

1201 Sheridan Road
Escanaba, MI 49829

Phone: 906.786.1846
Fax: 906.233.9250

21 NEWS

Editor: Gerald Kell WWW.USW2-21.COM April, 2018
Contact Editor at: djgribble@gmail.com or 906.869.7943

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 – 3 pm

Welfare Club Meeting: 1st Monday - 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.



We have set dates for future negotiations.

May – 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th
June – 6th and 7th

Union Negotiations comprise of all three Unions, USW, IBEW, and Teamsters.

Great Turnout

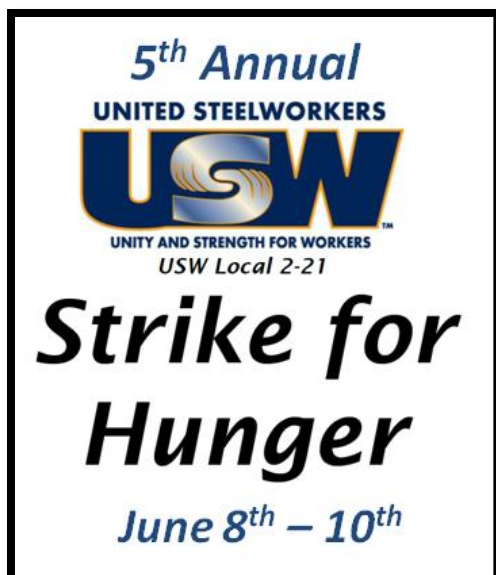
Steve Benoit, President

I would like to thank everyone that ran for a position within our Local. The great turnout shows that we have a healthy, democratic local. It's important that we have people who want to move the union forward and we appreciate all the members that want to make a difference. There are so many ways to get involved and help besides elected positions. Join the Women of Steel, Rapid Response, or simply take part in community events and speak to the power of unity in a union. Continue to fight for our union brothers and sisters, for our communities, all workers, families, and our mill.

I want to give a big thank you to Bob Larson, Tom Rogers, and Gary DuBord, Sr. Taking on positions in the union can be time-consuming and challenging at times and each of these people sacrificed their time to dedicate themselves to union positions. They will now pass the torch to their successors. Thank you for your dedication.

I also want to welcome those who will soon be taking positions. Derick Buchbinder will be one of our trustees; Joe Curran returns to an elected position as the Outer Guard; and Jim Gunderman will join the committee as the 2nd Vice President.

		Work	Cell
President	Steve Benoit	233.2529	399.4195
1 st Vice	Jeff Skorupski	233.2953	399.5472
2 nd Vice	Jim Gunderman		553.1699
Insurance	Gerry Kell	233.3135	869.7943
Comp	Ross Strand	233.2531	280.1494
Secretary	Brandon Stromberg	233.2788	284.1604
Treasurer	Guy Trudell	233.2534	399.9143
Hall Rental	Steve Kennedy	789.1933	



In Good Hands

Bob Larson, 2nd Vice

This will be my last article as a Union Officer. The chance to serve my union as a Chief Steward will definitely be the high point of my career at the Escanaba Paper Company. The fact that I was defeated saddens me, but the fact that two others were willing to step up and shoulder the responsibility is reassuring. The mill and the paper industry have changed a great deal since I started in the late 1980's. The one thing that has not changed is that Escanaba has a strong and vocal union. I'm confident that Jim Gunderman will be able to carry this tradition forward. I can only hope when Jim leaves the committee he feels as good about his replacement as I feel about him. The position of Chief Steward is an honor and privilege and I would like to thank all of my union brothers and sisters for bestowing it upon me. **SOLIDARITY!**



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Rogue State

Jeff Skorupski, 1st Vice

Over the last few months there have been several issues with the way the scheduling department has been treating members who are "off the schedule for training" in regards to overtime or being forced for 18 hour shifts. Most people understand the way this has always been done in the past, but below you will find the contents of the letter of intent from Human Resources outlining the way it will be handled going forward. Most people will look at this and think to themselves, "That's the way it has always been done". And I agree. Unfortunately, it's become clear that when the schedulers feel like

changing something they will just change it. I'm not sure how they have this type of power but I believe a lot of us have asked that question for years. In fact, we had a meeting about this very issue and the schedulers said they will not change it back to the way it was unless it's in writing. So that's what this letter of intent is. On a side note, after telling us they will not change the way it's done (and saying that in front of their boss), they got together for their own meeting and took it upon themselves to change the way it was being done again. "How can that happen?" you may ask. Well, I have asked that question and not received a satisfactory answer as of yet.

The following is a clarification of the intent of the existing Vacancy Procedures.

Any employee that is taken off the regular schedule for training purposes-

1. Will not be forced for 18 hours unless there are no other options.
2. Will not be asked for overtime until Step #7.
3. May be asked by an employee forced on an 18 hour shift to voluntarily work the hours of the forced employee.



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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.

April Union Meeting Highlights

- Treasurer's Report informed of issues the Union is having with the Company failing to deduct the proper amount of Union dues and failing to send us the dues. This has now been corrected.
- The Women of Steel coordinator, Donna Dams, talked about the T-shirt sales for our Union sister who is battling cancer. Also she thanked those who attended the Honor Flight fundraiser.
- Steve Benoit discussed the changes made to the E&I bid. A motion to accept the bid passed.
- We requested a letter of intent from the Company regarding the elimination of the Core Room along with the financials. There has already been a delay due to CoreEnzo, the date looks to be mid-June now. A grievance will be filed.
- We continue to work through scheduling issues; there seems to be no accountability for scheduling.
- There were 9 paid grievances reported.
- The Company is working on the maintenance bid process.
- Welders that just hit their three years and should be now be certified as welders are not certified, as the Company continues to drag their feet. After a meeting with the Chief Steward, the Company began getting the training started and welders certified.
- Sedgewick (the Workers Comp administrator) is not communicating with our members.
- A Comp case is going to the magistrate next week.
- All were encouraged to report injuries at work, it's difficult to fight for a Comp case without records.
- Membership should contact TransAmerica to make sure you received your 401(k) fixed contribution.
- We discussed the retiree healthcare grievance and how the Company wants to arbitrate these individually.
- The safety advocate from Woodyard took a bid. The company wanted to go to the next qualified, but they were told to rebid it.
- The Company is creating a six month trial for a lockout coordinator special assignment position. We will meet with the Company after the six months and discuss the job's future.
- A meeting was held to discuss the E1 Coaters concerns between members of the area and

management. E1 Coater has the highest turnover rate in the mill. One thing we are pushing for is the equalization of pay for all 3 coater systems to increase retention.

- A discussion about the eliminated dumpsters throughout the mill without talking to our members on the floor or communicating this to the Union.
- The crane crew is reporting corrosion in the E3 area and a meeting was held with the chemical company, Buchman, to make changes to prevent this corrosion. There are a number of ventilation issues in the E3 including air make-ups simply not functioning.
- Union/Management meeting: The Grove that was in the recent fire was a complete loss; the new mill manager is very customer oriented; E1/E3 ran over standard for March; there are three management positions open; and our subtotal ops is positive.
- Negotiations were canceled recently due to significant concerns at some Wisconsin mills, but rescheduled for May. We are still waiting for an answer about Master Contract negotiations.
- Bishop Noa Home negotiations are scheduled for the end of May.
- Elections results are:
 - President-Steve Benoit
 - 1st Vice President-Jeff Skorupski
 - 2nd Vice President-James Gunderman
 - Secretary-Brandon Stromberg
 - Insurance Advocate-Gerald Kell
 - Workman's Comp-Ross Strand
 - Treasurer-Guy Trudell
 - Inner Guard-Adam Whitney
 - Outer Guard-Joe Curran
 - Trustees: Fred Nordman, Derick Buchbinder, Daryl St. Vincent

AMY DYER

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Pension AFTAP Number

Gerald Kell, Insurance Advocate

Each year the Defined Benefit Retirement Fund, a.k.a. Pension (not to be confused with the Defined Contribution Fund, a.k.a. 401k) is audited by an actuarial group to determine its level of funding versus its liabilities. This percentage, the Adjusted Funding Target Attainment Percentage (AFTAP) is determined in the first month after the first quarter of each plan year. AFTAP was part of the Pension Protection Act which sought to close loopholes and require some employers to shore up underfunded single employer pension plans. If the percentage is too low, it requires plan administrators to initiate a variety of benefit restrictions—there are multiple restrictions determined at separate thresholds.

Our 2018 AFTAP number is 92.41% which ensures there will be no benefit restrictions through September of 2019. Most commonly, members are interested in this number to determine the availability of the Lump Sum option when retiring. The Lump Sum is a distribution alternative to the pension annuity. Instead of receiving a monthly benefit through retirement, a current value of the member's pension is determined by actuarial assumptions, mortality data, expected term of payments, and an assumed interest rate; this is then converted to a single value and issued to the retiree. Other distribution options include **Single-Life Annuity**—this option maximizes your monthly benefit and ends on the month of your death; **Joint & Survivor Annuity**—which allows a member to select a beneficiary to receive payments after one's death; **Annuity & Cash Balance**—which converts your benefit to a starting balance and reduces that balance each month; in the event of your death would pay the remaining balance to a beneficiary. These are just some examples of options individuals need to consider prior to retirement. There are a variety of annuity options and endless factors to any one retiree's choice. Seeking professional advice is recommended.

In addition to the Lump Sum, there has been some misinformation floating around about how the pension works when a member passes away prior to

receiving their pension benefits. If a member passes away prior to receiving pension benefits and is *not married*, there is no death benefit. If a vested member is married and dies prior to receiving pension payments, a death benefit is paid to the spouse but at different rates depending on whether the employee was under *or* over age 55. The benefit is calculated as though the member retired on the date of death along with all applicable reductions.

E&I/Mechanical Bids

Steve Benoit, President

Both the E&I and Mechanical bids have passed the vote at the Hall and the Company now will move ahead with the bidding process. We've seen a very strong membership turnout for mechanical bids. With these 12 bids, the group that recently came in, and our existing mechanics, we hope to see a positive move in our Mechanical department staffing. We understand that these added jobs are only the beginning of brining the department back and we will continue to push for proper staffing in each of these departments. Mechanical and E&I are immensely important to the daily function of this mill. We should see the E&I bid posted soon. I feel that this bid

could struggle some due to the expectations the Company has set forth. We need to get back to an apprenticeship program in both E&I and Mechanical, but I feel that E&I is going to continue to struggle with the starving of trades all over our country. We must start taking responsibility for the training of people and investing into the trades within our facility. Verso cannot expect to successfully poach from the trades when the trades outside of the mill are struggling to find people at the same time. Having an apprenticeship program is the safest, cheapest, and most reliable way to properly staff a successful department. Through the negotiation of these bids, the Company agreed to re-establish the off-shift training for the trades similar to what we had in the past. If you are interested in the Mechanical or E&I field in the future, please take part in these classes. You'll find that our union brothers and sisters teaching these classes will have a wealth of knowledge for your benefit.



Workers' Memorial Day

Brandon Stromberg, Secretary

As Workers' Memorial Day approaches, it's important to take a moment and reflect on the workers who have tragically lost their lives while simply trying to make a living. In 2016, there were 43 fatalities in Michigan; the highest in a decade. In 2017, there was a slight decrease resulting in 38 fatalities. Year-to-date for 2018, there has been 4 fatalities. These numbers are not simply a statistic. Each number is a person with a story; a story of a man or woman working toward a better life for themselves and their family. Each person was a family member, a part of a community, and a friend. Each person was an asset, in their own way, to their workplace and everyone around them. Each person's life was abruptly ended. These tragedies caused grievous suffering to everyone who knew them.

Let us not forget our USW brother, Matt Shumaker, who was fatally injured at our Luke facility in April, 2017. Matt served in the U.S. military, was a volunteer firefighter, an Eagle Scout, liked all kinds of sports, loved music, reading, and enjoyed fishing. He left behind a wife of 12 years and many family members. We can't put a price tag on our safety. Let it be our resolve to look after ourselves and our brothers and sisters working alongside of us, defend our safety and health protections, require our employer to fix hazards, and continually fight for our voice to be heard on the shop floor. "Pray for the dead, fight like hell for the living."-Mother Jones.



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Jamie Sebeck
Owner/Operator

Vacation Pay

Below is the information provided by the Company concerning a change on vacation for new hires and a change to how pay is handled when a person is earns a week of vacation for years of service. If you have any questions, contact a committee member.

"For employees that have less than one year of service, they can take their vacation prior to the one-year date if approved by the supervisor but will not get paid for it until the one-year anniversary date. In Worksight, they are marked "Off with Permission" for the week they are gone. Then, when the anniversary falls, we use the vacation code to reduce the vacation bank by 40 hours and pay them for the week taken previously without allowing more time off.

For employees who have been here more than one year who earn another week of vacation, we changed the programming in 2014 so that if they earned an additional week during the course of the year, they could take it and get paid for it prior to the actual anniversary date. Prior to 2014, we did not allow the employee to take the extra week until after the anniversary date had occurred but that created issues for the schedulers trying to track all the employees who would get an extra week during the year. It resulted in some grievances when the vacation did not get used/paid from what I understand, thus it was decided to just change the rules to allow for it to be used right away in the anniversary year. But, if an employee has taken and been paid the additional week of vacation prior to their true anniversary date, and decides to leave the company, that employee must pay it back as they truly hadn't worked the years of service required to get paid for it."

Where do we stand?

Steve Benoit, President

We all seem to be waiting for something to happen, whether it's being purchased by a different company, going to the table over a Master Agreement, or a direction on the retiree insurance arbitration. Answers to these things are lacking and we continue to voice our concern to the Company and USW leadership. It's odd that even local management is wondering what is going on as they continue to say that they are not receiving answers from Corporate. This could be a sign of all sorts of impending actions. The important thing is that we all remain strong and continue to fight for a strong contract that's fair for our families, communities, and membership. Our contract must continue to move us to a safer work environment, a stronger mill, and an environment that strengthens our foundation of family and community.

Unions are good for America and all Americans. Unions are associated with higher productivity, lower employee turnover, improved workplace communication and a better-trained workforce. You probably are wondering where some of these things are sometimes, but consider our mill without each of our union brothers and sisters voicing their concerns on some of these issues. I've been told several times that an at-will employee who speaks out of turn can be terminated. The comment made to me was, "Our freedom of speech does not extend into the workplace where you are an at will employee". Think of the things that we are able to do and say while standing up for our rights as a union. A great example is the E1 Coater meetings. Members are unsatisfied with the turnover and the ability of the coater to run due to poor staffing. One of the biggest issues that came out of this meeting was training, specifically "green training green" and the frustration from this that causes excessive turnover. The group feels that if wages and maintenance are addressed we'll see less turnover, improved training, and better work place health and safety. Each of the crews was represented and a game plan was created. Because of these concerns we have begun addressing solutions with the Company. In a non-union workplace, you won't have that freedom. When these issues are addressed, the Company will see economic growth through productivity which will drive us to a better-quality

product for our customers and increase our competitive edge.

I bring this to your attention because even though things may seem quiet on the negotiating front we can still make a difference in our workplace. There are some great things happening all over the mill including union membership communication to the committee, addressing scheduling issues, E1 Coater meetings, body-mapping in the Woodyard, and much more. These are all being done through your union. Continue to fight for what is right. Remember: this is *our* mill, *our* community, *our* union, and *our* families. Solidarity!



Thomas John LaChance

Agent

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Eskey Clean-up 2018



Saturday, May 19, 2018
Escanaba Farmer's Market
(1501 Ludington Street)
10:00 a.m.–12:00 noon -
Rain or Shine

The goal of the Eskey Clean Up is to make Escanaba a better place by cleaning it up. This is done by sweeping, raking, pulling weeds, spraying weed killer, picking up debris, mowing and trimming grass and weeds and giving attention to areas where needed. Last year approximately 6,000 pounds of garbage, dirt, debris and junk were hauled away.

Eskey Clean Up is seeking teams to participate in this year's clean up. Teams need to be formed and then are assigned various areas to clean up throughout the two hour segment. Equipment, rakes, shovels, gloves and garbage bags will be provided. All garbage is placed along alleys and curbs on Ludington Street or in front of beach house and will be removed by volunteers.

Afterwards, food, refreshments and great prizes are awarded at noon at the Farmer's Market. Come out and show your community pride!

Please contact them today to get you (or your team) signed-up!

Email – info@eskeycleanup.com

Call – [906-212-5555](tel:906-212-5555)

Join the contact list – <http://eepurl.com/b3sXjP>

Facebook – <https://www.facebook.com/eskeycleanup/>

Grandfathered 401(k) Contributions

Gerald Kell, Insurance Advocate

The Company has failed to make the Annual Fixed Contributions for many of our grandfathered employees who retired in 2017. They have not missed all of them and I'm still waiting on a list of those they believe were omitted. However, I'm asking our membership to reach out to any one you may know that could be impacted by this as I can't fully trust that the list will be complete. My hope is that this will be resolved by the time you're reading this, but I have no reason to believe that will be the case. There is potentially tens of thousands of dollars at stake here. So again, if you or someone you know may be affected by this, please call Transamerica through the Verso One Number 1.800.422.6103 Option 4 to identify whether or not you received your contribution and then let me know by calling me at 233.3135 or 869.7943 or email me at Gerald.Kell@versoco.com. You can also notify Human Resources, Patty Jacobsen, at 233.2229. Whether or not you closed your 401(k) account upon retirement should not have an effect on your eligibility for this earned contribution. It should reflect a percentage of your prior year's wages prorated for your active employed time in 2017.



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