

March 2024

Volume 3



# Forged Together

USW 2958 Newsletter



Communications Team:

Zach Keller, Andrew Betzner, Paul Reehling, Paul Wines,  
& Joe Fields

## **USW LABOR NEWS: SUMMER SCHOOL EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES**

By Joe Fields

One of the things I appreciate about our local and district leaders is their willingness and desire to educate the membership, specifically the USW District 7 summer school scholarship program. This program is a partnership between USW District 7 and the University of Illinois located in Champaign. The school features a four-year program, along with specialized electives that help build our power as a

union. The classes are held during June and July, in week increments. Nearly 600 steelworkers from Indiana, Illinois, and now Wisconsin go through the program every summer. It is the longest union/university education partnership in America.

Some of the things you will learn and the classes that are offered include "Grievance Handling & Processing," "Labor History," "Civil Rights," "Safety and Health on the Job," along with specialized classes focusing on negotiations, arbitrations, and building programs such as "Women of Steel."

I am grateful for the educational opportunities that I have been provided. Knowledge is power, and it is crucial to have an informed and educated membership. This is true not only for the shop floor but also for the functions of our local union.

# Education Opportunities

Continued

Along with the learning opportunities, you will have the chance to meet other steelworkers from a wide variety of industries, with entirely different experiences, contracts, and perspectives. This has helped me have a greater understanding of solidarity beyond 2958.

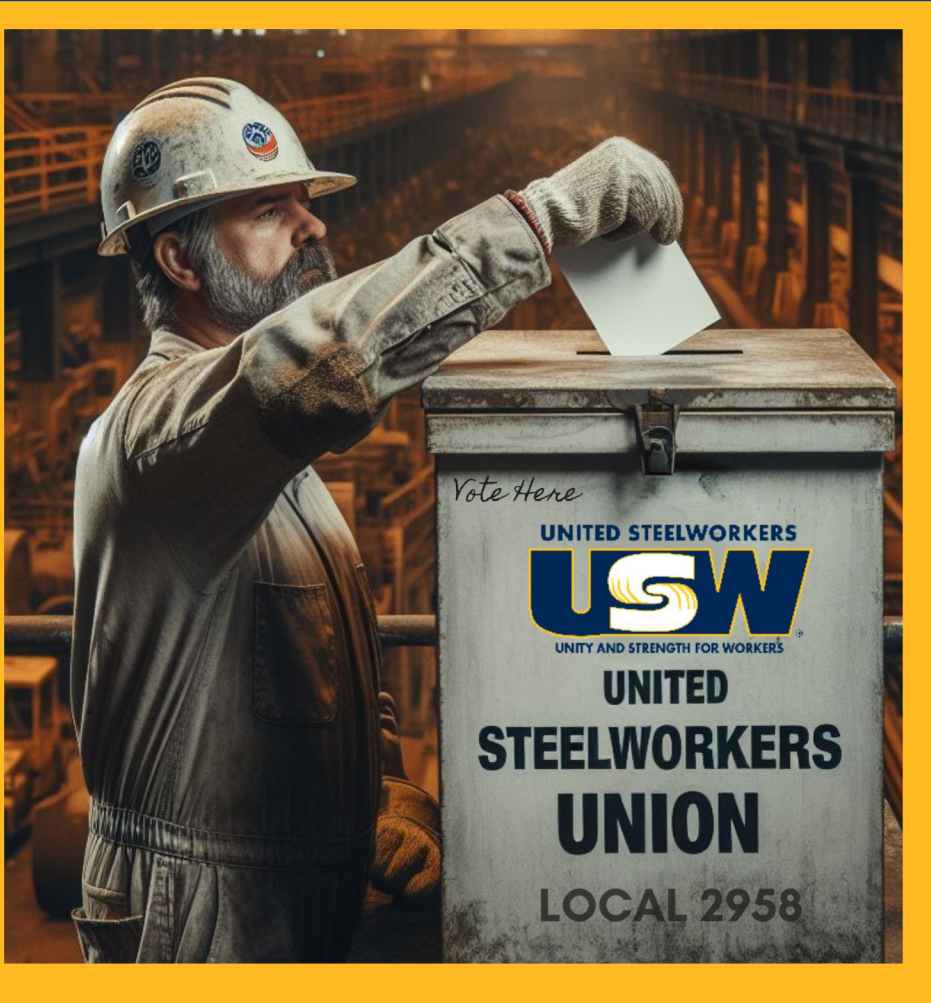
You will get to meet SOAR members – those who are retired from their jobs but maintain a desire to be active for the cause of the working class. You will also meet district leadership and other workers from the International.

This becomes helpful when you need a point of contact from someone outside of our local. Also, to be honest, when you go to summer school, you realize local leadership doesn't always have the answer for your situation, and it's okay to seek that information for yourself.

Currently, to be eligible to attend summer school, you must have attended half of the membership meetings over the prior year and fill out a scholarship form. These usually come by mail and should have already arrived in your mailbox. They are also posted on union information boards, or you can call the Union Hall and request one.

It's imperative that we prioritize education as a local. An organized and powerful union doesn't just happen through memes, Facebook posts, and t-shirt campaigns. It happens by valuing education and having as many people as possible take the opportunity to empower themselves and make our union stronger.

Applications will be due by March 15 and information should have reached you by mail. Listed on pages 8-9 of this newsletter is information on classes. Please call the Union Hall at (765) 452-4367 with any questions or for more information.



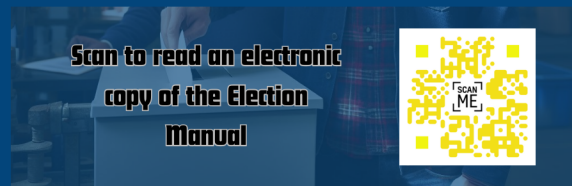
## ELECTION INFORMATION: PROCESS & PROCEDURES

By Zach Keller

Our Local Union elections must be conducted in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution, as well as the Local Union By-Laws and rules approved by the International Union. The election of all Local Union Officers and Grievance Committee persons will take place in April. Nominations shall take place from the floor at the meeting immediately preceding the scheduled date of voting. That date is set for March 21, 2024, during the regular monthly meeting. Nominees must indicate their acceptance or rejection of their nomination before the first nomination meeting, usually by letter to the Recording Secretary. If only one eligible member has been nominated for an office and has accepted the nomination within the prescribed time limits, no election is necessary for that office.

# Election Information

Continued



Members are not allowed to be candidates for or hold more than one specific office at the same time, unless it is an Executive Board position and an Area Grievance Committeeperson position. If nominated for more than one Executive Board position, you must decide on which nomination to accept at the nomination meeting. In order to make certain that no member is given the impression that a candidate has the endorsement of the United Steelworkers, no candidate or supporters of candidates shall print, or be permitted to print, campaign material on any type of union letterhead, to apply any USW logos to any campaign materials, or to use any union materials or media, whether from the local, the district, or the international.

The notice of the nomination meeting must be given to the membership at least one week prior to the meeting by mailing to each member's last known home address. The notice must also specify the Local Union offices to be filled and advise that absentee ballots are available to members who will be more than fifty miles away from a designated polling place during the election. Nominations shall take place from the floor at the meeting immediately preceding the election, and the names of nominated members must be recorded in the Local Union Minute Book. Additionally, members must meet specific eligibility requirements to run for Local Union office or Grievance Committeeperson, including being in continuous good standing for a period of 24 months and must have attended at least one-third (1/3) of the regular meetings held by the Local Union during the twenty-four (24) month period immediately preceding the month in which the election is to be held, provided that meetings which a member was prevented from attending because of any of the following six specific reasons shall not be counted in determining that member's eligibility. The six are, union business, working hours, service in the Armed Forces of the United States, sickness which confines, death in the immediate family, and Jury Duty. Meetings which the member is prevented from attending because of one of the six excuses will not

be counted in determining the number of meetings the member must have attended to be eligible. Elected Officers and Grievance Committeepersons shall serve until their successors are elected and qualified. Executive Board positions are also exempt from the meeting requirements due to an NLRB decision.

The Election Committee is responsible for supervising the voting, maintaining order at the polling place, and providing absentee ballots to eligible members. The results of the election must be posted promptly, and the Election Committee report must be submitted to the membership at the next regular meeting following the election. The election committee is headed by Phil Kuntzman.

Every bona fide candidate has the right to inspect a list containing the names and last known addresses of all members of the Local Union and have observers who are entitled to be present when the Election Committee prepares and mails the absentee ballot materials to the members and are also entitled to be present when the returned absentee ballots are checked for verification, placed in the ballot box and later counted. Observers must be members in good standing. Members designated by candidates to act as observers shall identify themselves and report to the Tellers in sufficient time before the election to enable the Tellers to check their identity and membership status. The Tellers shall afford observers a reasonable opportunity to observe the conduct of the election on election day, including observation of: the ballot box before voting commences, the opening of the ballots, the opening of the polls, the voting at the polling places, the check made by the Tellers against the Local Union membership list of the eligibility of members desiring to vote, the handling of members whose eligibility to vote is challenged, the ballots and tally sheets during the tabulation conducted by the Tellers, and the sealing of the ballot boxes by the Tellers.

Overall, the Election Manual provides detailed guidelines and procedures for conducting elections, ensuring transparency, fairness, and adherence to the Union's Constitution. A copy of the Manual is kept at the Hall and is also available online for all who wish to read it by scanning the QR code accompanying this article with your mobile device. Anyone wanting to volunteer as a teller should contact the hall as soon as is practicable. Those running for office are ineligible to be Tellers.



# When In Doubt, Seek Them Out

By Andrew Betzner



Who wants to talk about feelings? Gut feelings that is. No, not that sensation saying habanero hot sauce was a bad idea. I'm talking about that feeling in the pit of your stomach when you think something you're about to do might cause you bodily harm. No, I'm still not talking about hot sauce. I'm talking about safety, your rights when you and management disagree on it, and what your Union Safety and Health Representative can do for you.

Pretend for a moment your supervisor orders you to perform a task you feel is unsafe. Obviously, the first course of action would be to express your concerns to your supervisor and ask them to correct the situation. What if they refuse? You don't want to receive discipline for insubordination but that gut feeling is telling you that your safety is at risk if you comply. Your union contract under Article 15.2, Letter D, Item 3 addresses this situation, granting you the right to have your Safety and Health Representative present.

Let's talk about why you may need the assistance of a Safety and Health Representative. Much like Weingarten Rights, in order to get your Safety and Health Representative all you have to do is ask.



Tell your supervisor you feel uncomfortable and would like a S&H rep present. If they refuse or they are unable to reach the on-duty S&H Rep, reach out to Safety and Health Chairman Doug Kline at (765) 461-7947 by either call or text. This number is posted in your building's union bulletin board. After Safety and Health is contacted, the task should stop until they can assess the situation.

Upon arrival the Safety and Health rep will determine if the process should continue or if the job needs to halt until the unsafe situation is corrected. "It's up to Safety [Representative] whether or not work continues. We always try to give the company the chance to correct the issue," says S&H Chairman Kline. "If they don't make the right decision then safety does have the authority to shut down the job. Over the years we have had to do that a handful of times because supervisors want to just push out work. We can and will shut down jobs but that is rare anymore."

Coils, slabs, and heats can be replaced. Fingers, limbs, and lives cannot. You should never feel uncomfortable seeking a second opinion. I asked Chairman Kline what he wishes people knew about the process, he said "The thing I want people to know is the safety committee will always come to look at situations with everyone's safety as the first thought. We want everyone to go home from work the same way they walked in."

Current Safety & Health Representatives (subject to change)

- SAFETY & HEALTH CHAIR - DOUG KLINE, FIRST SHIFT
- SAFETY & HEALTH (ALT) - SCOTT PULSIPHER, FIRST SHIFT
- SAFETY & HEALTH - DENNIS TUCKER, SECOND SHIFT
- SAFETY & HEALTH (ALT) - KEVIN SMITH, SECOND SHIFT
- SAFETY & HEALTH - KELVIN VAZQUEZ, THIRD SHIFT



# METAL MAYHEM

LOCAL 2958'S EDITORIAL  
CARTOON FEATURE

BY PAUL WINES



## UNITED STEELWORKERS EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM (ERT)

By Paul Wines

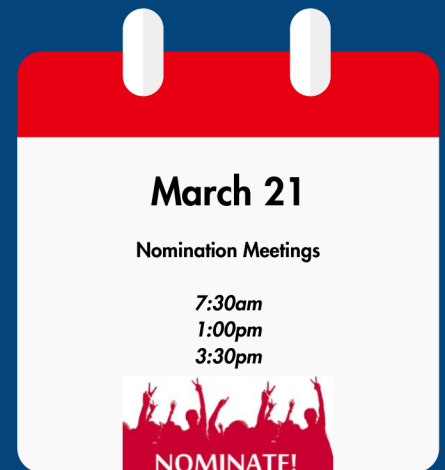
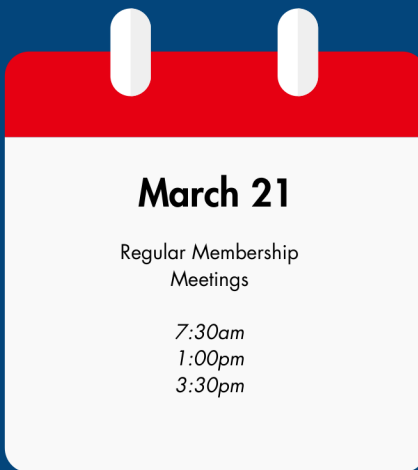
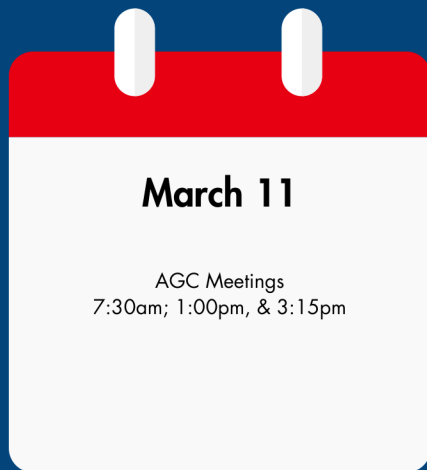
Allow me to introduce myself. I am Paul Wines and I have been a part of Haynes's Emergency Response Team for the past 19 years. I am also a 20-year veteran, volunteer Firefighter/ First Responder.

As most of you are aware, our company has an Emergency Response Team (ERT) to help those of us who might suffer minor cuts, major medical issues, slip-and-falls, spills (both large and small), hazardous chemical spills, and clean-up. These members are also trained to handle some of the worst-case scenarios. The ERT team members are the first ones on scene of any incident, the first to start needed medical attention, and may very well be the last persons you see when the ambulance doors close. Unfortunately, our local ERT team has had to deal with a number of severe situations in the last few years.

The USW ERT takes over after an initial response to provide aid, counseling, investigate causes, provide legal assistance, find and fix hazards, support the local union, and coordinate with regulators. Specific duties include: serving as victim advocates, coordinating support, finding lodging, acting as a liaison between families/company/union, helping secure legal representation, providing therapist referrals, follow-up care, gathering insurance information, and offering mental health resources. The USW ERT has a 24/7 call center to receive incident information and deploy a response team within 24 hours. They are continually trained to advocate for victims no matter the situation. The goal is to assist families, coworkers, and local ERT teams who have had their lives disrupted by providing a shoulder to cry on, listening, and helping however needed after an incident.

Our goal is that no matter who, what, or when, the International ERT team is ready to be called upon to provide assistance for those brothers and sisters, their families, coworkers, local ERT team members and company. We are there for the family members who have just had their lives disrupted by the event. the International ERT team is ready to help with whatever may happen. Whether it be offering a shoulder to cry on, hold the hand of those who have to deal with the aftermath of an incident, or just be a trained ear to listen to concerns on multiple levels.

# LOCAL 2958 CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS



## New Hires 101: How to Give Rookies the Union Orientation They Deserve

By Zach Keller

As new hires take to the floor and begin their journey with us, it's important to highlight the important educational role that we as "experienced" brothers and sisters play. As the "face of the union," to new members, we serve as a resource for them to learn about the rights and benefits they receive under our collective bargaining agreement once they successfully complete their 120 day probationary period.

We should proactively reach out to new members to educate them on contract provisions like seniority, healthcare, grievance procedures, etc. Don't wait for them to come to you. We should also admit that if we don't know the answer to a question, we'll commit to following up once we get more information or sending them to a person who does. This shows everyone that we're all on the same team.

We should all endeavor to make them feel comfortable approaching us. Building trust takes time. Education though should go both ways. We learn from every interaction. Serving as a resource to new hires empowers everyone and builds loyalty.

Providing members with knowledge gives the union strength at the bargaining table and on the shop floor. Check in frequently at first to see if they have questions. Be patient though, as a new member and employee they can have a steep learning curve. Explain who they can go to for help with tasks, equipment issues, schedule changes, etc. Point out people, such as Committeepersons and EAP representatives so they can get the help they need. Keep an eye out for them so that they work safely. An informed membership is a powerful and effective unit.



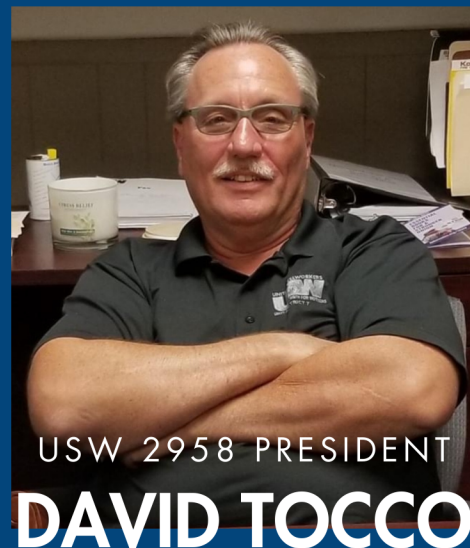
**"When we give of ourselves cheerfully and accept gratefully, everyone is blessed"**

Maya Angelou



## YOUR LOCAL OFFICERS & OFFICIALS

VICE-PRESIDENT - STEVE LEMING  
FINANCIAL SECRETARY - ROBERT CRULL  
TREASURER - JOE FIELDS  
RECORDING SECRETARY - JOHN BECK  
GUIDE - TROY JOHNS  
OUTSIDE GUARD - MARION LABIG  
INSIDE GUARD - WILLIE JACKSON  
TRUSTEE - DESMON WILLIAMS  
TRUSTEE - ZACH KELLER  
TRUSTEE - JIM ELLIOTT



USW 2958 PRESIDENT  
**DAVID TOCCO**

## YOUR LOCAL OFFICERS & OFFICIALS

Continued

EAP REPRESENTATIVE - LOWELL PARSON, FIRST SHIFT  
EAP REPRESENTATIVE - KELLY SILVERS, FIRST SHIFT  
EAP REPRESENTATIVE - BYRON ELLISON, THIRD SHIFT  
EAP REPRESENTATIVE - DANNY SHELTON, THIRD SHIFT  
EAP REPRESENTATIVE - DAVID TOCCO, FIRST SHIFT  
EAP REPRESENTATIVE - DESMON WILLIAMS, THIRD SHIFT  
EAP REPRESENTATIVE - JIM ELLIOTT, FIRST SHIFT  
EAP REPRESENTATIVE - ERIC HAINLEN, THIRD SHIFT  
EAP REPRESENTATIVE - STEVE LEMING, FIRST SHIFT  
EAP REPRESENTATIVE - ERIC GIBSON, SECOND SHIFT  
EAP REPRESENTATIVE - LISA BRYANT, SECOND SHIFT  
EAP REPRESENTATIVE - BRAYDEN MOTE, THIRD SHIFT

HUMAN RIGHTS CHAIR - WILLIE JACKSON, FIRST SHIFT  
HUMAN RIGHTS ASSISTANT - ROMAN MARTIN, FIRST SHIFT  
HUMAN RIGHTS ASSISTANT - HENRY YOUNG, SECOND SHIFT  
RAPID RESPONSE COORDINATOR, JIM ELLIOTT, FIRST SHIFT  
SAFETY & HEALTH CHAIR - DOUG KLUNE, FIRST SHIFT  
SAFETY & HEALTH (ALT) - SCOTT PULSIPHER, FIRST SHIFT  
SAFETY & HEALTH - DENNIS TUCKER, SECOND SHIFT  
SAFETY & HEALTH (ALT) - KEVIN SMITH, SECOND SHIFT  
SAFETY & HEALTH - KELVIN VAZQUEZ, THIRD SHIFT  
CONTRACTING OUT CHAIR - SCOTT PUSLIPHER, FIRST SHIFT  
CONTRACTING OUT ASST. - KEVIN SMITH, SECOND SHIFT  
SKILLED TRADES CHAIR - JOHN BECK, FIRST SHIFT  
SKILLED TRADES COMMITTEE - DENVER REEVES, FIRST SHIFT

AGC- Brandon Thomas WG 1 - Department 170; first shift  
ASSISTANT- Jeremy Ingold WG 1 - Department 170; third shift  
ASSISTANT -Johnnie Roberts WG 1 - Department 170; first shift

AGC- Eric Gibson WG 2 - Department 190; second shift  
ASSISTANT - Alvah Copeland WG 2 - Department 190; first shift

AGC- Kasey Mitchell WG 3 - Department 145; first shift

AGC- Michael Wright, WG 4 - Department 143; first shift  
ASSISTANT- Craig Musgrave WG 4 - Department 143

AGC- Scott Pulsipher WG 5A - Department 154; first shift  
ALT - Zach Keller WG 5A - Department 154; first shift

AGC - Danny Acord WG 5B - Department 156; first shift  
ALT- Trey Shane WG 5B - Department 168; first shift  
ASSISTANT- Braedon Wyrick WG 5B - Department 168; 2nd shift

AGC- Dennis Tucker WG 6 - Department 172; second shift  
ALT- Marion 'Bud' Labig WG 6 - Department 172; first shift  
ASSISTANT- Matt Mince WG 6 - Department 172; first shift

AGC- Randy McGuire, WG 8 - Department 427; first shift  
ASSISTANT- Craig Bambrough WG 8 - Department 427; third shift  
ASSISTANT -Doug Herr WG 8 - Department 427; first shift

AGC- Pat Young WG 9, 10 - Department 447; first shift  
ASSISTANT- Rob Ooley WG 9, 10 - Department 447; third shift.

AGC- Bryan Ashburn WG 11 - Department 297; first shift  
ASST- Adam Henderson WG 11 - 297; first shift

AGC- Kacey Gibson WG 13 - Department 317; first shift

*Area Grievance Commiteepersons*

# 2024 USW District 7 Scholarship Classes Information

\*\*\*ALL CLASSES ARE HELD MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY WITH A MANDATORY ORIENTATION ON SUNDAY\*\*\*

At the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

## JUNE 2-7, 2024

- **Latino Leadership:** Esta clase se impartirá íntegramente en Español. Esta clase se centrará en la tutoría de los latinos en el movimiento obrero. (This class will be taught entirely in Spanish. This class will focus on mentoring Latinos in the labor movement.)
- **Raymond G. Pasnick Alumni Class:** This is for those members who have completed Summer School 1-4. This class will deal with various subjects within our union and the labor movement.
- **Summer School Year 1:** A 500-word essay and the Raymond G. Pasnick 4-Year Scholarship Application must be completed and attached to the USW District 7 2024 Scholarship Program Application given to your Local Union President. The first year of the 4-year Summer School Program. College professors and USW Staff will teach classes. You will be in class all day.
- **Women of Steel Year 3:** Prerequisites: Introduction to WOS, WOS Year 1, and WOS Year 2. This class will focus on exchanging information, ideas, thoughts, feelings, and emotions through speech, signals, writing, and behavior. Participants in this class will also be coached on how to effectively communicate face-to-face, on the phone, and with social media. \*MUST BRING A LAPTOP TO CLASS\*

## JULY 7-12, 2024

- **Advanced Arbitration Prep:** This class will teach you how to prepare and present a case for arbitration, and also participate in a mock arbitration. Previous experience with grievance handling in your local is required for this class.
- **Economics and Its Effect on the Labor Movement:** We will explore how the American middle-class job evolved, why workers (union and non-union) and their families today are finding it hard to hold onto the American dream. We will offer an overview of the American economic system, how it has historically evolved along with a contemporary analysis of why income inequality has grown so severe. We will discuss the labor movement's proposals for once again making the American dream possible for working people.
- **New Steelworker Activists:** This class is for new members only with fewer than six (6) years with the Union and have not started the Summer School 4-Year Program. You will be introduced to District 7's Summer School Program, the USW, its history, principles and values, structure, dues, strike and defense funds, etc. \*MUST BRING A LAPTOP TO CLASS\*

## JULY 7-12, 2024 continued

- **Rapid Response:** Rapid Response focuses on current issues and legislation that involve our membership. This class will help provide the tools to improve education, communication, and action structure. Whether you are new to Rapid Response or a veteran of Rapid Response, this class is for you. Members will take part in role-playing exercises. This is a hands-on class and participation of the members is an absolute must.
- **Social Media Matters:** Participants will learn how the use of social media tools can enhance member involvement as well as learn social media practices, including video production. Students will then collaborate on a project to produce, shoot, and edit short videos. \*MUST BRING A LAPTOP TO CLASS\*
- **Trustee Training:** This class is only for current and newly-elected Trustees of the local. The class is taught by International auditors and is designed to make you a better trustee of the local. \*MUST BRING A LAPTOP TO CLASS\*
- **Introduction to Women of Steel:** Designed specifically for our women in the union. It will cover issues unique to women in the industrial setting, dealing with harassment, family/work issues, union activism, and child care.
- **Women of Steel Year 2:** Prerequisites: Introduction to WOS & WOS Year 1. This class will focus on grievance handling, becoming an effective griever, the challenges female grievors face, and mentoring sisters in the labor movement. College professors, USW Staff, and Local Union Members will teach this class.

## JULY 21-26, 2024

- **Summer School Years 2, 3, & 4:** Classes must be taken in consecutive order. These classes are the continuation of the Summer School 4-Year Program at the University of Illinois. College professors and USW Staff will teach these classes.
- **Women of Steel Year 4:** Prerequisites: Introduction to WOS, WOS1, WOS2 & WOS3. This class will focus on creating a plan of action on how to use your developed leadership skills to create an organizational structure that will educate all sisters on the WOS Committee and women's issues while embracing resistance. This will give you an idea of "Where do I go from here?"





# 2024 USW District 7 Scholarship Classes Information (continued)

\*\*\*ALL CLASSES ARE HELD MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY WITH A MANDATORY ORIENTATION ON SUNDAY\*\*

At the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

AUGUST 4-9, 2024

- **Collective Bargaining:** This class will cover costing out contracts, preparing for bargaining, the laws of collective bargaining, understanding contract language, and will include mock negotiating sessions.

- **Financial Officer Training:** This class is for current and newly elected financial officers of the local only. It is taught by our International Auditors and is designed to help you properly handle and record the local's finances (and keep you out of jail). \*MUST BRING A LAPTOP TO CLASS\*

- **Labor History:** This class explores labor history and the history of the workers' rights movements in America.

- **Women of Steel Year 1:** Prerequisite: Introduction to WOS. This class will cover Women's History in the Labor Movement. College professors, USW Staff, and Local Union Members will teach this class.



At Linden Hall - Dawson, Pennsylvania

AUGUST 18-23, 2024

- **Director's District 7 Leadership:** Agenda has not yet been finalized

- **Health & Safety:** Agenda has not yet been finalized



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



## LOCAL UNION BUSINESS DIRECTORY

Cardwell Tax Service (David Hunt)

Tax preparation services

Call Heather Hunt at 766-864-0684 with any questions or to schedule an appointment

343 S 00 EW, Kokomo, IN 46902

We are a small family owned business that has been in operation for 50 years. We prepare tax returns for individuals, businesses, farms and rentals! UAW and USW member owned.

Terry Roe

Epoxy painted insulated cups and hardhats



574-229-3998

[nrsroe1@outlook.com](mailto:nrsroe1@outlook.com)

Colby Marner

My name is Colby Marner and I am an Esthetician and Massage Therapist. I run my spa business when I'm not working at Haynes. I have a little studio in downtown Kokomo where I do facials, waxing, lashes, microneedling and massage.

Body Glow on Facebook text 317-855-0595 for booking info

Brandi Tackett

S&B Creations LLC

Website: [www.sbcreations4you@gmail.com](mailto:sbcreations4you@gmail.com)  
Facebook group: S&B Creations LLC  
Cell: 765-480-9974 (call or text)

What we do: Custom apparel, graphic design, tumblers, marketing material, laser engraving, keychains, decals, and more.

Danny Shelton

Dumpster rental  
[www.RussioVillerentals.com](http://www.RussioVillerentals.com)  
765-867-8104

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OUR USW  
BROTHERS & SISTERS

# Vote! Your Power, Your Union, Your Future!

By Paul Reehling

Why should I vote in the upcoming election of our union officers and representatives? Does my vote even matter? Should I care who is in office? I don't participate in any union functions, so why should I care about elections? All these questions and more run through people's minds. And some are just apathetic about the whole thing and don't care.

As an active member of the United Steelworkers union, I WANT to have a say on who is fighting for and representing me with the company. I want the best possible people in office to help us move forward toward better pay, better benefits, and a better work environment. I'd love to say everyone feels the same but we all know that they don't. Let's look at these questions that I've asked and try to find answers to them.

## First up - Why should I vote in the upcoming election of our union officers and representatives?

Voting is how we make ourselves heard as we strive to influence our future. Most, if not all of us, want something better as we move forward in our job and this is just one way for us to try to do something to improve our situation. We make a decent wage, have health benefits, 401k, vacation time, many holidays, but could things be better? I want to think so and having the right people in office can help with that.

## Second - Does my vote even matter?

Absolutely, every single vote counts. IF a candidate get just ONE more vote than anyone else running for that position he or she wins. With only approximately 500 union members at Haynes, everyone's vote is very important. If you don't vote then you are leaving the next set of officers in someone else's hands. You could be that one vote that makes a difference.

## Third - Should I care who is in office?

In my opinion, YES you should definitely care. Those in office represent us in a way we cannot do alone. They are our voices to the company and I for one want

someone representing me to have the same ideals and values that I have.

## Fourth - I don't participate in any union functions, so why should I care about elections?

Very similar question to the last one, and yes, you should absolutely care. Even if you are not participating in union activities you still have someone actively fighting for you and you should want the best possible person doing that.

And for those who are just apathetic about the whole thing, there are more and more opportunities popping up all the time that are trying to grab your attention. I, for one, spent a long time sitting on the sideline. I voted for contracts and voted for elections but that's it. Now that I've gotten involved I definitely feel more a part of the union than before.

I see more of the workings that go on in our union and by our officers. I see reasons to get more involved and participate more. It just takes YOU to step out and try something, see where the opportunities are and get involved.

So go out and meet the candidates. Find out what they are all about. Don't listen to rumours about them, find out for yourself. I would think that any and all running for office would be happy to let you know why they think they would be good at whichever position they are running for and what they would like to try and accomplish while in office.

I'll be casting my vote. I hope you all will also.



# Local 2958 Member Highlight

John Walton ~ Member Since 2015

## Passions and interests outside of your job?

When I'm not at work, I'm usually camping with my wife. We love to find state parks that we have not yet been to. The parks have great scenery with lots of hiking trails and bike riding. We travel all over the state and most of the Midwest. I also love to kayak fish and a few years ago I got into Kayak bass fishing tournaments.

## What's your favorite thing about your local community, and how do you like to contribute or give back?

I think that the people of this community do a great job of helping people in need. There are a lot of charity organizations that help people who are struggling. This community steps up and I love that. I give back by donating whenever I can and supporting local businesses that give back to the community. I also join running events like 5k run/walks that donate the proceeds to different charities.

## If your life were a movie, which actor would play you, and what would the title be?

Paul Hogan, One More Adventure

## Is there a particular accomplishment or achievement that you're especially proud of?

I think that the thing that I am most proud of is serving my country in The Army. My time in service positively impacted my life and I gained a lot of lifelong friends.

## What advice would you give to new members who are just starting their journey with the union?

My advice to new members would be to seek out your committeemen and see how you can get involved and what all the union has to offer. Talk with other members about questions that you have. Stay informed through the meeting and the bulletins that come out.



# Local Union News: Women of Steel

By Faith Truax

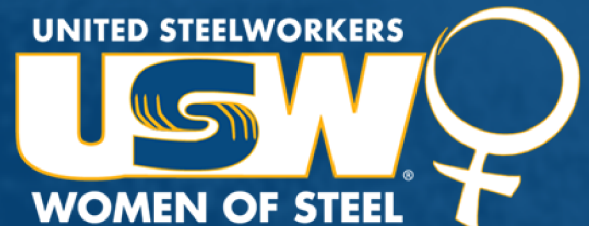
The local USW 2958 held the first Women of Steel meeting on January 31. We had a few women attend the different meetings and assisted with forming ideas for the first fundraising idea for a local shelter.

Our next meeting is set for March 28th at 7:30am, 1:00pm, and 3:30pm. The following information is about our fundraiser; Women of Steel will be collecting items to donate to the Gilead House in Kokomo, Indiana to help local women in need. From March 11-18, there will be donation boxes placed in the break rooms for hygiene and personal care items. We will also accept monetary donations through the Venmo link @USW2958 (please indicate this is a gift).

We are excited about getting more women involved with our chapter to build a better foundation for issues that concern women in our workplace specifically, and to help local women in the community.



Byron Ellison wanted to let everyone know he is very appreciative of the gate collection we took up for him, To the person that wrote the note, thank you for your kind words and God Bless!



# World Labor News: Workers of the World, Unite!

By Andrew Betzner

On February 5th, 2024 in two factories over 4,000 miles apart, workers would wake up to separate news stories that would alter their futures. I'm sure you are familiar with the story of our factory and the announcement of a planned merger with Acerinox, but what do you know of our newly acquired siblings in Los Barrios, Spain?

Situated in the southern portion of Spain just a stone's throw away from the Rock of Gibraltar lies Los Barrios. Home to 23,000 Spaniards and Acerinox Europa. While we were receiving news of a buyout, the 1,800 employees of the Los Barrios plant were staging a walkout. After a year of negotiations, talks had stalled over pay increases and changes to work scheduling. Public news on this story is limited, so the members of Forged Together decided to reach out to one of these workers.

For privacy reasons we will refer to our new found brother as Samuel. Like several factories in the US, Los Barrios employees are paid on scale ranging from level one (\$6.71/hr U.S dollars) to level 13 (\$13.48/hr U.S. dollars). On top of that they receive additional hazardous pay and shift premium, as well as a monthly production bonus. Samuel states he makes roughly \$32,000 yearly, which he says is good for his area (median salary in Spain was \$29,000 in 2023).

Where we differ vastly from our European counterparts is work life balance. Remember when UAW President Shawn Fain asked for a 32 hour work week and the country laughed at him? Samuel tells us he works 18-19 days a month. 8 hrs shifts on a schedule of 6 days on, 4 days off. This work-life balance that they enjoy is at the heart of the negotiation breakdowns.

At the time of writing, the company has offered pay raises of only 2.75% the first year and 1.75% for the following 3 years, falling well short of the workers' demands of 3% for all four years. The biggest attack has been to work-life balance previously mentioned. According to Samuel, the changes would reduce the amount of time off by close to 2/3rds. The reaction of the workers to these proposals

has been...intense. On the morning of February 5th anyone wanting to enter the Los Barrios factory was met with a wall of flames. Bonfires had been lit by the strikers to prevent access to the facilities. This was only the beginning of the unrest. On February 13th, hundreds of strikers blocked the A-7 highway - a major artery for the region. The response from Acerinox has been to challenge the legality of the strike, which workers are calling a failed attempt to cause fear.

Besides the tenacity which these men and women are fighting, what captures my attention the most is the solidarity. Everyone knows the magnitude of the situation and is doing their part to guarantee success. Two weeks into the strike and morale still remains strong. This unity extends to the surrounding community. If you see the reactions to their news posts or read the comments on their videos, you don't see the hate and ridicule often launched at workers taking action in America. You see a community standing with them. They had a major highway cut off in their neighborhood and the public recognizes that what these men are fighting for is far more important than them being late to work. That its a fight they all benefit from, and welcome it.

Samuel mentions that not just in Spain but in all of Europe is experiencing a period of increased labor activity. Like the agricultural strikes in France last month, he mentions the farmers in Spain are now on strike, too. That one day the tractors went by their factory so they joined them. "In Spain we have been asleep for a very long time and it's time to wake up and join our revolutionary neighbors, the French".

Samuel, I have no doubt that if you and your brothers stay strong and continue to be a radiant example of solidarity there is no limit to what you all will achieve. I hope that my brothers and I can be there to assist you in any way we can. As they say in Spanish: ¡Solidaridad para siempre!

(A special thanks goes out to Joe Fields. Without you diligently tracking down contacts none of this would have been possible.)

## Next Issue: Special Election Issue with Sample Ballot



We are looking for better ways to communicate happenings within our local, but also help build community amongst our members. We hope you find the content of the newsletter worth reading, and we are always looking for feedback. If anyone has general questions, articles they would like to submit, hobbies they want to highlight, comments, ideas of topics to cover, side hustles you want to promote, questions for officers, useful information, or even to volunteer, e-mail us at: [usw2958news@gmail.com](mailto:usw2958news@gmail.com)