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Volume 2/4

Labor Day 2007

USW@Work

A Publication of the United Steelworkers

A Powerful Voice for Workers

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Toxic
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// A community is democratic only when the humblest and weakest person can enjoy the highest civil, economic, and social rights that the biggest and most powerful possess. //

A. Philip Randolph
(1889-1979)



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ON THE COVER

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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*.



Forward-looking

The articles on Global Solidarity and Cross Border Strategy in the Summer 2007 edition of *USW@Work* bring back memories of my work as a union economist from 1957 to 1985.

I am glad to see that the USW is moving towards one big union that many were pursuing more than a century ago. Congratulations on being a dynamic forward-looking union.

Roy Ockert Sr.
Salem, Ore.

VEBA thank you

I worked at U. S. Steel's Lorain Works for 41 years, retiring in 1992. When we lost our health care, the United Steelworkers came together and secured a VEBA (Voluntary Employee Beneficiary Association) health plan for its members. The members in Lorain, Ohio, thank you very much.

May God bless the USW.

Otis McCoy
Local 1104 retiree, Lorain, Ohio

Building power

Two years ago I received a solicitation from the United Steelworkers to join as an associate member. I set it aside. Then earlier this year I received another and sent in the dues.

Lo and behold I got a membership card and a subscription to the periodical *USW@Work*. When I read the publication, I began to understand the strategy and it is very smart. Samuel Gompers would approve.

Unions need to build organizational strength, not just to improve their financial base but to put real muscle behind their demands for change in wages, health care and workers' rights.

With my second issue, I find I am proud of the Steelworkers for taking a long overdue initiative — going international in a serious way. The USW is joining with a large union in the United Kingdom and Ireland to form a trans-Atlantic body representing more than

3 million workers and retirees.

We'll have to see how this plays out but I have hope that it shows evidence of a vibrant, creative labor movement, ahead of the curve and looking for interesting ways to tackle what seems like intractable problems of poverty, ignorance and misallocation of resources worldwide.

Si, se puede!

Mary Beth Acuff
Dublin, Calif.

Memorial Day massacre

Regarding the article on the 1937 Memorial Day massacre, one of the 10 men killed during the protest, Alfred Causey, was my uncle. It makes me very proud to know that he is being recognized for what he believed in and died for.

Martha Scott
Attalla, Ala.

America in jeopardy?

I retired 24 years ago with a small pension and health insurance, thanks to the bargaining ability of labor unions. I supplement that with Social Security, thanks to a great president, FDR. Now my income may be in jeopardy due to a "brain dead" Bush, and a "bought off" Congress.

What happened America?

Jack E. Carroll,
Radcliff, Ky.

We've had enough

Enough of sending our troops off to war; alienating our allies, ravaging Social Security and Medicare, squandering America's riches on the wealthy, while trading on the rights of the struggling poor and middle class.

Let's hope that our next President will be a person of unquestionable integrity, morally sound, compassionately understanding and highly intelligent with the wisdom to lead our great nation onward in a quest for peace and goodwill toward all of humanity.

Bill Diller Sr.
Local 1196 retiree, Brackenridge, Pa.

Thank you

My husband loved his job and was loyal to the company and his union during his years of service at LTV Steel, Cleveland Works.

Thank you for all that you are doing to help retirees and surviving spouses ... I am very proud to be in touch with the USW and appreciate the financial and prescription assistance as well as the surviving spouse checks.

Novella Reece
Mountain City, Tenn.

Private equity problems

I agree 100 percent with the article in *USW@Work* regarding President Gerard urging Congress to regulate private equity pools of capital used for investments.

The article missed one important problem. The private equity and the venture capital crowd are treated like the top one percent fat cat taxpayers in this country and taxed at a much lower rate.

These people also play games by agreeing to waive fees and instead take a larger chunk of the profit to further dodge the tax man on their payday. Plus they are taxed only after an investment proves successful, often after many years.

Tom Sedor
Local 2599 retiree, Northampton, Pa.

Worker against worker

International President Leo W. Gerard calls on Congress to regulate private equity funds, but that may not be enough and may be too late.

A report by the International Trade Union Confederation advises its members in 153 countries to pull their pension investments out of hedge funds and private equity funds.

The immense debt bubbles these funds create are threatening a collapse of financial markets as credit conditions change for the worse. Pensions are directly in the path of disaster.

Geri A. Mellgren-Kerwin
Burbank, Calif.

“ It's bad enough that we have a record trade deficit with China. It is even worse that there is a dangerous quality deficit threatening the safety and health of American consumers. ”

U.S. Sen. Charles E. Schumer

CHINA

Syndrome

TOXIC TOYS.
FOULED FOOD.
POISONED PETS.



USW members know all too well the devastating effects of a broken trade system: the loss of jobs, shattered communities, staggering national deficits.

Now, nearly every edition of the daily newspaper or broadcast of the nightly news reveals there are more side effects that could harm every American — toxic toys, poisoned pet food, tainted toothpaste and an at-risk human food supply are making their way into the United States from China and other places where there are little or no environmental and health regulations.

In early August, Fisher-Price recalled 967,000 plastic preschool toys made in China because their paint contains excessive amounts of lead. The recall covered 83 types of toys including play sets, toy vehicles, figures and musical instruments. Many of the recalled toys are connected to popular children's TV programs including Sesame Street, the acclaimed educational series, and Dora the Explorer, an animated series. Fisher-Price is a subsidiary of Mattel Inc.

In July, media reported that 180 food factories in China that make everything from shrimp to candy were shut down after inspectors found industrial chemicals such as formaldehyde, illegal dyes and wax being used in products.



Toxic baby bibs

That report came after thousands of pets died from poisoned food, 1.5 million Thomas and Friends toy trains made in China were recalled

because its paint contained lead, and after Chicago area grandmother Marilyn Furer tested her 3-month-old grandson's Chinese-made baby bibs and found they had alarmingly high levels of the poison.

Furer alerted the California-based Center for Environmental Health and further testing led to the recall this spring of tens of thousands of Baby Connection brand bibs sold at Wal-Marts across the nation. Some 60,000 vinyl bibs were recalled in Illinois alone.

"It was incomprehensible to me that bibs with lead in them could be on our marketplace shelves. A deep sense of betrayal overwhelmed me along with great sadness when I thought of babies possibly already damaged by this lead poisoning from baby bibs," Furer said. "Each parent, each grandparent should correctly be outraged, infuriated and picket-ready angry that this was allowed to happen by our government."

Furer says her story should be a wake-up call for those who think a cheap price tag is worth abandoning American manufacturing. She's called on the government to toughen its trade policies and product safety laws to better protect children from dangerous imported items.

Trade debate intensifies

As consumer pressure to toughen trade and product safety laws mount, the U.S. trade deficit with China hit a record \$233 billion and counting. The deficit has grown at 20 percent or more every year.

Some on Capitol Hill are pushing the Bush administration to take a tougher stance on product safety and China's unfair currency advantage. China's yuan is consistently undervalued, making its exports less costly for American consumers.

U.S. Sen. Charles E. Schumer, chairman of the Joint Economic Committee and a member of the Senate Finance Committee, called for an import czar to oversee consumer protection from Chinese imports.

"It's bad enough that we have a record trade deficit with China. It is even worse that there is a dangerous quality deficit threatening the safety and health of American consumers," Schumer said.

China has stockpiled more than \$1 trillion in U.S. assets as a result of its booming export business. The U.S. economy could be vulnerable if China decides to

dump dollars in the event of a trade war, some lawmakers and economists warn.

Recalls mount

Meanwhile, the product safety concerns continue. A recent *Chicago Tribune* analysis revealed that since 2004, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission issued 303 recalls for children's products, including 94 toys. Of those recalls, 218, or 72 percent, were products made in China.

While imported food and other products reach record numbers — they've doubled since implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement and the World Trade Organization agreements — the Bush White House has cut the number of Food and Drug



Administration inspectors every year since 2003.

A new report by watchdog *Public Citizen* says the government tests only .6 percent of the food being imported into the United States and that the only effective way to truly protect Americans is to change the nation's trade policies.

Shoddy food safety regulation isn't the only problem. The Administration is proposing closing seven of the FDA's 13 laboratories that do health and safety testing, and has overseen the shrinking of the Consumer Product Safety Commission to about 400 workers, less than half of the agency's staffing levels in 1980.

Deadly imports

The tainted product scandal first captured the attention of U.S. consumers last year with front-page newspaper reports of dogs and cats dying from pet food made with a toxic additive.

Some 24.3 million tons of Chinese wheat gluten laced with melamine, a chemical used in plastics, were sold to a major pet food maker that supplies North America. The resulting pet deaths led to a massive recall and a public uproar.

Safeguard Your Children

Until the government does a better job at protecting consumers' safety, Furer suggest people take the following steps to safeguard babies and children:

- Test for lead. It is a simple finger or toe prick. Lead accumulates in the body and can cause brain damage, learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders, behavioral problems, stunted growth, impaired hearing, kidney damage and even death. It can be removed but only if you know it is there. Call your doctor and ask if a lead test for your child has been performed. If not, schedule one. Even babies and toddlers should be tested.
- Call, write, e-mail, or forward an informative Web site (go to any search engine and type in "baby bibs and lead") to your contacts, especially to new parents in and out of the United States.
- Buy American-made products when you can and home test soft vinyl plastic baby items. If you don't test — throw them out. Lead is an invisible poison.
- After home testing, should you find lead in any baby or child item, notify the Center for Environmental Health (www.cehca.org) at (510) 594-9864, or (800) 652-0827. They want to know about it.
- Put pressure on your lawmakers to do something about the nation's unfair trade policies that discourage American manufacturing. Let them and the businesses you frequent know that saving a few pennies is not worth endangering our babies and grandbabies!

Serious questions were also raised about the safety of Chinese-made tires after two Pennsylvania passengers were killed in a vehicle crash caused by separating tire tread.

As many as 450,000 Chinese-made tires sold in the U.S. lack a key safety feature — a gum strip or thin layer of rubber that binds belts of a tire together. Without it tire treads can separate.

The faulty tires were manufactured by China's Hangzhou Zhongee Rubber Co. and distributed in the U.S. by Foreign Tire Sales Inc. under the brand names Westlake, Telluride, Compass, and YKS.

Calls for hearings

The scary statistics about unsafe imports, particularly toys, prompted Minnesota Democrat Sen. Amy Klobuchar to call for a congressional investigation. She said the number of recalled Chinese-made products has doubled in the past five years.

"As a parent of a 12 year-old and as a member of the Commerce Committee's subcommittee on Consumer Affairs, Insurance and Automotive Safety, I am alarmed by these statistics and concerned

that the risks our children face in playing with these unsafe toys are not being adequately addressed," Klobuchar wrote in her request for hearings.

For China, the product safety scandal is a public relations nightmare, and observers said it could lead to sympathetic hearings for U.S. legislators interested in toughening trade regulations.

"This is going to play against China in the larger political picture," said



There are many resources available for consumers to research important information about product safety and trade. Here is a sampling:

The Center for Environmental Health:
<http://www.cehca.org>

Wake Up Wal-Mart:
<http://www.wakeupwalmart.com>

Wal-Mart Watch:
<http://walmartwatch.com>

Women's Health and Environment:
<http://www.womenshealthandenvironment.org>

Consumer Reports:
<http://www.consumerreports.org/cro/index.htm>

High Cost of Cheap Goods

Subsidized foreign-made products being dumped into the U.S. market cost the economy more in money, profits and jobs than the savings realized by consumers who buy them, a new study has found.

Applying countervailing duties on illegally subsidized and dumped products "does not harm the U.S. economy and should not be viewed negatively," the report by the newly-created Alliance for American Manufacturing also concluded.

"The pure gains from unfair trade ... are relatively small compared to the revenues lost by the domestic industry," the report found, "and are often not significantly higher than the financial costs associated with higher imports."

Dumping cases reviewed

The Washington-based think tank analyzed dumping cases in 10 U.S. industries including garlic, lumber, crawfish, carbon steel, ball bearings, cement and bedroom furniture.

In each case, lost revenue, lost indirect economic activity and the interest expense of being in debt due to the trade deficit in imports far surpassed the price gains offered to consumers from cheaper imports.

"When our trade laws are enforced, the contribution to the economy actually outweighs any of the so-called benefits of the dumped or subsidized imports by more than 50 times, in the form of American jobs, added productivity and a positive impact on the surrounding communities," said Scott Paul, the AAM's executive director.

AAM researchers found, for example, that the U.S. shrimp industry lost \$210 million in revenue between 2000 and 2003 due to dumped and subsidized

imports, along with \$175 million in lost indirect activity impacting suppliers. Yet the "pure consumption gains" to consumers totaled \$66 million.

Carbon steel analysis

The costs associated with dumped imports for the carbon steel industry were much more massive: \$5.9 billion, while the benefit to consumers through lower prices was only \$1.3 million over a two-year period, the study found.

Predatory trading practices have contributed to the loss of 3.2 million manufacturing jobs and the closing of more than 40,000 U.S. facilities, the AAM said.

The report is entitled "Enforcing the Rules: Strong Trade Laws as the Foundation of a Sound American Trade Policy." It is available at www.americanmanufacturing.org.

Merrill Weingrod, head of China Strategies, which advises companies on doing business with China.

And the problems aren't unique to the United States. Other countries have banned Chinese-made toothpaste while Japan and the European Union have pushed Beijing to improve inspections of goods sold globally.

China has a history of product safety problems at home, too.

At least 14 people died after taking the prescription antibiotic Xinfu, one of several medicines that were tainted with unsafe ingredients.

That led to the execution of the former head of the Chinese State Food and Drug Administration, Zheng Xiaoyu, who was convicted of taking bribes from pharmaceutical companies.

AFL-CIO Industrial Union Council Executive Director Bob Baugh says it's time for the nation's dangerous trade policy to change. He says the huge trade deficit is costing Americans jobs and putting their safety at risk.

"People want to act like this is an act of God. Or it's like the weather and you can't do a damn thing about it," he said.

"And that's a flat-out lie. This trade system is a system that is run by rules, and the set of rules have been designed by global corporations who do this in their own self-interest."

Acting U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission Chairwoman Nancy A. Nord said in July she was preparing regulatory proposals that could mandate broader inspections of imports and stiffer penalties for ignoring safety rules.

The Republican appointed by President Bush is drafting the proposed changes, which would require importers and manufacturers to certify that products comply with regulatory standards. At press time there was no word from the White House about whether it would support the plan. In the past, the Administration has generally favored loosening business regulations.

USW working for 'all of us'

After telling her story to the Steelworkers' POWERcast, Furer, a former postal worker, was so impressed with the union's various efforts, especially those to fight for fair and safe trade, that she joined the USW's Associate

Member program.

Among other things, the USW is fighting to put an end to presidential Fast-Track authority over trade deals, drawing attention to the assassination of trade unionists in Colombia and elsewhere, and is pushing an anti-sweatshop bill (H.R. 1992) in Congress that would prohibit goods made in sweatshops and with child labor from being imported into the U.S. marketplace.

"I can readily see that the United Steelworkers membership has a tremendous influence and power contained within themselves to effect great contributions to a safer and fairer environment for the average American," Furer said. "You are working on behalf of all of us."



To hear more of Furer's story go to www.usw.org or iTunes and listen to POWERcast, Episode 17.

Protecting Kids

Sierra Club Threatens to Sue Over Lead in China Products

The Sierra Club has notified 10 companies that import or distribute Chinese products containing potentially-hazardous lead levels that it will sue if they don't file required reports with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) over health risks.

The American environmental group told the companies — importers or distributors of toys, children's jewelry and other goods — that they are required to report their lead-tainted products to the EPA under the U.S. Toxic Substances Control Act.

Among the companies notified are retailers Target Corp., Dollar General Corp. and RC2 Corp., a maker of die cast collectibles and toys under various brands. RC2 has recalled some Thomas and Friends wooden railway toys made in China because of lead paint.

The Sierra Club said it took the step to protect children from contaminated products. The overwhelming majority of toys sold in the United States are now manufactured in China.

"Companies need to be held accountable for failing to report

dangers posed by their products," said Jessica Frohman, co-chair of the Sierra Club's National Toxic Committee.

After discovering a problem with one or more of their products, the 10 companies requested that the U.S. Consumer Products Safety Commission (CSPC) issue a voluntary recall, the Sierra Club said.

However, the companies failed to also notify the EPA as required by law. The EPA is responsible for investigating toxic chemicals such as lead in commerce and taking action to protect the public. The agency has greater authority than the CSPC to get to the source of the problems.

The EPA, as part of a prior settlement with the Sierra Club, sent more than 100 letters to companies with a track record of potential problems warning them of the legal obligations to report poisonous products to the EPA and the CSPC.

"Violators simply have no excuse," Frohman said. "It's time to enforce the law to protect children from toxic toys and other products that may lead poison them."



Toxic Imports

This illustration shows how many tainted goods could potentially be purchased during one trip to a big box store. The products shown represent imported goods whose brand names have been changed.

TIRES:
Up to 450,000 tires made by Hangzhou Zhongee lacked a gum strip, a key safety feature that binds the belts of a tire to each other

JUICE:
Contained unsafe color additives

SEAFOOD:
The U.S. Food and Drug Administration found levels of the cancer-causing malachite green and high levels of fluoroquinolones, which can increase antibiotic resistance in humans

PET FOOD:
Contained suspected melamine-tainted wheat gluten, a chemical found in plastics and pesticides

CANDIES:
U.S. FDA recalled some Chinese-made candy after tests revealed it contained the uncertified color additive tartrazine (FD&C Yellow No. 5)

PICKLES:
Some contained unsafe industrial wax, formaldehyde and illegal dyes

LIPSTICK:
Contained banned Sudan I dye, an industrial dye and possible carcinogen

TOOTHPASTE:
Contained diethylene glycol, a poisonous chemical used in anti-freeze

VINYL LUNCH BOXES:
Some contained lead

BIBS:
Contained lead

DIAPERS:
Contained excessive levels of fungus

TEETHING RINGS:
Many contain phthalates, a toxic chemical used to soften and smooth plastics

TOY TRAIN:
Paint on wooden train contained lead

PLASTIC BABY BOTTLES AND SIPPY CUPS:
Many contain polycarbonate, an ingredient in plastic, which can leach bisphenol-A, a suspected hormone disruptor that mimics estrogen. That can cause low sperm count, obesity and neurological problems

PACIFIERS:
Rubber pacifiers or bottle nipples can contain chemical nitrosamines, which can cause cancer. This chemical also is often used in cosmetics and pesticides

Challenging C

USW Challenges Subsidized and Dumped Paper, Pipe and Tires

The USW saved American jobs by partnering with a paper company to challenge illegally subsidized and dumped imports from Communist China. Now, we're going after the Asian juggernaut's shady trading practices in steel pipe and off-the-road tires.

In a precedent-setting decision announced this spring, the Commerce Department said it would, for the first time ever, slap anti-subsidy or countervailing duties on imports from China.

The decision to hit China with anti-subsidy duties on imports of glossy paper came in a case brought by the USW and Baltimore-based NewPage Corp., which employs 4,000 of our members at plants in Escanaba, Mich., Luke, Md., Rumford, Maine and Wickliffe, Ky.

Glossy paper imports from China rose to \$224 million last year from \$29 million in 2004.

Give us a fighting chance

"The decision is welcome news for our workers here in Maryland and at other coated free sheet mills throughout the United States," said Tom Caldwell, president of Local 676 in Luke.

"Putting the brakes on unfairly traded products will help ensure our workers a fighting chance to compete on equal terms," Caldwell added.

The USW has since joined in complaints alleging imports of welded standard pipe and tires used in agriculture, construction and general industry are also being both dumped and illegally subsidized.

In those filings, made in June, the USW joined with six steel pipe producers and tire maker Titan International Inc. The companies are seeking tariff relief.

International Vice President Tom Conway joined the pipe industry in testifying before the International Trade Commission (ITC) on the need to enforce U.S. trade laws against the predatory practice of Chinese imports.

Too many family-supportive jobs in the American pipe industry have already been lost to surging, illegal imports from China, he said. Other skilled jobs with good wages, health care and pension benefits are difficult if not impossible to find.

"I'll tell you what happens to these folks," Conway testified. "Their cars get repossessed, their houses foreclosed, their kids can't afford to go to college and they lose their health insurance. That is the plight of the American manufacturing worker when they lose

their job because of imports."

Under the complicated rules of trade, a country may impose duties or tariffs for two reasons: when products are dumped (sold below cost) or if illegal subsidies are involved. Up until now, our government only went after China on allegations of dumping and left illegal subsidies unchallenged.

Cold war policy reversed

While government policy, originated during the Cold War, prohibits applying countervailing duties on subsidized goods from non-market economies, the decision on paper imports reflects our government's decision to treat China as the market-oriented economy it has become.

In the past, the government reasoned that subsidies to non-market economies were too hard to measure and state-controlled firms set export prices without regard to subsidies. That reasoning no longer applies to the industrial powerhouse that China has become in 2007.

"The message to foreign governments is 'stop providing unfair subsidies to your exporters,'" said International President Leo W. Gerard.

In the paper case, Commerce Secretary Carlos Gutierrez announced a preliminary countervailing duty of 10.90 percent against Shangdong Chenming Paper Holdings and 20.35 percent against Gold East Paper Co. A preliminary rate of 18.16 percent will apply to all other Chinese glossy paper exports.

Commerce will make its final determination on those duties later this year, likely in August. Until then, importers will be required to post bonds or deposit cash with the U.S. Customs Service based on the preliminary duty levels.

Separately, Commerce placed dumping duties on glossy paper from China running from 23.19 percent to 99.65 percent. Indonesia was hit with preliminary duties of 10.85 percent and Korea 30.86 percent.

Beijing reacted angrily to the U.S. decisions. Gerard, meanwhile, said the USW will fight to ensure that the Bush

Wheatland Tube's Sharon plant tumbles.
Photo by David E. Dale/
Sharon Herald

China

administration does not bend to Chinese pressure and grant China special immunity.

USW, producers join forces

In the steel pipe and tire cases, the USW joined with employers in filing petitions with both the Commerce Department and the ITC.

On July 31, acting on a petition filed by the USW and Titan Tire, the Commerce Department announced that it would initiate investigations on imports of new pneumatic off-the road tires from China. In their petition, the USW and Titan claimed rising low-cost imports from China have harmed the industry. They cited lost sales, reduced market share, lower production and shipments and reduced employment in the domestic industry.

On July 20, the ITC determined that there is a reasonable indication that the domestic welded pipe industry is materially injured or threatened with material injury by imports from China.

As a result, the Commerce Department will move forward with its investigation and make a preliminary determination on countervailing duties on or about Aug. 31.

Imports of circular standard and structural pipe jumped to 690,000 tons last year from 10,000 tons in 2002.

During the last three years, in a strong U.S. economy with a robust market for nonresidential construction, we have lost one quarter of the jobs at plants producing welded standard pipe.

Gerard was critical of the Bush administration, saying that the real tragedy is that most of the recent job losses occurred after the president denied relief that had been recommended by the ITC.

The ITC, acting under Section 421 of the Trade Act of 1974, had urged the president to grant relief to the pipe industry after finding a surge in imports from China had disrupted the domestic market.

"It is time for the Administration to put a stop to the Communist Chinese government's unfair trade practices that are stealing good American jobs and to restore the rules of fair competition to the U.S. marketplace," Gerard said.

Just two years ago, the Wheatland Tube Co. plant in Sharon, Pa. employed 420 USW members. Today the site is an empty lot, the mill having been leveled by a flood of imports from China.

The Clark Street plant, which had been upgraded with some \$200 million in new equipment, was torn down in June after imports wasted its market for half-inch to four-inch diameter pipe.

"It was one of the most modern mills in the United States," said an angry George Bourne, president of Local 1016. "Now, I've got a big parking lot. Now, I have nothing. And you can thank your Commander in Chief for that."

Bush inaction kills jobs

Layoffs in the pipe industry accelerated after President Bush in December 2005 ignored a recommendation by the International Trade Commission and refused to place tariffs on pipe imports from China.

Last summer while in Washington to promote an AFL-CIO sponsored trade action against China, Bourne warned that his plant was in danger. He said the company was considering closing the plant because it could not compete with China's finished pipe prices and surging volume. At the time, 300 people were laid off from the Sharon plant. Chinese pipe was being delivered on the West Coast at \$550 a ton while the steel and zinc ingredients to make the pipe Wheatland produced cost \$700 before delivery.

In less than a year, Bourne's prediction

of a plant shutdown came true. "I told them this might happen and it did," he said.

Today all sectors of the pipe, tube and fittings industry are challenged by growing imports, many of which are unfairly traded and threaten the future of companies and the jobs of thousands of workers.

Of particular concern are imports of standard pipe, oil country tubular goods and structural tubing. In the first quarter of this year, those imports were 81 percent higher than the first quarter of 2006, increasing from 350,000 to 631,000 tons.

"Almost every year, the amount of exports from China to this country have doubled," said USW member Mickey Bolt, a lab technician at Wheatland Tube.

Chinese export tax rebates are particularly galling to Bolt, who is also part-time chairman of the Western Pennsylvania Committee to Save Our Manufacturing Industries.

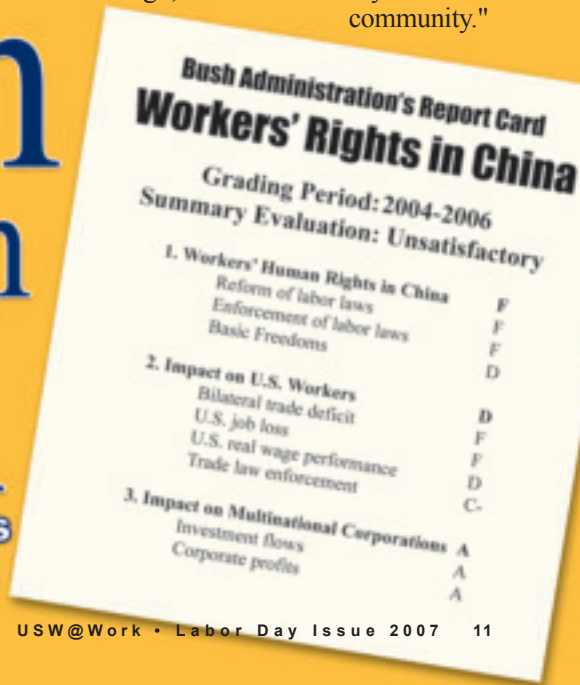
While the Chinese government has recently removed tax rebates on many steel products it exports, it kept unchanged a 13 percent rebate on pipe and tube products, which has a devastating impact on the domestic industry and the local economy where Bolt lives.

The industry's primary regional production areas include the Sharon/Wheatland areas of Northwest Pennsylvania, the Chicago metropolitan area and Northwest Indiana, North Central Ohio, North and Central Arkansas, metropolitan Houston and metropolitan Los Angeles.

"One of the cornerstones, one of our three main pipe plants has already closed," Bolt said of the Sharon area. "If the other two go, it would definitely devastate the community."

Bush Inaction Fatal

Cheap Chinese Imports
Kill Pipe Industry Jobs



A steep decline in manufacturing jobs over the last decade has harmed millions of working families and their communities throughout the United States.

To keep strong, America must develop a national strategy to renew and rebuild manufacturing industries that provide good-paying jobs and a solid community tax base.

In early July, the USW hosted a presidential candidates' forum in Cleveland to hear what the candidates would do to revive American manufacturing.

More than 1,000 members from across the United States heard from four

who served as that state's U.S. Senator before becoming the Democrat's Vice Presidential nominee in 2004.

Biden, who credited a Steelworker endorsement for helping him to win his first Senate race in 1972, promised to be a "best friend" to the USW if elected and pledged to use the president's bully pulpit to promote organized labor.

Clinton said if she is elected, "We are actually going to appoint people who are pro-labor," while Kucinich promised to be a "labor president."

All of the candidates called for meaningful national health care reform and pledged to better enforce trade laws and

royalties from the oil industry.

Edwards, who has made eliminating poverty a hallmark of his campaign, pledged to raise the national minimum wage to \$9.50 an hour by 2012, and require that it automatically increase each year.

"No one should work full time in the United States of America and still live in poverty," Edwards said.

Enforce labor standards

Edwards, noting that his father worked for a textile mill that closed, said he would make sure trade agreements have real labor and environmental

USW Presidential Forum

Candidates Pledge to Honor Union Agenda

JOE BIDEN



HILLARY CLINTON

JOHN EDWARDS



DENNIS KUCINICH

Democratic presidential candidates — Sen. Joseph Biden of Delaware, New York Sen. Hillary Clinton, former Sen. John Edwards of North Carolina and Rep. Dennis Kucinich of Cleveland. The members also participated in a concurrent forum on political activism.

Sen. Barack Obama and two other Democratic hopefuls did not attend, citing scheduling conflicts. The top Republican presidential candidates declined invitations to appear.

Unions welcomed

All four of the candidates present emphasized their ties to organized labor and said unions would be welcomed and encouraged during their administrations.

"We need a president who is not afraid to use the word 'union,'" said Edwards, the son of a North Carolina textile worker

toughen future trade agreements by including labor rights and environmental standards in the core language of the agreements. They all called for ending the war in Iraq.

Restore economy

"When we take back the White House we're going to... restore the economy and the opportunity that goes with it," Clinton said.

"We're going to work to make sure there is health care for everyone, work to create new good-paying jobs by dealing with energy and global warming and we're going to bring our troops home."


Clinton, who said she considers herself an honorary Women of Steel member, pledged to rebuild America's manufacturing base by, in part, funding new renewable energy with taxes and

standards that can be enforced.

"When I'm president and trade agreements land on my desk to be signed, I will not ever forget where I came from, what I have seen with my own eyes," he added.

Kucinich drew heavy applause from the union audience when he pledged to cancel the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), withdraw from the World Trade Organization and make sure new trade agreements have labor and environmental protections. He and Biden also proposed rebuilding bridges, water and mass transit systems.

"Isn't it time we had an American manufacturing policy where the maintenance of steel, auto, aerospace and shipping is seen as vital to our national security, our national defense," Kucinich said.



Liberian Workers Celebrate A New Day on the Firestone Plantation

This summer, workers employed on a Firestone rubber plantation in Liberia, West Africa took the first step in standing up to their oppressors when they chose new union leadership in the first democratic election held in their 80-year history.

Liberia was founded in 1847 by former American slaves and their descendants. The settlers formed an elite ruling class in which native residents could not participate. In 1980, a military coup toppled the government and assassinated the president. A second coup occurred a

decade later followed by a civil war, which decimated the nation.

The rubber plantation did not escape the war. Lawlessness and desperation struck at all walks of life. Schools, hospitals and many other buildings were damaged or destroyed.

Order was restored in 2003 when the dictator Charles Taylor was removed and U.N. Forces took control and established a board of Liberian citizens to run the country until elections could be held.

During this period, union activists in Liberia requested assistance from the AFL-CIO Solidarity Center, an organization that provides technical assistance and support to workers and unions around the world. International President Leo W. Gerard is a board member.

The biggest concern of unionists in Liberia was the workers on the Firestone Plantation. So the Solidarity Center contacted the USW because we represent Bridgestone/Firestone workers in North America.

The USW responded by sending a fact-finding delegation to Liberia in 2005, led by then District 7 Assistant Director Fred Redmond and Harmon Lisnow of the Institute for Career Development (ICD). Lisnow had experience serving in Liberia with the Peace Corps.

Misguided tour

Arriving at the plantation, the delegation was taken on a guided tour by union representatives and management. Things did not appear as bad as they expected. But it soon became apparent that they were being restricted to areas that the company wanted them to see.

Later they were approached by a group that wanted them to experience what plantation life was really like. They set out at 4 a.m. and following local escorts, evaded guards to gain entry. They were shocked by what they saw.

They visited five villages and saw dismal living conditions prevalent on the plantation. "We saw people living in squalor with no running water; hospitals and schools had been destroyed," said Redmond, now an international vice president.

Impossible production quotas required workers to put their entire families to work and basic safety items were not available. Some workers were blind from getting latex in their eyes.

Each tapper was responsible for 750 rubber trees and had to accumulate 150 pounds of latex daily. Pay amounted to little more than \$3 a day and a monthly 100 pound bag of rice if quotas were met. Children who should have been in school were put to work.

After about three hours, Firestone's security police caught up with them. But by that time, plenty of information had been gathered with photos to back it up.

The next day in the Liberian capital of Monrovia, Firestone's human resources director confronted the delegation. He was furious because he had tried to control their Firestone experience.

What next?

The fact finding group returned to the U.S. and gave a complete report. They knew that there was a moral obligation to help the workers but since there

“ The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppress. ”

Frederick Douglas, an American abolitionist

was no democratically elected government, it was too early to determine how to do it.

Then, in November 2005, Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf was elected president of Liberia. Many years ago, she had been an immigrant living in the U.S., who swept floors and waited tables before graduating from a university in Wisconsin and from Harvard. She worked at the World Bank and Citibank.

"Johnson-Sirleaf's election was a milestone," Redmond said. "We knew she was committed to improving the lives of her people."

Redmond sent her a letter. She wrote back and put him in touch with the Minister of Labor, Samuel Kofi Woods. With the support of the Liberian government, the USW and the Solidarity Center offered training sessions for members of FAWUL, a union represent-

ing plantation workers. But there was one condition. All activists, not just union officials, who wanted to attend would be permitted.

FAWUL agreed. It was a mistake that they would later regret.

Empowering the workers

In training led by USW staff member Mike Zielinski, workers learned about union democracy, methods of building solidarity and how to take strategic action when necessary. In early 2006, workers formed the "Aggrieved Workers Committee" demanding better treatment from Firestone and new union leadership. They led wildcat strikes and some improvements were made.

Workers struck again in April. This time, police attacked and beat the strikers. One worker died from his injuries.

Convinced that the attacks were



Photos courtesy DeWitt Walton

instigated by Firestone management, they appealed for outside help while continuing to demand new union elections. President Gerard sent a strong protest letter to Firestone management and arranged for a delegation to return to Liberia.

Following the strike, Liberia's Ministry of Labor ordered an election and invited representatives from the USW and the Solidarity Center to be monitors.

The historic event

A delegation including DeWitt Walton of the USW staff, Kim Smith, president of USW Local 9-508 in Summerville, S.C., Ben Edherue of the Solidarity Center and Zielinski were dispatched.

Upon their arrival, they had heard Firestone management was putting pressure on the workers to support the incumbent office holders.

"Not long after we got there, Firestone backed off," said Walton. "Workers told us that our presence made a significant difference. It was incredible to see how people with no experience in running democratic elections rose to the occasion."

Most rubber tappers and their families rise at 3:30 a.m. to begin a long workday. On Election Day, they returned in late afternoon to find fellow workers standing in long lines waiting to vote.

There were 55 polling places spread over the 240 square mile plantation. Election monitors were able to cover all but the most remote locations.

"The Liberian government played a critical role," Zielinski said. "They wanted participation and transparency."

Many workers are barely literate. Colorful ballots were used, listing not only the names of the 30 candidates but photos as well. More than 3,000 people voted. The eight candidates of the Aggrieved Workers Committee, who had received USW and Solidarity Center training, won by large margins. The incumbent officers were stunned.

The workers had viewed their old union leadership as a company union and with good reason. They were part of a caste system in which management lived at the top level and rubber tappers and their families lived in abject poverty. Union officers lived in upgraded housing and facilities that were not quite up to management level, but far above the workers.

As the new officers take charge, plantation workers are looking forward to contract negotiations next year. Led by Austin Natee, they have time to prepare.

Plantation wages are extremely low but are not the biggest issue. Third and fourth generation workers want Firestone to provide better housing, running water, toilet facilities, and schools for their children, medical care and a hospital.

They want production quotas that can be filled without entire families having to work to meet them. They want the price of rice set where they can feed their families.

"As Liberia advances so will the union," Redmond said. "This election was important because it establishes democratic principles for the union and the country. It's just one step but it's a big one. There's no going back. Firestone is one of the country's biggest employers. We've helped empower the workers. We've helped set a new standard."

“ We've helped empower the workers.
We've helped set a new standard. ”

Fred Redmond, International Vice President



Steelworkers'

Grammy Award Winner Finds Musical Muse in Working

Dave Alvin is a Grammy Award winning songwriter, singer and gut-wrenching guitarist. He's also the son of a USW organizer and publicist who has not forgotten his labor roots.

His late father, Cass Alvin, had a colorful 40-year career with the Steelworkers on the West Coast starting in 1945. Cass worked as a union organizer in steel and mining and was the Western Bureau Chief for *Steellabor*, the forerunner to *USW@Work*, as well as a publicist for the union's non-ferrous labor negotiations.

Working-class start

Dave, who was born in 1955, and his older brother Phil spent their childhood in a working-class neighborhood in suburban Los Angeles.

Their father's work took him to steel mill communities in California and to copper and coal mines in Arizona, Utah, New Mexico, Colorado and Wyoming. Sometimes the brothers would tag along to union events and travel with him on organizing drives during their school vacations.

Dave vividly remembers the

nervousness and anticipation he felt while driving down a one-lane dirt road at night in a back country mining community in Colorado to attend a union rally. It was a clandestine meeting kept quiet because it was a company town.

"The community feeling inside that hall and to see my dad up there exhorting the workers had a profound impression on me," he said. "Most kids don't see that unless they live it every day."

Lessons from dad

The musician said he "learned a lot of lessons from dad"

during those trips. "One of the big ones was there is more than one side of a story," he said.

Another was that black, Latino, Asian and white workers all had the same issues.

"There are differences between everybody," he told one interviewer. "But ... what are the connections? On a working class level, you're connected by that. You're all working men and women."

His search for that other side of the story has extended into his music. "That's what I'm going for," he said. "What's the side that you're not hearing?"

The Alvin brothers learned to love the rock n' roll music they would listen to on those car trips with their father. The R&B, soul, honky-tonk and rockabilly they heard on AM radio were early exposures to music that would shape their professional lives.

Their childhood love for music led them to form The Blasters, an 80s band big in the Los Angeles club scene that combined blues, rock n' roll, and rhythm and blues. Despite critical acclaim and a devoted following, Dave left the band in 1986 for a solo career.

Brothers on the line

Dave's first solo record was "*Romeo Escape*," which features the compelling, blue-collar roots inspired song "*Brother on the Line*." An excerpt follows:

Cass Alvin and Dave Alvin
Photos courtesy of Dave Alvin



*I'm the man I've always been
I'm the kid who rode the rails through
the Great Depression
I fought in the big war and marched for the Union
I'm the man I've always been.*

*Dave Alvin,
'The Man in the Bed'*



Sons

Men and Women

"Brother, I'm fighting for you as well as me. I gave them my sweat, they want my dignity. When the boss man shakes your hand and says, 'Son, you'll do just fine,' and you walk into the factory to a job that once was mine, please don't forget your brother who's still standing on the line."

This poignant ballad is just one example of Dave's ability to tell stories through his music. His songs, intimate tales of working people's lives, address universal issues yet touch the hearts of listeners.

He finds a musical muse in his loyalty and respect for everyday people. He said he is quite aware that "working people rarely get their stories told." Besides, he said, he was "brought up with a certain kind of morality of the underdog."

Dave believes, as his father did, that working people are underdogs who need to stand up against greedy corporate powers and make their voices heard. His father strongly advocated the labor cause and the necessity of unions.

"Get the message out there," he said. "Unions, though not perfect, are the best way for working people to have a voice, to have clout and to have power against the powerful."

Though he acknowledges "things are hard now" he remains optimistic and feels that the labor movement is still alive and kicking, just like rock n' roll.

Back on track

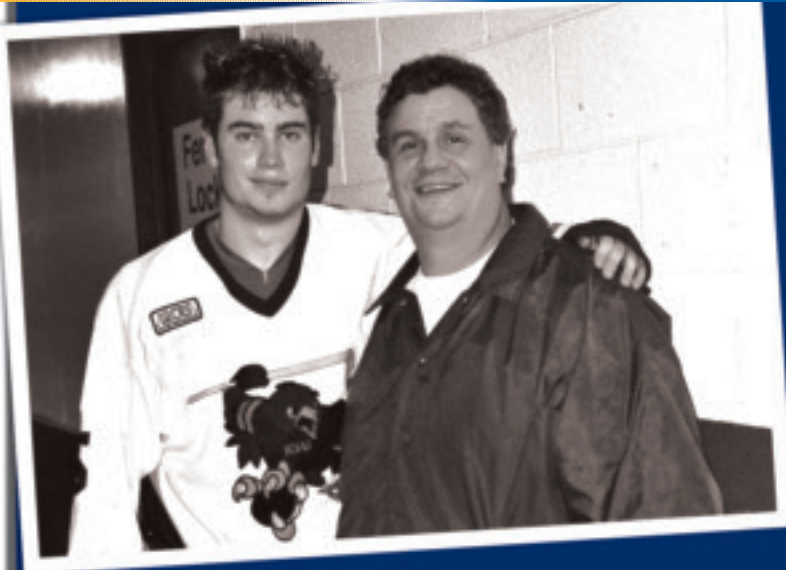
It just "takes people to see things outside the box," he said. As with musicians, "it is up to (union) members to correct the problems" and steer America back on the right track.

Americans will soon realize that "the things people take for granted are the things the union got for them," he said.

Workers' benefits were gained through our forefather's "toil and struggle," not corporate America's CEOs who "do not give employees benefits out of the kindness of their hearts," he said.

"My dad believed in the Steelworkers union," Dave said in ending the interview, the pride obvious in his voice.

One can only believe that his father would also be proud — proud that his son carries on his mission to promote and protect the values and rights of the nation's working class.



Kent State Hockey Star Hopes to Turn Pro Credits his Steelworker Dad

Ron O'Bannon, a member of Local 979 at the Mittal Steel USA plant in Cleveland, tenderly jokes about his son Jason, a National Hockey League prospect, but he can't hide his pride.

"Jason's a handsome kid, still has all of his teeth, polite; not like a hockey player at all," says Ron, a No. 2 Steel Producing MTM, or maintenance technician.

The senior forward from Kent State University has raised eyebrows in the hockey community this season, racking up numerous awards for his efforts.

The Collegiate Hockey Association named Jason to the Division I All-American, making him the third rising senior in Kent State history to be so honored.

The younger O'Bannon led his Golden Flashes team to a school record 26 wins, which qualified Kent State for its fourth ever National Tournament appearance.

His head coach, Jarret Whidden, had nothing but praise for his star player, who is no slouch in the classroom even though being a Division I athlete can qualify as a full-time job.

"Jason is a leader both on and off the ice," Whidden said. "He looks after his fellow teammates, which is always a sign of a good leader. He sets the bar high."

Jason has hopes of playing in the National Hockey League. His effort this season has drawn the attention of league scouts, giving him a shot at making that dream come true.

A criminal justice major who started playing hockey at age 4, Jason remains modest about his achievements. He gives his father credit for being a good example.

"He works hard every day just to provide for his family," Jason said of his dad. "He showed me the importance of hard work. You have to put in the time to get results."





CAPITOL LETTERS

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

Last summer, that Wal-Mart fake happy face was the perfect symbol for Washington, D.C., with Republicans, fat-cat corporations and K-Street lobbyists controlling foreign trade deals and constantly crowing about how great they were. But all the while, middle-class Americans were losing their good-paying jobs as U.S. manufacturers closed.

The symbol changed after last fall's elections. There was a look of surprise on that Wal-Mart happy face when the Democrats took control of Congress, followed by a scowl of consternation.

And if a symbol could cry, you'd have seen it after those Democrats refused to approve the Korean and Colombian free trade deals that Wal-Mart wanted so badly, followed by their denying the president renewed "Fast Track" authority to negotiate such pacts and get them through Congress unchanged.

If that weren't enough to make that happy face spin, the Dems then had the temerity to suggest America should expand the benefits given to workers who lose their jobs because of foreign trade.

O Columbia

It will take the involvement of millions of individual workers and voters to get that piece of legislation passed, as it did to accomplish the scuttling of the Korean and Colombian free trade deals and "Fast Track." Over the past year, those voters and workers have shown that they're a force to be reckoned with.

After the election, with the Democrats in control of Congress, the K-Street boys knew they'd have to put a little more effort than usual into getting the likes of the Colombian and Korean free trade deals approved.

Wal-Mart, Citigroup and Caterpillar teamed up to lead a business lobbying group on the Colombian deal.

The United Steelworkers, the AFL-CIO and other labor groups fought back. They pointed out that more labor leaders are killed each year in

Colombia than in all other countries in the world combined, about 120 a year. They pointed out that despite the killings, Colombia makes no effort to punish murderers. Colombia has convicted only one person since 2004, even though its murder rate amounts to approximately one every three days.

The International Labor Rights Fund and the USW are pursuing a federal lawsuit in the United States for the survivors of three murdered union officers who had worked at a Colombian mine owned by Alabama-based Drummond Co. The suit accuses Drummond of hiring paramilitaries to kill the three union officers. A federal judge and the government of Colombia refused to permit the USW to obtain testimony from key witnesses for the trial in July, and the USW now plans to appeal what it believes were incorrect rulings that led to the jury's decision in favor of Drummond.

One-sided deal

International President Leo W. Gerard said the free trade agreement (FTA) with South Korea would erode jobs in America, just like those that preceded it. "The FTA with South Korea represents a one-sided deal. It favors South Korean interests at the expense of farmers, workers and businesses here in the U.S," Gerard said, "It allows for benefits under the agreement to extend to a South Korean industrial park operated in North Korea where the workers are paid virtually slave wages."

When leading House Democrats suggested that a side agreement to the Korean and Colombian trade agreements might solve the problems, labor leaders, including Gerard, met with them in Washington.

They reminded Democrats that last fall voters across the country demanded

a new direction on trade, not just a side step.

In the end, that's what American workers and voters got. Democrats dumped the Korean and Colombian free trade deals at the end of June.

Also, that's when the President's authority to negotiate "Fast Track" deals expired. In the Constitution, trade is the responsibility of Congress. Fast Track gave it to the president, who negotiated deals, which Congress could vote up or down without changing.

Expanding assistance

What remains, however, from years of unfettered free trading is economic devastation in the heartland. Democrats have proposed expansion of the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program as a result.

This aid would go to more categories of workers who lose their jobs to offshoring, and there would be more of it. TAA pays for job training and relocation assistance, among many other things, for workers whose jobs are moved overseas. Under the expansion proposed by Democrats, these would include computer programmers, call center staffers and other service-sector workers, in addition to traditional manufacturing workers.

Republicans have said they'll never go for this bill to help Americans who lose their jobs unless Fast Track returns.

They say, in the words of Susan C. Schwab, U.S. Trade Representative, "America needs to remain open for business to the 95 percent of the world's consumers living outside the United States."

Maybe so. But if they want to send their cars, baby bibs and pharmaceuticals here, we have a right as a nation to insist on certain standards. We have the right to demand that the products are not made with child labor; that they are not made in countries where trade unionists are routinely murdered; that they are not made in countries where international environmental regulations are openly flouted, leading to global warming. We have a right to fair trade.

After facing nearly universal Republican opposition in the U.S. Senate, the battle for the Employee Free Choice Act is moving to the 2008 election with the promise of its passage under a new presidential administration well within our reach.

The grass-roots momentum for the bill continued to grow even after the Senate voted strictly along party lines this summer to stop the bill before it could be voted on. Only one Republican, Pennsylvania's Arlen Specter, was supportive.

More proof on the need for the bill came in July when American Rights at Work released a new report by University of Oregon political scientist Gordon Lafer that uncovers how employers exploit weaknesses in U.S. labor law during union recognition elections.

"Anti-union employers are making a mockery of the principles governing American elections," Lafer said. "Weak labor laws allow anti-union employers to manipulate the outcome of union elections in a manner that is inherently unfair and undemocratic."

Legal, illegal strategies

Lafer's report details strategies — legal and illegal — that employers use to deny their workers the right to form unions and collectively bargain. He found workers routinely face:

- Denial of free speech: Management consultants typically advise employers to maximize legally-permitted one-sided advantages, such as plastering the workplace with anti-union material. Pro-union employees are prohibited from doing likewise, and union organizers are banned from entering the workplace.

- Economic coercion and intimidation: It is common practice in anti-union campaigns for supervisors, who have the most immediate control over hiring and firing, to communicate to workers that their jobs may be at risk if they form a union.

- Ostracism and defamation of union supporters: Security guards with walkie-talkies followed one worker featured in the report to restaurants on her days off. A member of management was assigned to work with her eight hours a day, five days a week, solely to change her ideas about unions.

- Intrusion into workers' decisions on how to vote: "Union avoidance" consultants typically train supervisors to have

repeated, intimidating one-on-one conversations with their employees to make them reveal their feelings about the union before the election.

Level playing field

The Employee Free Choice Act would level the playing field in the workplace by allowing workers to decide to join a union without employer interference and by requiring arbitration if a timely agreement is not reached on a first contract.

But the Senate in June voted 51 to 48 for cloture, or shutting off debate, on the act. The slim majority was not enough since 60 votes are needed to invoke cloture and move to a vote.

Even though the cloture vote fell short, the Senate action was a step forward. It was the first time in a generation that a majority of the U.S. Senate voted for workers' rights.

Prior to the Senate vote, 16 state governors and nearly 1,300 state and local elected officials expressed support for the legislation in all 50 states. Seven presidential candidates also backed the bill.

Middle-class Americans generated 50,000 telephone calls to the Senate, 156,000 faxes and e-mail messages and 220,000 postcards.

Momentum Building

Battle for Employee Free Choice Moves to '08 Election

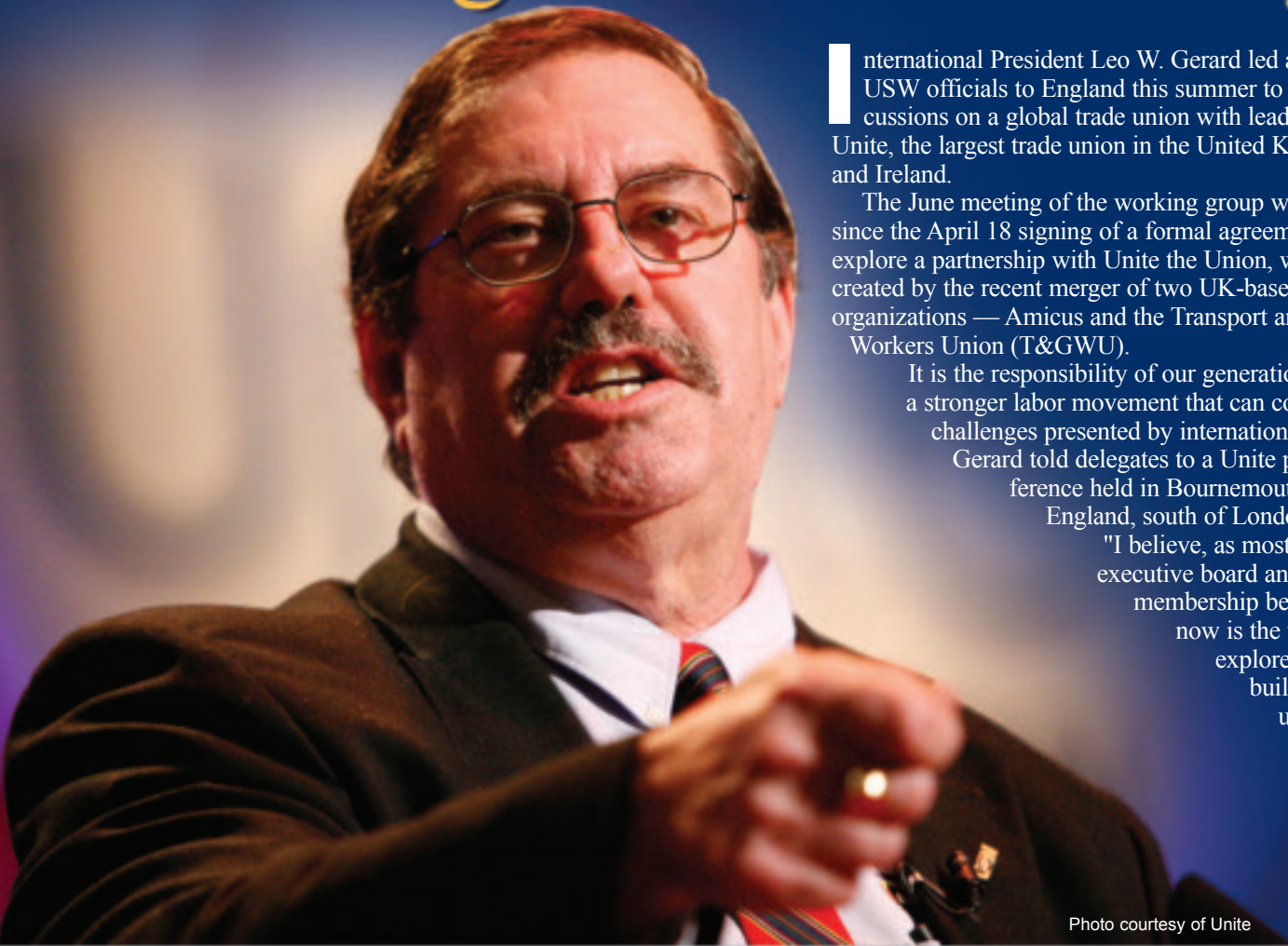
"It's clear the majority of the American people want this legislation," said a supporter, U.S. Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio). "A majority of the House wants it. A majority of the Senate wants it. And we will keep coming back year after year."

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said the Senate vote shows the ground has shifted. He predicted that working men and women will elect more senators and a president who will champion their concerns and fight for their futures.

"The status quo of our broken system is unacceptable," Sweeney said. "Those who continue to support our broken system will find themselves on the wrong side of history."



Working Globally to Bargain Better Locally



International President Leo W. Gerard led a team of USW officials to England this summer to open discussions on a global trade union with leaders of Unite, the largest trade union in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

The June meeting of the working group was the first since the April 18 signing of a formal agreement to explore a partnership with Unite the Union, which was created by the recent merger of two UK-based labor organizations — Amicus and the Transport and General Workers Union (T&GWU).

It is the responsibility of our generation to build a stronger labor movement that can confront the challenges presented by international capital, Gerard told delegates to a Unite policy conference held in Bournemouth, England, south of London.

"I believe, as most of our executive board and our membership believe, that now is the time to explore a way to build a global union so we

Photo courtesy of Unite

Steelworkers, CWA Sign Strategic Alliance in Canada

The United Steelworkers and the Canadian Region of the Communications Workers of America have signed a strategic alliance agreement to work together on issues of common interest in Canada and globally.

The agreement was signed in July during a two-day international convention of the CWA that was attended by more than 1,500 people at Toronto's Convention Centre.

Ken Neumann, USW national director for Canada, said the USW is proud to join forces with CWA members in Canada.

"Our union has a history of developing partnerships that are flexible and constructive with like-minded organizations throughout the world," said Neumann. "Through these closer

ties we are better able to work toward building justice and better working conditions for working people."

CWA Canadian Regional Director Arnold Amber said both unions are "progressive forces that fight in the political arena as well as collective bargaining" and are dedicated to protecting their members in Canada.

"Members of my union look forward to working closely with the USW," Amber said. "We have long been allies. Now our partnership is even stronger."

The unions will fully retain their autonomy and independence but commit to conducting joint activities in support of their members and their struggles. Initially, the alliance will

can respond to global corporations," Gerard said in a passionate speech that drew a standing ovation from the conference .

Technical issues discussed

The parties discussed technical and procedural issues and established a working plan for future discussions, said Gerald Fernandez, who oversees international affairs and global bargaining operations for the USW.

Of note was an agreement to detail each union's top sectors and employers as a step toward creating working groups, or joint councils, to coordinate bargaining and apply leverage in support of each other in difficult bargaining.

Delegations for the two unions will next meet in October, Fernandez said. Talks on the possible merger will run parallel with the discussions on building bargaining and other leverage.

In addition, it was agreed that the unions will exchange rank-and-file delegations to cooperate on functional areas such as health and safety issues.

"Our meetings were very fruitful, including establishing working groups to look at the possibility of coordinated bargaining with common employers such as Timet," Gerard said in a *Message From Pittsburgh* to our members.

Solidarity is key

"We'll start talking to each other soon about areas where we can begin immediate cooperation such as health and safety," Gerard added. "This sort of solidarity is key to the USW better representing our members."

In his speech, Gerard touched on public and private health care, student

debt, private equity and corporate manslaughter in illustrating the common problems faced by union members around the world.

The 2005 explosion at a BP oil refinery in Texas City, Texas, that killed 15 workers and injured 180 illustrates the sectoral, company and issue links between Unite and the USW.

Some of those workers had been "evaporated" in the intense heat of the explosion, which had been caused in part by cost-cutting measures ordered by BP's British former boss, Lord Browne.

“This solidarity is key to the USW better representing our members.”

Noting that Browne escaped sanctions, Gerard told the delegates that the United Kingdom needs its own version of the USW-backed Westray Bill in Canada, which makes corporations, their directors and executives criminally accountable for putting workers' lives at risk.

"We need that law in Britain just like we needed it in Canada so that people who behave like that with the health and safety of workers get punished the way they deserve to be punished and we're going to be proud to work with you to make that happen," he said to applause from the delegates.

Private equity firms

While the team was in Britain, the USW and Unite jointly called for government regulation of private equity firms that increasingly operate around the world and wield much economic influence.

The unions pledged to lobby national and regional governments in Europe and North America for legislation to bring transparency into the activities of private equity firms and close tax loopholes that reward short-term manipulation at the expense of sustainable jobs and income for workers.

The unions want greater powers and flexibility for member pension plan trustees to ensure more ethical investments.

"Private equity firms operate under a cloak of secrecy, often creating instability in the companies by loading them with debt, and treating working people as expendable commodities," said Derek Simpson, Unite joint general secretary.

The use by private equity firms of pension money against the interests of workers highlight the reason that we are exploring a merger with Unite, Gerard said.

"Global finance must be confronted by global labor," Gerard added. "Our members demand that the deferred wages of workers be used to create long-term viable companies and that workers receive a fair share of the wealth that they create."

The merger exploration process is expected to take a year. A merger committee made up of five principal individuals from each union, with support of technical staff, will meet regularly during that time.

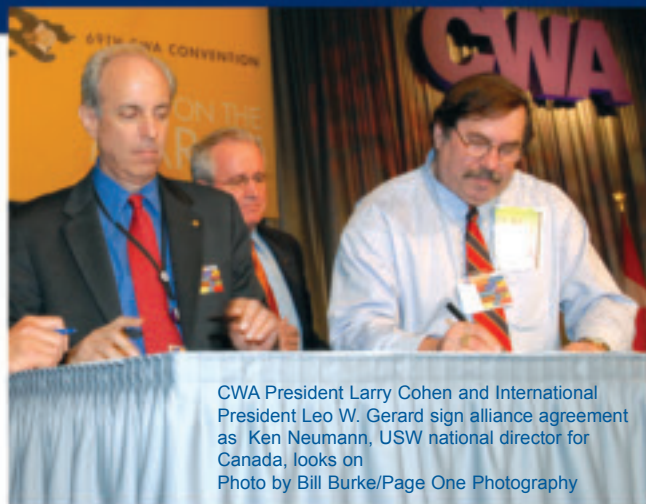
If consummated, a merger would create the first trans-Atlantic labor union, representing more than 3 million workers and retirees in the United States, Canada, the Caribbean Basin, the United Kingdom and Ireland.

focus on joint public policy and legislative work but joint activities could include any other mutual objectives including education.

The presidents of the USW and CWA will appoint a coordinating committee consisting of their Canadian national directors and other key elected officials and staff. The committee will operate by consensus.

The CWA/SCA Canada Region represents about 9,000 workers in Canadian media including newspapers, broadcasting, news agencies and the Internet. Other members are in social work, interpretation services and light industry.

The USW is the largest private sector union in both Canada and North America, with more than 280,000 members working in every economic sector in Canada, and 850,000 members continent-wide.



CWA President Larry Cohen and International President Leo W. Gerard sign alliance agreement as Ken Neumann, USW national director for Canada, looks on
Photo by Bill Burke/Page One Photography

Abandoning H

Patriots Struggle to Obtain Compensation from Government

Douglas DelForge sat in a wheelchair during a USW demonstration called to support former Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant workers seeking expedited compensation and medical care.

DelForge, 45, worked for 24 years at Rocky Flats, which manufactured plutonium triggers for atomic weapons. He cleaned equipment that leaked radioactive contamination in dangerous Building 771.

Confined to a wheelchair because of many falls, DelForge suffers from a palsy that distorts his face and prevents his right eye from opening. He has atypical meningioma, an aggressive nonmalignant brain tumor. So far, he has had four conventional operations and numerous treatments that have caused further health problems.

Thousands of sick former nuclear weapons workers like DelForge are struggling to obtain compensation and medical care from an aid program fraught with delays, red tape and imprecise science.

For many it's an exercise in patience and perseverance as they try to prove their work caused their illnesses and find the data to back it up.

The Department of Labor (DOL) denied DelForge's claim four or five times, said his father Clifford. The DOL said there was no credible evidence the meningioma was caused by ionizing radiation.

Conducted own research

Clifford found information on the Internet claiming ionizing radiation does cause meningioma. He sent the information to the DOL, which passed Douglas's claim to a toxicologist. Soon after, the claim was approved under the program's Part E, which offers compensation and medical benefits to workers sick from exposure to chemicals, acids and metals.

"I don't think workers are getting the compensation they deserve," Douglas said. "It seems to me that the money the government spends trying to avoid the situation could be spent on the workers and getting everybody compensated."

As of June, the government compensated 299 of the 1,253 former Rocky Flats workers who applied for help and turned down 631 sick workers. Nationally, more than 60 percent of 72,000 cases processed were denied.

It was not supposed to be this way. When Congress passed the Energy Employees Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act in 2000, its intent was to help sick workers get compensation and medical care in a timely fashion.

The act applies to employees who develop cancer and other illnesses as a result of their exposure to radiation, beryllium or silica while employed by the Department of Energy (DOE), its contractors and subcontractors.

Under the program's Part B, a lump sum payment of \$150,000 is given to applicants whose cancer is determined to be likely related to their employment. They also receive medical expenses from the date their claim is filed.

Many die waiting

It can take two or more years to process a claim. One in 10 Rocky Flats workers die before the government pays, the *Rocky Mountain News* reported. In those cases, payment goes to survivors.

The DOL sends claims to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), which has hired a contractor to do dose reconstructions that estimate how much radiation a worker was exposed to during his employment.

Film badge readings, medical x-rays, urine analysis, incident reports, co-worker data, environmental exposure records, technical documents, interview information and workplace history are used.

NIOSH's contractor enters this information into a computer program to determine if it is more likely than not that a worker's illness was caused by workplace exposure. If the probability of a link is less than 50 percent, the worker's claim is denied.

Richard Castillo addresses the Advisory Board on Radiation and Worker Health in Denver. Castillo worked at the Rocky Flats nuclear facility for 27 years. He suffers from neuropathy.

Photo by Omar Vega/ The Denver Post



eroes



Justice
for
All!

Gathering the information necessary to do a dose reconstruction is not easy. Records are often lost, incomplete, unreliable and inaccessible. For example, 400 boxes of medical records from an Ohio weapons facility were found in a Los Alamos, N.M., landfill contaminated by radiation. Workers cannot access secret government files or personnel records.

There is no guarantee the documentation found is adequate. Nuclear workers tell stories of being told to toss their badges that measure radiation exposure, use their last data or their co-worker's data if the exposure reading was high.

Some question whether science is advanced enough to fulfill the intent of the program. Scientists have had to make so many assumptions and take so many shortcuts in reconstructing estimated radiation exposures that the results may be no more valid than assuming certain cancers are work-related.

A group of workers from a particular site can be recommended by

NIOSH and the presidential-appointed Advisory Board on Radiation and

Worker Health to be part of a Special

Exposure Cohort (SEC) if dose reconstructions cannot be done with accuracy and the harm to the group from radiation exposure is great. Workers with SEC status who have any of 22 radiation-induced cancers and worked at least 250 days at their facility receive the \$150,000 compensation and medical care without having to do a dose reconstruction.

Rocky Flats workers, represented by USW Local 8031, filed a petition on Feb. 15, 2005 for SEC status. NIOSH expanded the class of workers affected to include all employees of DOE, its contractors or sub-contractors who worked at Rocky Flats from April 1952 through February 2005, and who were employed 250 workdays.

NIOSH evaluates these petitions and forwards its report to the advisory board which determines whether the government has enough information to accurately gauge a worker's radiation exposure. The advisory board then recommends to the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) whether or not the class of employees should be granted SEC status.

Challenging NIOSH data

At a June two-day public meeting in Denver, Rocky Flats workers challenged

the credibility of NIOSH's data by telling of times where their exposure was not measured or was measured inaccurately.

"People were exposed. I can prove it," said Dennis Romero, a Local 8031 member at Rocky Flats. "I know how work was done on the job. I know how shortcuts were done. I know how management circumvented things so they wouldn't get fines... Safety went out the window."

Last May, the board recommended SEC status to Rocky Flats workers who were exposed to neutron radiation from 1952 to 1958. At the June meeting, the board approved SEC status for "workers who were monitored or should have been monitored for neutron dose from 1959 to 1966." These two groups covered 4,000 former Rocky Flats workers.

However, the board voted 6-4 to not recommend SEC status for workers exposed to radiation and toxic chemicals from 1967 to 2005. It concluded there was enough sufficient data to do individual dose reconstructions. This recommendation left 15,000 to 20,000 former Rocky Flats workers without expedited compensation and medical care.

How many must die?

"How many more workers have to die before NIOSH is 100 percent certain their cancers and illnesses were caused by their on-the-job exposure to radiation and toxic chemicals?" asked District 12 Director Terry Bonds.

International President Leo W. Gerard said our union "is prepared to get justice" for these nuclear workers who sacrificed their lives for our national security.

"The decision was heartbreaking," said Jennifer Thompson, the former Rocky Flats worker who wrote the petition. "We're definitely going to file an appeal based on the process and the science. We're not giving up until we achieve justice for all Rocky Flats workers."

If HHS Secretary Michael Leavitt decides in August against the petition, the USW plans to help the workers appeal his decision. The union also is working with the AFL-CIO and Building Trades unions to draft legislation to change the way the SEC is done.

"The Bush administration has really hurt us," said Michelle Dobrovolny, who has a brain tumor and liver disease. "We are the forgotten bunch and that's how we all feel. They don't care about us and what we did. We served our country."

Renewing

Clean Energy Economy Means

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy announced the bold challenge of sending astronauts to the moon within a decade. In 1969, after only eight years of American innovation, Neil Armstrong stepped out of a landing craft onto the moon's surface, taking what he called "a giant step for mankind."

If the country's energies and talents were again focused as they were by President Kennedy, something just as grand could be achieved — new energy-saving technologies that lessen our nation's dangerous

dependence on foreign oil while creating new good-paying manufacturing jobs and improving the quality of our environment.

That's the lofty yet doable goal of a new strategic partnership between the United Steelworkers, the nation's largest manufacturing union, and the Sierra Club, the nation's largest environmental organization.

"It's fabulous. It's something that's way overdue," USW member Mike Russo said after hearing International President Leo W. Gerard and Sierra Club Executive Director Carl Pope tout the program with



As executive director of the Sierra Club, Carl Pope was instrumental in forging the unique alliance between the environmental organization and the United Steelworkers to fight for good jobs and a clean environment. He discussed the project in the following excerpts from interviews conducted during the "Road to Energy Independence Tour" with International President Leo W. Gerard.

Why partner with the USW?

We are both very large and we have long traditions of fighting for the right thing. We're both local. Both organizations derive their strength from people who are rooted in their communities and they're rooted around the same values, like fair-

America

New Manufacturing Jobs

Pennsylvania Gov. Ed Rendell in front of Philadelphia's Independence Hall.

Both the USW and the Sierra Club vigorously support the Apollo Alliance, which takes its name from the early space program and aims to spur the economy and create jobs by investing in renewable energy technologies, more efficient buildings, manufacturing techniques and modes of transportation.

The Apollo Alliance was originally launched by the Institute for America's Future (IAF), a pro-labor progressive

advocacy group whose board of directors includes Gerard. The IAF recently voted to scale up Apollo's operations by having former California state treasurer and Democratic gubernatorial candidate Phil Angelides become its chairman.

The Apollo program has been endorsed by members of the Democratic Governors Association in a December meeting with Gerard and Apollo Alliance President Jerome Ringo.

New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson called the plan a "solid road map" to end

our reliance on foreign oil and predicted the issue would be a major focus of the 2008 presidential campaign.

"It is the top issue in the presidential race, the top challenge facing America because it deals with national security," Richardson added. "It is focused on state efforts because states are the incubators of innovation, especially when there's an absence of leadership at the federal level."

The governors' endorsement followed a three-day whirlwind tour dubbed "The Road to Energy Independence — Renewables Now" — that took Gerard and Pope to St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minn.; Columbus and Cleveland, Ohio, and Philadelphia and Pittsburgh, Pa.

In union halls and on public stages over the three days late last year, Gerard and Pope called for an innovative 21st century energy policy that would create a new generation of domestic manufacturing jobs while reducing global warming and air pollution.

Blue Green Alliance

Carl Pope: We Have a Future Together

ness and opportunity, security in the future. It is very powerful to bring together the concerns of people where they live, where our members are, and the concerns of people where they work, which is what the Steelworkers bring.

Finally, we have a big overlap of common members, folks who would like to express both elements of their advocacy and activism through one alliance.

Trade agreements

One impetus for the coalition is trade. That was a very easy one for us. I'm not sure you could write a trade deal that would split us.

Fixing global warming

There are no silver bullets for global warming. There are silver BBs.

We need to make cars, trucks and SUVs with new technology that is efficient. Then we need to make sure that they're not just burning gas, they're burning bio-fuels as well.

We need to make sure that new buildings will be energy self-sufficient.

But we also need to retrofit old buildings, especially schools and hospitals, public facilities that are right now wasting money heating the great outdoors.

We know how to do that. It will create lots of jobs if we do it.

America's energy policy

The energy sector is the least innovative sector of the American economy because the government keeps it that way.

The reality is we live in a rapidly changing world. The rule in today's world is to innovate or die.

Producing vehicles on assembly lines built in the 1950s is not innovation. When we make it difficult for electrical utilities to modernize the grid by installing digital switches, which every telephone uses, we're not innovating.

When we make it difficult for glass factories to find markets for innovative new products that would keep houses cooler in the summer and warmer in the winter, we're stopping innovation.

Associate Member Program

It's been very exciting for a lot of our members to be able to join the Steelworkers through the Associate Member Program.

If you don't work in an organized workplace you can't join a labor union. For many of our members who had an interest in unions but didn't know what it was about, this has been a wonderful experience. It's an open door that's really important.

The future

I'd like this collaboration to be a model for others.

I'd like to have these kinds of collaborations — across class lines, across sector lines — become the norm for the progressive movement.

As far as our partnership with the USW, I don't know nearly as many Steelworkers as I'd like to. I'd like to know that whenever I went into a community where there are Steelworkers and Sierra Club members, that they knew each other, that they liked each other, they trusted each other, and they all had common experiences of doing things to make their communities better places.

We have a future together. It's up to us whether it's a good future.

"We need to put an end to the lie, the myth, the hysteria that you can't have a clean environment and good-paying jobs. In fact, it's not one or the other. It's both or neither," Gerard told a packed meeting of labor leaders and elected officials at United Auto Workers Local 879 hall in St. Paul, Minn. across the street from a Ford truck plant that is slated to close in 2008.

U.S. lags behind

The United States is lagging behind other countries in taking advantage of new green technologies in markets that could be filled by U.S. companies and U.S. workers.

Japan, for example, controls 43 percent of the solar power market, an industry invented in the United States. European countries control an estimated 90 percent of wind turbine production.

"If we use existing science and create incentives to do inventions and research on the newest forms of energy efficiency, we could create tens of thousands, if not hundreds of thousands, of new non-exportable jobs," Gerard said.

The USW and the Sierra Club are also jointly pushing for stronger worker and environmental protection in trade agree-

ments. We are working together, for example, to stop illegal logging in Indonesia that harms the domestic paper industry.

Gerard and Pope also called for higher fuel efficiency in domestic-made automobiles, arguing that better mileage standards would help create demand for American manufacturers as well as improve the environment.

The USW has an estimated 175,000 members making products that could end up in the domestic auto industry ranging from metals to tires, plastics, leather and glass.

Innovate or die

"We have a great stake in making sure we can make cars in America, cars that people want to buy, and unless we deal with fuel efficiency, they won't buy them," Gerard said.

"Don't tell me we can put a person on the moon and find out that Pluto is not a planet, but we can't put out a vehicle made in America with American workers using American products that gets 35, 40 or 50 miles to a gallon," he said to sustained applause.

Participants in the St. Paul meeting discussed the possibility of a community

effort to retool the Ford Ranger plant into a manufacturing site for green energy technologies such as battery-powered cars, windmills or solar panels. The plant, located along the Mississippi River, has its own hydroelectric plant.

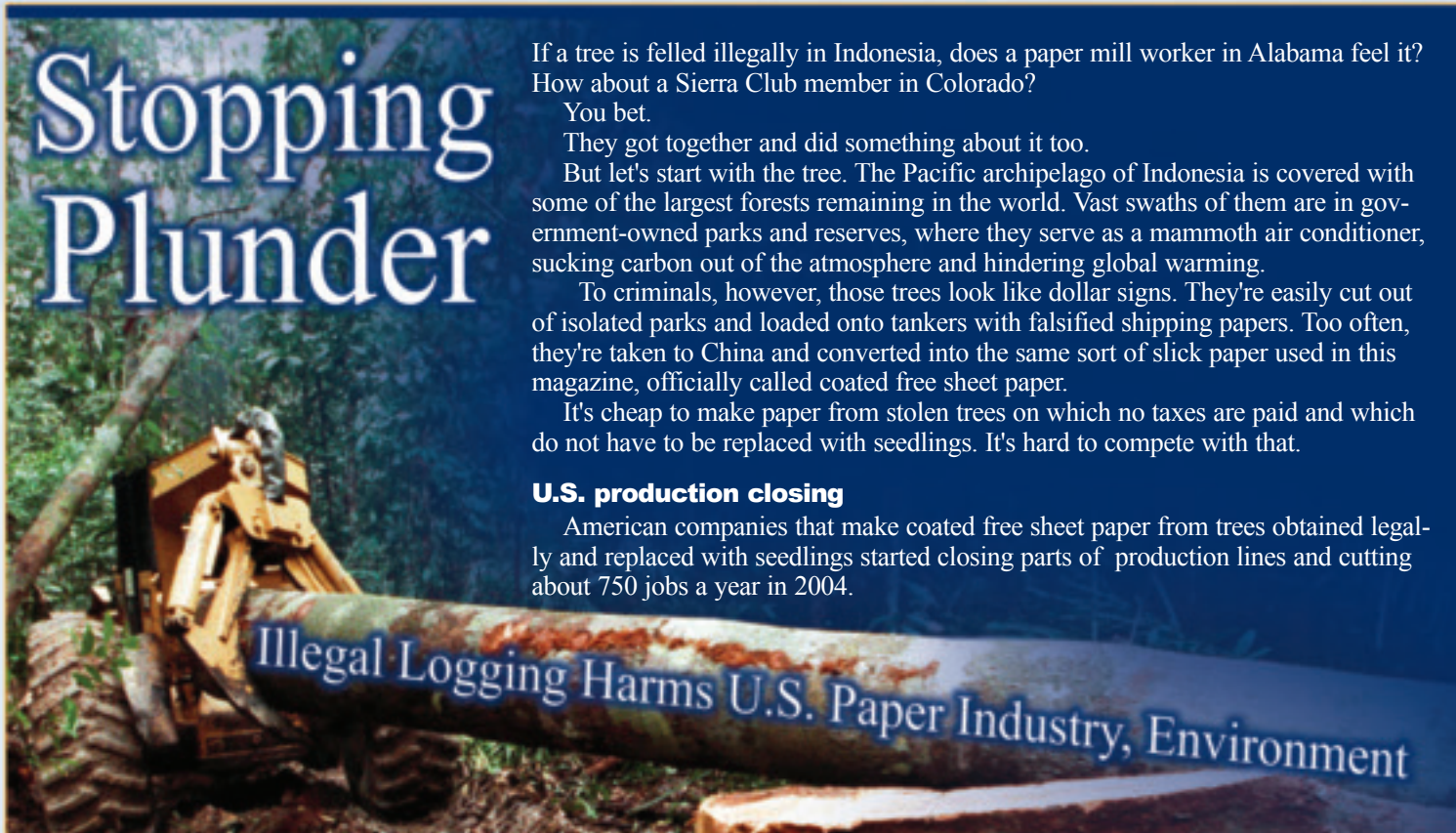
Innovation and modernization of manufacturing and energy production and distribution are keys to building a better future for American workers, Pope asserted.

Hybrid and other clean cars, public transportation, efficient heating and lighting systems and clean renewable power plants using solar, wind and clean coal technologies are keys to energy freedom. Producing them can create more than 1.4 million jobs, according to the Apollo Project, and strengthen our economy while simultaneously making America more secure.

Wind employs thousands

In Germany, where more than 18,000 wind turbines are spinning, the wind industry employs more than 65,000 people and has overtaken coal mining as a major employer, according to the German Wind Energy Association.

The German wind energy industry is that country's second largest consumer



Stopping Plunder

If a tree is felled illegally in Indonesia, does a paper mill worker in Alabama feel it? How about a Sierra Club member in Colorado?

You bet.

They got together and did something about it too.

But let's start with the tree. The Pacific archipelago of Indonesia is covered with some of the largest forests remaining in the world. Vast swaths of them are in government-owned parks and reserves, where they serve as a mammoth air conditioner, sucking carbon out of the atmosphere and hindering global warming.

To criminals, however, those trees look like dollar signs. They're easily cut out of isolated parks and loaded onto tankers with falsified shipping papers. Too often, they're taken to China and converted into the same sort of slick paper used in this magazine, officially called coated free sheet paper.

It's cheap to make paper from stolen trees on which no taxes are paid and which do not have to be replaced with seedlings. It's hard to compete with that.

U.S. production closing

American companies that make coated free sheet paper from trees obtained legally and replaced with seedlings started closing parts of production lines and cutting about 750 jobs a year in 2004.

Illegal Logging Harms U.S. Paper Industry, Environment

of steel, said David Foster, a retired USW district director who is the executive director of the Blue Green Alliance. "Imagine how that makes the heart of a Steelworker beat."

In the U.S., most of the progress being made in renewable energy is coming at the state level while the federal government under the Bush administration has dithered.

In Pennsylvania, where new state legislation requires electric generators and distributors to provide alternative energy to retail customers, a big enough market has been created to attract Gamesa Corp. of Spain, one of the world's largest wind turbine producers.

Gamesa has set up three new modern manufacturing centers on 20 plus acres of the defunct U.S. Steel Fairless Works near Philadelphia to produce towers, blades and other parts. It is also operating a separate manufacturing facility across the state in Ebensburg, north of Johnstown. Total employment is projected to be 1,000.

The USW won recognition at Gamesa and negotiated a first contract that included salary hikes, bonuses and benefits, as well as giving the union a leg up in the growing wind energy

industry. Gamesa spokesman Michael Peck called it a "world-class agreement."

"Our union is proud to partner with Gamesa to further grow their domestic manufacturing base and to promote wind energy as a source of clean, renewable energy and good jobs," said International Vice President Tom Conway, who negotiated the agreement.

The wind turbines that Gamesa makes in Pennsylvania can each turn out two megawatts of energy, enough to

power close to 700 homes. Their steel bases are 260 feet tall to the hub. The blade radius is roughly 130 feet.

"Right now we have a historic opportunity to forge a new direction," Gerard said. "Investments in environmentally friendly alternative energy programs at the state level, supported by federal initiatives, can create a new surge of quality job growth while significantly reducing our dependence on foreign oil."



Photo by Andy Betts

Simultaneously, satellite pictures began showing whole mountain ranges of trees disappearing in Indonesia, and a study by the United Nations' Environmental Program found that up to 88 percent of Indonesia's logging was done illegally, clearing as much as 68 million cubic meters of timber annually, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

So when a tree is felled illegally in Indonesia, what both the Sierra club member and the Alabama paper mill worker feel is fear. They're afraid of global warming and frightened of American mills closing.

They acted together to do something about those fears. The USW and the Sierra Club, which had formed the Blue Green Alliance in June of 2006 for just this very sort of project, asked the federal government to impose extra costs on paper sent here from China and Indonesia.

The USW and Sierra Club argued that it was only fair to tack on the extra costs when the logs used in the papermaking process are stolen. They joined NewPage Corp., a Dayton-based paper company, in petitioning the U.S. Department of Commerce to impose trade sanctions against China's glossy paper products sold in the U.S.

Equalize competition

Any government's lax enforcement of environmental laws should be treated the same way as an illegal subsidy, they argued. When a country subsidizes a product, the U.S. may

impose trade sanctions on those imports to equalize competition for American companies.

In May, the Commerce Department agreed to impose trade sanctions on glossy paper products that China sells in the U.S. The decision reversed a 23-year-old U.S. policy that had excused China, and other communist countries, from anti-subsidy laws.

The Commerce Department did not consent to the same request for paper from Indonesia. That did not stop the Sierra Club and the USW, however. The team now is lobbying for legislation that would enable Congress to order the Commerce Department to investigate situations such as illegal logging in Indonesia, which could then lead to sanctions.

In addition to the devastating environmental damage done by the illegal logging in Indonesia, the Sierra Club recognizes the political and economic impact it causes. "This kind of logging does not sustain development in Indonesia," said Sierra Club Senior Representative Margrete Strand Rangnes, "Behind the illegal logging are criminals and large corporations. They are not individual farmers and families. The money and logs are shipped right out of the country, and the profit goes out of the country, and the jobs are lost in the U.S. as well."

What the USW and the Sierra Club want is for the illegal plunder of Indonesia's forests to end. Stopping unfair and illegal trade will protect both the environment and good-paying U.S. jobs.

Obligation Upheld

USW Legal Action Forces Continental to Pay for Retiree Health Care

Mark Cieslikowski often feels like he's been run over by one of those Continental Tires he used to make in Charlotte, N.C.

The president of Local 850 has gone round and round with the German-based tire company in negotiations and is frustrated by management logic that is as circular as its principal product.

So it was satisfying for Cieslikowski, who had watched employment in his plant dwindle from 1,080 to 160 over two years, to see retirees win their suit against Continental in July.

The court victory, which the company attempted to appeal just one day later, means Continental must pay bargained health care premiums for 2,000 retirees and their spouses from the Charlotte, Mayfield, Ky., and Bryan, Ohio plants.

Continental stopped paying its full share of the premiums last spring. Contractually, the company was obligated to pay approximately \$18,000 a year for retirees not yet eligible for Medicare and \$4,200 for those old enough to receive Medicare. Instead, Continental summarily decided to pay \$3,000 for everyone, regardless of age or circumstance.

Retirees devastated

Cieslikowski said that devastated many retirees from Charlotte. They just didn't have the money to make up the difference in the premiums, and they couldn't get insurance on their own because no company would sell it to sick, elderly people.

"Because they had pre-existing conditions, they could not buy insurance," he said. "If you are a diabetic or have high blood pressure, lots of companies will not insure you."

That left some people too young to qualify for Medicare, but old enough to have invested a lifetime making tires for Continental without insurance at a

vulnerable time in their lives.

That's when the USW and several retiree representatives filed the class action suit on behalf of everyone affected.

Continental explained their behavior to the judge this way: Contracts with the USW at three plants had expired, so it had no obligation to pay for health care at the \$18,000 and \$4,000 per year levels.

The fault with that logic is that, unlike other obligations that may end with a contract, those that are vested do not. They endure beyond expiration dates.

Benefits vested

The judge was Jack Zouhary of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio (Toledo). He did not buy Continental's contention that the retiree's health care benefits were not vested, pointing to contract language that locked in the retirees' rights.

In addition, the judge points out in his decision, when Continental closed the Bryan and Mayfield plants, it signed an agreement with the USW which states specifically that its obligations to retirees remained unchanged. Continental tried to twist that language into a relinquishment of retiree rights, but the judge rejected the argument.

Never willing to roll over even when dealing with an international giant, Cieslikowski cheered the court win over Continental, though he admitted to some reservations.

"To some extent I am guarded about it because I am not used to getting good news about this company," he said, "This company runs all over people without regard to moral issues or responsibility. It is a foreign company that uses this country's laws to its benefit. Now it is being told it is wrong."



Ellis Nelson, retired after 31 years, was forced by Continental's arbitrary health care cutbacks to spend \$1,011 of his \$1,126 monthly pension on health insurance premiums.



Larry Little, a Vietnam veteran, retired after 32 years, then underwent quadruple bypass surgery. Despite his heart condition, Continental's cutbacks forced him to seek a job to pay for insurance.



Bruce Nash retired after 34 years but had to find a new job to pay for his health care premiums after Continental arbitrarily reduced the payments. His monthly pension from the company didn't cover the cost of health care coverage.



Bill Granata gave Continental 34 years but can't afford to pay for insurance for his wife after Continental's cuts. He also stopped regular visits to his prostate and skin cancer specialists because he can no longer afford it.

USW Tackles Oil Industry Safety

The USW is taking steps to change the oil industry's safety culture through testimony before Congress and with the implementation of a 10-point safety initiative with BP.

In July, health and safety specialist Kim Nibarger told the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works that the industry has not acted on lessons learned from accident investigations conducted by the U.S. Chemical Safety Board.

The root causes of accidents that occurred before the March 2005 explosion at BP's Texas City facility were similar to that fatal accident, he said.

"Until the petrochemical industry takes a serious look at how they contin-

ue to operate, we will continue to see catastrophic accidents," Nibarger said.

Enforce standards

To create a safe environment for workers, Nibarger said OSHA must enforce its Process Safety Management (PSM) standard, which applies to companies that work with hazardous chemicals and gases.

He urged employers to treat the PSM as a minimum requirement and said the Senate committee should consult with the USW on federal enforcement penalties and accountability requirements.

Our union wants Congress to make sure that relevant federal agencies adopt CSB recommendations and make statutory changes to give both major political parties representation on the board.

Nibarger urged Congress to give the CSB, which has been denied access to some accident sites, clear lead authority and control over evidence and accident sites similar to the National Transportation Safety Board.

BP safety summit

Health and safety at BP is set to improve with the implementation of a joint union-company 10-point plan on standards for refinery staffing, new management structures, joint process safety culture, internal maintenance plans and better designed work schedules.

Local and international union leaders from four BP refineries and the Texas City chemical plant met with executive and plant management in June.

"After the Texas City explosion and reports from the CSB and the Baker Independent Review Committee, we began a dialogue a year ago to move forward," International Vice President Gary BeEVERS said. "We tried to correct the failures in the industry on process safety management. This summit was an accumulation of those discussions."

International President Leo W. Gerard had a frank and positive discussion with Bob Malone, chair of BP America, and they helped develop the new health and safety strategy.

BeEVERS said BP is making significant strides to correct past problems and to move forward in a positive way under Malone's leadership.

"It is this level of cooperation that will change BP's safety culture over time," Gerard said.


New training

Local union bargaining committees sat down with site management at the summit to establish plans and set a timetable for implementation. They agreed to have more maintenance and operations employees and to re-establish the chief operator position at locations that do not have one. New training programs will be put in place.

A four-person steering committee comprised of international union leaders and executive-level management will oversee the timetable and progress for each facility.

BeEVERS called the summit "a huge change" and said it would probably affect the entire oil industry, at least indirectly.

"The entire industry is watching what we do at BP," he said. "We anticipate the process spreading to other companies."



Texas City, Texas explosion
on March 23, 2005

Phil Murray

USW Founder Changed Nation's Economics and Politics

By Russell W. Gibbons

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My first union card had the signature of Philip Murray at the bottom, and I carried it for many years after leaving the pig iron conveyor belts of the National Steel Co.'s Hanna Furnace in Lackawanna, N.Y.

Later I would come to the headquarters of the United Steelworkers of America in Pittsburgh, and found his picture was still on the walls even though he had been dead for 13 years.

When I sought out a dentist, I soon found out that he had been named Philip Murray, an honor his father had wished to bestow on the man who had effectively changed his life and allowed a son to enter college and not the mill.

Humble immigrant

And the "old timers" who formed the original Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC) were still around in numbers. Many told stories of the humble immigrant from Scotland who went into the mines at Castle Shannon, Pa. when only 14 and who in time was able to draw thousands to hear his magnetic speeches.

The Allegheny County Council on May 1 (an International Day honoring working people in

USW Members Attend AFL

A stronger union movement is the goal behind the AFL-CIO's Resolution No. 2. Adopted in 2005 at the federation's national convention, the resolution offers a sweeping plan that aims to increase the diversity of union leadership at all levels.

USW members and staff this summer attended a series of federation-sponsored workshops meant to help ensure the resolution becomes reality. International Vice President Fred Redmond attended the Detroit event. Other dialogues were held in Atlanta, San Francisco and Philadelphia.

Attendees heard from speakers, studied research, shared best practices for recruiting and retaining diverse union leaders and worked in small groups to come up with ideas on how the movement can do better from the local level.

USW Local 3657 member Marcia McGee attended the forum in Detroit and said she learned

most countries) acknowledged this pioneer of the modern labor movement by honoring him with a new designation for Pittsburgh's 10th Street Bridge, for decades the artery to the steelmaking South Side of the city. A 75-foot bell tower erected by the Steelworkers in the 1950s honors Murray in the Castle Shannon cemetery next to St. Anne's Church.

Following final dedication on Labor Day, the Philip Murray Bridge will provide an appropriate companion to three sister spans that honor other greats in diverse fields who shared his Pittsburgh links.

The former 6th, 7th and 9th Street bridges are now known as the Roberto Clemente, the Rachel Carson and the Andy Warhol bridges. Each has a special connection to Pittsburgh and the forces that shaped 20th century America.

Special connections

One of the last true heroes of baseball, Clemente embodied the finest of Hispanic Americans, meeting his death in a humanitarian mission to Nicaragua.

Carson is commemorated as the spiritual founder of the modern environmental movement, initiating much of her work and the book "*Silent Spring*" in her Springfield, Pa. homestead, where she helped create an increased awareness of toxics and dangerous workplaces.

Andy Warhol brought attention to the rich cultural and artistic tradition of largely blue collar ethnic communities through his world-famous art and painting.

Ironically, the region's younger generation might recognize one or more of these bridge honorees, but it is unlikely that they would know of the man who lived in a modest suburban Pittsburgh home and who arguably changed the economics and politics of the second half of the last century.

If you entered the work force after 1950, you were affected by the dynamics of bargaining that were launched by Phil Murray and his concept of industrial democracy. His reach was immense — for 16 years he led the Steelworkers and for 12 he was president of the Committee — later Congress of Industrial Organizations, the CIO.

Shaped middle class

Consider wages, for that was a time when workers could shut down an entire national industry, which Murray and his Steelworkers did in 1946, in 1949 and in 1952, to gain what would be in time the fundamental building blocks for social policy achieved through collective bargaining.

Those strikes elicited outrage among the establishment and among many citizens, but they shaped the middle-class standard of living that included the non-union worker as well as the trade unionist. Now disappearing, pensions based upon years of service and health insurance for families became realities in America, with many employers emulating them.

Who was this Philip Murray, anyway? He made the cover of *Time* magazine and was a frequent guest at the White House of presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry Truman.

Historian Melvin Dubovsky said that Murray was different from his labor and industry peers: "He preferred to be among ordinary folk. In negotiations he persuaded, jollied and persevered ... Murray practiced a form of social democratic Catholicism."

Lessons to learn

One of Murray's confidants in his first decade leading the Steelworkers was Harold Ruttenberg, an economist who was the first research director of the USW. Murray told him, "was a man of the people, who had a touch of greatness, a Lincolnesque quality about him and who was essentially a working-class individual."

The Murray bridge will in a sense be a bridge to a past industrial century that represented both glory and power, proving the foundation for America's middle class, now itself in danger of eradication. As with all history, it offers lessons for those willing to learn.

Russell W. Gibbons was the last program director of the Philip Murray Institute of Labor Studies. He is a former editor and communications director of the USW.

AFL-CIO Diversity Dialogues

much and brought a lot of information home that she spread to her union colleagues. "We now have Resolution No. 2, and it is time to make this resolution real," she said. "We must keep the diversity forums going and get progress from this."

In Philadelphia, AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Linda Chavez-Thompson said diversity is a vital issue for labor leaders. Almost half of union members are women and one in five is a person of color, she said.

"Often times because we're busy representing people or because we're busy negotiating contracts we lose sight of the fact that we're not doing enough to make sure that our leadership is diverse, that at all levels people can see themselves in

the leadership of their union," Chavez-Thompson told *USW@Work*.

"This is a very important dialogue for us. We're trying to make sure that we look like the labor movement that is out there today."

Welcome all

William Lucy, secretary-treasurer of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees and president of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists, also attended the Philadelphia session. He said in order for labor to grow stronger — especially as it is under attack from multinational corporations and others — the movement has to welcome and develop all workers.

"The new work force is made up of young people, immigrants, African-Americans, women, gay and lesbian

workers, and the movement has a responsibility to represent their hopes and dreams and aspirations as a part of its basic work," Lucy said.

"Secondly, and equally as important, is to have those kinds of people at the table when policies and decisions are being made that relate to labor's mission — its economic mission, its political mission and certainly the issues that it will deal with on a social basis."



You can hear more from the Philadelphia dialogue in POWERcast Episode 22. Download it on www.usw.org or from iTunes.

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News Bytes

Women's Conference Set for September

Union women from around the world will meet in Toronto, Ontario on Sept. 23-26 at the Sheraton Centre Toronto. The Conference theme is "Women of Steel: Building Power-Taking Action." The conference registration deadline is Aug. 29. We expect the turnout to be even larger than the previous conferences.

For information and registration, go to www.usw.org/womenofsteel.

Sweet Outcome

As if nothing at all had happened, as if a private equity company hadn't swooped in and taken over the FiberMark converter plant in Lowville, N.Y. and arbitrarily slashed benefits, as if the average steelworker there still hadn't lost about \$5 in take home pay because of the cuts, the plant manager invited all the workers to come on down to the annual summer trade show.

He propositioned workers on the 11 to 7 shift first — shut down an hour early and get free ice cream in the show tent outside. All 30 workers knew that if they ate ice cream provided by the company that had made their health insurance unaffordable, it would make them really sick. So they stayed at their machines.

That embarrassed the manager because no one showed for the sales shows. So he ordered the next shift to attend. That put Local 1988 President Roger Turck in an awkward position. He certainly didn't want to violate a company directive, but he didn't want his union brothers to gag on company ice cream either. So he ordered popsicles delivered to the plant and handed one to each worker on the way to the tent.

The sales people might have been a little intimidated by the line of workers enjoying their own treats and declining ice cream offered by the company. The planned hour-long show was over in 10 minutes.

"What we did to them isn't anything like what they did to us," Turck said. "They stole our wages and benefits but not our will to fight."

Local 1988 is not just winning the fight symbolically. The local learned shortly after the popsicle showdown that the NLRB agreed to hear their case against the company.

Kelloggs Contract Ratified

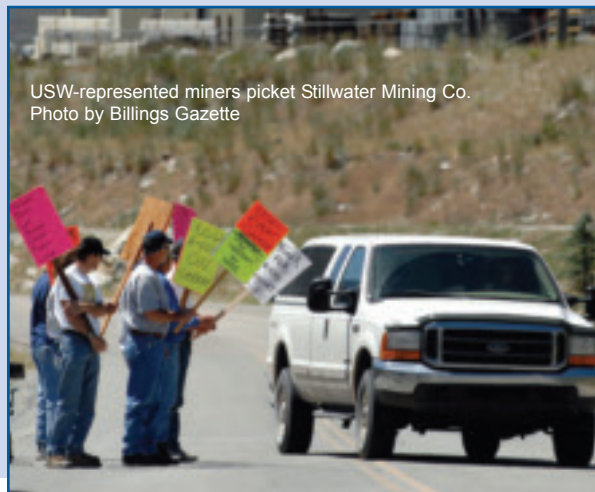
Steelworkers who make Nutri-Grain Bars and Pop-Tarts in Pike County, Ky., for Kelloggs ratified a new agreement that provides for improvements in most contract areas.

The agreement ratified July 17 by members of Local 9345 included a \$500 signing bonus, \$2.50 in pay increases over four years, a \$5 increase in the defined benefit pension multiplier, and a freeze of out-of-pocket health care costs.

This is the first time that an agreement with this employer was ratified on the first vote. Kelloggs bought the plant, which employs about 600 people, in 1996.

Steelworkers staff the 2007 America@Work AFL-CIO Union Industries Show at the Duke Energy Convention Center in Cincinnati, Ohio. The show is an annual expo of products and services produced by union workers. Here, volunteers take a short break in between handing out free products and holding several drawings for product assortments in the USW paper booth. From left, Vickie Brake, Samantha Herdt, Robert Atkins, Robert Odom, Calvin Welck, Sophia Welck, Carolyn Kirchner, Melissa Herdt and Corrinne Kirchner.





USW-represented miners picket Stillwater Mining Co. Photo by Billings Gazette

Strike Leads to Pact at Platinum Mine

USW members struck Stillwater Mining Co. in Montana for six days before ratifying a new four-year labor agreement with the only U.S. producer of palladium and platinum.

The work stoppage involved about 800 members of Local 11-0001 at a Stillwater platinum mine near Nye, Montana, and a related smelter project.

The strike ended July 16 after members ratified the new agreement by a 54 to 46 percent margin. It contained improvements over two previous tentative agreements rejected by the membership.

Miners got a 3 percent wage hike and support workers received 4 percent in the contract's first year. All workers won 4 percent wage increases in each subsequent year. Vacations were improved and benefits were maintained. Emergency leave provisions for new hires were added.

Stillwater is the largest producer of platinum metals outside of Russia and South Africa.

Community Supports Aluminum Strikers

Workers on strike at Ohio Valley Aluminum Co. in Shelbyville, Ky., have received unprecedented encouragement and support from the community in a dispute over their first contract.

Since the strike began June 1, a broad array of civic, labor and community-based organizations have rallied to the cause, including attending a mass rally July 11 at the Louisville corporate headquarters of the parent company, Interlock Industries.

Some 90 workers at the plant, which produces aluminum billets, are represented by Local 1693. The amalgamated local represents 1,600 members at a wide variety of employers.

Working people and community members have donated food and thousands of dollars in cash to help the families of strikers. A local doctor, David W. Suetholz of Taylor Mill, Ky., provided free medical care after the company stripped away workers' meager health insurance when the strike began.

Gerdau Settlement Leaves Two Open Contracts

Members of Local 9777-29 in Joliet, Ill., ratified a four-year agreement with Gerdau Ameristeel, leaving two contracts still outstanding during the current round of bargaining.

Nine contracts with Gerdau have been settled since the company tried to break the union by locking out members of Local 8586 in Beaumont, Texas for six months in 2005. At press time, negotiations were continuing for workers at Sand Springs, Okla., and Calvert City, Ky.

Recent top management changes have led USW negotiators to believe the company may want to develop a more cooperative relationship.

Gerdau is a Brazilian company that has expanded into North America by acquiring existing steelmaking properties, many with USW represented workers. It is now the No. 2 mini-mill producer.

Sparrows Point Goes to Esmark

To satisfy the government's anti-trust concerns, steel giant ArcelorMittal has agreed to sell its Sparrows Point plant near Baltimore to an investor group led by Chicago-based Esmark Inc. and Wheeling-Pittsburgh Corp.

The sale, announced Aug. 2, ends months of uncertainty for the mill's USW-represented workers. Mittal had been looking for a buyer since February when the Department of Justice ordered the sale.

District 1 Director David McCall, USW chair of the ArcelorMittal bargaining committee, said negotiations with both the seller and the new buyer will be initiated and resolved in the near future.

Esmark and Wheeling-Pittsburgh agreed to merge earlier this year. "We are looking forward to our growing relationship with Esmark and their commitment to invest in the acquisition," said International President Leo W. Gerard. "We have full confidence that the Esmark venture will grow steelworker jobs in Baltimore and fulfill the commitment to the retirees."

Sparrows Point is a former Bethlehem Steel plant capable of producing 3.9 million tons of raw steel annually. Our Local 9477 represents about 2,500 active USW members.

Contract with Carlyle Approved

USW-represented workers at four Goodyear Engineered Products plants have ratified a new five-year contract with the Carlyle Group, a private equity firm that is buying the facilities.

The agreement was approved by more than a two-to-one margin at plants located in St. Marys, Ohio, Lincoln, Neb., Sun Prairie, Wis. and Marysville, Ohio. The facilities will become part of EPD Inc. once the sale is finalized.

The USW negotiating committee at the Golden Crest Nursing Home in Hibbing, Minn., recently settled a first contract. Golden Crest was one of three lead cases before the National Labor Relations Board last year in the so-called Kentucky River decision that redefined the legal definition of a supervisor. Pictured are (back row) Nancy Francis,

Local 9349 president; Patty Rancourt, unit president; Cathy Warner, District 11 staff rep. (front row) Theresa Trejo, LPN; Colleen Clusiau, LPN and Deb Waara, RN, LPN. Kristin Jensen is not shown.





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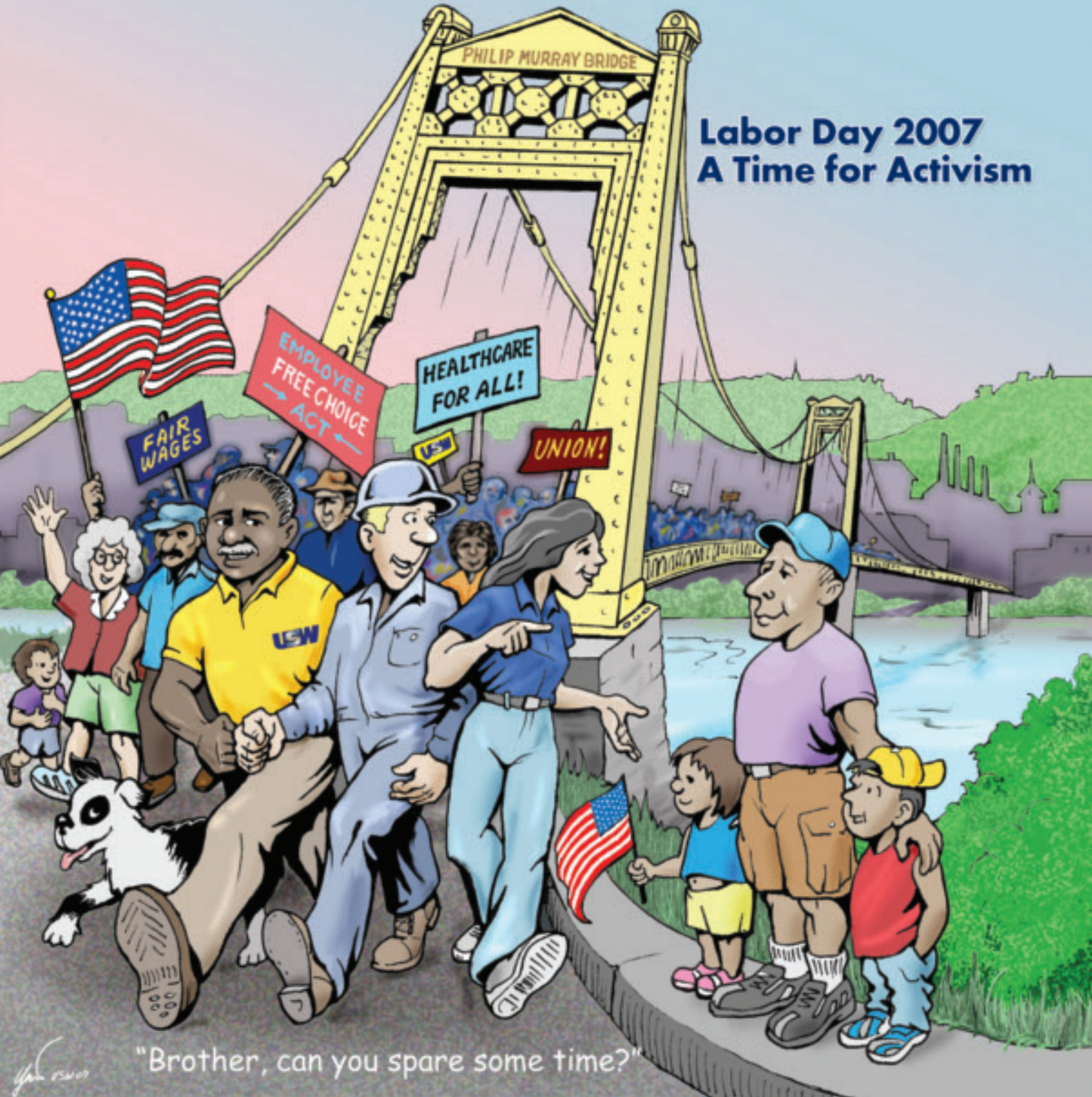
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