

# REPORTER



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF USW LOCAL 2-232

VOLUME 28, NO.1

FEBRUARY 2007

President's Report by Scott Godshaw

## Vicky Black, Jackie Goodwin and Dan Badzinski Unopposed

### Jesse Edwards opposed

#### Karl Schneider chooses not to seek re-election

Trustee at Large Vicky Black, along with Briggs 1st and 3rd shift Grievance Reps Jackie Goodwin and Dan Badzinski were unopposed in their elections for their respective positions.

Incumbent Second Shift Grievance Rep Jesse Edwards will be seeking his sixth term for that position and will be challenged by Dennis Clark, an electrician from dept.700.

At Strattec, Incumbent Grievance Rep Karl Schneider since 1999, chose not to seek another term in his position as he will be eligible for retirement this year. Current Bargaining Committee member Al Olivares will be running for that position against Milton Dawson.

Vicky Black, an analyst from department 729, will begin her fourth term of Trustee at Large, which is an Executive Board position.

Jackie Goodwin and Daniel Badzinski, production workers from coils, department 797, will both begin their first full terms as Grievance Reps as they fulfilled the remainder of the previous grievance representative's terms that retired in 2006.

### Briggs

At Briggs, Dave Debaets was in town to give his State of the Business communication meetings on Thursday January 25, 2007. The news was not good as he announced that all of mufflers will be out-sourced between now and the July shutdown. This will be an elimination of approximately 38 jobs.

### Strattec

At Strattec, the members from the service division are now gone and we have had only one problem. That problem is when do you have to begin your retiree healthcare. We have always understood that the clock does start ticking the day you retire, however, the discrepancy is, do you have to take it right away or can you take the insurance any time during your 5 years? Obviously, the Bargaining Committee and the company have a difference of opinion on this issue

### Elections

The elections for Grievance Reps will be held on March 2nd. Times and locations are listed below. Don't forget to vote. (Bios and photos are on page 2.)

On behalf of the Joint Board, I would also like to thank Karl Schneider for a job well done.

## March Membership Meeting

Sunday

March 25, 2007

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.

## Election Notice:

### Strattec Grievance Rep Briggs 2nd Shift Grievance Rep

- Strattec Cafeteria- 5:00a.m. to 7:30a.m and 1:30p.m.to 3:30p.m.
- Burleigh Plant- Column A-39 and Cafeteria 2:00p.m. to 3:00p.m.
- Menomonee Falls Plant- 1:30p.m. to 3:00p.m.
- Local 2-232 Union office (8500 W. Capitol Dr.) 10a.m. to 3:30p.m.


**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.

Richard Baker	Charles Wagner
Thomas Klamann	Margaret Jurena
Dennis Pocian	Jennie Patterson
Milton Tischendorf	John Devalk
Fanny Helland	Eleanor Waraxa
Magdalena Jedrzejak	Gregory Kalmadge
Phyllis Greenblatt	Gisela Wagner
Lorraine Pulkownik	Ronald Smith
Colleen Anderson	Anna Brigham
Wilfred Brigham	Fred Gaschke
Juan Cruz	Patricia O'Connell
Bertha Mengeling	Mae Conlin
Verna Becker	Helmut Ratz
Lorraine Carmody	Roger Strieter
Kenneth Rauch	Richard Geiger
Jack Pierce	Joanne Gilmeister
Michael Meunier	Lester Benz
Peter Baumgartner	Lucille Miller
Ann Bauer	James Dakins
James Bann	Ruth Groszkiewicz
Willis Bennin	Julia Strauss
Sue Ellen Ziegler	Lucille York
Robert Patterson	Edna Rusten
Henry Erdmann	Dorothy Mlodzik
Donald Kowis	Lester Lemieux
Clara Geiger	Doug Kostrzewa
Ida Hanson	Magdalena Stemmer
Anabel Chartier	William Bruner
Marshal Mercier	Roman Socolick
Mildred Shackelford	Gilbert Matz
Lillian Skonieczny	Margaret E. Schmidt
Kathleen Branta	Pamela Hamidi
Rose Schroer	Jeanette Achtziger
Alvin Huisheere	Rose Andrzejewski
Margie Nyleen	Charles Scott
Dollie Wright	Larry Gross
Helen Waraksa	Ruth Brauer
Richard Weber	Annette Johnson
Cecilia Sanders	Alice Friend
Gregory Wichman (act)	Norman Butterfuss
Ida Stevens	Robert Twardowski
Carl Varro	Milton Schuman
Inez Blaszczyk	James Teg

## Grievance Rep Elections

### Briggs Second Shift



**Jesse Edwards**

Steward Dept.194/195- 5 years; Alt. Gr. Rep-2 years; Acting Vice President-7 months; Gr. Rep. 1997 to present; Member-SPEC and Die Cast Sub Committee; Chairperson of the UED Safety Committee; Delegate- Wisconsin State AFL-CIO Convention-96, 98, 00, 04, 06 and PACE International Convention-96, 99, 03, 05  
Co-Chair Steward Training Comm.  
Numerous other conferences and schools



**Dennis Clark**

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

### Strattec



**Al Olivares**

Current Bargaining Committee Member since 01, AFL-CIO State Convention 06, USW Leadership Conference 06  
School for Workers- Union Leadership 02 and Advanced Union Representation 02, PACE Spring Conference 05, Region X Leadership Conference 02 Contract Negotiations  
FMCS Conference 02 and 06,  
Co-Chair Steward Training Comm.  
Co-Editor of the Reporter  
Author- Strattec Corner



**Milton Dawson**

Union Steward  
Department 055, 071

# Fundamental Health Care Reform Within Reach- If We Act!

by David Newby, President Wisconsin State AFL-CIO

For more than fourteen years, the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO has been pushing hard for fundamental health care reform in Wisconsin. In the early 1990's we helped form the Coalition for Wisconsin Health and drafted a path-breaking state-level "single payer" health care bill (similar to Canada's very successful health care system).

We still support that proposal, but as the health care cost crisis deepened at the end of the last decade, we realized that we needed to develop a new plan--a plan that would meet many of our goals in the single-payer proposal, but one that could also get management support and have a significantly better chance of being passed by the Wisconsin Legislature.

Over five years ago we established a Wisconsin State AFL-CIO Health Care Committee to see if we could come up with a proposal that would control health care costs and take the cost of health care off the bargaining table for all of our unions. The result, after many discussions and consultations with other groups and health care professionals, was the Wisconsin Health Care Partnership Plan (WHCPP).

You can read more detail about that plan at our website ([www.wisafclcio.org](http://www.wisafclcio.org)). The basic idea is that all workers and their dependents in Wisconsin would be covered by a common totally comprehensive health care plan. It would be financed in a fair fashion by affordable co-pays and deductibles by workers, and a flat per worker per month fee by employers. Our actuary determined that in 2003 the employer would have to pay considerably less than \$300 per month per employee to provide this comprehensive health care plan (estimated at \$330-\$340 in 2006). The cost is so low for two reasons: we would drastically cut the unnecessary administrative costs in our current health care system; and with all employers both in the private and public sectors paying their fair share, the per-employee cost would be reduced dramatically.

All our unions endorsed this plan, as well as a number of private sector corporations, the associations that represent management in the public sector, as well as family farm groups such as the Wisconsin Farmers Union, the National Farmers Union, and advocacy organizations such as the AARP, the Alliance for Retired Americans, the Coalition of Wisconsin Aging Groups, Citizen Action of Wisconsin, and others.

**So where are we today with this proposal?**

**We're within shooting distance of success.**

As a result of the November elections, we now have a Senate with a Democratic majority that is committed to fundamental health care reform. The Assembly still has a Republican majority, but we have some support among Republicans as well (for example, Republican Representative Terry Musser was our co-sponsor in the WHCPP bill that was introduced last April). Every poll before the November elections had fundamental health care reform as the first or second most important issue for voters. Many candidates, especially successful Democratic challengers, had comprehensive health care reform as their number one issue.

We are now asking Governor Jim Doyle to include the WHCPP in his 2007-2008 Budget--and we urge you to call his office (608-266-1212) and urge him to do that. It's a long shot but one we have to take.

We will also be reintroducing the WHCPP as a bill in the Legislature in January. We'll be asking you to call your local state legislatures to become sponsors (1-800-362-9472). Senate Democrats as a group ran on comprehensive health care reform in the November elections. We need every single one of them as a sponsor of the Wisconsin Health Care Partnership Plan. We need Assembly Democrats to make the same commitment.

But we also need Republican support. Union members that have Republican Senate and Assembly representatives have a special responsibility--and opportunity--to get their legislators to support the WHCPP, the most innovative and practical health care reform proposal in the entire country.

If our elected officials act in the interest of working families, Wisconsin could lead the country in fundamental health care reform and Governor Jim Doyle could go down in history as the leader of health care reform in the United States.

But it's up to us to create the grass-roots pressure to make our elected representatives do the right thing. Let's do it!



*David Newby is President of the Wisconsin State AFL-CIO, a federation of over 1000 local unions which collectively represent some 250,000 workers in Wisconsin united to achieve economic justice in the workplace and social justice in our communities.*

## Strattec Corner

by Al Olivares

## Briggs Retiree Club

Happy New Year Sisters and Brothers! I hope everyone had a very safe and enjoyable holiday season. What does 2007 hold in store for us, the Bargaining Unit at Strattec de Milwaukee? A question all of us are definitely asking ourselves. All we really know is we are installing that new press and continuing to try and obtain new business for Die Cast and Punch Press. Of course, these are positive things. The other obvious fact is that along with plating and warehouse, that is all we have left. The scary part of '07 is the unforeseens that could negatively impact our very existence. With the delicate nature of the automotive market, we are subject to erratic shifts in orders from high to low. Now when you mix that with attrition and a management that tends to react too quickly at times to the erratic shifts by job reduction or loss, we got ourselves a very threatening work environment. We cannot become complacent with the rumbles of new work and machinery popping up. The reality is, if the new work and the flow of attrition is not enough to counter a prolonged slow spell, we will definitely see more job loss. I am not trying to be a pessimist or rain on anyone's parade. I just want to keep reality close in everyone's mind. Do not think for one minute the bleeding is done. I wish and hope it were. Nothing would please me more than the resurgence of a "Golden Era" of prosperity for all of us at Strattec. With any luck, we will see just that- "A Golden Era".

Another thing I have noticed since returning from the holidays is a change in management. Not necessarily individuals, even though that does exist, but a change in responsibilities, for lack of better words. It would appear now that each shift is in its' own little kingdom. What I mean by that is instead of having a few company players across all three shifts, we have a player for each shift. And of course, that is in addition to the main players situated on first shift. What I see happening with this type of management is a breakdown of continuity across all three shifts. This will create nothing but animosity between us Union folk on the shop floor.

For example, the question has already arose, "Al, that's not the way they do it on first shift. Why are we doing it different?" Everyone knows where I am going with this. Even though we can do without these extra headaches, I am confident we as Union leadership and rank and file can endure this new tactic. As long as we realize that it is not members doing members wrongly but management handling their

Thanks to our Local Union for putting our newsletter in the *Reporter* and also thanks to Briggs & Stratton for their yearly help.

Remember, you must be a paid up member to attend any of our events. The dues are \$24 a year- paid by December 1st. For more information, call Erma Gorecki 262-781-8951.

Our officers were all unopposed and thus re-elected for their 2 year terms. The officers are Bob Johnson, President; Dolores Higgins, Vice President; Erma Gorecki, Financial Secretary; Doris Reinke, Recording Secretary and Frances P. Capello, Corresponding Secretary.

The second week of each month will be bingo. Doors open at 10:30 and bingo starts at 11:30. All prizes are free. The third Wednesday of the month will be our meeting. Doors open at 10:30 and the meeting starts at 11:30. Please bring your birthday or anniversary treats at this time. 2 free drink tickets are given and raffle tickets are sold. Cards are played every Tuesday at noon. Free prizes are given at every table. All of our functions are at American Legion Post #449 located at 3245 N.124th St. Door prizes are given out at each meeting. To be eligible for a door prize, you must give a \$5 donation once a year by January.

Our get well wishes go out to Harold Bahm, Dawn Johnson, Doris Reinke and Nancy Vasquez.

Once again, you can pick up your copy of the *Reporter* online at [www.pace7232.org](http://www.pace7232.org), at our meetings or at the Union office on Capitol Dr.

Till next time, take care and God Bless,

Francis P. Capello  
Corresponding Secretary

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own issues by shift as opposed to a whole. I am not pleased with the new structure, but rest assured, I am prepared to deal with it. Remember, our agreed upon contract does not change per shift. If management feels it does, well then the path ahead will be bumpy to say the least. Once again, these are my personal opinions and not necesarrily the views or the opinions of the entire local for which I represent.

Finally to management, if you take the time to read this, this by no means is an attack on the way you choose to run your company, but merely my thoughts on what could transpire with the system in place. I just want things to go positive and smoothly. We don't need internal headaches to coincide with our external ones.

In Solidarity,  
Big Al Olivares



## ASK YOUR LAWYER

by Thomas Flanagan

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

### WHAT WORKERS COMPENSATION ISN'T

Workers compensation isn't a pain and suffering system. For instance, in the typical personal injury case, such as an auto accident, the injured person is entitled to make a monetary claim for "pain and suffering and disruption of life." That type of claim is not available in our workers compensation system.

Also, in the typical personal injury case, a party is entitled to actual wage loss (past and future over the course of a working lifetime – if the person is unable to go back to a former job and suffers a wage loss); a spouse's claim for loss of society and companionship; lost pension rights (if the person is unable to return to former employment in which pension contributions were made), and other types of lifetime disruptions. Again, none of this is available in workers compensation. Workers compensation is a formula system in which benefits are paid according to a mathematical formula for very specific types of claims, such as temporary disability, permanent disability (over a limited time period), retraining benefits, loss of earning capacity (for a limited number of payments), and death benefits. Also, under the workers compensation system, if a person is unable to return to any work and is totally disabled, benefits are payable for life.

## Membership Meeting Recap

by Karen Clark

The membership meeting was held on Sunday January 21, 2007 at 9:30 a.m. sharp at Frank Monreal's El Matador 9155 W. Bluemound Rd..

Under application for membership, 5 new members were accepted and voted in.

Ralph Schwieger gave the Trustee report for the months of November and December.

Ross Winklbauer gave the Financial-Secretary/Treasurer's combined report for the months of November and December. He reported there were 560 dues paying members at Briggs and 254 dues paying members at Strattec for a total of 814 members for the month of November 2006. He also reported there were 556 dues paying members at Briggs and 256 dues paying members at Strattec for a total of 821 members in December of 2006. All reports can be seen at the Local Union office located on 8500 W. Capitol Dr.

### Communications

The Local received thank you cards for our donations from United Way, both Milwaukee and Waukesha County, Hunger Task Force, National Labor Committee and the Strattec Retiree Club. Executive Board recommended motions that passed were:

- Send a \$100 donation to Special Olympics
- Send 8 people to the USW Spring

Conference to be held in Green Bay March 17 and 18

### Reports of Officers

President Scott Godshaw reported on the upcoming job loss at Briggs and retiree healthcare issues at Briggs and Strattec as well.

Jesse Edwards on safety issues, HRA, Life Insurance and Service Department adding jobs.

Dan Badzinski reported on pension options.

Jackie Goodwin reported on back charges.

Karl Schneider reported on pension at Strattec, Insurance flex plan and the departed Service Department.

Ralph Schwieger reported on the highlights from the past election held in November of 2006.

### New Business

Nominations were taken for all grievance representative positions and for Trustee at Large. Jackie Goodwin, Dan Badzinski were unopposed for 1st and 3rd shift grievance rep and Vicky Black was unopposed for Trustee at Large.

The next meeting will take place on Sunday March 25, 2007 at Frank Monreal's El Matador located at 9155 W. Bluemound Rd. at 9:30 a.m.

## LOCAL 2-232 REPORTER

February 2007

Volume 28, 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 Winklbauer, Al Olivares  
Officers: President: Scott Godshaw Vice President: Al Evseichik, Secretary-Treasurer: Ross Winklbauer Sr. Recording Secretary: Karen Clark, Trustees: Ralph Schwieger, Vicky Black, Betty Burmester Guide: Debbie Curro, Sergeant at Arms: Chuck Porter.  
Briggs Bargaining Committee: Scott Godshaw, Dan Badzinski, Jesse Edwards, Jackie Goodwin, Karen Clark  
Strattec Bargaining Committee: Scott Godshaw, Karl Schneider, Dennis Nowak, Al Olivares

# Grievance Rep Reports

## Strattec Security

by Karl Schneider

Sisters & Brothers:

This is my final report.

### Service

The Company has completed the transfer of the Service Department to Mexico. From what I am hearing they are struggling to meet the customer's needs.

### Stamping

The new 400 ton press has been assembled and the timeline is on schedule for it to be operational on or around February 16.

Other Stamping news the Epsilon II Key Business has been awarded to Strattec it should be noted this is a side mill key made from Nickel Silver. The volume is around 2 million annually. Strattec is looking to do this work in Milwaukee.

### FINOPS

A question was raised at the last FINOPS meeting in regards to new GM business. The Company's response was the delay had to do with current inventory and that it was cost prohibitive for GM. I can tell you that Strattec is currently building 3 tools for this program with an additional 5 tools still needing to be built. All tools are being built in-house.

### Die Cast

We are still waiting to hear about the Epsilon II Housing work, Strattec is building a single cavity tool for this program.

A tour by ALPS, the tier I supplier of Epsilon II housing is to take place early next week.

We are also waiting on the Epsilon II Door Handle work.

So as you can see there is a lot of potential for new work out there.

Your Bargaining Committee is very supportive of everyone's efforts to bring this work to Milwaukee. With that said, it is still not certain if this would create any new jobs.

### Miscellaneous

Remember you have until March 31, 2007 to use your FSA (flexible spending account) dollars from 2006. To be eligible the bills had to be incurred on or before December 31, 2006. If you are not able to use all the funds in your account you will lose them. This is an IRS law and has nothing to do with Strattec. It is my understanding that the government has expanded the timelines for 2007. What this means to you is qualifying bills from January 1, 2007 through March 15, 2008 can be used with 2007 funds

you will have 90 days to turn in your qualified bills. If you have any questions on your FSA see Danielle in Human Resources.

### FMLA

There also seems to be an issue with intermittent FMLA. If you have approved family leave on file you still need to notify the Human Resources Department via the STARS system (247-3344) within 2 days of your return to work. The Company requests you fill out an Intermittent Absence Report found in the kiosk outside HR.

As most of you are aware I am not seeking another term as your Grievance Representative. It has been my privilege and honor to serve you, the membership of USW Local 2-232, for the past 7 years and 8 months (not that I'm counting). I know there have been times where we did not agree but there has been a mutual respect in our opinions.

I would like to thank the people that have supported me over the years. I am also very thankful to the people that helped me learn and grow, your leadership was critical in my development.

Thank-you ALL

In Solidarity,  
Karl Schneider  
Grievance Representative  
USW Local 2-232

## Union Dues Paid for 2006

**Briggs \$40.69 X 8 months = \$325.52**  
**\$43.39 X 4 months = \$173.56**  
**Total = \$499.08**

**Strattec \$39.42 X 8 months=\$315.36**  
**\$41.94 X 4 months= \$167.76**  
**Total = \$483.12**

## 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 Previat, Goldberg, Uelman, Gratz, Miller & Brueggeman at the Local 2-232 Union office, 8500 W. Capitol Dr. Legal clinic hours: 1:00P.M. to 4:00P.M. First Monday of the month. Call for an appointment 414-463-7425.**

# Grievance Rep Reports

## Briggs & Stratton Second Shift

by Jesse Edwards

### Heat Treat

There was a fire in the heat treat department on Thursday January 11, 2007. The fire came out of the duct work of the ventilation system connected to the furnaces. The operator was able to put the fire out with a fire extinguisher and the fire department was called to make sure the fire was out. No one was injured.

### Attendance

I'm still getting a lot of attendance warnings. I can't stress enough how important it is to keep good attendance. I have a member who is discharged because of attendance. If you reach 9 points you are subject to discharge. If you have any question regarding your attendance, please see your steward or grievance representative before it's too late.

### Recall

The members who are out on voluntary layoff were recalled on January 22, 2007 seniority permitting. Some members informed human resources that they wanted to stay out longer and those members will be recalled within six weeks after the July shut-down, seniority permitting.

### Health Risk Assessment

The members who took the H.R.A. and were actively employed as of January 1, 2007, received their pay on the last paycheck in January.

### Life Insurance

Life and accidental death Insurance as of January 1, 2007 for members with sixty days of seniority is \$27,000. For the members who are retired your Life Insurance is \$8,000.

### Checks in the Mail

During the Christmas holiday period the hourly payroll checks were mailed to the employees homes. The company stated that they plan to continue this practice. I asked if they plan to do the same for the July shutdown and they said no. Some people are working during the July shutdown and those checks would not be mailed.

### M / F

The M/F plant continues to add more employees on second shift. A number of employees who were bumped out of the B/P were transferred or recalled to the M/F plant. They currently have a requisition in for six DC-3s (warehouse attendants) for second shift.

In Solidarity,  
Jesse Edwards

## Briggs & Stratton First & Third Shift

by Jackie Goodwin & Dan Badzinski

It is very important that members understand vacation back charges. Some members were thinking that if they have earned vacation days, they are automatically eligible for vacation back charges. **This is not true!**

On page 12 of the contract, it states, "An employee who's seniority entitles him to three (3) weeks of vacation per vacation year will be allowed to back charge up to three (3) vacation days per calendar year for days of absence (except the day before or after a holiday), provided the personnel department is notified via the ACTT system between two (2) hours prior to their regularly scheduled starting time and their regularly scheduled shift ending time upon their return from absence. Such absences will not count as points. When you call the ACTT system, the day of your return, the code is number 38.

In other words, you must have 6 years of seniority to be eligible for vacation back charges.

### Pension

There are several pension options for a survivor benefit. If you are married, you have the choice of selecting either the 50% or 100% joint and survivor option of your pension for your spouse. If you choose to take the single life option (no survivor option) then your spouse is required to sign off. If you are not married, the only survivor option you could select is a 10-year certain. There can be several beneficiaries and it does not have to be a relative.

When you acquire 29 years and 1000 hours, or turn 55 years of age with 10 years of seniority. Mercer should be sending you information on your options. If you have any questions, contact Mercer at 1-800-685-6474.

Briggs will be conducting pre retirement seminars in early March. Check posting for exact dates.

## Membership Information

January 2007

873 Members in Good Standing  
626 in Briggs & Stratton Unit  
247 in Strattec Unit

January Dues Payments

526 Dues Paying Members at Briggs  
263 Dues Paying members at Strattec  
789 Total Dues Paying Members

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

# Wellness Corner “You can’t live without it”

## Seasonal Affective Disorder: Blame it on Sunlight and Serotonin

by Urmila R. Parlikar, MS

The winter blues aren't just a frame of mind; they're also a state of mind. Seasonal affective disorder (SAD), also called winter depression, is characterized by a drop in energy level, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, irritability, weight gain, and carbohydrate cravings, among other things. It usually begins by late fall or early winter and ends by late spring or early summer. The neurotransmitter serotonin is believed to play a significant role in SAD. Now a new study in *The Lancet* provides further evidence for this relationship.

**It Is (and Isn't) All in Your Head** Although scientists have long suspected an important role for serotonin in SAD, concentrations of this neurotransmitter in the cerebrospinal fluid bathing the central nervous system (brain and spinal cord) of SAD patients appear to be normal. In an article published in the December 7, 2002 issue of *The Lancet*, researchers from the Baker Heart Research Institute in Australia sought to determine whether concentrations of serotonin and other neurotransmitters measured from blood vessels draining the brain (a more accurate measure of serotonin concentrations in the brain than cerebrospinal fluid) would provide evidence for the relationship between serotonin and SAD.

The researchers enrolled 101 healthy men between the ages of 18 and 79 years. None of the men included in the study had a history of major illness (including depression) or cardiovascular disease, were currently on any medications, or had previous psychiatric therapy.

Over the course of a year, the researchers gained access to blood draining from the brain of the volunteers by taking samples from their internal jugular veins, which are found in the neck. They then measured the blood concentrations of serotonin and two other neurotransmitters not believed to be directly related to SAD—dopamine and norepinephrine—to use as controls. The neurotransmitter concentrations were then correlated to seasonal factors (measured daily) such as highest and lowest temperatures, total rainfall, and hours of bright sunlight.

As expected, production of serotonin by the

brain was lowest in winter and was strongly correlated with the amount of bright sunlight during the day. Other than bright sunlight, no other seasonal factors had an effect on serotonin production. Concentrations of dopamine and norepinephrine were not influenced by these factors.

The major limitation of this study is that it was conducted on healthy volunteers, and it is not known whether environmental factors would affect people with SAD in the same way.

**What Does This Mean For You?** By solidifying the link between sunlight, serotonin, and SAD, these study results provide further support for light therapy and certain antidepressant medications to treat SAD.

Light therapy, also known as phototherapy, involves the use of light to stimulate the brain to produce neurotransmitters. You sit a few feet away from a special light box for a prescribed amount of time—usually up to 45 minutes—every day. This light is stronger than ordinary office or household lighting. If light therapy works for you, your symptoms will most likely improve significantly or disappear altogether.

If light therapy does not work for you, or if your depression is very severe, your doctor may prescribe a type of antidepressant called selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs). SSRIs increase the level of serotonin activity in the brain. Though SSRIs are already used to treat SAD, this study further validates their use by supporting the relationship between serotonin and SAD.

### RESOURCES:

Aurora Health Care

<http://www.AuroraHealthCare.org>

American Academy of Family Physicians

<http://www.familydoctor.org>

National Mental Health Association

<http://www.nmha.org>

**SOURCES:** Lambert GW, Reid C, Kaye DM, et al. Effect of sunlight and season on serotonin turnover in the brain. *The Lancet*. 2002;360:1840-1842.

## USW Members at Goodyear Ratify New Contract

(Pittsburgh, PA) -- The United Steelworkers (USW) announced that a new contract at Goodyear Tire and Rubber was approved at all Locals and overall by membership by more than a two-to-one margin. More than 10,000 USW-represented members voted at the 12 locations where 14,000 Steelworkers struck on October 5. A majority of the majority principle applied meaning that a majority of the locals as well as a majority of the overall membership voted to accept the Tentative Agreement as the new contract.

"The credit really belongs to our members and their families, whose solidarity prevented the company from short-changing them, despite all of its attempts," said USW International president Leo W. Gerard. "Special thanks go out again to all of our AFL-CIO union affiliates, activist groups, community organizations, businesses and public officials who not only understood our struggle, but stood shoulder-to-shoulder with us."

"It took a strike, but we achieved a fair and equitable contract that protects quality health care for active and retired members," said USW executive vice president Ron Hoover. "And by winning major capital investment expenditures, it secures our jobs for the future."

The new contract establishes a company-financed trust of more than \$1 billion that will secure medical and prescription drug benefits for current and future retirees. Future contributions will include diverted COLA (cost of living allowances) payments and profit-sharing funds. Affordable, high quality medical and prescription drug coverage for its active and retired membership was also maintained.

"To secure jobs, we had to obtain enough money to keep our plants globally competitive," said USW International vice president Tom Conway. "The \$550 million in new capital expenditure commitments is the result of our objective of enhancing the ability of USW-represented plants to meet the challenges of the international marketplace."

The new contract that requires Goodyear to rescind its demand for immediate closure of its Tyler, Texas plant, and provides for a one-year period of transition during which workers will have the opportunity to take advantage of sizeable retirement buyouts.

"It's a bittersweet outcome," said Kevin Johnsen, USW-Goodyear Contract Coordinator. "We wanted to win Tyler protected status like the other plants, but we only got it for 2007. Still the company has committed to building the Tyler ticket in USW-plants as long as the company stays in those markets." That commitment will prevent the company from outsourcing that work or servicing this market segment with imports.

The Tentative Agreement was endorsed by the

## UPCOMING EVENTS

February 14- Valentine's Day



February 19- President's Day



March 2- General Election

March 11- Daylight Savings Time

March 17- St. Patrick's Day



March 21- First Day of Spring

March 25 - Membership Meeting

April 8 - Easter



USW's Goodyear Policy Committee, composed of local union leaders from the 12 facilities involved in the contract talks on December 22. Members were presented with a Summary of the Tentative Agreement at informational meetings held on December 27 and 28. The ratification votes also took place on Wed. and Thursday. The new contract covers tire and engineered product plants in: Akron, St. Marys and Marysville, Ohio; Gadsden, Ala.; Buffalo, New York; Lincoln, Nebraska; Topeka, Kansas; Fayetteville, North Carolina; Danville, Virginia; Tyler, Texas; Sun Prairie, Wisconsin; and, Union City, Tennessee.

Negotiations between the USW and Goodyear began in June of 2006. With a contract expiration date of July 22, 2006 approaching, a day-to-day extension agreement was reached that gave both parties the option of terminating the agreement upon delivering 72-hour notice. Lack of progress in bargaining talks forced the USW to deliver notice on October 2 and 15,000 USW members in 16 plants throughout North America struck on October 5, 2006.