LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As you are all aware, our collective bargaining agreement with Merck expires April 30th next year. If you’ve gotten this far in the newsletter you know the Company has committed to spending a lot of money at West Point. And not just Band-Aid money for business-as-usual. We need real repairs but big investments to our infrastructure and our future. That is a good thing.

However, I don’t believe we should fool ourselves into thinking negotiations will be a walk in the park. They never are. We continue to have disagreements over employee movement, outside contractors doing bargaining, and safety, and of course, our absence control policy. We are certain to hear complaints from the Company about costs and premium pay. We have faced challenges before. But I am confident that if we stick together, we can be successful in addressing any and all issues management will bring to the table.

Our preparations have begun. Your Bargaining Committee has already met to discuss strategies. We will meet on a regular basis in the coming months to review our collective bargaining agreement and analyze and prepare for whatever issues come our way.

As you may have read in our Local News section training is back to the present. SEPTA plans to raise its already met to discuss strategies. We will meet on a regular basis in the coming months to review our collective bargaining agreement and analyze and prepare for whatever issues come our way.

We STRONGLY suggest you bring a shop steward or someone from the Union office or a member of the Workers Comp Committee. This is to insure your injury report is accurate in order to protect your rights.

If you are injured at work, you must notify management and report to Health Services immediately. We STRONGLY suggest you bring a shop steward or someone from the Union office or a member of the Workers Comp Committee. This is to insure your injury report is accurate in order to protect your rights.

If you are injured at work, you must notify management and report to Health Services immediately. We STRONGLY suggest you bring a shop steward or someone from the Union office or a member of the Workers Comp Committee. This is to insure your injury report is accurate in order to protect your rights.

If you are injured at work, you must notify management and report to Health Services immediately. We STRONGLY suggest you bring a shop steward or someone from the Union office or a member of the Workers Comp Committee. This is to insure your injury report is accurate in order to protect your rights.
Class dismissed.

Extinction: In biology and ecology, extinction is the end of an organism or a group of organisms, normally a species. It is generally considered to be the disappearance of the last individual of the species, although the capacity to breed and recover may have been lost before this point.

And how exactly does the Merriam Webster dictionary define extinction?

Animals and humans aren’t the only things putting carbon dioxide into the air. It is also released when plants and animals die. Scientists estimate that the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was 280 ppm. Sixty years ago, it was 315 ppm. The past few years? It’s been rising 2 or 3 ppm a year.

The changes are happening fast. Think back to the words from that out: glaciers are melting, sea levels are rising, wildfires are more frequent, hurricanes and typhoons are growing more intense.

As of June, this year we currently have 1776 dues paying members. Regardless if you are a CAT Team member, a new hire or a venerable veteran eyeing retirement this is not the time for apathy. We have a significant amount of training is not a Just Transition. The transition needs to begin before the jobs go away. A Just Transition must mean an investment in infrastructure capable of supporting new work. And that means JOBS.

Our jobs here at Merck, while not guaranteed, aren’t easy to fully replace with automation. We may not be as vulnerable as other folks out there in the country’s workforce. Rising temperatures and changing cycles of seasons are likely to create breeding grounds for new strains of disease and the critters that carry them. Hopefully the medicine business should be okay.

But what about the men and women in the fossil fuel industries? When coal is burned, it releases carbon dioxide. The byproducts began cutting back for all the right reasons) Labor heard about a Just Transition. It never happened. It’s no wonder so many people grew sour and angry. Take away a person’s job you take away their dignity.

Sara Nelson is president of the Association of Flight Attendants and Communications Workers of America (AFA/CWA). She is considered a possible candidate to replace Rich Trumka, the President of the AFL-CIO if he retires. Recently Nelson was interviewed by In These Times. She was asked about a New Green Deal and what a Just Transition could look like. Here’s her response:

SN: “What is a Just Transition? I can tell you what it’s not! A few hours before the transition is not a Just Transition. The transition needs to begin before the jobs go away. A Just Transition must ensure that pensions and healthcare are protected for workers who spend their lives working for our country in the fossil fuels industries. A Just Transition includes bringing the expertise of unions to the table, so we don’t create policy that has unintended consequences, such as making it impossible to produce steel needed to create alternative forms of energy. A Just Transition must also invest in technological innovation to determine whether current energy sources can be utilized in a green way. A Just Transition includes focusing on negotiating fair trade agreements for American workers to keep production in the United States so that, for example, American workers are building wind turbines and solar panels. And finally, a Just Transition means maintaining income for families who depend on a Just Transition of jobs, career training, apprenticeships.”

Nelson goes on to say that other countries have already begun their transition and that we (American workers) don’t get on board now we’ll be left behind.

If a Green New Deal is the best answer (see front page) it’s going to need the support of Labor. It is pretty much a given that in the next five to ten years a good forty to forty-five percent of our population will be out of work due to automation. Don’t think so? Amazon has a robot that picks, wraps and sends 600 packages an hour.

As the presidential campaign season kicks off you should be hearing a lot about the new Green Deal and a Green New Deal. We are reaching a point where it’s not worth denying whether the climate crisis is, for the most part, manmade. The fossil fuel industry has successfully framed the debate as a political one when in reality it’s a scientific one. It’s a factual argument. And because we’ve allowed it to happen we have lost precious time discussing what to do about it.

If we do not act now we will be leaving future generations in the dust. Our world will be a very different place by 2050. We are going to see food shortages, water shortages, pandemics and extreme weather events.

The lady gets our vote.
Roadside Cleanup/Next Gen Committee

- On June 12th, members voted three of our own to serve on the Local’s Negotiating Committee. Vice President Johnny Beidler, Jimmy Ford and Gary Holland will join President Mike Gauger, Plant Chairman Bill Panetta. Plant Committee members Debbie Vickers, Randy Rosenberger, Joe Messina and Kevin McCafferty as well as our attorneys from Wilig, Williams and Davidson as they prepare to work out our next collective bargaining agreement. Dan Pevoni will serve as an alternate. Our agreement expires April 30, 2020.

- Members of the Executive Board and the Plant Committee will meet sometime in September for CAT (Contract Action Team) training by the International. They in turn will share the information with remaining members of the CAT Team at our Union Office on Garfield Avenue on a forthcoming date. Once all are trained CAT team members will be tasked with keeping you, the membership, engaged and informed about all things contractually related. The purpose of all this is to build Solidarity. CAT members are a good resource for questions, suggestions and rumors because of their proximity to the Negotiating Committee. Make no mistake. You will be hearing a lot of rumors. Some advice: if what-you-heard-didn’t come from the Negotiating Committee, Union leadership, your CAT rep or your shop steward then odds are it ain’t true.

- CAT members are provided to keep you informed. Sometimes that information will come as a CAT letter from the President. Or a posting on our webpage (www.usw10-86.org). Other times its given face to face during your breaks or meetings and if you don’t think it’s worth your time it might be asked to attend a rally or show your solidarity by wearing your USW gear every Wednesday. (Wednesdays are USW t-shirt day). CAT Team communications are meant to flow both ways – not just top down.

- Regardless if you are a CAT Team member, a new hire or a venerable veteran eyeing retirement this is not the time for apathy. We have a contract ready to expire and a new one on the horizon. Speak up about what works in your department and what doesn’t. Get engaged. It’s your Job. It’s your Union.

- The Company has continued to invest significant amounts of money into the plant site. West Point’s Site Leadership Team (WPSLT) believes we are a cost effective, reliable supplier of quality product which we provide in a safe and compliant manner. Understanding and embracing those words is our ticket – COST, RELIABILITY, QUALITY, SAFETY, AND COMPLIANCE. They put the butter on our bread. It’s why we are an attractive place to do business. And it makes any decision by Corporate to send work elsewhere a difficult one.

- According to a new 37 ppm, the climate has already warmed about one 415 ˚C. That is the past few years? It’s been rising 2 or 3 ppm a year. It is also released when plants and ... to turn the oxygen into carbon dioxide and send it back out there to the plants. The Great Cycle of Life so to speak.

- Animals and humans aren’t the only things putting carbon dioxide into the air. It is also released when plants and animals die, volcanoes erupt, and, most importantly, when we burn fossil fuels. Last year we dumped 37 billion tons of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere by burning fossil fuels. The more coal, oil and gas we burn, the faster that number rises. Before the Industrial Revolution (about 250 years ago), the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere was 280 ppm. Sixty years ago, it was 315 ppm. The past few years? It’s been rising 2 or 3 ppm a year.

- That might not sound like much. The problem is carbon dioxide molecules are very good at trapping heat in the atmosphere. Scientists have determined it has been this way for the past 150,000 years. Carbon dioxide molecules act like hall monitors of the Earth’s atmosphere. They let sunlight in, but they don’t let heat out.

- Scientists might argue about how well carbon dioxide is at warming the atmosphere but there is a doubling of carbon dioxide levels from 280 ppm to warm the Earth’s atmosphere by 2 3 degrees Celsius.

- Right now, at 415 ppm, the climate has already warmed about one degree. And you don’t need to be a scientist to see the how that plays out in the ground water levels. Dangers around an ongoing project can change daily. Don’t get complacent. Pay attention to what is going on around you. Be knowledgeable.

- As the presidential campaign season kicks off you should be hearing a lot about a Just Transition and a Green New Deal. We are reaching a point where it’s not worth denying whether the climate crisis is, for the most part, manmade. The fossil fuel industry has successfully framed the debate as a “political” one when in reality it is a “scientific” one. A climate change is manmade. It’s a fact. And because we’ve allowed it to happen we have lost precious time discussing what to do about it.

If a Green New Deal is the best answer (see front page) it’s going to need the support of Labor. It is pretty much a given that in the next five to ten years a good forty to forty-five percent of our population will be out of work due to automation. Don’t think so? Amazon has a robot that picks, wraps and sends 600 packages an hour.

- Our jobs here at Merck, while not guaranteed, aren’t easy to fully replace with automation. We may not be as vulnerable as other folks out there in the country’s workforce. Rising temperatures and changing cycles of seasons are likely to create breeding grounds for new strains of disease and the critters that carry them. Hopefully the medicine business should be okay.

- But what about the men and women in the fossil fuel industries? When coal power plants and coal burning plants shut down (for the right reasons) Labor heard about a Just Transition. It never appeared. It’s no wonder so many people grew sour and angry. Take away a person’s job you take away their dignity.

As the presidential campaign season kicks off you should be hearing a lot about a Just Transition and a Green New Deal. We are reaching a point where it’s not worth denying whether the climate crisis is, for the most part, manmade. The fossil fuel industry has successfully framed the debate as a “political” one when in reality it is a “scientific” one. A climate change is manmade. It’s a fact. And because we’ve allowed it to happen we have lost precious time discussing what to do about it.

If a Green New Deal is the best answer (see front page) it’s going to need the support of Labor. It is pretty much a given that in the next five to ten years a good forty to forty-five percent of our population will be out of work due to automation. Don’t think so? Amazon has a robot that picks, wraps and sends 600 packages an hour.

- Our jobs here at Merck, while not guaranteed, aren’t easy to fully replace with automation. We may not be as vulnerable as other folks out there in the country’s workforce. Rising temperatures and changing cycles of seasons are likely to create breeding grounds for new strains of disease and the critters that carry them. Hopefully the medicine business should be okay.

- But what about the men and women in the fossil fuel industries? When coal power plants and coal burning plants shut down (for the right reasons) Labor heard about a Just Transition. It never appeared. It’s no wonder so many people grew sour and angry. Take away a person’s job you take away their dignity.

Sara Nelson is president of the Association of Flight Attendants and Communications Workers of America (AFA/CWA). She is considered a possible candidate to replace Rich Trumka, the President of the AFL-CIO if he retires. Recently Nelson was interviewed by In These Times. She was asked about a New Green Deal and what a Just Transition could look like. Here’s her response:

SN: “What is a Just Transition? I can tell you what it’s not! A few hours of training is not a Just Transition. The transition needs to begin before the jobs go away. A Just Transition must ensure pensions and healthcare are protected for workers who spent their lives powering our country in the fossil fuel industries. A Just Transition includes bringing the expertise of unions to the table, so we don’t create policy that has unintended consequences, such as making it impossible to produce steel needed to create alternative forms of energy. A Just Transition also must include both industrial innovation to determine whether current energy sources can be utilized in a green way. A Just Transition includes recognizing that federal agreements for American workers to keep production in the United States so that, for example, American workers are building wind turbines and solar panels. And finally, a Just Transition means maintaining income for families who depend on a Just Transition. Ask union leaders. We are a group of people who want to keep your jobs.”
Dear Sisters and Brothers,

As you are all aware, our collective bargaining agreement with Merck expires April 30th next year. If you’ve gotten this far in the newsletter you know the Company has committed to spending a lot of money at West Point. And not just Band-Aid money for business as usual; repairs but big investments to our infrastructure and our future. That is a good thing.

However, I don’t believe we should fool ourselves into thinking negotiations will be a walk in the park. They never are. We continue to have disagreements over employee morale, safety, and of course, our absence control policy. We are certain to hear complaints from the Company about costs and premium pay. We have faced challenges before. But I am confident that if we stick together, we can be successful in addressing any and all issues management will bring to the table.

Our preparations have begun. Your Bargaining Committee has already met to discuss strategies. We will meet on a regular basis in the coming months to review our collective bargaining agreement and analyze and prepare for whatever issues come our way.

As you may have read in our Local News section training is scheduled in September for your (Contract Action Team) CAT. The CAT Team is an important piece of our negotiating strategy as they will work closely with our Bargaining Committee to keep you informed throughout negotiations. Get to know your CAT Team representative. And get registered on our webpage for the latest news and information – www.usw10-86.org.

As for negotiations themselves we will listen to any sensible proposals that make West Point an attractive place to do business. We believe our members are the ones who are best positioned to do that work. I believe that our membership has the talent and ability to continue to make West Point the most productive medicine manufacturing facility in the entire Merck Sharp & Dohme network. I believe that most of the problems the Company perceives can be fixed if management would only listen to our members. After all, we know our jobs better than anyone else.

However, I don’t believe we should fool ourselves into thinking negotiations will be a walk in the park. They never are. We continue to have disagreements over employee morale, safety and of course, our absence control policy. We are certain to hear complaints from the Company about costs and premium pay. We have faced challenges before. But I am confident that if we stick together, we can be successful in addressing any and all issues management will bring to the table.

This is the time for our membership to present a unified front to management. This is not a time for politics or personal agendas that divide us and/or keep us from our goal: to provide the best possible working conditions for all our members and to assure job security for us and future members of our Union.

In Solidarity,

Mike Gauger
President USW Local 10-00086

Mike Gauger/President USW Local 10-00086

Put the MOVEMENT Back in the Labor Movement.*

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

If you can’t find someone to accompany you to Health Services, take a packed room got an earful (Medical Trustees: President Mike Gauger/26555; Plant Committee Member Kevin McCafferty/20187; Treasurer Danny Peterson/27479).

When your first injury occurs or a procedure becomes necessary for a second injury occurs or a procedure becomes necessary for a different condition, you may run out of sick time. That’s right. By not reporting that first injury you may have lost sick time that would have been protected under Workers Comp. Avoiding a “hassle” might cost you your job.

The sheer enormity of the issue is enough to guarantee a walk in the park. But there are people out there trying to change the way things are done. One is my Congresswoman, Elizabeth Osca-Cortez of New York and Massachusetts Senator Edward Markey introduced a bill to phase out the use of Agent Orange, a defoliant that was used during the Vietnam War. The bill also calls for a grand plan for tackling Climate Change – the Green New Deal.

The bill has been kicked around before. It is a proposal that will attempt to take on two things – Climate Change and Inequality. Like if Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal during the Great Depression this time it will do so from an environmental point of view. It will mobilize public support to help us transition from an economy built on exploitation and fuel dependency to one driven by dignity work and clean energy.

It would call for upgrading our infrastructure, retrofitting our buildings and restoring our ecosystems. It would cut carbon pollution while creating millions of jobs. It would ensure that every person has access to clean air and water, raising wages and building climate resilience. And all policies are paid for with the revenues generated by the carbon and carbon pollution.

The Powers-That-Be will find ways to undermine any such efforts. They will mock the idea of the government fixing anything as a pipe dream. They will call it “socialism.” They will convince you that your job is the only way and be our salvation. They will be lying.

ExxonMobil knew back in the 1970’s about the threats posed by Climate Change. They could have warned us of the dangers posed by fossil fuels. Instead they hired the scientists who challenged any evidence that cigarette smoking is bad for your health. They allowed nothing to hinder their ability to make money.

They undermined any such efforts. They will mock the idea of the government fixing anything as a pipe dream. They will call it “socialism.” They will insist that private enterprise should lead the way and be our salvation. They will be lying.

A recent United Nations report stated that one million plant and animal species are on the verge of extinction, with alarming implications for human survival. The study draws a direct link of the loss of species to human activity. Its conclusion? The current rate of decline is unparalleled and the accelerating rate of extinctions “means grave impacts on people around the world are now likely.”

In May of this year a high-tech instrument atop Mauna Loa, a 13,679 ft. volcano in Hawaii, recorded a scary human achievement. Thanks to our addiction to fossil fuels the level of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere has reached 415 parts per million (ppm). The last time CO2 levels were this high was three million years ago. The world was a much different place. Bee species were growing at the South Pole. There was no Greenland ice sheet. And sea levels were 50 to 60 feet higher. That’s the world we are creating.

*see our 10-86 Newsletter/Spring/2014

Mike Gauger/President USW Local 10-00086