. Public employee unions there typically depend on building major demonstrations of members and lobbying state and local representatives.

Dallas workers join

Workers for the city of Dallas joined the USW after the city in 2001 tried to cut employee wages by 10 percent to balance the budget. The USW conducted large-scale rallies around the city to let the city know it could not balance the budget on the backs of workers.

The cuts were averted. Soon afterwards, two Dallas County departments of adult and juvenile probation officers were organized based on the success in the city.

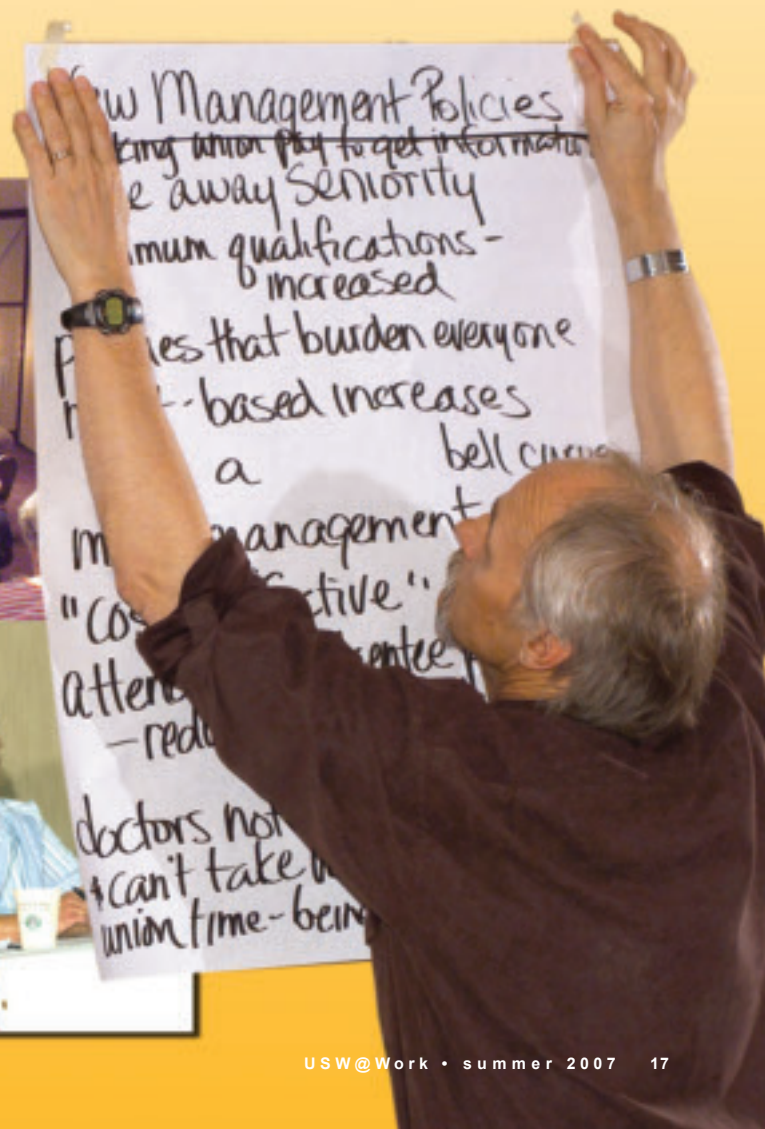
"There was no real charm or recipe. The municipalities helped us organize by treating their employees badly," said District 13 organizer Roy Robinson. "We had good committees, a good team of organizers and it all fell into place."



Right: Robin Rich and Pat Shatlain speak to the delegates.



Photos by VPI/Tom Fitzpatrick





CAPITOL LETTERS

The inside scoop on what's going down in D.C.

That Democratic donkey galloped out of the gate in January, taking Congress on a wild, 100-hour legislative ride, completing the initiatives in the New Direction for America program. Since then, however, workers have waited patiently for their agenda to move while Congress has done little but kick around Iraq funding bills.

Among the labor-endorsed legislation still idling in Congress is the Employee Free Choice Act, which would give workers, not employers, the choice of whether to have a secret election to form a union. One piece of legislation that finally moved, when it was stuffed into the Iraq-funding bill at the end of May, was an increase in the minimum wage. It would rise for the first time in a decade from \$5.15 to \$7.25 an hour.

For low-wage workers, it was a six month wait from when the bill to increase the rate was first introduced. But that's only for those poor workers in states that hadn't already taken matters into their own hands. More than half the states had already increased their minimum wage rates, with Washington paying \$7.93, Oregon, \$7.80, Connecticut \$7.65 and California, Illinois and Massachusetts \$7.50.

The concept has such popular appeal that voters in six states approved referendums increasing their minimum wage last November, and in each of those, the rates are to be tied to the cost of living so that as inflation rises so will the minimum wage pay. No more decade-long waits for the lowest-paid in those states to get raises. They are Arizona, Colorado, Missouri, Montana, Nevada and Ohio.

Oregon and Washington — which already pay more than the \$7.25 Congress is considering — also adjust their rates based on inflation.

Trade secrets

The House Ways and Means Committee made a deal on trade with the Bush administration in May but kept it in the top secret Congressional closet. Committee leaders held a press conference to say they'd reached an agreement, then refused to tell the American people — or even the whole Congress — the terms.

The Ways and Means Committee apparently felt the details were just too much for the American people to handle. Among other things, those details describe exactly how the Administration would allegedly enforce labor and environmental safeguards newly added to the proposed Peru and Panama free trade agreements in an effort to get the Democratic majorities in both houses of Congress to vote for them.

Ways and Means needs to focus on the “ways and means” to make trade deals fair, not just free for the working people of this country. The nation's leaders need to create a trade climate that revitalizes manufacturing. In addition, they must end currency manipulation, subsidies by foreign governments, violations of workers' rights and environmental degradation breaching international standards — all of which combine to rob Americans of their jobs.

Finally, there can be no trade deal secrets in a self-governing democracy. Trade may be good under certain conditions, but most Americans don't want to exchange their party preferences for practices as secretive as those of the Politburo.

Guest immigrants

"Guest workers" have been included in the immigration compromise bill released with much fanfare in May. Described as a bargain reached in negotiations among the White House, Democrats and Republicans announced at a news conference by the bi-partisan duo of liberal Edward M. Kennedy (D-MA) and conservative Jon Kyl (R-AZ), the proposal includes a method for the current 12 million undocumented workers to obtain citi-

zenship and a "guest worker" program to accommodate hundreds of thousands of additional foreign workers.

The odd thing about a "guest worker" program is that most people are one or the other — guests or workers. And in the case of this program, the fact is that they're neither. They're 21st Century slaves. When the current guest worker operation was described to House Ways and Means Committee Chairman Charles Rangel, he put it this way, "This guest worker program is the closest thing I've ever seen to slavery."

The problem for a "guest" worker is that if he complains about his employer abusing him, he's sent packing back to his home country — no way to treat a guest or a worker.

A study by the Southern Poverty Law Center called "Close to Slavery: Guest Worker Programs in the United States" found: "Bound to a single employer and without access to legal resources, guest workers are:

- routinely cheated out of wages;
- forced to mortgage their futures to obtain low-wage, temporary jobs;
- held virtually captive by employers or labor brokers who seize their documents;
- forced to live in squalid conditions; and,
- denied medical benefits for on-the-job injuries."

The labor, immigrant and civil rights communities stand united in their belief that reform must protect the human and civil rights of immigrant workers. They insist that the legislation must protect foreign workers against exploitation, while at the same time ensuring the right of American workers not to have their wages driven down by employers profiting from conditions that enable them to abuse immigrant workers.

The immigration compromise proposed in May contains no decent protections for "guest workers" and thus no wage protections for American workers.

Toronto Calling

Women's Conference to be Largest Ever

The USW International Women's Conference, scheduled for September in Toronto, Canada, is expected to be the largest Women of Steel gathering in the history of our union.

Local unions are showing much interest in the conference, which will be held from Sept. 23-26 at the Sheraton Centre in Toronto. Registrations arrive daily.

Women from around the globe will meet to set a course for their future activism and to discuss important issues including trade, politics and the need for international solidarity.

"Strong unions need women," said Leeann Anderson, assistant to International President Leo W. Gerard.

"At this conference, we intend to light a flame of enthusiasm and activism and build the skills necessary for women to participate as fully as possible in the upcoming elections, to confront the trade crisis facing both of our countries and to raise our voices on a host of other issues facing the union," Anderson said. "We also intend to enact a program of engagement so our energy and passion carries forward into the future."

Delegates will have an opportunity to enhance their activist skills in the many workshops being offered, to meet their district director and to hear from influential speakers including Gerard.

Gerard is encouraging every local to send a woman to what he called the union's "most high energy conference."

"As our union faces and surmounts the challenges before us, we need the strength, activism and passion of women to succeed," he said.

Located on the northwestern shore of Lake Ontario, Toronto is the largest city in Canada. It has a reputation as one of the world's most multicultural cities.

Union members are encouraged to celebrate both Toronto's diversity and the many cultures within our union.

There's no better place to do it. See you there.

Travel and Passport Notes

What are the new passport rules? If flying in and out of Canada, delegates will need passports or a receipt showing you have applied for one. If driving, only a picture ID and birth certificate are needed this year.

Is there still enough time to get a passport? You are advised to apply right away because normal turnaround time is roughly eight to twelve weeks. The expedited procedure with turnaround time of about four weeks is recommended.

Where can I apply for a passport? Passport applications are typically available online, at U.S. Postal Service locations and at county courthouses. Passports are delivered through the mail.

What documents are required for a passport application? Social Security number, birth certificate, passport picture and application fee.

What should I do if it's too late for me to receive my passport in time for the conference? Fly into Buffalo, N.Y., rent a car and drive the two hours north to Toronto. The conference hotel is easy to locate.

Photo by Scott Marshall



Black Trade Unionists Call for Working Family Policies

Picture this: a stronger, more diverse labor movement that pushes our nation to have an economic and political system that values workers' rights, offers health care for all and delivers on promises of a stable retirement.

That's the agenda the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists presented during its 36th annual convention held recently in Chicago, where USW's Director of Civil Rights Maxine Carter and Vice President Fred Redmond were among the 1,200 attendees.

About 40 Steelworker members also attended the event that featured an appearance by Democratic presidential candidate U.S. Sen. Barack Obama and a day of planning strategy for turning out the vote next year.

Redmond, who with Carter sits on the CBTU executive council, said highlights included spending time with USW members and other union leaders.

"Discussing common challenges, planning for the 2008 elections and learning about how we can continue to grow the labor movement so that it is more diverse and stronger are so important," Redmond said.

CBTU was formed in 1972 to be an independent voice of black union workers. Today, more than 50 unions, including the United Steelworkers, are members of the coalition.

In recent years, the group has worked to reverse the damage done to minority workers who have been hit especially hard by the massive loss of manufacturing jobs. In 2004, some 55 percent — 168,000 — of the nation's union jobs lost were held by black workers.

"We have to embody in our planning the right of workers to join unions; the right to bargain collectively; the right to have access to universal health care; a fair trade policy as opposed to a free trade policy, so that all of us can benefit from the fruits of our society," said CBTU President William Lucy, who also is Secretary-Treasurer of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Workers.

Carter, who served as the presiding officer on the convention's opening day, said it's vital that the issues get discussed.

"Our members and the others who attend are inspired to continue the conversation back home in their local union halls and in their neighborhoods where action really begins," she said.

www.usw.org

For more on the CBTU convention, visit www.usw.org and listen to POWERcast Episode 19.

Pressing for Justice

Lawsuit Filed by USW in Murders of Union Leaders in Colombia Going to Trial in July

"They were shot to death the very first night we were there," Dan Kovalik said.

Kovalik, a Steelworker attorney, was among a delegation of USW activists in Colombia on March 12, 2001, when two leaders of a miners' union were pulled off a company bus by paramilitary forces and shot dead execution style.

Union President Valmore Lacarno Rodriquez was blasted in the head several times in front of frightened co-workers. Vice President Victor Hugo Orcasita Amaya, later found dead by the side of a road, had been tortured and shot.

The men were both leaders of the Sintramiennergetica labor union, which had been engaged in contract talks with an Alabama-based multi-national corporation, Drummond Co.

USW gets involved

The murders of Rodriquez and Amaya led to a strike by 1,200 workers at a Colombian mine owned by Drummond and a call by International President Leo W. Gerard for the Colombian government to protect trade unionists in Colombia.

"Trade union rights are human rights and our union will do everything in its power to bring these assassins to justice," Gerard said at the time.

Much has happened since then.

In 2002, union attorney Kovalik used an obscure law, the Alien Tort Claims Act, passed in the 1700s, to sue Drummond on behalf of the labor union and the families of the murder victims. The charges included extrajudicial killing, wrongful death and aiding and abetting.

With opening arguments scheduled in July before a federal court in Alabama, the Drummond case would be the first of its kind to go to trial. Drummond has denied knowledge of the killings and has pledged it will not settle the case.

Tragically, the brutal killings of Rodriquez and Amaya were not unusual. More than 2,000 trade unionists have been killed in Colombia between 1991 and 2006, according to the International Trade Union Federation (ITUF).

"Year after year, Colombia has been on top of the list of countries where trade unionists are killed simply for their legitimate activities in support of workers' rights, leading to the destruction of thousands of lives and devastation of families throughout the country," said ITUF Human Rights Director Janek Kuczkiewicz.

After the Middle East and Afghanistan, Colombia is the largest recipient of American assistance, with more than \$4 billion disbursed this decade alone.

In April, U.S. Sen. Patrick J. Leahy (D-VT) put on hold \$55.2 million in military aid because of claims of collaboration between Colombia's army and paramilitaries, which have been classified as terrorist groups by the State Department.

While the aid does not officially go to the paramilitaries, the State Department has concluded that every year since 2000 the military that the U.S. is funding provides weapons, ammunition, intelligence and logistical support to paramilitaries, and even collaborates with them at times in gross violations of human rights.

International scandal

The case against Drummond is now an international scandal.

In April, a leading opposition senator in Colombia went public with an alleged assassination plot. Senator Gustavo Petro accused a former Army Colonel who has provided security for Drummond of conspiring to kill him.

According to Petro, the public prosecutor's office learned of the plot from one of the would-be assassins, who testified that he met with retired Colombian Army Col. Julian Vilate and others in January to plan the killing.

Vilate, now employed by Drummond, worked for the U.S. embassy two years ago in Bogota, Colombia, between December 2004 and July 2005, when he resigned.

Petro, President Alvaro Uribe's most vocal critic, has taken the lead among Colombian lawmakers in unmasking ties between Uribe's allies and illegal right-wing militias.

Petro and his relatives have received a series of death threats since November, when his denunciations of paramilitary infiltration in Colombian politics spurred probes that have landed eight members of Congress in jail on charges ranging from conspiracy to murder.

Paramilitary commander Salvatore Mancuso (left) of the United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia (AUC) recently testified that major companies doing business in Colombia, including coal companies operating in the Cesar region and the U.S. firms Chiquita, Dole and Del-Monte, have been making regular payments to AUC paramilitaries, a designated terrorist group, for years.

AP Photo by Zoe Selsky



Enacting the Employee Free Choice Act would go a long way toward eliminating persistent poverty in America, a blue-ribbon task force has recommended.

The Center for American Progress convened a diverse group of national experts and leaders to examine the causes and consequences of poverty and to make recommendations for action.

The resulting new report outlines a strategy to cut poverty in half over the next decade by, among other things, promoting decent work, opportunity for all and unionization.

"The link between increasing collective bargaining power and reducing poverty is clear," said AFL-CIO President

in 20 lives with income below half of the poverty line.

Poverty imposes enormous costs on society that can be measured in the lost potential of children raised in poor households and lower productivity and earnings of poor adults. Poor health, increased crime and broken neighborhoods all hurt our nation.

Yet in the last six years, the number of poor Americans has grown by an estimated five million people, while income inequality has reached historic high levels.

The richest one percent of Americans in 2005 had the largest share of the nation's income (19 percent) since 1929.

(EITC) and the Child Tax Credit to help millions of low and moderate-income families.

To reduce the high cost of being poor, the panel called on the government to broaden access to mainstream goods and financial services in low-income communities and to expand and simplify the federal Saver's Credit to encourage savings.

Equitable development

The federal government should promote "equitable development" in and around the nation's central cities and promote affordable housing in communities where there are employment opportunities, the report said.

Restoring Hope

Employee Free Choice Act Will Help Reduce Poverty in America

It also called on the government to expand federal tuition grants, to use training and other programs to better connect disadvantaged youth with school and work, and to help former prisoners find stable employment.

Only 35 percent of the unemployed receive unemployment benefits — so that system should be overhauled to better help workers and their families.

The task force suggests the \$90 billion a year in costs could be paid by bringing better balance to the federal tax system and recouping part of what has been lost to excessive tax cuts. The current annual costs of the tax cuts enacted by Congress in 2001 and 2003 is roughly \$400 billion a year.

"We recognize that serious action has serious costs, but the challenge before the nation is not whether we can afford to act, but rather that we must decide to act," the report said.

John Sweeney. "Workers who have been able to join in with co-workers in unions make an average of 30 percent more than their colleagues who don't have the benefit of collective bargaining."

Action urged

The report calls for both personal and social responsibility and urges that action be taken at the local, state and national levels.

One in eight Americans now lives below the poverty line of \$19,971 in annual income for a family of four. One

At the same time, the poorest 20 percent shared only 3.4 percent.

The panel recommended a dozen key steps to cut poverty including passage of the Employee Free Choice Act. The pending legislation would require employers to recognize a union once a majority of workers sign authorization cards and would strengthen penalties for violations of employee rights.

It was also suggested that Congress raise the minimum wage, guarantee child care assistance to low-income families, expand the Earned Income Tax Credit



Making Gerdau Do The Right Thing

In the summer of 2005 Curtis Brottem, locked out of his job by Gerdau Ameristeel in Beaumont, Texas, fell and broke his back while working on the roof of his lake house.

Brottem, 50, was paralyzed from the waist down by the fall. But that wasn't his last injury. After the lockout ended, Gerdau terminated Brottem rather than put him on disability as company executives had promised.

Joey Duhon, a fellow Local 8586 member, was designated as permanently disabled during the lockout because he has Parkinson's disease. He found himself in the same position as Brottem.

Gerdau maintained they were not employees any longer when they could not report to work following the six-month lockout, which ended in December, 2005.

The local union helped Brottem and Duhon with COBRA insurance and, with support from the International, refused to settle a contract with Gerdau



Photo by Mark M. Hancock/The Beaumont Enterprise

until the company secured their future. It was basically a two-year holdout.

"The local stood behind myself and Joey until we received compensation. They were there for us," said a grateful Brottem. "Some people think the company did something for me, but really my support was from the union and the union members, not the company. I want to make sure people understand that."

In the end, the USW convinced the company to grant both a disability pension for all of their years of service at the mill, not just the few years since Gerdau purchased the mill. They were

also enrolled in a VEBA trust fund for medical benefits.

The union's intervention meant a lifetime annuity of \$1,120 a month each instead of payments of \$40 a month each, with no offsets and a joint survivor option.

"The union did an exceptional job, above and beyond the call of duty," Duhon said. "The Lord moves in mighty ways and Curtis and I are the beneficiaries. I just hope other men who become disabled don't have to go through the waiting we did."

Photo courtesy The Daily Times/Wes Hope



Iron Man

USW Member Retires After Record 66 Years of Service

Major league baseball's iron man Cal Ripken had nothing on the USW's Clyde "Tiger" Tidwell. Tidwell, 87, retired on May 16 from Alcoa's Tennessee Operations with a record 66 years of service. That made Tidwell the longest serving employee in the history of the company.

Was he also the longest active member of the USW? There are no records to confirm that, but it could be true since Tidwell's membership dates back to the 1940s.

The Steelworkers Organizing Committee (SWOC) was formed in 1936. The United Steelworkers of America was officially created on May 22, 1942 by delegates to a SWOC convention in Cleveland.

Shortly before a tornado hit his hometown of Greensburg, Kan., USW member Jason Butler heard sirens blare an alarm and hid with his family in a basement storm cellar.

While the tornado was swirling in darkness above them on May 4, the Butlers could hear the wrenching sounds of destruction and smell the wood of their house breaking apart.

When the winds stopped, with lightning as their only source of illumination, they discovered their home was completely destroyed, with the exception of the basement.

Greensburg itself was virtually wiped off the face of the earth. Hundreds of homes and businesses — an estimated 95 percent of the town's buildings — were flattened. At least 10 people died.

Large and powerful

The unusually large and powerful tornado, a brawny 1.7 miles in width, traveled for nearly 22 miles. It mowed down everything on Sycamore Street where Butler's home once stood.

"The whole center of town is just wiped out," said Butler, an employee of Panhandle Energy. "Pictures don't do it justice. If you were to drive through town, you'd think hundreds of thousands of people were dead, not just 10."

USW Local 348, an amalgamated local of 750 members led by

Tidwell joined Alcoa on May 16, 1941 at Alcoa, Tenn., and became a millwright apprentice in late 1942. Initially a member of the Aluminum Workers of America, he became a steelworker when the two unions merged on June 30, 1944.

Ripken's streak

By comparison, the great Cal Ripken played in 2,632 consecutive games for the Baltimore Orioles from May 30, 1982 to Sept. 20, 1998, when he voluntarily ended the streak. He was one of seven players in major league history with 3,000 hits (3,107) and 400 home runs (421).

In his 66 years at Alcoa, Tidwell's only break was a short leave of absence in 1944 to serve his country as a World War II paratrooper. He worked in a variety of jobs including overhead crane operator and mechanical crafts specialist

Call for Help

Tornado Wipes Out Kansas Town, Leaving Members and Retirees Homeless

Dennis Chaplin, has established a fund to help the members and retirees who lost their homes and possessions.

Two members — Butler and Bruce Raber — and 10 of our retirees who resided in Greensburg lost their homes and most, if not all, of their belongings as a result of the storm. The mother-in-law of another member was killed.

Helpful boost needed

"It is times like this that the extended Steelworker family rises to the occasion and helps those who need a boost so they can start to rebuild their lives," District 11 Director Bob Bratulich said in a letter supporting the relief fund.

To help, make checks payable to USW LU 348 Tornado Relief Fund and send to USW Local 348, P.O. Box 171052, Kansas City, KS 66117.

The Canadian Steelworkers Humanity Fund donated \$10,000 Canadian to the local union fund. The Steelworkers Charitable and Education Organization also made a donation.



and was most recently a mechanic in the Rigid Packaging Division's Finishing Department.

"I installed sprinklers. I held rods for civil engineers. I was an overhead crane operator. I unloaded brick when they were building furnaces. I've even swept the floors," Tidwell told the local newspaper, *The Daily Times*.

Happy worker

"I wouldn't change one thing if I had to do it over. I guess you could just say I'm a happy worker."

Tidwell exercises every morning, walks regularly with his wife, Floy, and before he retired woke up at 3:45 a.m. every day. He's had a few health problems over the years including a broken hip and two heart-valve replacement surgeries.

"I never really made any plans to retire," he said. "But then they offered

this good retirement package. My age had a little to do with it — but it was mostly the package."

Safety improvements are among the most significant changes he has seen over his career, along with the growth of computers. And what was Tidwell's secret to employment longevity?

"Stay positive and don't have negative thoughts," he said.

Can you top Tidwell?

If you know someone with longer service than Clyde Tidwell, let us know by writing to the USW Communications Department, Five Gateway Center, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15222.



Lynn Williams Honored Twice by Canada

Two good things happened this spring to Lynn Williams, the retired International President of the United Steelworkers and current president of SOAR, the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees.

Williams, 82, was invested in May as an Officer of the Order of Canada, the country's highest civilian honor, in recognition of a lifetime of achievement in the labor movement.

Created in 1967, the Order was established to recognize the exemplary lifetime contributions made by Canadians to Canada and to humanity at large. Its motto is "Desiderantes meliorem patriam," which means, "Desiring a better country."

Lynn Williams Street

Three days after the investiture, on May 7, the city of Toronto named a street after Williams in a former factory district where he had his first job as a Steelworker.

Within sight of Toronto's famed CN Tower, Lynn Williams Street is an area known as Liberty Village. It is near the site of the former John Inglis Co., a USW-organized appliance factory, where he joined the union.

"I'm quite surprised, but very pleased," Williams said of the two awards. "I look at them as recognition of the importance of unions."

Williams grew up in Ontario during the Great Depression in a socially-conscious family. Not long after starting to work at Inglis, he was recruited by the Canadian Congress of Labour to organize department store workers.

In 1956, Williams was hired by Larry Sefton, then director of USW District 6. He organized new members on the Niagara Peninsula and led major negotiations in the nickel and other nonferrous industries in Canada.

Fifth USW President

Williams was elected Director of District 6 in 1973 and USW International Secretary in 1977. He became the union's fifth International President in 1983 by a vote of the International Executive Board on the death of his predecessor, Lloyd McBride.

He led the union from 1983 to 1994 — turbulent economic times when the steel industry was confronting unfairly priced imported products and undergoing massive changes that destroyed tens of thousands of jobs.

Gerard Urges Congress to Regulate Private Equity

International President Leo W. Gerard is calling for congressional action to deal with the growing problem of unregulated private equity — pools of private capital used for investments.

Gerard made the case for such intervention in a keynote speech he gave in May at the Harvard Labor and Worklife conference on Managing Labor's Capital.

"The USW wants to avoid another pension fund meltdown," he said.

Further oversight is needed because more private equity firms are becoming employers, creating insecurity among workers, and because such deals are contributing to the growing gap between the very rich and everyone else.

Values at stake

"What's at stake are the values that govern democratic societies, because the greatest risk being caused by private equity is the danger that it is deepening the societal divide being caused by globalization," Gerard said.

Private equity and hedge funds are fueling an unprecedented rate of mergers and acquisitions. Nine of the 10 largest buyouts in history have occurred in the last 18 months, including deals worth \$1.2 trillion total in the first quarter of 2007 alone.

Often these private equity ventures quickly flip the company back to the public market, usually with jobs being cut in the process.

The USW is not opposed to leveraged buyouts and private equity when it's used in the right way for the right purpose, Gerard said, adding that the union has been in the forefront of saving jobs and revitalizing industries by using leveraged buyouts and private equity.



Photo by Gail Oskin



Federal Plant Security Rules Inadequate

New U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) rules on chemical plant security fail to protect workers and communities, lack a timetable for changes and do not require industry to take specific measures.

“This is another example of the Bush administration’s attempt to appear as if it is taking care of industrial safety problems. Security actions alone are insufficient to protect workers and communities,” said International President Leo W. Gerard.

Numerous faults

Though workers are in a position to identify and prevent potential security threats — they understand where an intruder might enter a plant or whether backup control systems are operating properly, for example — DHS did not require employee involvement in making a facility safe.

Under the DHS rules issued in April, whistleblowers are not offered protection. There are no requirements that companies use inherently safer technologies or less hazardous chemicals, and more stringent existing and proposed laws are pre-empted.

Ron Marino, president of Local 5032, works at Neville Chemical Co. near Pittsburgh and said his plant’s security training mostly focuses on being aware of any unusual happenings and reporting them, rather than having security and evacuation drills.

“Our complaint has been that the company has not given us enough involvement in plant security,” he said. “It only does what is required by law.”

Lax security exposed

After being exposed on the TV show *60 Minutes* for lax plant security, Neville sought a less hazardous substitute for the chemical, boron trifluoride.

Marino said Neville is using the DHS regulations against workers. Cameras are focused constantly on employees and the union is battling the company over using a camera instead of a worker to watch barges. He said the company is treating the employees as more of a security risk than contractors and other outsiders.

Required background checks under the DHS regulation have the potential for employer misuse, and our union views this as an attempt by companies to control workers and violate privacy rights.

Bipartisan attempts were made to pass legislation prohibiting the federal government from pre-empting more stringent state laws. But negotiations between the White House and a conference committee knocked out this provision from an appropriations act.

Acid Maker Enters into Company-wide Pollution Pact

Acid manufacturer and USW employer Rhodia Inc. will pay a \$2 million penalty and spend approximately \$50 million on air pollution controls to resolve allegations that it violated the Clean Air Act.

Pollution controls will decrease actual emissions at some of the company’s facilities by more than 90 percent.

Rhodia is the first sulfuric acid manufacturer in the nation to enter into a “company-wide” compliance agreement. It will meet lower emission limits at eight union and non-union plants located in California, Indiana, Louisiana and Texas. Rhodia employs USW members in Houston, Blue Island and Chicago, Ill.; Baltimore, Md.; Charleston, S.C.; Hammond, Ind. and Long Beach, Calif.

The acid is produced by burning sulfur-containing compounds, creating sulfur dioxide. The sulfur dioxide is then converted to sulfur trioxide, which combines with water to form sulfuric acid. Air pollution occurs when unconverted sulfur dioxide and sulfuric acid mist are released into the atmosphere.

The Environmental Protection Agency claims the settlement will reduce harmful air pollution by 19,000 tons per year and improve the air quality for millions of people around the nation. Sulfur dioxide can impair breathing, aggravate respiratory diseases such as bronchitis and cause acid rain.

The government’s complaint alleges Rhodia made modifications to its plants that increased emissions of sulfur dioxide without first obtaining pre-construction permits and installing required pollution controls.

The Justice Department and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) expect to reach similar agreements with other sulfuric acid manufacturers.



The Gift of Life

USW Member Donates Kidney to Union Brother

When USW member Mike Sumner needed a kidney transplant to save his life, a longtime co-worker came to his rescue, giving new meaning to the phrase union brother and sister.

Sumner and his kidney donor, Janice Webber, are both members of Local 42 at Cascade Tissues Group in Eau Claire, Wis. They have worked together for 25 years.

"I don't know how you repay someone for something like this," said Sumner, 59, who is back at work and feeling good after recuperation.

Modest about gift

Webber, though, is modest about her contribution and bewildered over why anyone would think she is special for giving up a kidney to a man she only knew through work.

"When I heard Mike needed one, I said I'd give him one," Webber told a news reporter. "I told him I wouldn't let him die. I don't understand why anyone wouldn't do the same."

Sumner, a lifelong resident of Eau Claire, had known for some time that he had Polycystic Kidney Disease (PKD). His mother had the same disease and an MRI confirmed his diagnosis.

PKD is a genetic disorder characterized by the growth of numerous cysts in the kidneys, the organs primarily responsible for cleaning blood. Fluid-filled cysts can slowly replace much of the mass of the kidneys, reducing function and leading to failure.

When PKD causes kidneys to fail – which can happen after many years – the patient requires dialysis or kidney transplantation to avoid end-stage renal disease.

Sumner and his wife, Sue McCrackin Sumner, eventually decided that a transplant was the best option.

Janice Webber, left, visits with Mike Sumner to whom she donated a kidney. Webber and Sumner are both members of USW Local 42.

Dialysis had certain side effects but might be necessary if a transplant were not available.

They came to the decision by reviewing information provided by physicians at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., and simply thinking through those choices the best they could.

"You don't wonder why it has to be," Sue Sumner said. "You just weigh each step as carefully as you can."

Mike had to meet extensive criteria to qualify for a transplant and underwent three days of testing at the clinic before a board of review authorized him to be placed on a donor waiting list. The anticipated wait was initially five years.

Family tested

Family members were tested for blood type and antibody acceptance. One of Sumner's three daughters, Kim, had the same blood type as her father but was unacceptable as a donor because she has also been diagnosed with PKD.

Sumner's blood type is O, a universal type that can be transfused to patients with other blood types. But patients with Type O blood can only receive Type O blood.

After he was on the list for a year and a half, Sumner's kidneys began to show signs of failure. That meant waiting for another 3 ½ years on the transplant list was no longer an option.

With dialysis looming, Janice Webber stepped forward to volunteer. She had the correct blood type, O, but needed to go through three days of tests to discover if other criteria were acceptable. She turned out to be an acceptable match.

The operation went off without complications last September. Webber had a two-day hospital stay and several weeks of recovery at home before returning to work.

For Sumner the hospital stay was a bit longer and more grueling. But subsequent check ups show his second chance at life has taken hold. "It's great," he said.

Searching for a donor

Bobby Tucker, a USW member retired from the Uniroyal-Goodrich plant in Opelika, Ala., has failing kidneys and is searching for a donor kidney to save his life. The Lanett, Ala., resident and associate Baptist minister, has Type A blood and may receive a kidney from someone with either Types A or O. To help, contact Michelle Dennis, living donor coordinator at the UAB Health System in Birmingham, at 1-888-822-7892.

In the midst of the tension and emotions that every strike evokes, the members of nine USW local unions in Kentucky and West Virginia showed what it means to be union brothers and sisters.

The 2,700 USW members employed by nine Appalachian Regional Healthcare (ARH) hospitals supported each other during a 25-day work stoppage in ways that were downright extraordinary.

They stood up to freezing rain and hurricane force winds on the picket lines and held their heads high in the face of attack ads the hospital placed in local newspapers and radio stations.

Positive support

The 18 presidents and vice presidents on the negotiating committee appreciated positive support. They faced the pressure of trying to quickly secure a fair tentative agreement for certified nursing aides, licensed practical nurses, housekeepers, maintenance and clerical workers whose average wage was \$12 an hour.

The most extraordinary illustration of fraternity was made late on April 21, the day negotiators reached a tentative agreement. That morning the only remaining major conflict was over the defined benefit pension.

ARH offered to add a dollar to the pension multiplier for all 2,700 employees over the three-year contract. This seemed to be generous since some companies offer only pennies and non-union employers routinely eliminate pensions.

String attached

But, of course, there was a mighty big string attached. In exchange, ARH wanted to eliminate defined benefit pension benefits for all new employees. They would get instead what is essentially a savings plan, called a 403(b).

All along, the bargaining committee had told ARH to forget the 403(b). The members knew the International union opposes giving up the protection of a defined pension plan for any worker. But more than that, the committee wasn't willing to do it.



Solidarity Prevails!

Workers Stick Together to Beat Appalachian Hospital Chain

They talked about it. Roger McGinnis, president of the Harlan local, noted that some younger members liked the idea of savings plans because they are portable.

But even if half a million dollars were accumulated in such an account over a lifetime, how long would it last in retirement? What if the worker spent it unwisely?

With defined benefit pension plans, the checks continue to arrive as long as the worker lives. The bargaining committee wanted younger workers to be protected and continued to reject the 403(b).

Finally, on the evening of April 21, ARH made the painful choice. The health care non-profit agreed to eliminate the 403(b) and permit new employees into the defined benefit pension plan, but only if the \$1 additional multiplier was removed.

ARH said it was its last, best and final offer and wanted a ratification vote,

with the committee recommending approval if the 403(b) were to remain out.

This was the real test. The bargaining committee didn't hesitate, however, to sacrifice a little bit now to protect future generations of workers.

Still, the committee wanted a few more concessions before it would accept a last and final offer and sent the federal mediators back to ARH with requests.

It was over

The mediators returned with an offer for return-to-work language, and the bargaining committee began celebrating. It was over. They could recommend the tentative agreement.

In meetings over the next few days, committee members described an agreement in which health insurance premium increases were limited and co-payments were eliminated altogether if employees used ARH facilities. There are bi-annual raises in each of three years, and workers will not have to pay for other benefits.



Worker Economics

Men in 30s Earn Less than Their Fathers Did

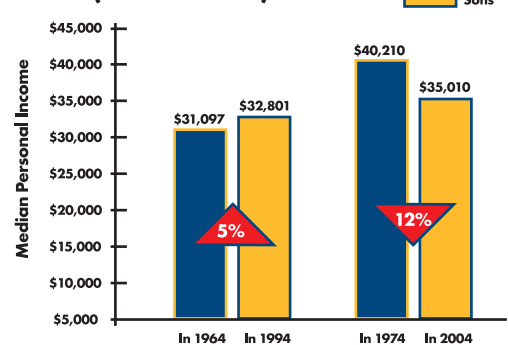
For generations, America was a place where children ended up better off economically than their parents. That long positive trend now appears to be over.

Men in their 30s today earn less than their fathers did at the same age when pay is adjusted for inflation. In 1974, the U.S. median income for men in their 30s stood at \$40,210 in today's inflation-adjusted dollars. In 2004, median pay stood at \$35,010.

The decline in men's earnings breaks a long U.S. history of rising earnings from generation to generation. It also comes despite growth in both productivity and gross domestic product.

It's true that families headed by people in their 30s are living better than they once did. But that's because more women are working. Even so, the improvement in family income has been modest: \$53,280 in 2004 versus \$49,503 three decades earlier.

MEN (AGE 30-39)



Circuit City Target of Protests

"Good worker? You're fired. Cheap worker? You're hired," protesters from the United Steelworkers and other labor groups chanted outside a Circuit City store in Bangor, Maine.

The protest was held in response to Circuit City's March 28 decision to terminate 3,400 of its highest-paid employees nationwide because they were paid above market rates.

In June, Circuit City said it would cut 850 U.S. jobs on top of the 3,400 eliminated in March.



China Talks Skip Workers' Rights, Focus on Big Business Concerns

The Bush administration recently held two days of trade talks with China in Washington, D.C. Unlike the past few discussions, U.S. Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson and others in the Bush camp didn't need to travel to China to achieve next to nothing. They did that without leaving home.

The Strategic Economic Dialogue with the Chinese once again produced lots of talk and no action on currency manipulation and workers' rights.

The talks instead focused on issues of concern to Big Business, such as protecting intellectual property rights, rather than the job concerns of ordinary citizens.

Continental's U.S. Failures Blamed on Mismanagement

Major management blunders at Continental Tire in North America have cost shareholders hundreds of millions of dollars, a new USW report concludes. The report, "20 Years Asleep at the Wheel; Continental Tire's Failure in North America," uses information made public as part of a recent lawsuit to show that these management errors have cost shareholders as much as \$1.2 billion over five years.

The report shows that Continental's failures in the North American market are the result of a failed management strategy, not labor costs.

The report reviews critical management errors including an overemphasis on the original equipment market, failure to develop an effective tire dealer network, a failed sourcing and supply strategy and an ineffective marketing strategy.

Continental has stopped building tires in USW-represented factories in North Carolina and Kentucky, harming 2,500 workers and their families.

The report is available online at www.SolidarityAtConti.org.

IRS Audits Up

The Internal Revenue Service is more likely than ever to audit middle-class Americans, and those caught cheating can expect to pay.

Since 2000, IRS authorities have nearly tripled audits of tax returns filed by people making \$25,000 to \$100,000 as part of a broad change in audit strategy.

Audits of these middle-class taxpayers rose to nearly 436,000 last year, up from about 147,000 returns in 2000. The odds of being audited rose from 1 in 377 to 1 in 140.

USW Commends Anti-dumping Tariffs for Paper Imports

The U.S. Department of Commerce has agreed to place anti-dumping duties of up to 99.65 percent on coated free sheet paper from China.

International President Leo W. Gerard said he was pleased that Commerce rejected calls from the Chinese government to grant special treatment to its dumped and subsidized exports.

On March 30, Commerce — for the first time ever — reversed a decades-old policy and decided that countervailing duty law could be applied to non-market economies. That led to preliminary duties on glossy paper imports from China.

The USW is a party to the anti-subsidy trade case with NewPage Corp., where the union represents nearly 4,000 production workers at plants in Escanaba, Mich., Luke, Md., Rumford, Maine and Wickliffe, Ky.

A final determination in the anti-dumping and countervailing duty cases is due in August. The USW is continuing to participate actively in the countervailing duty investigation on glossy paper imports from China.

China Surpasses U.S. as Exporter

China surpassed the United States as the world's second-largest exporter in the middle of last year and is pulling further and further ahead, according to figures released by the World Trade Organization.

Export growth from China boomed 27 percent last year, outpacing all other major trading nations, the WTO said in releasing global trade statistics for 2006.

While China finished behind Germany and the United States in total exports for the full year, it overtook the U.S. in the last six months of 2006 and will almost certainly finish ahead in 2007.

VEBA Helps Steel Retirees with Medicare Premiums

As many as 60,000 USW-represented retirees and spouses will be eligible to receive an additional \$300 cash payment later this year to help offset the cost of monthly Medicare Part B premiums.

Eligible beneficiaries include retirees, spouses and surviving spouses who lost health care coverage as a result of the bankruptcies of Bethlehem Steel, LTV Steel, Georgetown Steel and Acme Metal Products.

The payments will be made from surplus contributions to an innovative trust fund, the Mittal Steel USA Voluntary Employees' Beneficiary Association (VEBA). The VEBA was established in 2002 through negotiations between the USW and International Steel Group, which has since been acquired by Mittal Steel USA.

The benefit payment will be equal to \$25 for each month in which a Part B premium was paid by an eligible beneficiary in the 12-month period ending June, 2007.

Eligible beneficiaries will receive applications in the mail. Completed applications must be postmarked no later than August 31. The deadline will not be extended.

Questions regarding the eligibility rules and the application process should be directed to the VEBA by calling 1(877) 474-8322.

Paid Sick Days Becoming Scarce

It may be time for the United States to join the rest of the world and legislatively guarantee paid sick leave for its work force.

Only 57 percent of all private-industry workers in the United States have access to paid sick leave, according to the Economic Policy Institute, a Washington-based think tank.

The remaining 43 percent of private industry workers have no paid sick days. When they get sick, they are either forced to go to work or to stay home without pay and risk losing their job.

Workers making less than \$7.38 an hour are five times less likely to have sick days than workers at the top of the scale, those making \$29.47 an hour or above. (See chart.)

Most European workers are guaranteed at least 20 days of vacation, and some also receive up to 13 paid holidays, according to the Center for Economic and Policy Research.

Cornell Honors Local Union for Reviving Lackawanna Mill

The Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations has named USW Local 2604 and Mittal Steel USA winners of this year's "Champions at Work" award for reviving the former Bethlehem Steel mill in Lackawanna, N.Y.

When Bethlehem Steel went out of business in 2003, its mill in Lackawanna almost went with it. But "they refused to die," District 4 Director William Pienta recalled at an awards ceremony.

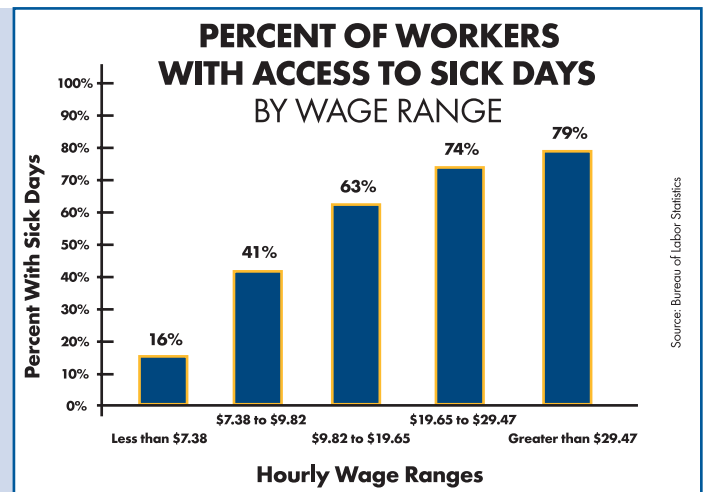
The award was created as a result of a Cornell study of constructive labor relations at work places in Western New York. It has been given three times.

To keep the plant alive, the local accepted unpopular concessions including changes to work rules that were won over generations. Management softened a previously autocratic stance.

"Our ability to adapt got us where we are today," Local 2604 President Anthony Fortunato said.

Today Lackawanna produces 500,000 tons of galvanized steel a year, the same volume as before, with a work force that is roughly half its former size. Employment is about 268.

Bethlehem's assets were sold in bankruptcy to International Steel Group. Mittal Steel bought ISG in 2005.



More to Come

Canadian Steelworkers Fired Up over Job Losses

Fed up with massive job losses, Steelworkers in Ontario, Canada, are promising a summer of unrest.

It began in May when steelworkers in District 6, which encompasses the Province of Ontario and the Atlantic Provinces, occupied two manufacturing plants – in the 1960s peaceful sit-in sense of occupation – and suspended production briefly at a half dozen other factories.

And there's more to come, says District 6 Director Wayne Fraser. The province has lost 250,000 jobs over the past four years, Fraser said, "and we have a government that is saying it's not really a problem."

Organized labor intends to illustrate to the government of Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty that it is a problem, Fraser said. Actions will take place over the summer up until elections are held in October.

Frustration evident

"There is a lot of frustration, and the Steelworkers union is a fighting union. So we occupy the plant until the company sits down and negotiates with us a deal that makes sense for our members," Fraser said.

Not only that, in both cases when steelworkers occupied plants, the union convinced the companies to pay the occupiers a day's wages!

First, on May 3, steelworkers from Local 4752 took over the Hamilton Specialty Bar plant. Just 30 workers shut down production and seized the facility. A hundred others rallied outside the plant, honking horns and waving union flags. They had the support of District 6 and the Ontario Federation of Labor.

The bankrupt company, located in Hamilton, had announced that it intended to slash benefits for about 500 retirees, withhold vacation pay from active workers and deny active workers shutdown benefits when the

plant, formerly Slater Steel, employing 320, closes.

Within 12 hours, the company agreed to resume paying retiree benefits and to make the vacation and shutdown payments. "That was a victory," Fraser said. "But McGuinty's refusal to get involved was not."

Painful reminder

The workers hand delivered to McGuinty an invitation to visit the plant site, which he declined. "For our members and retirees, it is a painful reminder that this provincial government does not care about working people in Ontario," Fraser said.

Twenty days later, steelworkers shut down seven plants across Ontario, six over lunch hours, but the seventh for about 10 hours until the company met demands.

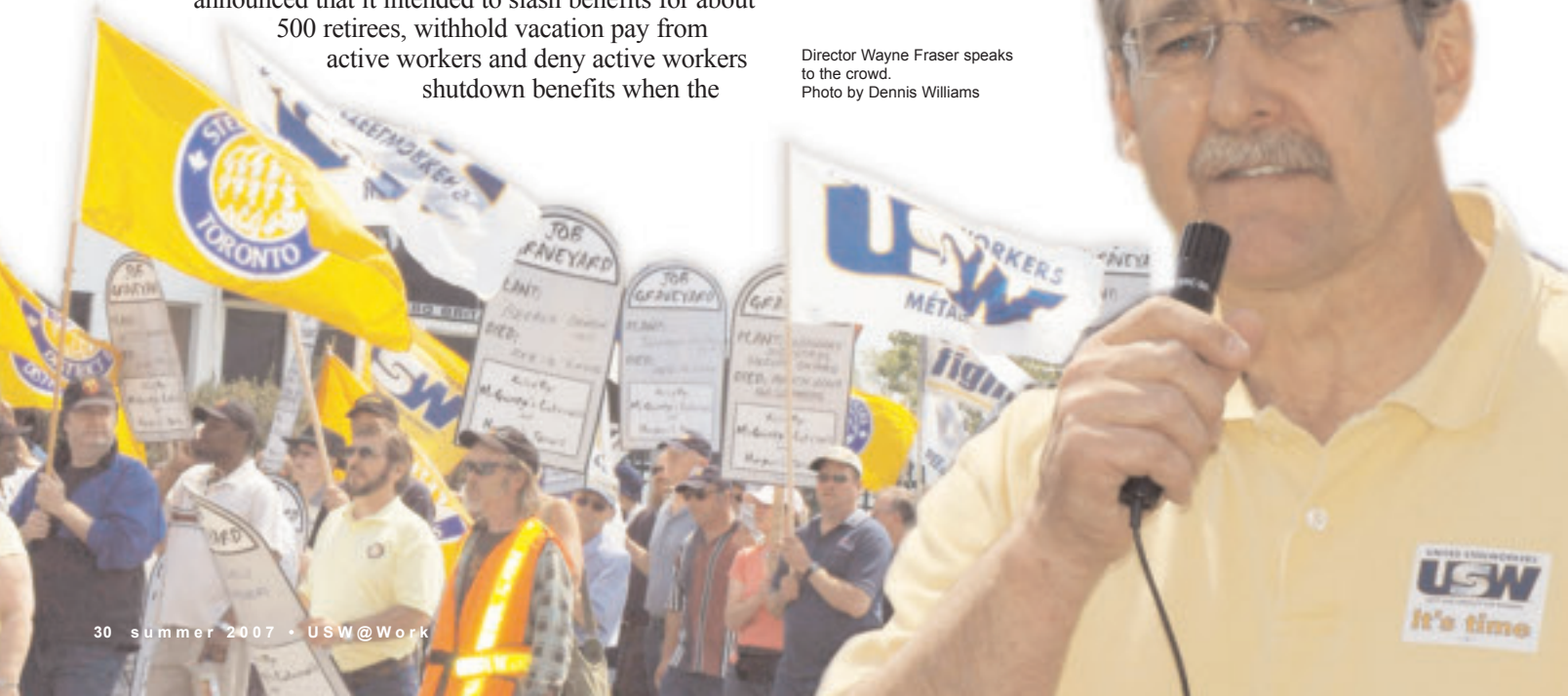
Workers at six plants boarded buses to Mississauga, where they joined their union brothers and sisters at the Masonite International plant.

Workers there had occupied the plant and shut it down. The others rallied outside, demanding that the company bargain in good faith over severance benefits. The door production facility is scheduled to close in August.

The sit-in ended when the company agreed to negotiate benefits for the 200 who will lose their jobs, rather than simply handing each the statutory minimum of one week's pay for each year of service.

"It is the beginning of a summer of unrest in Ontario," Fraser said.

Director Wayne Fraser speaks to the crowd.
Photo by Dennis Williams



Part of the tidal wave of change in the USW's national paper bargaining program is the formation of global networks of workers employed by the same company.

Kimberly-Clark (K-C) workers met in May with representatives of 10 other labor unions from K-C facilities spread over 10 nations and four continents. The Union Network International (UNI), an international union federation, helped them form a global network to represent over 10,000 K-C workers.

The new network's slogan is "A real global agreement for justice at Kimberly-Clark."

"Companies are going global. We need to figure a way to make things more even," said Keith Kovar, president of Local 2-86 in Marinette, Wisconsin.

Unite globally

Workers must unite globally to fight the international race to push wages to the bottom, said District 2 Director Jon Geenen, who chairs the K-C council.

"The impetus for corporate globalization has been market saturation, and in too many cases the exploitation of low-cost labor and the environment," Geenen said. "The only protection workers have in this fight is to join hands globally."

Global networks allow workers to communicate with each other, share problems, offer solutions, devise strategies and act in solidarity with one another, especially during contract negotiations and organizing drives.

"Having this forum will give us the opportunity to have unvarnished information on K-C's behavior around the world," said International Vice President Dick LaCosse.

"A real global agreement for justice at Kimberly-Clark."

Workers Form Global Network

Seeking Justice at Kimberly-Clark

"The USW has a positive relationship with the company where it has contracts at the Mobile, Ala., Chester, Pa., and Marinette, Wis., mills and the Neenah, Wis., converting operation," he said.

Closings and layoffs

"K-C, however, has targeted its unionized plants and mills for plant closings and large scale layoffs," LaCosse said. At the Neenah, Wis., diaper plant, the company is moving machinery to other facilities including its non-union Beech, Island, S.C. plant, said Local 2-482 President Robert Ekdahl, who estimates a loss of 400 jobs.

While K-C works with the union in represented facilities, it resists attempts to organize the non-union plants and mills.

"The wages and benefits are competitive, but there is no doubt in my mind they would be union-free anywhere they could be," LaCosse said. "They resist with vigor any place we try to organize. It perplexes me. How can they say they want to work with us, but then try to

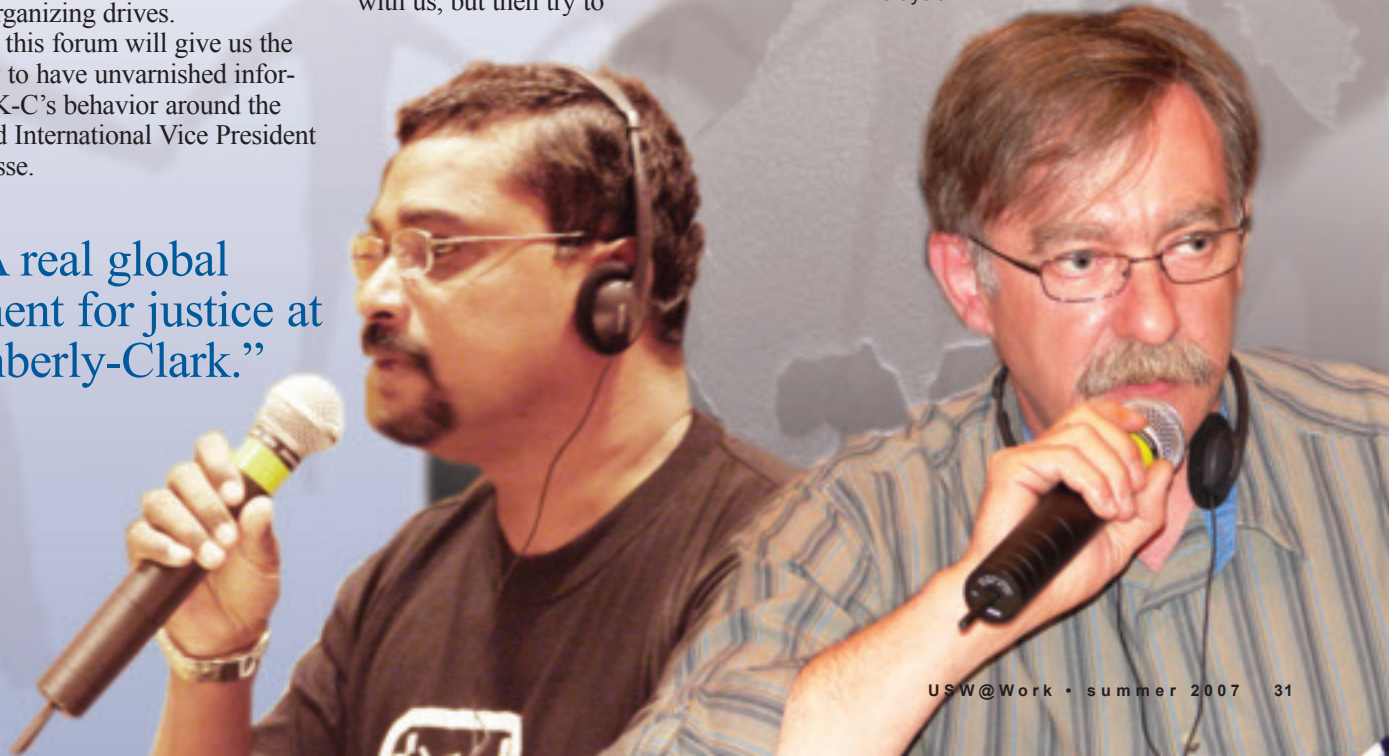
fight us in other facilities we try to organize?"

With the K-C global network, our union will be better able to combat anti-union behavior during organizing campaigns. A program drafted by participants at the global network meeting emphasizes labor rights and efforts to combat the contracting-out of union jobs.

"We intend to assist these unions, and K-C workers who want to organize into unions, to ensure their rights are fully respected, and a more positive culture is created at the company," said Adriana Rosenzwaig, head of UNI's Graphical Sector.

The K-C global network's next step is for its steering committee to meet in the fall and together plan an agenda that targets goals for the network to tackle. Geenen serves on the steering committee and LaCosse is the chairman.

Below right: Patrick Bauret of FILPAC-CGT reports on the situation of K-C workers in France. Below left: Salman bin Mokti of the PPMEU reports on conditions for K-C workers in Malaysia.



News Bytes



Bridge Named for USW Founder Philip Murray

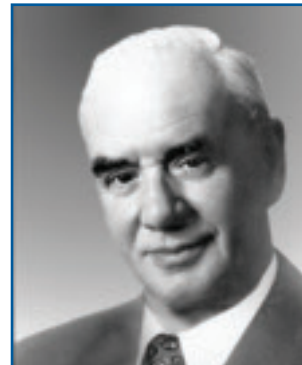
Pittsburgh's 10th Street Bridge is being renamed for Philip Murray, the USW's founder and first president.

The name-change legislation was sponsored by District 10 Director John DeFazio, a member of the Allegheny County Council. A dedication is expected to take place on Labor Day.

Murray joins other notable Pittsburgh figures with bridges named after them including Pittsburgh Pirate Roberto Clemente, artist Andy Warhol and environmentalist Rachel Carson.

Murray, originally a coal miner who emigrated from Scotland in 1902, was named the first chairman of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC) when it was formed in 1936.

In 1942, SWOC disbanded to become the United Steelworkers of America and Murray was elected its first president. He died of a heart attack in 1952.



Gerard Honored, Wins Eugene Debs Award

International President Leo W. Gerard was honored by the Democratic Socialists of America at the Eugene V. Debs-Norman Thomas-Michael Harrington Annual Dinner in Chicago.

Gerard was recognized in May at the 49th annual awards presentation by the largest organization of the democratic left in America. He was chosen because "it's always a bad day for the employer if they pick a fight with the Steelworkers."

The organization also cited the USW's "impressive work in building alliances within the labor movement internationally, and with environmentalists and other progressives in the United States."

Clean the Planet and Raise Living Standards

If we are to address the global climate crisis, it is essential that governments more stringently regulate both carbon emissions and international trade.

"Labor, environmental and human rights standards are at the core of our vision for making the global economy work for workers," International President Leo W. Gerard told the North American Labor Conference on Climate Crisis. "That should become the new gold standard for how nations trade with each other."

The struggle for sustainability is not just about cleaning up the planet, Gerard said. "It's about engaging in raising standards of living over the long term — creating a world that has the capacity to solve the divisions of wealth and poverty that are the drivers of international conflict."

USW, CWA Protest Verizon

Union supporters from across the nation gathered at USW headquarters in May to protest Verizon Communications and to show support for the Employee Free Choice Act.

More than 600 people rallied at the USW building in Pittsburgh as another 1,200 protested Verizon at its annual shareholders' meeting held nearby.

"We believe if workers want a union, they should have it. Period. End of story," International Secretary-Treasurer James D. English told the crowd.

Employees of Verizon face intimidation and harassment during organizing efforts. The Employee Free Choice Act, which passed the U.S. House on March 1, would rein in such employer abuse. The bill is pending in the Senate.



Photo by Jim Coleman

USW in Alliance with California Pharmacists

The USW has formed a strategic alliance with the Independent Pharmacists' Association, a group representing 265 pharmacists in Northern California.

This alliance is similar to one that was completed last May between the USW and the National Pharmacists' Association representing 1,200 Walgreen's pharmacists in Chicago, now known as NPha-USW Local 1969.

Mark Raus, secretary-treasurer of IPA, said he believes the alliance will help improve work life for his members, employees of Raley's Drug Stores.

The 850,000-member USW is championing personal and patient safety for the 2,600 pharmacists and 36,000 health care workers that it represents.

The union is pushing for proper rest breaks and enough time for pharmacists to fill prescriptions without errors. It is also demanding pharmaceutical giants provide personal protection for pharmacists, particularly those who work at night in dangerous neighborhoods.

American Chamber in China Opposes Workers' Rights

The USW is urging select members of the American Chamber of Commerce in China to distance themselves from the Chamber's attempt to undermine a proposed law that would bolster some fundamental rights of Chinese workers.

Letters from the union note that while the Chinese Draft Labor Contract Law does not go far enough in protecting the rights of Chinese workers, it would be a significant improvement over current law.

Alcoa responded positively and committed to express its concerns to the Chamber and seek out like-minded companies to work jointly on this issue.

"We are attempting to peel away as much support as possible for AmCham's immoral campaign to undermine Chinese workers' rights, and Alcoa's response to our letter was a step in the right direction," said International President Leo W. Gerard. "Now it's up to Alcoa to follow through on its commitments."

NAACP Honors USW's Maxine Carter

The NAACP will honor International Civil Rights Director Maxine Carter with its "Keeper of the Flame Award" during its 98th convention this July in Detroit.

The award, one of the highest honors given by the NAACP, will be presented to Carter on July 11 during a labor luncheon at the COBO Hall Convention Center.

The award is given annually to a trade union activist who has made contributions toward Civil and Human Rights in the spirit of A. Phillip Randolph, a black labor movement leader and founder of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. The convention will be held July 7-12.



Photo by Scott Marshall



Photo by April Dreek

Workers Protest at DuPont Meeting

Over 100 USW members joined other union, environmental and community activists in a rally outside DuPont's annual shareholders meeting April 25. The protestors demanded the company evaluate phasing out the use of PFOA, a toxic chemical. The company is also forcing current retirees to pay more for their health care while refusing to provide them with pension increases.

Entrekin Retires

Former District 9 Director Connie Entrekin, a special assistant to International President Leo W. Gerard, announced at the International Executive Board meeting on June 1 that he is retiring effective July 1.

Entrekin began his career as President of Local 4382 representing Gulf States Steel in Gadsden, Ala. He was appointed to the USW staff in 1977 and served as Legislative and PAC Director for former USW District 36 prior to being appointed Assistant to the Director of District 9 in 1996.

In April 2003, after the retirement of Homer Wilson, Entrekin was appointed Director of District 9 by a unanimous vote of the Executive Board and then in 2005 he was re-elected by District 9 members. He was appointed a special assistant to the president last October.



Local, International Solidarity Key to National Wire Fabric Settlement

Twenty-two months after being forced out on strike, Local 1671 members from National Wire Fabric in Star City, Ark., returned to work May 14, thanks to support received from Dutch, Belgian and German unions and their own solidarity.

None of the 56 members crossed the picket line.

"It's because of their solidarity actions locally, the support of people nationally and the activism of the Europeans that the company decided these guys would go back together as a union," said District 13 Director J.M. "Mickey" Breaux. "It let (NWF) know it wasn't just a small group of people in Star City, Ark., who were upset with their working conditions."

Future Retirees Protected in Major Can Settlements

Health care benefits for future retirees were protected in new labor agreements that cover some 2,000 beverage can makers at Crown Cork & Seal, Rexam Beverage Can North America, Ball Metal Beverage Container and Silgan Containers.

Many can companies have been bought out over the years by larger rivals and plants were shut down leaving the remaining companies with unfunded liabilities for approximately 10,000 retirees.

Rexam and Crown had moved in the federal courts to terminate retiree benefits with Rexam convincing a federal judge in Minnesota that it had the right to modify the programs. Retiree benefits at Silgan and Ball likewise were at risk.

"Our members stood up for those who came before them and because of their solidarity, we were able to maintain a secure retirement for those already on pension and for future retirees," said Fred Redmond, international vice president and lead negotiator with the can companies.

Retiree litigation

Prior to the parties beginning bargaining in February, the union and Rexam negotiated a resolution of existing litigation relating to the benefits of current retirees. Meanwhile, litigation with Crown Cork & Seal involving existing retirees continues.

The road to good contract settlements is not always smooth and the Rexam bargaining fit into that category. Management

came to the bargaining table pushing concessionary demands.

The highly profitable can maker, which had gained the ability to cut costs by convincing a federal judge to permit termination of retiree benefits, would not back off. With its factories running full force, the company gambled that the union would cave in and accept an inferior agreement.

Eighty percent of the workers at nine Rexam locations, voting by secret ballot, rejected the company's concessionary offer. A four-week strike followed. Rexam's CEO, headquartered in Europe, made a tour of the striking facilities and talked with many of the workers. Management got the message. The rank and file was sticking together. Scabs brought in to make cans were unable to fill orders with a quality product and Rexam sustained approximately \$30 million of losses during the strike.

Master agreement expanded

Eventually, Rexam returned to the bargaining table with a different attitude and we were able to reach a fair and equitable settlement. The agreement allowed 175 USW members in Winston-Salem, N.C., to join a master agreement with 700 USW members at eight Rexam plants elsewhere in the United States.

New agreements with Crown, Ball and Silgan were settled without strikes. The USW membership at those companies made settlements possible by sharing the resolve of their brothers and sisters at Rexam.

Active employees won wage and pension increases in addition to preserving and protecting health care coverage for future retirees at all four companies.

Local USW President Wins Dream Hunting Trip to Africa

Escape to the Wild

Hunting is a life-long passion for Kelly Bingham, president of USW Local 12-578 at the Holly Refinery in Woods Cross, Utah. So he was more than overwhelmed when he won a hunting trip to Africa.

"I had to fight back tears. It's really neat that something like this could happen to someone like me," Bingham said of the trip he won through *Escape to the Wild*, a television show sponsored by the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, its trade union partners in the Union Sportsmen's Alliance and Versus Network.

The program honors hard-working union members with the hunting or fishing trip of a lifetime. And there is no doubt Bingham is hard working both on the job and in his community.

As a local union president, a program

coordinator for the Utah chapter of Farmers & Hunters Feeding the Hungry and a member of nine other hunting, fishing and conservation organizations, Bingham is dedicated to making a difference — especially for the next generation of union workers and sportsmen.

Making a difference

"Everything that I have that comes from my job is because my union brothers and sisters stood up for what was right and made it better for my generation," he said.

Just prior to leaving for South Africa in May 2007, Bingham said he could hardly focus on anything else as he dreamed about hunting kudu and gemsbuck.

"I already have in my mind how I want them mounted," he said, adding

that he looked forward to seeing South Africa, experiencing its culture and sharing his story of union and community involvement.

Season two of *Escape to the Wild* begins in January 2008 on Versus Network. Tune in to watch your union brother as he stalks dangerous game on safari.



Bridgestone/Firestone Members Ratify New Contracts

USW members at eight Bridgestone/Firestone (BFS) plants have ratified new contracts that cover 5,200 members and fall in line with pattern agreements negotiated at BFGoodrich/Michelin and Goodyear.

The pacts provide for quality health care for active employees and retirees, pension improvements and capital investments in our workplaces.

"Quality health care coverage was maintained for active members and retirees alike, cost of living allowances were preserved and pension benefits were improved," said USW Executive Vice President Ron Hoover.

The master contract covers workers at four tire manufacturing sites in Akron, Ohio; Des Moines, Iowa; LaVergne, Tenn.; and Oklahoma City; a Firestone tube plant in Russellville, Ark.; and a Firestone air spring plant in Noblesville, Ind. Separate pacts were also approved for facilities at Warren County, Tenn., and Bloomington, Ill.

The three-year contract will run to July 18, 2009 and provide closure protection to the plants in Warren County and Des Moines plus \$100 million in investments. Current employees will receive wage-rate protection and the contracts guarantee job protection of at least 90 percent of established levels.

The master contract includes workers in Oklahoma City, where BFS halted tire production at the end of 2006. Provisions in the new deal include a \$23 million plant-closure package in addition to contractual benefits and life insurance coverage.

The USW's preservation of COLA — a benefit that was gained 30 years ago — played a large role in the ability of the union to protect retiree benefits. The active employees agreed to divert the first \$1 of a COLA to help defray retiree health care costs.

USW Honors Dorgan, Michaud with Wellstone Award

U.S. Sen. Byron L. Dorgan (D-ND) and U.S. Rep. Michael H. Michaud (D-Maine) are this year's winners of the USW's Wellstone Award, which recognizes public servants who are committed to helping working people.

The award is named for the late Sen. Paul Wellstone of Minnesota, who throughout his career stood with the USW and working families everywhere.

Dorgan has taken the lead on an anti-sweatshop international trade bill supported by the USW. He also wrote the book "Take this Job and Ship It: How Corporate Greed & Political Deadbeats are Selling Out America."

Steelworker elected to office

Michaud is a Steelworker who was employed at the Great Northern Paper Co. before being elected to Congress in 2002. He's leading the fight against Free Trade agreements with Peru, Columbia and Korea.

"You have no idea how much this means to me," Michaud said as he clutched the award during a dinner held at the Rapid Response conference. "I'm so proud of my roots. I'm proud to be here, proud to be a card-carrying union member."

Dorgan said he was deeply moved by the award, particularly because Wellstone was a close friend whom he missed. Wellstone, his wife, daughter and three campaign aides were killed in a 2002 plane crash.

"Working people build the middle class," Dorgan said during an acceptance speech in which he said too few politicians stand up for working people. "That's what expands opportunity in this country. Our job is to build the middle class."



PAC Award

Lee Gulley (center), a member of USW Local 602 in Malvern, Ark., displays a \$4,000 check he won as part of a contest connected to a PAC drive at his local. Also shown are Staff Rep. Don Davies (left) and Local 602 President Michael Martin.

Locals with PAC check-off language in their labor agreements can conduct a PAC drive along with a contest. Every member who signs up for a minimum of \$1 per week through payroll deductions receives a T-shirt and a ticket for a drawing. The International guarantees a prize to a winner from the local union. For more information, call PAC Coordinator Mike Scarver at 412-562-2342 or e-mail him at mscarver@usw.org.

Wind Energy Workers Ratify New Contract

Some 600 new USW members employed in Pennsylvania by the Spanish wind energy powerhouse Gamesa have ratified a new three-year agreement with pay raises, bonuses and benefit improvements.

Gamesa is the only wind turbine manufacturer that produces blades, towers and nacelles, the structures which house the generating components, in the United States.

"This agreement is a great example of how we can have good jobs and a clean environment," said International President Leo W. Gerard. "To think we can only have one or the other is a false choice. We can, and must, have both." USW members work at Gamesa sites in Ebensburg and Fairless Hills, Pa. The company has its U.S. headquarters in Philadelphia.



It's Time Once Again For the

USW Photography Contest



Last year's first-ever USW photography contest was a success and we encourage you to enter again this year.

Photographs entered in the contest should be unposed and capture USW members at work. Each photograph submitted must be the work of the USW member submitting the entry. The subject of the photograph must also be a USW member in good standing.

Entries will be independently judged. Winning photographs will be eligible for cash prizes of \$300 for first place, \$150 for second and \$50 for third.

Contest entry forms will be available for download at www.usw.org or can be obtained by writing the USW Communications Department, USW Photo Contest, Room 802, Five Gateway Center, Pittsburgh, Pa. 15222.

Deadline for contest entries is Labor Day, Sept. 3, 2007.

Photos may be in a print or digital format. Digital photographs must be shot with a digital camera with at least three megapixels and set at the fine setting. Prints must be at least 4"x6" and of high quality.

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@Work

USW Membership Department,
3340 Perimeter Hill Drive, Nashville, TN 37211

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