

REP RTER

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF USW LOCAL 2-232

VOLUME 29, NO.1

FEBRUARY 2008

Election for President and Sergeant at Arms to be held on Friday March 7, 2008

Evseichik, Schwieger, Karen Clark, Burmester, Curro, Porter, Nowak and Olivares all elected without opposition

Nominations were taken at the January Membership Meeting by International Rep Ernie Dex for Executive Board positions and Strattec Bargaining Committee. However, he prefaced it by stating proper notification was not given. The Reporter and the web-site was not sufficient because Federal regulations require a mailing. The mailing did go out and a Special Nomination meeting was held on Sunday February 17th at the Union office. The nominations that were taken at the January 27th membership meeting were valid and the meeting on February 17th was for only additional nominations. There were not any additional nominations for any of the positions.

A primary will not be necessary as there are only 2 candidates each running for 2 contested positions, President and Sergeant at Arms. The general election will be held on Friday March 7th.

President Scott Godshaw will be opposed by Bill Vian from Briggs department 770. Dennis Clark

and Stanley Quezaire will be running for the position of Sergeant at Arms. Both candidates are from Briggs. The incumbent Sergeant at Arms Chuck Porter, chose to run for the Strattec Trustee position and was unopposed. That opening was created when incumbent Strattec Trustee Ralph Schwieger chose to run for Financial Secretary Treasurer and was unopposed for that position. This opening was created by the departure of Ross Winklbauer. Ross retired officially August 1, 2006 but was able to fulfill the remainder of his term due to the International Constitution. The term ends in March.

Vice President Allen Evseichik, Recording Secretary Karen Clark, Briggs Trustee Bettie Burmester and Guide Debbie Curro were all unopposed for their respective Executive Board positions.

Nominations were also taken for the Strattec Bargaining Committee. Incumbents Dennis Nowak and Al Olivares were unopposed for these positions.

March Membership Meeting

**Sunday
March 16, 2008
9:30 a.m.**

**Frank Monreal's El Matador
9155 W. Bluemound Rd.**

IMPORTANT BUSINESS

- **Reports of Officers, Grievance Representatives and Committees**
- **Discussion and action on any other proper business for this meeting.**

NOTICE:

General Election for President and Sergeant at Arms will be held at the following locations and times:

**USW Local 2-232 Office-
8500 W. Capitol Dr. 10a.m. to 3:30p.m.**

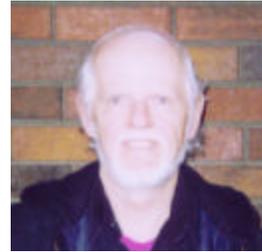
**Strattec Cafeteria- 5a.m. to
7:00a.m. and 1:30 to 3:30p.m.**

**Burleigh Plant- South Cafeteria and
Column A-39 (North end)
5a.m. to 7a.m. and 1:30 to 3:30p.m.**

**Menomonee Falls Plant Break Area
5:30a.m. to 7a.m. and 1:30 to 3:30p.m.**

President

Sergeant at Arms



Scott E. Godshaw

William Vian

Dennis Clark

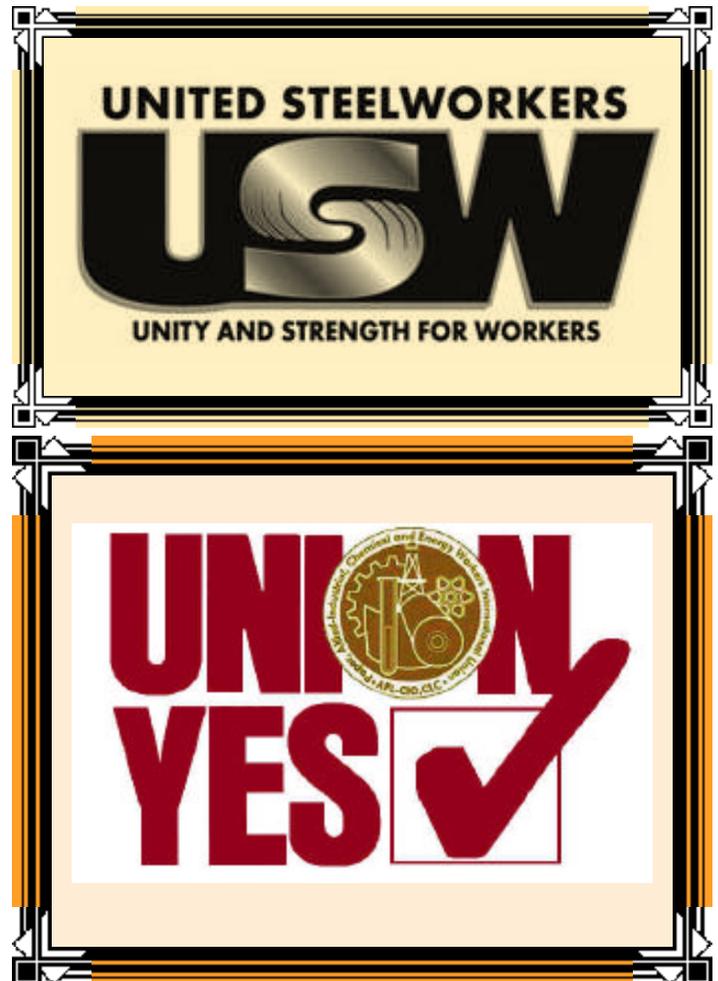
Stanley Quezaire

Current President, Recording Secretary 1997-2003, Gr. Rep-1994-1997; Alt. Gr. Rep. 1988-1994; Steward Dept. 188-1991-1994; Steward - Dept. 194-1987-1989; Committees: One-on-One (co-ordinator), Election and Safety; AIW International Convention Delegate-1993, UPIU International Convention Delegate-1996, Special UPIU Merger Convention Delegate-1999, PACE International Convention Delegate-2003; Special PACE-USWA Merger Delegate 2005, Wisc. AFL-CIO State Convention Delegate-1996, 2000, 2002, 2004, 2006; School for Workers Classes in Madison: Worker Comp, Time Study & Work Measurement, and Job Evaluation; Numerous other schools and Bargaining Conferences;. Current Editor of Local 2-232 *Reporter* and responsible for Website and lay-out of paper

Alternate Grievance Representative; Grievance Representative, Steward; Alternate Steward, Delegate to the International Convention, Chairperson of Sports Committee, Bargaining Committee

3rd Shift Grievance Rep
Dept.100 Steward
Alt. Grievance Rep-3rd Shift
Steward Dept.700
Sergeant at Arms

Current Steward Dept. 735,
Steward Dept. 135,
Steward Dept. 138
Pay for Knowledge Committee



President's Report by Scott Godshaw

Survivor Options and Make sure you have your 1000 Hours

At Brigg's, the company is still hiring for positions at the Service Division. You can apply online or come to Burleigh.

At this point there is NOT a WARN notice on the horizon for the coil department. As I had reported in the last issue of the *Reporter*, the rumors that coils was going to be gone by May or September of this year are totally false. Phelon, the company that has attempted to bid on our coils at this time still cannot beat us. However, the threat looms elsewhere as the company may attempt to assemble coils at one of their southern plants, but that would be far down the road.

Dave Debaets, the Company VP, had stated over a year and a half ago at his last State of the Business that we will not see any new manufacturing work coming into Milwaukee. However, it has been a credit to the members and the extraordinary work that is being done not just in coils but everywhere to maintain as much work as possible. And we have made it more difficult for them to move all of the jobs by doing just that. Staying competitive as they say and the committee and the members have done everything in our power to slow down that process of moving jobs as much as possible. Without a contract in place and ratification in 2005, you can bet your bottom buck that all the jobs would have been outsourced much quicker. And also with the contractual right of giving the company the ability to allow retirees to train people in their respective areas of expertise, those jobs as well would have been gone much quicker. That has been in the contract since 2002.

Last year as most of you know, we agreed on a mid-contract change for a new Productivity Reward Program that saved approximately 20 plus jobs at the Service Division and more importantly than that preventing them from outsourcing more work because as we know once they start outsourcing jobs, it usually does not stop.

Strattec

At Strattec, there have been rumors about threats and potential acts of violence. It is the company's responsibility and obligation to maintain a safe work place environment and our job to police that as well. The company will not have anyone working there if it has been determined that someone could be harmful or violent. They will take the necessary measurements to insure there will not be any workplace violence. In the year 2008, anything that could be misconstrued as a threat, will certainly be investigated fully. Rest assured, at this time, no one in the shop that is currently working, is a known threat to anyone else.

Also at Strattec, when we had met with the company recently, they had stated that there could be a lay off in January due to being slow. However, there has been in an increase in orders so business right now is steady. Strattec's contract will end this year June 29th. We will be in negotiations beginning in spring.

Survivor Options

There have been some questions about survivor options. When you have 29 and 1000 hours or are 55 years of age and are not planning to retire, you are eligible to sign up for a survivor option. If you are married, you can sign up for 100% for your spouse, then if you choose to change that option when you do retire there will not be a penalty. Prior to the 2005 negotiations at Briggs, there was a 1% penalty for each year your option was in place. Once again, now there is not any penalty for changing. If you are married, there is no reason not to sign up for the 100% survivor option for your spouse. In the unfortunate event that you, the member, would pass away before you retired, your spouse would collect 100% of your pension until their death.

At Strattec, you also have the right to sign up for a survivor option but the penalty is still in place.

Also at Briggs, the question has come up regarding the 29 years and 1000 hours for retirement eligibility. It is the individual's responsibility to calculate their own 1000 hours. If you are eligible to retire for the first time this year, just to be safe, you should put down last day of work June 26th, date of termination June 27th and Pension start date July 1st. You cannot depend on overtime that has not happened yet to be included in your 1000 hours. If you put down May 1st or June 1st as your retirement date and do not have the 1000 hours, you would have cancel first, then start the process all over again with a new 4 month notice. Once again, you want to be sure you will have the 1000 hours. If you have a problem or have questions regarding such, feel free to give me a call here at the Union office 414-463-7425. Or call Mercer's new number 1-866-417-5663.

LOCAL 2-232 REPORTER

February 2008

Volume 29, Issue #1

LOCAL 2-232 UNITED STEEL, PAPER AND FORESTRY, RUBBER, MANUFACTURING, ENERGY,

ALLIED INDUSTRIAL

AND SERVICE WORKERS INTERNATIONAL UNION

Representing employees of Briggs & Stratton Corp. and

Strattec Security Corp.

Office 8500 W. Capitol Dr.

Phone 414-463-7425 Fax 414-463-7638

e-mail -office@pace7232.org

Website- www.pace7232.org

Hours 7:00a.m.- 4:00p.m.

Monday through Friday

The information contained herein is of informal nature and is not intended to be final and authoritative.

Editors: Scott Godshaw, Ross Winklbaauer, Al Olivares

Officers: President: Scott Godshaw Vice President: Al Evseichik,

Secretary-Treasurer: Ross Winklbaauer Sr. Recording Secretary:

Karen Clark, Trustees: Ralph Schwieger, Vicky Gorecki, Bettie

Burmester Guide: Debbie Curro, Sergeant at Arms: Chuck

Porter.

Briggs Bargaining Committee: Scott Godshaw, Jesse Edwards,

Jackie Goodwin, Karen Clark, Dean Wegner

Strattec Bargaining Committee: Scott Godshaw, Milton Dawson,

Dennis Nowak, Al Olivares



IN MEMORIAM

USW Local 2-232 would like to extend our deepest sympathy to the families and friends of the following members that passed away in the past year.

Muriel Retzlaff	Carlos Kennemer
Harry Dunton	Richard Noll
Clifford Lepak	Early Wyatt Jr.
Anastasia Matuszak	Ernest Schutte
Gloria Mierow	Margaret Graves
Silvia Springborn	Daniel Lescynski
Richard Leick	Richard Czerniak
Roy Banks	Stanley Puchner
Norma Smith	Dave Schweiger
Connie Roedl	Donald Ochalek
Janette Schaefer	Richard House
Carmen Rodriguez	Gisela Mendini
Dorothy Simonis	Kathy Downs
Anton Thone	Ethel Cronk
Inez Nelson	Ken Giese
Robert Schiller	Henry Groth
Harry Meyer	Shirley Wenker
Ruth Marks	Harijs Indriksons
Rowena Frahm	Nicholas Krezinski
Kenneth Knuth	Barbara Barksdale
Erwin Rzepkowski	James Haskins
Frank Buda	Nikolaus Sawa
Carol Graf	Donald Mantey Sr.
Esther Jordan	Catherine Gahagan
Fannie Tate	John Strieter
Ruth Johnson	Anthony Sonnentag
Ruth Cutsforth	Shirley Ann Ketchum
Glenda Sally	Jeryce Schroeder
Elizabeth Raloi	Eugene Mengel
Lois Jean Sterchy	Bernice Kastner
Ken Geske (A)	Janette Verbunker
Edwin Labrie	Ann Marusich
Walter Gutknecht (A)	Geraldine Kubeny
Thomas Haerter	Glen Manikowski
Maryann McQuitty	Lorraine Medrow
Dan Hoyne	Wayne Helt
Lloyd Biller	Georgine Meyers
Richard Rom	Leonard Podolski
Ruby Matthies	David Radomski
Evelyn Werner	Karl Heinz-Brunn
Lydia Schraenkler	Shelby Shafer
James Bennett	Barbara Bancroft
Richard Witkowski	Marjorie Demlow
Charles Redjinski	Elfriede Bogen
Wesley Sherlock	Stephen Hrin
Larry Schueller	Katherine Marker
Venton Newsome	Elfrieda Bauer
Lavina Harvey	Helen Sager
Sophie Kalman	Jadwiga Paciura
Loretta Omann	Richard Fisher



ASK YOUR LAWYER

by Thomas Flanagan

*Previant, Goldberg, Uelman, Gratz,
Miller & Brueggeman, S.C.*

IDIOPATHIC INJURIES

Idiopathic injuries are injuries that occur seemingly without any explanation for them. Sometimes these types of injuries occur at work, and you may think that since they occurred at work, they must be compensable under worker's compensation laws. This is not necessarily true.

An example of an idiopathic injury is fainting and striking your head on the concrete floor. If there is nothing unusual about the surroundings at work when this occurred, it would be considered an idiopathic injury (one that occurs within ourselves for no particular reason) and would not be compensable. There must be some external reason arising from the workplace that caused this particular fainting injury before it may be considered work related.

Just because an injury happens at work doesn't always mean it is going to be compensated under worker's compensation law. Idiopathic injuries are somewhat unusual but do occur, and you should be aware of this type of situation.

Local 2-232 Legal Clinic

Do you have legal questions or problems facing you or your family? Have you suffered a major personal injury? If you have, or if you have any other legal problem, Local 2-232 is providing free legal consultations with lawyers from the law firm of Previant, Goldberg, Uelmen, Gratz, Miller & Brueggeman at the USW Local 2-232 Union Office on 8500 W. Capitol Dr.

- The legal clinic will not provide free representation, but will advise you on your best course of action and make the appropriate referrals to help resolve your legal problems.
- The Previant Law Firm has many excellent attorneys, experienced in most kinds of legal problems.
- Members of Local 2-232 may also contact the law firm of Previant, Goldberg, Uelmen, Gratz, Miller & Brueggeman, S.C. for a free consultation regarding all personal injury matters. Please feel free to call the number of the office nearest you. Milwaukee 414/271-4500, Waukesha 262/549-6300. Identify yourself as a member or retiree of USW Local 2-232.

Legal Clinic Hours:

1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M.

First Monday of each month

Call for an appointment: 463-7425

Membership Meeting Recap

by Karen Clark

On Sunday January 27, 2008, our membership meeting was held at Frank Monreal's El Matador at 9:30a.m. sharp.

Ross Winklbauer read the names of our newest members to be accepted into our union. His motion was passed to accept these members.

Vicky Gorecki read the Trustee's Reports from September and October 2007. Ralph Schwieger read the Trustee's Reports from November and December 2007.

Ross Winklbauer read the Financial Secretary Treasurer's combined reports from September, October, November and December 2007. He stated in September, there were 461 dues paying members at Briggs and 213 members at Strattec for a total of 674. In October, there were 454 members at Briggs and 211 at Strattec for a total of 665. In November, there were 461 at Briggs and 220 at Strattec for a total of 681 and in December 472 at Briggs and 229 at Strattec for a total of 701 dues paying members.

Communications

Take note:

- Waukesha County Labor Council-Scholarship Awards - \$200, \$450
- Recommended Motions that passed:
 - USW Conference Call - Friday March 28 - 30th- Send 7 delegates- Delegate Fee \$50
 - USW District 2 Women of Steel - Thursday March 27th- Send 2 delegates- Delegate fee \$25
 - WISCOSH -Membership Renewal- \$125
 - Wisconsin Labor History Society- Annual Membership Dues \$100
 - Special Olympics - Send a \$75 donation
 - Send \$100 Donation- Memorial Fund for 2 USW members killed on the job

Reports of Officers

President Scott Godshaw reported on the coil department, Productivity Reward Program at Service, Strattec safe work place and layoffs, AARP article regarding pension, survivor options and presented Ross Winklbauer with a plaque for all his hard work and dedication to our Union.

Jesse Edwards reported on the Coil department, the locker rooms, security power unit, W2s and a grievance settlement in the testhouse.

Jackie Goodwin reported it was nice to see so many people present, bereavement and attendance.

Milton Dawson started his report by acknowledging the stewards, a safe and secure workplace, 4 new machines at Strattec, a layoff that did not take

place, problems between management and union members, 6 grievances still open and this is a contract year at Strattec.

A motion was made and passed at the beginning of the meeting to dispense with the normal order of business, in order to hold the grievance rep election. Dean Wegner beat Dennis Clark for the 1st and 3rd shift Briggs Grievance Representative position.

Old Business

Ross Winklbauer read the new by-law regarding the Briggs Committee, which was accepted.

New Business

International Rep Ernie Dex took nominations but prefaced it by stating the Reporter and the website may not be sufficient notification. Nominations taken included: President: Bill Vian and Scott Godshaw; Vice President: Al Evseichik; Financial Secretary/Treasurer: Ralph Schwieger; Recording Secretary: Karen Clark; Briggs Trustee: Bettie Burmester; Strattec Trustee: Chuck Porter; Sergeant at Arms: Stanley Quezaire, Dennis Clark and Bill Berdan (declined) and Guide: Debbie Curro. Strattec Bargaining Committee: Dennis Nowak, Al Olivares.

Ralph Schwieger made a motion that passed to endorse Lena Taylor for County Executive.

Ernie Dex reported that former USW President George Becker passed away and there is a raffle for a Harley Davidson motorcycle. Tickets are \$20. The drawing will be held at the International Convention in Las Vegas in June. You do not have to be present to win. Ernie also recognized and thanked Ross for his many years of service to this local.

A motion was made and passed to have the next membership meeting on Sunday March 16th at 9:30a.m. at Frank Monreal's El Matador 9155 West, Bluemound Road in Milwaukee.

Membership Information

February 2008

755 Members in Good Standing

519 in Briggs & Stratton Unit

236 in Strattec Unit

February Dues Payments

444 Dues Paying Members at Briggs

225 Dues Paying members at Strattec

669 Total Dues Paying Members

(Difference reflects members off work for lay-off, illness or other reasons)

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 14- St. Valentine's Day



February 18- President's Day



March 16- Membership Meeting
March 17- St. Patrick's Day



March 21- Good Friday
March 23- Easter



May 11- Mother's Day



May 26- Memorial Day



USW Local 2-232 endorses Lena Taylor for County Executive

Senator Lena C. Taylor, who attended our membership meeting in December, was overwhelmingly endorsed by USW Local 2-232 at our January membership meeting for County Executive.

Senator Lena C. Taylor was elected on November 2, 2004 to the 4th Wisconsin State Senate District, becoming only the 2nd African American Woman to serve in the Senate. Previously, Lena Taylor won an April 2003 special election in the 18th Assembly District and served in the State Assembly from May 2003 until she was sworn-in as State Senator on January 3, 2005.



Here is a letter from Senator Lena Taylor:

Dear Milwaukee County Resident,

After five years of the current County Executive Administration, Milwaukee County tax payers are in an unwarranted position. Two thirds of Milwaukee County residents believe that County Government is on the wrong track.

You have spoken and I have listened.

With inexcusable cuts to our court system, detrimental eliminations to public transportation that make it difficult for our children to get to school and parents to get to work, along with closing parks that people from all walks of life depend on, we as Milwaukee county residents deserve better.

As a member of the powerful state senate joint finance committee, I have experience in creating budgets that maintain public services. I will put that experience to work for Milwaukee County.

Just as I have as a state legislator, I will work hard to: Reform our pension system, Restore fiscal accountability, Fight for our fair share of property tax relief from Madison, Maintain services that we expect from County Government.

I will work with the Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors to create balanced budgets that will improve our quality of life, meet the needs of families, and our seniors.

The incumbent has made the office of County Executive a partisan one. I intend to make the office of the County Executive one that is accountable to the community--not just partisan politics.

With new direction, new leadership, and new vision, I will put Milwaukee County Government back on the right track.

Senator Lena C. Taylor

Grievance Rep Reports

Briggs & Stratton Second Shift

by Jesse Edwards

Coil Department

The orders for the Coil Department have increased. The department was scheduled to work nine hours per day and two mandatory Saturdays per month. Some of the members asked if the company was stock piling. As you know, during the past year, many of our members didn't get any overtime. When I asked the company about the orders, they, in fact, stated the plants down South are working three Saturdays per month. So we have to work the overtime to support the orders. However, on February 5th, the department went back to eight hours. Then on February 6th, certain areas of the department went back to nine hours. We will be working Saturdays.

Locker Room

Scott Godshaw and I met with the company regarding closing the locker rooms. The company's position is they need space to make it into a usability lab for their customers and it has to be on the outside of the building. They said they were willing to build a new locker room but want to make sure how many people actually change clothes in the locker room. Your facilitator will be coming around asking you to sign a survey confirming if you change clothes in the locker room or just use a locker. The goal is to keep enough room for the members who need to change their clothes.

Vehicle Jump Start

The company will no longer jump start your vehicle. They have two portable hand carry power boosters at the Burleigh Plant security office (door W-17). You are allowed to sign these power boosters out and jump start your vehicle.

W-2s

According to the law, your 2007 W-2s must be mailed to your address on file by the company by January 31, 2008. You can also go online at www.w2express.com to view your W-2.

Everyone should have received their W-2s

Grievance Settlement

A grievance was written recently regarding denied job preference when working on a voluntary Saturday. This grievance involved dayworkers. The company needed to fill a labor grade 16 job. When they didn't get enough labor grade 16 people to work, they asked the labor grade 11 to come in as a labor grade 16. The labor grade 11 was instructed they would have to take what ever job was left. This was done incorrectly. In the end, the company agreed with

Strattec Security

by Milt Dawson

Die Cast

As you know, there has been a number of grievances filed related to the "A" and "B" set up job. It has disrupted the normal contractual flow of things, job preference, etc. Just to keep you abreast of these concerns, as of this writing, the Union and the Company have been in constant discussions regarding this matter, as well as other very similar concerns in the stamping department. The Bargaining Committee met with the company again on this subject on Thursday February 14th and we seem to be making some progress.

Pension Questions

There have been a lot of questions regarding pension and when you can start receiving your monthly pension payments. Yes, you can start collecting your pension at age 62, thanks to the Pension Protection Act of 2006. The new law allows full-time workers, age 62 and older, to receive pension payments from current or former employers ..BUT!!!DO NOT GET THIS TWISTED.....The company has the option in participating in this program or not. And they choose not to participate. Under this law, they have that right. This is something that has to be contractual between the Company and the Union, in order for Union workers to participate in.

Stewards

I would like to acknowledge the fine job our stewards do and also thank the stewards that take the time to appear at our membership meetings.

In Solidarity,
Milton Dawson

Union Dues Paid for 2007

Briggs \$43.89 X 7 months = \$303.73

\$43.86 X 5 months = \$219.30

Total = \$523.03

Strattec \$41.94 X 7 months=\$293.58

\$42.97 X 5 months= \$214.85

Total = \$508.43

the union's interpretation of the contract.

Whenever you work on a voluntary Saturday or even a Sunday, you will all be grouped together and allowed to pick a job by seniority.

In Solidarity
Jesse Edwards

Briggs Retiree Club

Our club's bingo meeting for February was cancelled due to inclement weather.

Please follow your schedules for all future meetings. The second Wednesday of each month is when we play bingo. The third Wednesday of the month is our regular monthly meeting. All of our regular meetings and bingo will be at the Elks Lodge 5501 W. Good Hope Road.

The only exceptions to that is, our picnics in June and July will be at the Schwabenoff on Silver Spring Drive. And, as always, our Christmas party will be held at Alioto's on Hwy.100 and Burleigh.

We would like to thank Briggs & Stratton and USW Local 2-232 for their financial contributions to our club.

Any retiree from Briggs & Stratton is welcome to join our club. For information on how to join, contact Erma Gorecki at 262-781-8951. Join us and enjoy meeting with old friends and maybe some new friends as well.

See you all at the next meeting.

Fraternally yours,

Doris Reinke

Recording and Corresponding Secretary

Join the
Briggs Retiree Club
today call Erma Gorecki
262-781-8951
for information

Strattec Retirement Club

To USW Local 2-232:

Thank you so much for your support for our Club and our Christmas Luncheon. Your kindness will never be forgotten. Everything was very nice.

Hopefully next Christmas, everyone will be able to attend the luncheon.

Fraternally yours,

Love, Naomi Robinson

Secretary

Strattec Retirement Club

Ross Winklbauer Bids Adieu

by Scott Godshaw

Financial Secretary Treasurer Ross Winklbauer attended his last official membership meeting on January 27, 2008 as an officer of our Local. Ross has served this local for many years.



Ross Winklbauer (left) receives a plaque from President Scott Godshaw in recognition of his many years of dedicated service to this local.

He was a steward, an Alternate Grievance Rep, a Grievance Rep, Trustee, Acting President and for the last 5 years, our Financial Secretary Treasurer.

Although Ross officially retired August 1, 2006, thanks to the International Constitution, he was able to fulfill the rest of his term.

Ross is to be commended for his knowledge, his dedication and his compassion for helping members. This Local will truly miss him.

USW certainly recognizes his abilities and skills as he will be continuing his Union career. He will be working as what is known as a Casual Staff Rep for the International.

USW Local 2-232 would like to extend a hearty thank you for a job well done.

Ross Winklbauer spoke candidly about his many years here working for the Local.

Ross said, "I would personally like to thank the members for all their support over the years. I would also like to thank the current joint board and all the previous joint boards I have had the privilege of working with over the years. Thanks to everyone for the great opportunity you have given me. Mostly, I will miss speaking to the members, both active and retired, even the ones that were displeased with my answers.

I must say my proudest moment was helping a challenged gentleman lead a fruitful and productive life and also with the support of the company, he was able to retire with his 30 years of service. Also I will remember helping members with bad records overcome those obstacles and become good employees.

In parting, I want to say although I am leaving the Local, I will be continuing my Union career going to work for the International. I am looking forward to the new challenges and working with new people. If they are half as great as the people I have had the honor of working with the past 30 years, it will be a fabulous journey."

Wellness Corner "You can't live without it" High Blood Pressure on Increase Among American Women

Uncontrolled hypertension rates are on the increase among American women, and the prevalence of this major risk factor for heart disease and stroke among American men is still not as low as it should be, a new survey shows.

"Blood pressure that is higher than optimal is among the leading two or three risks for cardiovascular disease, if not the leading one," said Majid Ezzati, an associate professor of international health at the Harvard School of Public Health and lead author of the report in the Feb. 12 issue of *Circulation*.

About one in five American adults has "uncontrolled high blood pressure," defined as a systolic pressure -- the higher number of the 140/90 reading -- above 140, according to the state-by-state survey. Data from two major ongoing studies, the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey and the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, was used in the survey.

The incidence of uncontrolled high blood pressure had been declining steadily for decades into the 1990s, the researchers found. The decline has continued for American men, with the rate dropping from 19 percent to 17 percent in the early 2000s. But the incidence among American women increased from 17 percent to more than 22 percent during that same period.

There are big state-by-state differences, with the incidence of hypertension highest in southern states and the District of Columbia and lowest in Northeastern and Midwestern states such as Vermont, Connecticut, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Iowa and Colorado.

"We also found that in every state in the United States, women have higher uncontrolled hypertension prevalence rates than men do," Ezzati said in a statement. "The difference between men and women is as low as 4 percent and as high as 7 percent."

"We need to look nationally, but also especially focus on those states with the highest hypertension prevalence and emphasize interventions to do better than last decade's trends," Ezzati said.

The persistent incidence of hypertension is "principally a failure of our health-care delivery sys-

tem," said Dr. Dan Jones, president of the American Heart Association. "Certainly physicians have some fault, patients have some fault, and biology plays a role. But in our current health-care system, high blood pressure is treated as part of a visit with a primary-care physician that may take only five to 15 minutes. It may be one of five or six problems that the patient has and may be the least symptomatic of those problems, so it doesn't get the attention it should."

Even when the problem is detected and hypertension medication is prescribed, "patients need to take the medicine on a regular basis, and simply fail to do so," Jones said.

Measures other than drug treatment can keep blood pressure under control, Ezzati added. "Lowering salt intake, including regulation in packaged and prepared foods, and regular testing should both be effective, as would, of course, more exercise and lower weight," he said.

"We've got to make hypertension a high priority in the treatment of patients," Jones said.

More information

The full story on high blood pressure and its control is told by the U.S. Library of Medicine.

Healthy Corner

Here are some important numbers for Briggs employees regarding your health:

Health-Link - Access to immediate, confidential, healthcare expertise.

1-888-228-7672

Patient Care - Helping you through the healthcare maze.

1-877-344-7474

www.patientcare4u.com

Here is an important number for Strattec employees regarding your health:

United Health Care

Health care problems or questions, call toll-free

1-866-827-9025

www.myuhc.com