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Escanaba, MI 49829

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# 21 NEWS

Editor: Gerald Kell **WWW.USW2-21.COM** April, 2017  
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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](http://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:** **Canceled for April**

**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](http://www.pacelocal21.proboards.com)

We've provided the Company with an 'intent to bargain' letter and are awaiting dates to begin negotiations. Your Union Committee recently went through the mill with the 2nd contract survey. If you did not receive one, please contact a Union Committee member as soon as possible so we may provide you with the survey and tally the information. We issued this survey to ensure that we're on the same page as the membership. We will keep you informed as more information becomes available about the contract. Please continue the solidarity throughout the mill. We are stronger together, United we Stand!

**FOLLOW OUR CONTRACT**  
**BRING**  
**DERICK & TRACY BACK**

## Derick and Tracy Support

**Steve Benoit, President**

We continue to move forward on the arbitration hearing concerning the wrongful termination of our Union Brother and Sister. We have dates set for arbitration preparation and the campaign to bring back Derick and Tracy moves forward daily. The support from our membership and the community has grown exponentially. We have seen organizations, politicians, community leaders, and many others add their support to the cause. Increasingly, people from the community are expressing their concerns and displeasure about the tactics of this company against the workforce to bully them into a bogus last chance agreement. We will not be intimidated or bullied by a company into some archaic compliance of servitude. The productive and proper method of encouraging people to work with *and* for you is through respect, not fear and intimidation. Please continue to follow all the events within our Local and in the community supporting our cause to end the mistreatment of workers.



## When in need, remember EAP

**Brandon Stromberg, Secretary**

There is always a lot going on in life with work, family, and needed entertainment. The clock never stops and everyone responds to this differently. When I'm stressed, I might work out at the gym or spend some time with my family and friends. Some might go shoot their rifle or drive their muscle car on an open highway. You should know when those

stress relievers do not work, there is still help. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is *free* and *confidential*. Yes, *free* and *confidential* for you and your family. You simply need to dial 1.800.331.3226. You will be asked a series of questions and if they are unable to address your concerns over the phone you will be connected to a counselor. If you have any issues connecting with a counselor, you can call a local counselor directly! We recommend Mark Hallfrisch, 906.786.7839. Mark is back in the mill doing "EAP popcorn days" on a quarterly basis. We have a fantastic group of people operating the popcorn machine while Mark is out in the mill greeting all of you.



EAP covers financial issues, marriage/family stress, work related/careers, crisis intervention, life adjustment, legal, sexual Issues, self-esteem, conflict resolution, drug/alcohol assessment, depression/anxiety, geriatrics, retirement, handicapped, anger management, grief and loss, child abuse/sex abuse, terminal illness, and terminal illness. Did I mention it was FREE and CONFIDENTIAL?!

**Jerry's Body Shop**  
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jerrysbodyshop01@sbcglobal.net

**Jamie Sebeck**  
Owner/Operator

**2017**  
**ESCANABA DOWNTOWN**  
**CLEAN-UP**  
**MAY 20TH, 2017**  
**RAIN OR SHINE**

KEEP IT GREEN  
 LIVE THE DREAM  
 KEEP IT CLEAN  
 COMMUNITY PRIDE  
 COMMUNITY WIDE  
 Keep Escanaba Clean

**OJT**

**Steve Benoit, President**

We have started seeing On the Job Training (OJT) in some areas throughout the mill and it has caused some confusion and concern. OJT means exactly what it says; you are training “on the job”. The person doing OJT is first and foremost to perform their scheduled job and, if time allows, they can train. We need to be sure that work is not being pushed off on others in an area so that others can OJT train. Another thing we need to understand is that a person training OJT is filling an actual job and if they call in, the vacancy must be filled. We recently had this happen in the PS&D area when someone who was OJT training called in and the vacancy was not filled. This is a reason for a grievance. If you have questions concerning OJT please speak with a trainer in your area or reach out to a committee member.

**Working Together**

**Bob Larson, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice**

The last couple of months have brought some unusual events to the Utilities area. A brother who had been off for over five years after a hunting accident came back to work. The Human Resources director said he has never seen a contract that protected a person’s job and seniority for that long. This is a testament to the strength of our membership and the foresight of past negotiating committees...of course, I’m sure this is another item with which the Company will want to do away.

Two brothers in the Boiler House were involved in a physical altercation. The contract has very clear penalties for this. The Company chose to work with us on this situation and the allotted punishments took into consideration the mitigating circumstances surrounding the disagreement.

These two events demonstrate that the Company and your Union can work together for beneficial results for employees and employer alike. I know the decisions made surrounding these issues affected far more people than just those directly involved; and each honored our contract. Some people were not satisfied with the results, but at the end of the day, everyone still has a job to provide for their families.



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**1-800-562-0954**

Iron Mountain Escanaba Marquette Menominee Houghton

## Beckoning the Stop to Bullying Rally

Steve Benoit, President

Please make plans to attend the “Beckoning the Stop to Bullying” rally organized by the Local. It will be held on Tuesday, April 25<sup>th</sup> in the Besse Auditorium at Bay de Noc Community College from 6 - 8pm. There will be several speakers ranging from students, teachers, and members of the Delta County Suicide Prevention Task Force. We also have a number of sponsors and supporters from the community assisting including TBS Insurance Inc., Johnston Printing, the Delta County Democratic Party, Upper Peninsula Regional Labor Federation, Riverview Custom Tees, and the Delta County Suicide Prevention Task Force. Thank you to all these groups. Upon arrival, there will be a group project making signs with your personal message against bullying to be displayed during the event.


We must make moves in this community to stop the bullying. Many of us may experience it within our families, schools, work, or other organizations. We've seen it in our mill from Management with the Derick and Tracy's termination. It appears the bullying epidemic is getting worse. We must put a stop to bullying and we can only do this as a community. United we stand!



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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.



Where membership matters!

UNION JOBS COMING TO ESCANABA!

Meijer is hiring workers for its new Escanaba store. These jobs, both full-time and part-time, come with the protections and guarantees of a union contract, including:





- Guaranteed wage increases
- Paid time off
- Protection from unjust discipline and termination
- Minimum four hour shift guaranteed
- Opportunity for part-time workers to earn full-time jobs
- Quality health insurance at a reasonable cost and employer-paid retirement plan

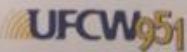
The United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 951 has a proud history of actively representing Meijer employees and offers members many benefits outside of the contract, like:

- Free online associate degree program through UFCW's partnership with Eastern Gateway Community College
- Over \$60,000 in scholarships awarded annually to assist with college, child care, family enrichment programs and utility bills
- Discounts on services like insurance, mortgage, home, technology, auto, and legal programs

If you or a family member are hired at Meijer, be sure to sign your union application to receive these members only benefits. For more information about UFCW 951, contact Hal Martin at 1.800.999.0951 ext. 148.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION | 1.800.999.0951 | [www.ufcw951.org](http://www.ufcw951.org) | [www.facebook.com/UFCW951](https://www.facebook.com/UFCW951)





John Cakmakci, President  
Dave Way, Secretary-Treasurer  
Karin Hopman, Recorder

## Training Woes

Jeff Skorupski, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice

With the amount of movement that many areas have experienced lately, training is once again a very big issue we are facing. There are a lot of new people in new areas and we must help by looking out for them the best we can. I could write for days and days where our training is lacking around the mill but that will not help us right now. There are a lot of new people training and a rash of events surrounding this training. Let us all work together to keep an extra lookout for your coworkers and jump in to help out where you can to ensure their training is the best that it can be.

## **The Power of Unity**

### **Brandon Stromberg, Secretary**

Prior to attending the USW International Convention recently, I was thinking of Escanaba and our two members who were wrongfully terminated, our upcoming contract negotiations, our safety concerns, our inability to properly maintain equipment, and the general wastefulness seen throughout the mill. Sometimes in order to view those issues properly and really adjust our bearings, we must also look at the bigger picture. We must look at the success ATI had after being locked out for seven months or the sixty-five Somco employees who went on strike and had a new contract with increased benefits and the reinstatement of a wrongfully terminated member within twenty-four hours. We should learn from the experience of others. Like the workers at RioTinto—one of the largest mining companies in the world—who fought off a two-tier wage scale on their employees and the hiring of contractors as their employees retired. “That shit didn’t happen,” said Leo Gerard, USW International President. “Why?” he asked, “because



**Leo Gerard, USW International President**

7,000 people rallied to stop them!” Every victory relied on their solidarity. During the conference, Napoleon Gomez, President and General Secretary of Los Mineros (a Mexican miner’s union), reported his union ended their 58 day strike securing a 7.5% wage increase and 3.5% increase in benefits. Each day we heard example after example of the power of unity. During one of the mornings, Father Robert E. Stoeckig, a Catholic priest, said a prayer prior to the start of the convention and talked about Jesus the Worker, the importance of human dignity and respect, and working together in unity to attain those things. Reverend Dr. William Barber II, a protestant pastor and president of North Carolina NAACP

passionately said about those opposing the labor movement, “They are afraid of our unity. They had to engage in voter suppression just to win, they had to spend massive sums of money to divide and conquer us, they had to go all the way to Russia just to win, they had to depend on 97 million voters (black, white, and latino) not voting, just to win. We are not



**Mike Bolton, USW District 2 Director**

weak. Someone fears unity because you don’t cheat someone who you can win in a fair fight.” Congressman Emanuel Cleaver, a Democrat from Missouri, told the convention that we are being pushed around by rich bullies. “We must go out of here with a new found unity. The only way we are going to make it is if we are all together as working people. We are in the majority. There are more of us than them,” he proclaimed. Let it be our resolve to remain united. Solidarity!



**Jon Geenen USW Vice President over Paper**

## April Union Meeting Highlights

The Welfare club had seventeen members at its last meeting, 5 were active members of the Local.

In the trainers report it was recommended everyone check the jobs for which they are qualified. There is a supervisor in the Kraft Mill stating that it is okay for employees to work a job even if they are not completely qualified to do so. This is not true.

Eleven paid grievances were reported.

There was discussion around the return of a union member after being off of work from the mill for multiple years due to medical reasons.

A chief steward discussed the company contracting out our bark hauling work and the grievance that was filed.

Mill trainee interviews wrapped up last week.

We discussed the mediation that took place last Friday.

A grievance has been filed surrounding the E3 temporary shutdown.

Grandfathered employees' 401(k) fixed contribution has been deposited.

Issues plaguing the healthcare benefits were shared.

We have a new corporate director over benefits. A face to face healthcare meeting with the Verso/USW Healthcare Committee was requested to shore up the issues we are seeing.

The success of our facebook video was discussed along with the future use of this type of communication.

The radio news on WDBC/WYKX was explained.

The Beckoning the Stop to Bullying Rally at Bay College on April 25th was discussed all are encouraged to attend.

## Union Proud

### **Ross Strand, Comp Advocate**

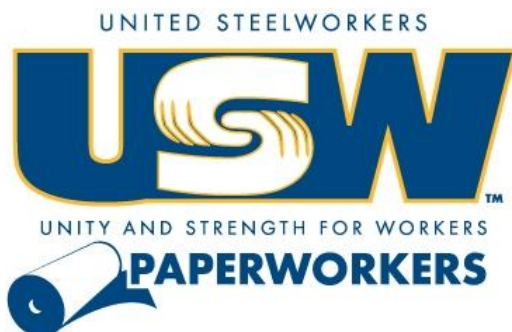
Hi all, as you may know I just got back from the USW International convention in Vegas and I couldn't be more proud of our union. The strength of the USW is amazing. We had representatives from other large unions there learning from our power and strength and taking notes to follow our methods. Vice President Joe Biden gave a speech that made me even prouder to be a union man. He said that just because he's out of office, he's not done working for labor in America, and that labor and the middle class have been getting stepped on for far too long; without us this country would be done. He couldn't say enough positive things about our union and USW International President, Leo Gerard, We all know that, it's just great to hear it from a man of his wisdom and power, we now all need to stick together more than ever, I think by now this company knows what they're up against, not the other way around. In solidarity, let's stay strong from the start.



## Common Sense and Cents

### **Chuck Way, 1<sup>st</sup> Vice**

History shows us Verso spent over \$2,000,000,000 and ended up with only three mills that are maintained. All the other mills they had are shut or cut way back. I see the same thing happening all over again, utilizing mills for all that they can squeeze out of them, not putting any money into them and then closing doors. All the while blaming antiquated labor practices and not recognizing the fact the problem is with wasteful management. Givebacks never save the day they just keep asking for more of them under the guise that it will be the cure-all. They show up on the books for one year and the following year those numbers have to be beat again. Sound familiar? It happens about every three years. It is easier for them to pass the buck onto your workforce and never shoulder the burden themselves (that way they never feel the pain). Hear of any bonuses being given back? Me neither. When asked about this, their answer is, "It is part of their compensation." Well everything they are asking for is part of ours. They call it a fair and equitable proposal, I just call it BS.



## Need Help with Benefits Issues?

Finding answers to your benefits-related questions and getting help to resolve benefits challenges is now easier than ever. Verso's two-tiered benefits help approach will get you the answers you need as efficiently and quickly as possible.

### HealthEquity®

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If you have questions about your Verso benefit plans or coverage, require help resolving a claim or need other types of benefits-related assistance, your first call should be to the Verso One Number, 1-800-422-6103. When you call, you will hear a menu of numbered options that correspond to Verso's benefits vendors (BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee, Cigna, Transamerica Retirement Solutions, Sedgwick Leave Administration, etc.). Simply choose the option for the vendor associated with your question or benefits challenge. Your call will be connected directly to that benefits vendor for assistance.

Before you call, be sure to have close at hand all personal information, such as your Social Security number and applicable policy/ID/account numbers. You should also be prepared to provide all information relevant to your question, claim or benefits issue, for example, dates, healthcare provider information, and the names of anyone previously contacted about the issue.



of Tennessee

[www.BCBST.com](http://www.BCBST.com)

Questions about your current coverage and available services should be answered quickly. The time needed to resolve other issues will depend on their nature and complexity. You should ask the benefits vendor how long resolution is expected to take.

If the benefits vendor does not answer your questions satisfactorily or does not resolve your benefits challenge in a timely manner, you should then contact Verso Employee Advocacy Services by calling the Verso One Number and selecting Option 8, or emailing [service@benefithelp.com](mailto:service@benefithelp.com).

## Humana

Vision Insurance

Verso Employee Advocacy Services will advocate directly with the benefit vendor on your behalf to assure that your questions are answered and your issues are resolved. Advocacy services are available to help with, among other things:

- Clarification of coverage and available services
- Benefit claims resolution
- Provider and carrier billing resolution
- Prior authorization for necessary procedures
- Claims appeal management
- Eligibility appeal management
- Plan and policy clarification and education

Verso Employee Advocacy Services is available Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (central time). Once again, be prepared when you call to provide your personal information, all pertinent information related to your question or benefits issue, and details of your recent communications with the benefits vendor.



For general questions about your Verso benefits, visit the benefits resource library at [www.myversobenefits.com](http://www.myversobenefits.com).

You can also reach your USW Local Insurance Advocate Gerald Kell at 233.3135 or 869.7943 for assistance with benefits.