

Burleigh Bulletin

United Steelworkers Local 2-232 at Briggs & Stratton

Issue 2

May 29, 2019

Militancy Pays Off in Menominee Falls

Members in the Menomonee Falls Warehouse have begun wearing buttons that say, "Ready to fight against mandatory OT beyond 18 weekends." They're putting Briggs & Stratton on notice: Violations of our union contract will not be tolerated.

The company has responded by offering to hold raffles for employees who volunteer to work Saturdays. Possible prizes would include Briggs & Stratton products or gift cards.

Prior to beginning the campaign, union representatives spoke with Menomonee Falls plant manager, Greg Green, and HR manager, Teri Zielski, who both denied that the company plans to violate the contract. But workers in each department are keeping a running (Continued on Page 2)



Collective Action is the Heartbeat of the Union by President Jesse Edwards

Standing together is what makes the union strong. Uniting with our fellow workers to fight for better pay, benefits, and working conditions is the essence of unionism.

Historically, in extreme cases, job actions and strikes have been necessary to pressure companies to recognize and respect the needs of working people. But having a contract enables us to wage day-to-day struggles without disrupting production.

The little things we do together contribute to the strength of the union and give it the power to enforce the contract and represent us effectively. Here's how we do it:

Wearing union t-shirts on the shop floor
Our navy and gold t-shirts stand out and

(Continued on Page 2)

Know Your Rights

In a *non-union* workplace the bosses can fire you for any reason or *no reason at all*. There are very few restrictions on why or when they can put you out of a job and leave you and your family without an income.

But working in a union shop means, in order to fire you, the bosses must have *just cause*. Our union contract spells it out in black and white: **Article V, Section 3** states, "Employees with seniority will not be discharged without just and sufficient cause..." It goes on to say, "Employees found to have been unjustifiably discharged shall be reinstated to their jobs with full seniority, and unless otherwise agreed to between the Company and the Union, shall be paid for all time lost as a result of such discharge."

That means, if you're fired unjustifiably, the union is prepared, with the full weight of a legally binding document, to fight to get your job back.

Collective Action (continued)

make a bold statement. They tell the company that you will stand up and defend your rights, that you're a leader, and that you value your fellow workers' rights and wellbeing over the company's greed.

Paying dues

In order to take part in the collective life of the union by voting, running for union office, or attending union meetings, we must be members in good standing, and that means paying dues.

The dues we pay fund the activity of our union. For example, when union stewards and officers represent us or do organizing work, they are required to clock out. During that "lost time" they are paid by the union, not the company.

Dues money also goes toward literature and other materials and costs associated with running a workers' organization.

Attending union meetings

Membership meetings are where decisions about the future of our union are made. This is where members get to vote and have a say on how our union relates to the company, the labor movement, and the broader community. Meeting times are posted on bulletin boards around the plant.

Sticking up for our fellow workers

Don't play management's little blame game. Don't let them turn us against each other. If you see someone being singled out unjustly, say something. If management gets out of pocket, tell your steward and ask to file a grievance.

Being informed/informing others

Read the contract and union newsletters. Visit the local and international websites frequently. Sign up for text message updates.

Each member of United Steelworkers 2-232 is a leader in the fight for a better future, not just for themselves and their coworkers, but for their whole community and the working class. This is what it means to be a *Steelworker*.

www.usw.org
www.uswlocals.org/local-2-232

REPRESENT YOUR UNION!

- ★ T-shirts
- ★ Hats
- ★ Outerwear
- ★ Stickers
- ★ More



www.steelworkersmerchandise.com

Militancy (continued)

tally of mandatory Saturdays.

As one worker put it, "I wouldn't put it past the company to try to pull a fast one. They've been screwing us for years."

The contract language is clear and unambiguous. **Article VI, Section 9** gives the company the right to designate eighteen Saturdays per calendar year for mandatory overtime.

As the 18 weekend limit approached, members wanted to make a big statement letting the company know that they intended to defend the union contract.

The steward distributed the buttons to first and second shift workers on a Friday. By the following Monday, the company had contacted the union with an offer: To encourage employees to volunteer for Saturday overtime, volunteers' names would be entered into a raffle.

The union is waiting for additional details about the offer.

Solidarity Social

A day of fun, FREE for union members
Bowling, Bag Toss, Vollyball
Drinks, Food, and Prizes

Saturday, July 27th, Noon to 4
Brown Deer Lanes

Bring your kids! Have a ball!