

*Serving Bargaining Unit Employees at Merck and Co. Inc., West Point, Pa.*

## STAND UP/FIGHT BACK

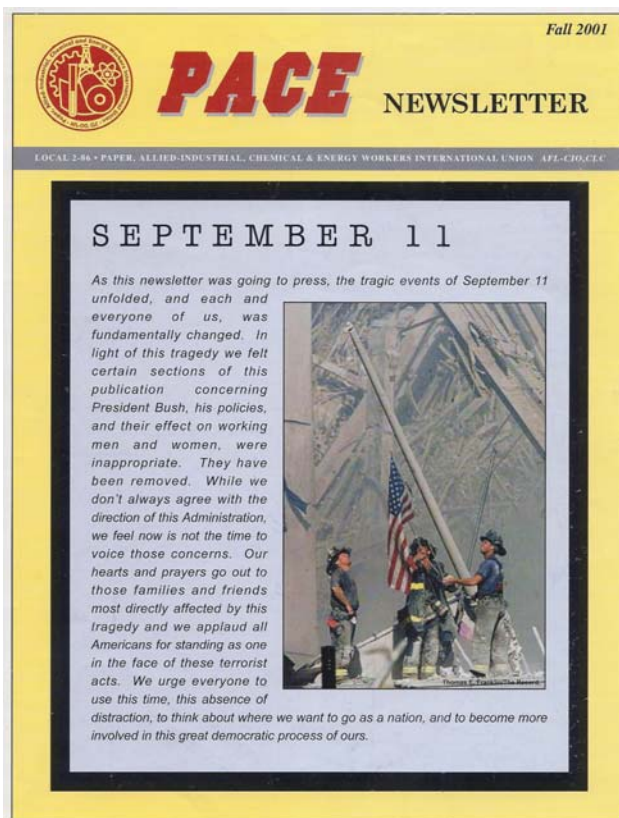
Ten years ago as we went to press the events of 9/11 were unfolding. Out of respect for the families and friends of the fallen we felt it inappropriate to criticize then President George Bush and his party's policies, in particular, their ruinous effect on working men and women and their families. Today, we have no such reservations. Bush and his cronies were responsible for two misguided wars that have bankrupted the country and the appointment to the Supreme Court of two Justices who gave us the Citizens United Decision, a ruling which allows unlimited corporate funding in election campaigns, and is arguably the single greatest threat to democracy the United States has ever seen. While we grieved they stole our dignity and the American Dream.

Let's be clear about what's going on today, right here, right now: Class Warfare. Big Business is systematically destroying the middle class. Just ask the 45,000 Verizon workers who are being asked to give back \$20,000 a year in pension and health care costs even as their top five executives received a quarter of a billion dollars in pay last year. Or the Public Sector employees in Wisconsin or Ohio who are fighting for their collective lives, their bargaining rights unilaterally stripped by arrogant Republican Governors emboldened by mid-term election hysteria.

The richest 1% owns more wealth than the bottom 150 million Americans. The deep pocketed Right Wing buys and sells our Congress with the same ease we use to shop online at Amazon. A minority lunatic fringe of the G.O.P., funded by billionaires like Charles and David Koch, calls the tune and our legislators in both parties dance the hostage dance and refuse any meaningful discourse as to how to put people to work. This shameful and criminal soap opera has unfolded with precision and planning over the past decade and insures that our children and our grandchildren will not lead better lives than those our parents and

grandparents fought and struggled to provide for us. Enough is enough.

The United Steelworkers held their 34th Constitutional Convention in Las Vegas this past August. Officers of this Local were among the 2,742 delegates from dozens of trade unions throughout North America who gathered with labor leaders from Africa, Mexico and the European Union to share and discuss just what the hell is going on here and abroad. The theme of the Convention: Stand Up/Fight Back.



"They want to call it the Great Recession," said USW International President Leo Gerard in his opening remarks. "They should call it the Great Wall St. Rip-Off." Gerard called the assembled union members the "greatest fighting unit on the planet" and urged everyone to step up because "they (the politicians) aren't working for you anymore."

"Don't let anyone tell you democracy makes you free without work, without a struggle," he continued. "Freedom is not free."

History tells us that real democracy is created by workers who are willing to stand up and fight whatever the cost. Poland and the Solidarity Movement, Nelson Mandela and the African National Congress, Gandhi and the struggle for Indian Independence, Martin Luther King

and the Memphis Sanitation Workers, all of these are examples of what can be done when people are ready to put it all the line. It has happened before and it is happening again. This past spring labor unions were on the frontlines of the uprising and rebellion in Egypt.

Back in 2001 we urged everyone in the wake of tragic circumstance to use that time, that absence of distraction, to think about where we want to go as a nation, and to become more involved in this great democratic process of ours. We believe the time for consideration is long past gone. We all need to make a choice. As Mr. Gerard is fond of saying, "I can't promise you we're going to win. I can only tell you that if we don't fight, we're going to lose."

# LOCAL NEWS

IT'S BEEN AWHILE SINCE OUR LAST NEWSLETTER. SOME THINGS MEMBERS MAY OR MAY NOT BE AWARE OF:

- BACK IN APRIL WE HAD A SHOP STEWARD SCHOOL. 75 STEWARDS ATTENDED AN ALL DAY TEACH-IN CONDUCTED BY OUR PLANT COMMITTEE, AS WELL LAWYERS FROM OUR FIRM, WILLIG, WILLIAMS AND DAVIDSON. TOPICS INCLUDED DUTY OF FAIR REPRESENTATION, WORKERS COMPENSATION, SAFETY AND HEALTH, WEINGARTEN RIGHTS AND DISCIPLINE, GRIEVANCES, ARBITRATION AND THE CONTRACT.
- MEMBERSHIP APPROVED A \$10,000 DONATION TO THE STEELWORKERS CHARITABLE AND EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION TO HELP PROVIDE RELIEF TO OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS LEFT HOMELESS AND UNEMPLOYED BY TORNADOES AND FLOODING IN THE SOUTH LAST SPRING.
- WE NOW HAVE 17 USW-LED SAFETY COMMITTEES THROUGHOUT THE SITE IN ADDITION TO OUR SITE SAFETY AND HEALTH COMMITTEE. WE WOULD LIKE TO THANK THOSE MEMBERS WHO VOLUNTEER IN ORDER TO INSURE WE ALL GO HOME EACH DAY THE WAY WE ARRIVED.
- WE ARE SOLICITING IDEAS FROM MEMBERSHIP FOR SUGGESTIONS OR IDEAS REGARDING ENERGY CONSERVATION OR WASTE STREAM IMPROVEMENT. CONTACT OUR SITE SAFETY REP DEBBIE YAKSCOE AT 20185 OR 215 872 1787.
- THE SITE VEHICLE AND PEDESTRIAN POLICY HAS BEEN REVISED AND WILL SOON BE IMPLEMENTED. MEMBERS ARE URGED TO BECOME FAMILIAR WITH THE DOS AND DON'TS REGARDING SAID POLICY.
- WE WISH TO CALL MEMBER ATTENTION ONCE AGAIN TO THE IMPORTANCE OF PROPER DOCUMENTATION. NOT ONLY IS IT CRITICAL IN OUR INDUSTRY TO MANUFACTURE QUALITY DRUGS AND VACCINES FOR OUR CUSTOMERS IN ORDER TO SAVE LIVES, IT IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT THAT WE CAN PROVE WE DID SO AS EVIDENCED BY PROPER DOCUMENTATION. ANYTHING LESS PUTS US ALL IN THE UNEMPLOYMENT LINE. DO NOT LET ANYONE RUSH YOU THROUGH ANY STEP OF A PRODUCTION OR CLEANING PROCESS. IF YOU ARE UNCLEAR ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE SIGNING FOR, CONTACT YOUR SUPERVISOR, YOUR SHOP STEWARD OR THE UNION OFFICE.
- BACK IN JULY WE REDESIGNED OUR WEBPAGE MAKING IT MORE USER FRIENDLY AND EASIER FOR US TO ADMINISTER. SPECIAL THANKS TO JEFF HARRINGTON. LOG ON AND VISIT US/REGISTER AT [www.usw10-86.org](http://www.usw10-86.org).
- HAVE AN IDEA, SUGGESTION, OR COMMENT ABOUT THE NEWSLETTER OR THE WEBPAGE? CONTACT PAUL MERCURIO AT 215 527 6283.

## Civil and Human Rights MLK Conference

Back in January members of our Civil and Human Rights Committee attended the USW Conference of the same name in Cincinnati, Ohio. Co-Chair Gary Holland was good enough to write us a report that wasn't completed in time for the last newsletter. We present it here.

"The theme of this year's USW Civil and Human Rights Conference was activism. Unions all over the nation are under attack. The state workers in Ohio are at risk of losing their right to collectively bargain. On a cold night in January, our committee joined hands with hundreds of other Union activists in a protest outside of Cincinnati's City Hall. We stood up to Ohio's Governor, John Kasich, to have our voices heard. We will not sit idly by while our brothers and sisters struggle to maintain basic human needs. On another night we participated in a phone bank. Calling the state office and demanding an end to the anti-union activity tactics employed by elected officials. Ohio has since fallen, but we will not be deterred.

"At each conference, one day is dedicated to community service. This year's service was to work at a food bank. Our committee worked tirelessly to help box food and supplies for over 900 families in the Cincinnati area. This work, by far, is the most rewarding of any during the conference. The Women of Steel contingent of our committee never cease to impress me. They are by far the hardest working, most dedicated people at every conference.

"Many workshops are conducted over several days. This year, immigration rights were headlined. Each year thousands of undocumented workers are sent packing back to their respective homelands. On the surface this seems an innocuous occurrence, but as we learned, many of these undocumented people are assets to their communities. We all have an image of what an undocumented worker is. We are wrong. These workers are college graduates, many with masters and doctorate degrees that they

earned here in the United States. The question: if we educated these people to better serve humanity, why would we then send them somewhere else and lose the services they would willingly provide for us? I encourage you to read "Underground Undergrads: UCLA Undocumented Immigrant Students Speak Out" before you close your mind to the issue.

"As always during the final day there is a Martin Luther King Day parade. Members from all over the country combine to celebrate his legacy. Over forty years ago, Dr. King surrendered his life fighting for worker dignity during the Sanitation Strike in Memphis, Tennessee. His struggle continues, as does ours, for the betterment of workers all over the world."

Respectfully, Gary Holland

# Labor Leaders Part 3 / Robin Drace

From time to time we like to give props to members of our Local who go above and beyond in service to the Union and others. In this issue we spotlight Robin Drace for her leadership qualities that exemplify what it means to be a selfless advocate for others. Many of us go through the workplace wearing blinders, navigating through our daily routines, choosing not to engage in or make a commitment to others that involves too much of our personal time. Let's face it, during the hustle and bustle of our daily schedules, who has time to spare? Hard work, dedication, and time helping others are precisely the attributes that make Robin stand out in our eyes and the reason she is being recognized in this newsletter.

Many of us who have Merck email may recognize Robin's name from our inboxes. Sometimes she's forwarding important Union information, or more to what this article speaks of, asking for help to support the brave men and women of our Armed Forces. As if serving her Union wasn't enough, Robin spends countless hours night in and night out, making a difference in not only the lives of members here at West Point, but also in the anonymous lives of our young men and women abroad, who by their own choosing, continue to put themselves in harm's way in order to make our world a safer place. Working hard at her military care package drives is only one component of what makes Robin special. When she's not packing and lugging boxes of generous USW donations, she's busy organizing burger sales and participating in fundraisers such as Walk for the Wounded. Robin's dedication is not confined to the walls of West Point; she is just as active and caring in the outside community. I had an opportunity to catch up with Robin last April during a presentation hosted by the Merck Veterans Leadership Network (VLN) featuring United States Army Colonel Steve Jones.

- together forward, Jimmy Beidler



Robin Drace/former and current officers/2010 Membership Meeting

JB: What is your current department/job?

RD: Department 268. I'm a Digital Pre-Press Technician.

JB: And how long have you been employed at Merck?

RD: 22 years.

JB: And your duties/involvement with the USW?

RD: I work as the departmental shop steward, and I'm a member of the USW Safety and Health Committee.

JB: What made you decide to get involved with helping the troops?

RD: Well, I'm a member of the Souderton American Legion, and when the Commander of the Legion's son (Steve Walter) got deployed to Iraq, I started sending him packages. This was in 2007. I remember we did a Memorial Day collection that year. After that it just took off. I mailed my 1000th package to Steve and will be mailing my 2000th package very soon.

JB: Any family members in the Armed Forces?

RD: No.

JB: Did someone mentor you, or lead you in this direction?

RD: My friend Cindy from the Souderton American Legion gave me the idea. The Marine Moms began using the Legion as a meeting place. As their sons and daughters began getting deployed to Iraq, we began sending care packages and it snowballed from there.

JB: Where do you champion your cause?

RD: I run my collection campaigns at the Legion Post and here at my place of employment.

JB: At work?

RD: Merck has been very generous in allowing me to put out my collection barrels for the troops. I was truly amazed at a Merck Retiree's Meeting which I attended. I spoke a little about what I do and \$700 was raised on the spot. I can't stress enough the generosity of my fellow USW members as well as the retirees. Whenever I ask for anything, money or care packages, they always come through in a very big way!

JB: So you're active not only here at Merck, but in the community as well.

RD: I am active in both my community and here at Merck. I run cheeseburger events to raise money, and organize the collection programs that you see around plant site.

JB: Why are you so passionate about this?

RD: I just feel these kids, a lot of them are just kids, are over there in these foreign lands, far from home, facing God knows what...I just want them to feel that they're not forgotten, that we're thinking of them and wish them well and thank you.

\* **Note:** if you're interested in making a donation to the troops you can contact Robin at [robin\\_drace@merck.com](mailto:robin_drace@merck.com)

# Convention Quotes

So much went on at the USW Constitutional Convention that to try and report all of it would take a dozen newsletters. We encourage members to visit the Steelworker website [www.usw.org](http://www.usw.org) where you can get videos, photos, in-depth summaries and more. We would, however, like to leave you with some of the more memorable quotes from the event.

- "Nobody can tell me justice has been done until one of these bastards (Wall St. speculators) spends time in jail."  
- Leo Gerard/USW International President
- "The Chinese have figured out that our Corporate Executives like money more than they love our country."  
- Leo Gerard
- "Taxes are not evil, they are the way we insure our future." - Ken Neuman/National Director of Canada
- "They keep talking about shared sacrifice. Hell, shared sacrifice would be a step up - we've been doing all the sacrificing." - Rich Trumka/President AFL-CIO
- "Our infrastructure is crumbling. Bridges, roads, schools. We've got millions of people, engineers, steelworkers, construction and trade unionists looking for work. It shouldn't take a rocket scientist to figure out a solution."  
- Bob Herbert/Author/Former New York Times columnist
- "There's nothing wrong with Social Security, Medicare or Medicaid. Poor people didn't cause this deficit. They shouldn't have to pay for it." - Bernie Sanders/U.S. Senator (I-Ver)
- "The Governor told working people to get on the bus or get run over."  
- Joe Schiavoni/State Senator/Ohio State Senate
- "You get weary sometimes. People don't drown in deep water because they can't swim. They die because they stop kicking." - Lena C. Taylor/Wisconsin State Senate
- "Richard Donner (Director of Lethal Weapon) asks the Casting Director, 'Who do you have in mind to play Riggs?' 'Mel Gibson,' she says. Donner says, 'Great. How about Murtaugh?' 'Danny Glover,' she says. Donner stops, says, 'Isn't he black?' Casting Director says, 'So what?'" - Danny Glover/Actor
- "We are the last bastion, the middle class, organized labor, the last bastion between saving this country or seeing it go down the drain." - Ed Schultz/The Ed Show/MSNBC

## Local 10-00086 Officers

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- Writer/Webpage - Jimmy Beidler
- Webmaster - Jeff Harrington
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## One Final Quote

**"In Germany, the Nazis first came for the communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, but I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me, and by that time there was no one left to speak for me."**

**- Reverend Martin Niemoeller (1892-1984)**