

1201 Sheridan Road
Escanaba, MI 49829

Phone: 906.786.1846
Fax: 906.233.9250

21 NEWS

Editor: Gerald Kell **WWW.USW2-21.COM** May, 2017
Contact Editor at: djgribble@gmail.com or 906.869.7943

21 News is a periodic publication of USW (United Steel, Paper and Forestry, Rubber, Manufacturing, Energy, Allied Industrial and Service Workers International Union) Local 2-21, 1201 Sheridan Road, Escanaba, Michigan 49829. The views and opinions expressed in this publication are not necessarily that of the International Union, the Local 2-21 membership, or the officers of these bodies. The editor reserves the right to refuse any article that is detrimental to the Local Union or the USW. Article accuracy and content is the responsibility of the author.

Important Information & Events

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

www.freckmanandassociates.com (800) 331-3226

Retiree Get Together 1st Wed 10am - Union Hall

Union Meeting: 2nd Wednesday - 7 pm – Dinner 6 pm

Steward's Meeting: 4th Wednesday

Welfare Club Meeting: 1st Monday of the month - 7 pm at the Mead Rod & Gun Club

Total Benefit Solutions: Union Hall hours on the first two Wednesdays of each month from 9:30 to 3:30. Call 1.877.265.2212 to schedule an appointment.



Committee Members

	Work	Personal
President Steve Benoit	233-2529	399-4195
1st Vice Chuck Way	233-2705	280-1698
2nd Vice Bob Larson		420-2256
3rd Vice Jeff Skorupski	233-2556	399-5472
Insurance Gerald Kell	233-3135	869-7943
Comp Ross Strand	233-2531	280-1494
Secretary Brandon Stromberg	233-2556	284-1604
Treasurer Guy Trudell	233-2534	399-9143
Hall Rental Steve Kennedy		789-1933



www.pacelocal21.proboards.com



Downtime and Negotiations

Steve Benoit, President

No dates have been set for negotiations yet and we continue to see downtime in areas of our mill. Many of our members are wondering if the downtime is merely tactics to scare us into a concessionary contract negotiation. We have many active and retired members pointing out that they have seen these moves in the past when leading into a contract. If these are not tactics it's certainly suspicious timing. Of utmost importance, through all of this, is that we keep our solidarity. Remember who is creating the havoc and distrust.

We all have personal wants and needs when it comes to the contract. Some are similar and some of them are different. We all have one common need, a fair contract that does not irrevocably cut the wages, benefits, and protection for which those before us have fought. We must maintain a fair contract, one which continues to support not only our union but our families, the community, and workers off site who rely on the mill. We stand strong not only for us, but for every person that has been wronged by this company's mismanagement, fund misappropriation that landed them in bankruptcy causing many in our community to suffer while the company continues to recklessly spend without responsibility.

Matt's most recent letter to our homes speaks of the mistakes that have cost the company. But it has not been the mistakes of the employees on the floor that have cost this company; it is the decisions of the lead team. Recently we saw them "relieve" four of our local salaried employees and management wants you to believe that they're making sacrifices by letting these people go. Don't allow the lead

team members to exploit these people to their benefit. These are people that came in every day and did their job only to then be treated like criminals, removed from the mill and treated with zero respect. The lead team is still excessively traveling, wining and dining, and drawing large salaries on the company's dime. When is it time for the lead team and those above to make a sacrifice? Instead they remove people from their jobs across the company affecting employees, families, and communities. We must not allow this to continue and send a clear message in Matt's "business update meetings" that we expect everyone to make sacrifices. How about the CFO and VP of Sales both making over \$1 million as the company went through bankruptcy last year?



We, as the Union, can build a future for all of our families, communities, and other employees by standing strong and united together. Our foundation was built on the strength of those before us. It is our job to build upon that foundation. Solidarity Brothers and Sisters!!

USW Local 21 Strike for Hunger

Brandon Stromberg, Secretary

This year marks our 4th annual USW Local 21 Strike for Hunger. It will be held June 16th – 18th at Elmer's County Market in Escanaba and Pat's Foods in Gladstone. We will also have various drop-off locations throughout Delta County. As always, we will be staffing the locations from Friday through Sunday, day and night, rain or shine.

Can you believe we have been doing this event for 4 years already? The first year it was held in January; sunlight was short and it was freezing cold. Our volunteers were bundled up using hand and foot warmers, sitting by space heaters, and hitting the pavement with our signs. It was very difficult at times but the positive response from the community

and our membership was overwhelming! We quickly realized there was a better time to hold the event in order to better serve those volunteering and those donating, so we shifted our efforts to the middle of the calendar. The community support never wavered.

I recall on one occasion when an older lady presented a volunteering member with a rolled up bill and said, "Thank you and have a nice day." The member unfurled the bill as they brought it to the donation box and realized it was a \$100 bill! He turned to thank the lady again, but it was too late. All he could do is wave as she drove off. On another occasion, nearing midnight, a gentleman came through Elmer's front door and asked, "What are you doing?" After a brief explanation, he said, "I'll get you on the way out." After purchasing a couple of basic household items, the gentlemen came out and put a few coins in the donation box. He said, "I don't have much, but I want to help others. This is everything I have." This community is incredible!

As we begin our adventure this year, I would like to thank all of you in advance for your support. Also, I would like to thank Rod and the entire staff at Elmer's County Market who have supported us from the beginning. I would like to thank all of our drop-off locations: Kuchenberg's Korner Market, White's Grocery, and North Bluff Grocery. Thank you to our new partner, Pat's Foods in Gladstone, and Scott Murray of "Sick Air" who will be performing two live shows at Elmer's on June 17th (weather permitting). Last but not least, thank you to our community and the membership for their generosity and support. Who's ready to volunteer?

Working Families Flexibility Act

Gerald Kell, Insurance Advocate

When someone's looking to sell an old, rusty, used vehicle, do they advertise it as a "high mileage rust bucket that I'm tired of sinking money into"? Of course not. They conjure up some appealing tag line like, "Great runner with new-ish brakes!" and "All highway miles, needs a little TLC, terrific sound system" or "Classic car, has all four wheels and most of the seats." Well as you can imagine, congressional bills are susceptible to these same tactics. Probably not the first time someone's employed a "used car salesman" analogy for congressmen.

A recent example of this oft used and nauseating naming practice is HB1180 or the "Working Families Flexibility Act of 2017."

Sounds pretty terrific, right? Kick the tires a little, fork over some cash and drive it off the lot only then to discover a leaking head gasket, faulty brakes, and the rust pushing through

the rattle can paint job within hours. Well, HB1180 is no different than that 1975 Ford Pinto wagon sitting outside your neighbor's house for the past 8 years with a faded "For Sale" sign in the window. Although in defense of the Pinto, this bill may actually be less pragmatic than the explosion-laden car.

For the past 30+ years, there's been a concerted effort to curb middle class, working people's wages and benefits. Unfortunately, it's been fairly effective evidenced by stagnated wages and further separation between the haves and have nots. This latest attempt by Congressional Republicans is thinly veiled as an opportunity for working people to have more flexibility in their lives. Essentially, it allows employers to have employees bank overtime hours as "comp time" as opposed to receiving the time and a half wage for the time worked. Comp time would then be available for the employee to use per approval from the employer. You may be thinking, "Where have I seen this before?" Well, it's not the first time this heavily partisan legislation has been

proposed, but it's now passed the U.S. House of Representatives and is on its way to the Senate. The big business lobby has been pushing for this concession (among others) from employees since The Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 was passed.

I've heard many reasonable people speak to the positive aspects of the bill and ask, "Why is it so contentious?" Their inquiries are valid as when you first read the bill, there appears to be protections to prevent an employer from exploiting employees and naturally, they don't openly list the drawbacks. However, those of us who have worked under a CBA for any amount of time know too well how seemingly black and white language can become very gray depending on an employer's perception. Frankly, the language in this bill isn't even that clear.

For instance, it states an employee cannot be forced to agree to take comp time in exchange for overtime worked. However, if overtime is equally available to two qualified

H.R. 1180

WORKING FAMILIES FLEXIBILITY ACT OF 2017

H.R. 1180 WOULD ALLOW EMPLOYERS TO POCKET EMPLOYEES' HARD EARNED OVERTIME PAY – WITH THE VAGUE PROMISE THAT EMPLOYEES MAY BE ABLE TO TAKE COMPENSATORY TIME OFF AT SOME POINT IN THE FUTURE.

employees, Sally and John, and the employer knows that John is willing to take comp time instead of overtime pay while Sally likes the time and a half to help pay for her son's college tuition costs—who do you think will be offered the overtime? As a union workplace, we have channels to pursue justice when an employee is wronged and have the capacity to bargain our rights; the vast majority of the workforce simply does not. Even in our organized shop, many of us have witnessed how difficult it can be to get our earned time off, now imagine that you've sacrificed your overtime pay for some time off and your employer can unilaterally deny it if they feel it's too inconvenient. So much for that flexibility. There's also an impact to an employee's ability to use their time with existing laws surrounding FMLA. If you've worked a ton of overtime to bank the comp time for an upcoming vacation, etc. but are suddenly met with a family illness, your employer can force you to use the comp time rather than take it unpaid. Or maybe they arbitrarily set up situations that compel you to use your banked time out of necessity

by cutting your hours in weeks you normally would've received 40 hours—you're more likely then to cash in some of that comp time to get a full check.

If you follow labor laws closely, you may have also noticed the timing of this bill wasn't just a coincidence. There's been a growing movement to increase the minimum salary requirement for overtime exempt employees. Right now, an employee labeled salary only has to earn \$23,660 to be exempt from overtime. Should that limit increase (however unlikely under the current administration) many employers will look for other ways to avoid paying overtime. You may also recall that the previous administration had nearly doubled that threshold to protect employees before a Texas court placed an injunction on the order in late 2016.

Bills like HB1180 are poorly constructed answers to a problem created by the same element which lobby for the legislation. If they truly wanted their employees to have flexibility, why not offer paid time off? Do they only deserve time off once they've worked unpaid overtime?

As labor representatives, we need to be vocal advocates against any legislation that is so blatantly unfair to an employee whether or not it directly affects us here at the mill. If an employer wants comp time flexibility, I would suggest that business collectively bargain a contract with an organized workforce. That's the best way to ensure a fair and equitable package for their employees and themselves.

Parking Lot Rally

Our first parking lot meeting was held on April 18th and 19th by the credit union. We rallied around Derick and Tracy before the arbitration to show our support and solidarity. Watch for future parking lot rallies as we head into contract negotiations. Solidarity! United we stood together in the cold, the rain, and the wind. Nothing will deter our spirit or our fight for a fair contract! SOLIDARITY!!!!



Derick and Tracy's Arbitration

Derick's arbitration was held on May 11th. The day began with a tour of the Woodyard with the arbitrator. During the tour the arbitrator was able to see key points of interest that would be pertinent to the arbitration. We then made our way to the Pioneer Inn where the arbitration proceedings were held. Several people testified on the Company's behalf including mill manager, Matt Archambeau. We had 6 witnesses for the Union; each did a great job driving home the points we needed to make. Thank you to the witnesses for the job they did supporting their union brother through honest testimony: Brad Trombley, Randy Jacques, Mike Madalinski, and Chuck Way. The arbitration was successful but we will not have an answer until mid-July. Remember, through arbitration, we are putting the ultimate decision in the hands of a third party and there's no absolute way to know how they will rule. Tracy's arbitration is set for a future date. Watch for more information as it becomes available.



601 Ludington Street
Escanaba, MI 49829

- *Compliant Individual Health Plans*
- *Medicare Supplemental Plans*
- *Advantage Plans*
- *Part D Prescription Plans*

Call Adrienne St. Vincent or
Mary Ellen Johnson
906-786-2122 or 906-428-4515

Community Clean Up

On May 20th, members of USW Local 2-21 joined with others in the community to help clean-up downtown Escanaba. Our local has four foundational blocks: Union, Family, Community, and Workers. On this day, we supported the community block by helping make the place where we live and work cleaner for all. We're proud to have been a primary sponsor while also sponsoring a clean-up site which was then weeded, cleaned, swept and shoveled by our own members. Thank you to all that came out and thank you to Gary Dubord, Jr. for a great job planning our part in the event this year!



"Your Personal Partner in Healthcare"
Before – during – and after retirement

- ✓ Individual Health Insurance
- ✓ Marketplace – Non-Metallic
- ✓ Individual Retirement Insurance
- ✓ Medicare Supplement / Advantage Plans
- ✓ Prescription Drug Plans
- ✓ Union Voluntary Benefit Plans

Call **1.877.265.2212** for an appointment. A qualified representative will come directly to your home and help qualify your options. As a service to our Members, a TBS Representative is available at the Union Hall two days each month. Stop in or call for a specific appointment time.

Leave Work at Work

Bob Larson, 2nd Vice

The summer season is upon us with all of the things that go with it. Whether it's camping, fishing, going to the cottage, or racing, I hope everyone takes the time to do what they enjoy. The issues at the mill can be overwhelming; please don't let them ruin our brief summer. The back half of the mill has not experienced the same issues as the machine areas, but we have had plenty of issues in regards to training and use of outside contractors.

The Company will continue to use fear and intimidation. These tactics can only work if you let them. They say they need a modern contract yet use management techniques from the 19th century. Management says that for years the union ran our mill; if we did, we did a much better job of it. Go to work, do your job, go home, forget about this place and enjoy your life.

Jerry's Body Shop

#1 Collision Experts

1000 1st Ave S
Escanaba, MI 49829

Phone: 906-786-6425
Fax: 906-789-6026

jerrysbodyshop01@sbcglobal.net



Jamie Sebeck
Owner/Operator

Beckoning the Stop to Bullying Rally

Steve Benoit, President

Thank you everyone who came out to the Rally, "Beckoning the Stop to Bullying." We started a movement to stop bullying in our community. We need to rise-up and speak out for others, be it in our workplace, schools, worship groups or organizations. Together we can make a difference. Thank you to our speakers Lily Benoit, Jodi Gardner, Kelly Constantino, Dwight Brady, Dan Doyle and Mike DuPont. Also thank you to Congressman Jack Bergman, Representative Scott Dianda, and Senator Debbie Stabenow for providing a representative and/or a message for the evening. A big thank you to our community, Local 21 could not have done this without you. We cannot forget our sponsors TBS, Inc, Delta Democrats, UP Regional Labor Federation, End the Silence, and Johnston Printing.



Annual Picnic

Steve Benoit, President

Last year the Company made a unilateral decision to cancel the annual picnic. We fought it through the grievance procedure and were able to convince the Company during a third step meeting that a previous arbitration answer supported a bargained right to a picnic. It was agreed that we would meet in March to discuss a picnic for the summer. In an April meeting, the Company informed us they felt the money would not be available for a picnic. We have agreed to cancel the picnic and address next year's in March. We believe with the upcoming contract negotiations and shutdowns (company tactics) it would be best that we pass on the picnic this year.

E-1 Schedule Change

Jeff Skorupski, 1st Vice

Recently, the E1 System went to a 5 days-on 2 days-off operation schedule. The majority of employees will work 8 hour swing schedule starting at 6 a.m. Monday morning and running through the Midnight shift Friday—this will be a three crew swing. However, Machine Tenders and Color Building Operators remain on their current 12 hour Modified DuPont schedule. If you are moved up from an 8 hour job to fill a vacation on a 12 hour job the Company has committed to making sure you get 40 hours work.

For example, if you're working Sunday midnight for a move-up and normally scheduled for the Monday 8 hour dayshift, they will allow you to work the extra hours somewhere in that week to achieve 40 hours.

Also, if you have to cover a vacation that is only 36 hours, they will allow you to make up the 4 hours lost that week.

Additionally, we have a wage protection clause in our contract that pertains to curtailment; if you're a Back Tender bumped down to Third Hand, you will continue to receive the Back Tender rate for up to 24 months.

This IS considered a permanent curtailment as described in the contract, so bumping rights can be exercised by affected employees.

We asked Management to ensure—in writing—that employees would not be forced to work weekends; which they will not guarantee. They said they've changed a few things in the way orders are processed and received in Miamisburg to help minimize the potential for this to happen. They committed to working with people if vacation conflicts arise due to the schedule change.

A functional vacancy procedure is in the works and a vote will be held soon. You may see some job bids posted and be asking, "Why would the Company post jobs during a curtailment?" This is to allow the transition back to a 24/7 operation to be done as quickly and efficiently as possible. A timeframe of 4 to 6 weeks was bounced around with no guarantee; however, the Company seemed optimistic that the move back would happen sooner than later.

May Union Meeting Highlights

The Women of Steel report was given and their participation in upcoming events was shared.

The Welfare Club report was shared. They are looking into the possibility of including premiums for TBS, the Union supplemental insurance.

We are looking into a petition that the E3 color building department provided to the committee around the guillotine position in their line of progression.

We discussed the Company's slow responses to requests.

Chuck shared his experience at the USW International Convention in Las Vegas and their message of unity.

There are supervisors trying to force our members to work jobs when they are not qualified.

There was a good discussion around the current situation in E1 moving to a 5 day/8 hour schedule. Below are the concerns/questions shared with the Company. Considerations for E1 Change:

- Due to the language in the contract regarding curtailment, do they realize there will be people bumping back to other areas and the difficulty of going back to 4 crews?
- Due to curtailments and job bids, do they realize how difficult it will be to go back to 12 hour shifts?
- With a new schedule, a new OT procedure will need to be approved by area, company, committee, and the union hall? Also, it will cost the union for this vote, is the Company going to pay for that?
- Does the company agree to abide by Article 11 section 6B-Wage Protection in the event of curtailment?
- We proposed all departments start-up on Sunday night at 10pm.
- Do they realize how many people might bid out if the company utilizes staggered start times?
- We requested the Company not force people on the weekend unless they volunteer.
- We need, in writing, that employees will receive overtime after 8 hours.

There were two mediations discussed concerning Workers Comp. The first one was a victory, but the second was denied so now there are two going to the magistrate.

Information regarding comp time legislation and Gerrymandering was shared. A motion to write a letter supporting the 906Dems Gerrymandering was passed.

Brandon shared his experience at the USW International Convention.

The Strike for Hunger was discussed and the dates of June 16th through the 18th were shared.

All members will be added to mass text messaging system to help with communication through negotiations.

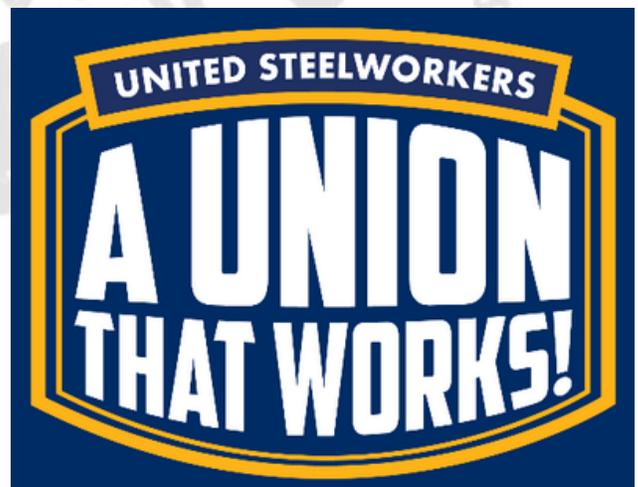
There was a discussion about Chuck Way's retirement and the Committee's decision not to replace his position at this time. The Committee shared the bylaws and explained the process of a bylaws change. We read the articles that would be changed and the proposed change.

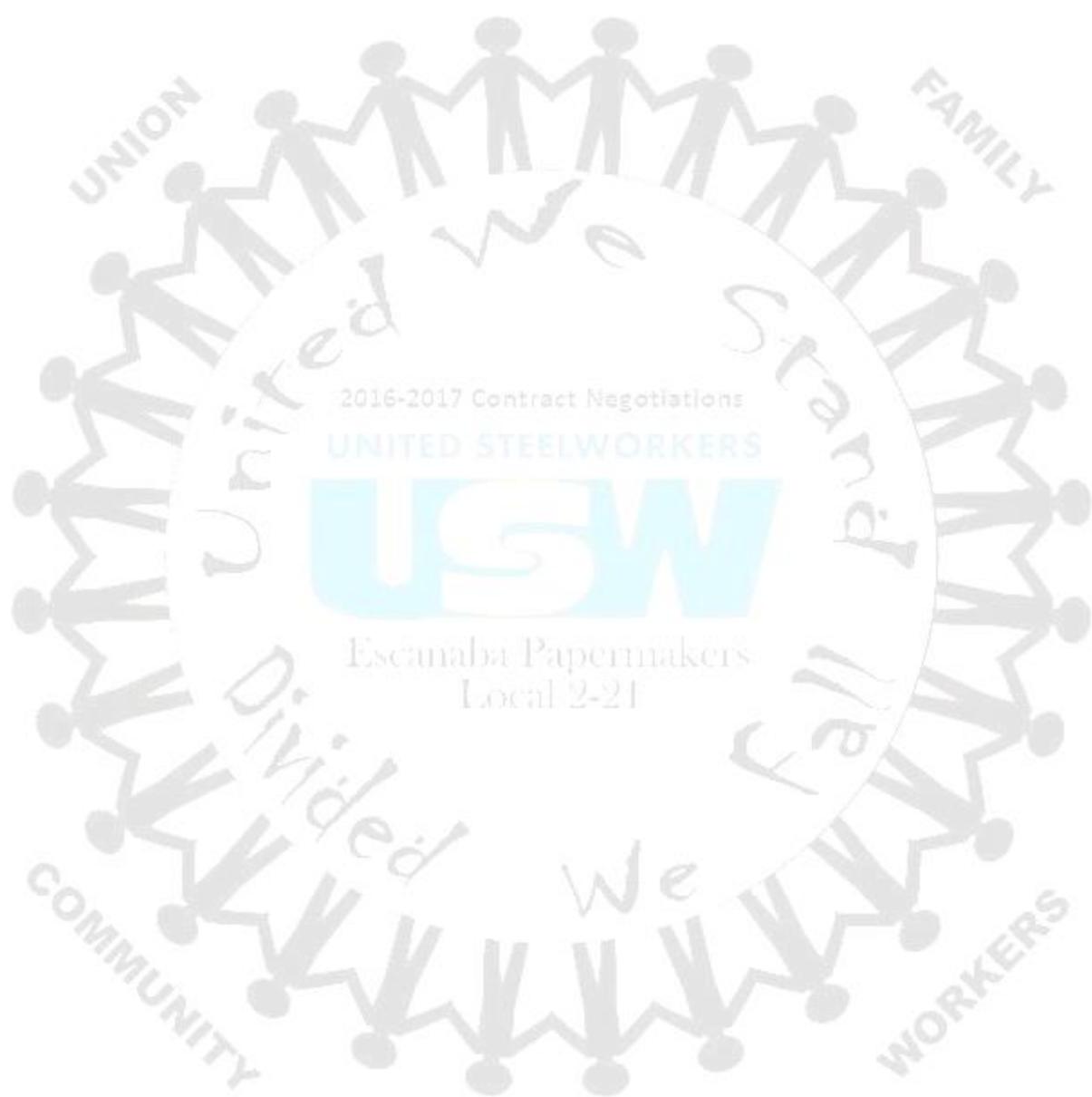
The arbitration for Derek was covered and would be taking place the next day.

There will not be a KEA this year.

We discussed some OJT training going on in our mill and how other Verso mills are not doing OJT training.

We heard paper statistics from the USW financial department.





UNION

FAMILY

United We Stand

2016-2017 Contract Negotiations

UNITED STEELWORKERS

USW

Escanaba Papermakers
Local 2-21

Divided

We

Fall

COMMUNITY

WORKERS