



**BAD TRADE DEALS
SHATTERED LIVES**



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BAD TRADE DEALS SHATTERED LIVES

Mostly, the consequences of bad trade are described in numbers. These tell of hundreds of thousands of lost jobs, declining wages and life expectancy and rising suicides and drug addiction. They're shocking. And sad.

But they don't tell the whole story. That can only be done by the workers who are cut down by bad trade deals, devastating trade policies and defective trade enforcement.

Here, for example, is what former Carrier worker Lakita Clark said about the day in 2016 that the officials at Carrier's Indianapolis plant announced their plan to move furnace manufacturing to Mexico: "Everyone was obviously devastated because it was such a shock. There were lots of people crying."

Maury King constructed furniture for Joerns Healthcare in Stevens Point, Wis., until a venture capital group

moved the work to Mexico. After the shutdown announcement, King and a former plant owner worked with state and local officials to put together a package of benefits to try to persuade the venture capitalists to keep the work in America. But, King said, they didn't listen. "We put more sweat into saving the place than they did. They didn't make any effort. It was going to

close no matter what we did."

Jackie Starks, who was among 1,900 workers who lost their jobs when Goodyear shut its Union City, Tenn., tire plant in 2011, said of his family, "We had to cut back on a lot of stuff, on everything really. We had a camper and a little place at the lake, and we had to let all of that go. We sold the camper. I had to draw down on my 401(k) savings, my retirement money, for us to live on. At one point, my 10-year-old son asked me if he should get a job."

Tim Crase worked for Whirlpool in Fort Smith, Ark., until the corporation moved the jobs to Mexico in 2011. He said when it happened, "I felt like the whole world was crashing down on me. To make matters worse, I was diagnosed with cancer the same year we closed. And since I was on medical leave to take care of myself, I didn't qualify for the severance package. That left me struggling to get one of my kids through college."

Terry Bennington and his wife lost their pensions when Republic Storage shut down its Canton, Ohio,

locker manufacturing plant in 2015. The federal Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp., which takes over bankrupt plans, gives the Benningtons less than half of what they had earned. He said, "Everything we planned on doing when we retired went away. We can't afford to travel now. The biggest traveling I do is to the basement to paint."

Jay Dillon and 130 others lost their jobs at Flint Group Pigments in Huntington, W.Va., in October of 2017. Finding a new job that pays family-supporting wages is nearly impossible there now, he said. "The only jobs left in Huntington now are service jobs, like burger flipping and housekeeping. But service jobs pay poorly compared to factory jobs, and they're no good if you have no one to service, and nobody here has any money anymore."

Doug Hilliard got another job after Indspec, where he'd worked 13 years, closed in 2017. But Hilliard, who had lived and worked in the area of Petrolia, Pa., most of his life, would have to hold down two jobs now to earn the same amount he did at Indspec. "I'll be making \$14 less an hour. I will have a high, \$6,000 deductible on my health insurance. There will be no pension and no company match on the 401(k)."

Lisa Crissman, who worked for Flabeg until it stopped manufacturing car mirrors in Brackenridge, Pa., in 2012, now works for Pittsburgh Glass Works, which announced it will close its East Deer, Pa., windshield factory in 2018. She said the shutdowns affect the whole community. "The little town of East Deer

will get hurt. East Deer officials already announced they won't repair tennis and hockey courts in Memorial Park next year because they're afraid the town won't receive sufficient tax revenue."

Rex Stapp worked as a welder for Polar Tank in Springfield, Mo., for two decades until the company shipped the work to Mexico. He said NAFTA has devastated his community. "If you looked at our community 20 years ago before NAFTA and free trade had a chance to really turn the tables on the American worker, you might see one person who was homeless or needed help. Now there are people standing with a sign on every corner."

Each of these workers wrote about their experiences after losing their jobs. Those accounts explain the real cost of bad trade.

“Everyone was obviously devastated because it was such a shock. There were lots of people crying.”

I didn't fully understand NAFTA until it affected me. Now I know what these kinds of trade deals can do to American workers, because NAFTA cost me my job.

I worked for 15 years as a fab tech — a fabrication technician — at Carrier in Indianapolis. I've lived my whole life in Indianapolis, and lots of my family, including my mother and brother, worked at Carrier, too, making furnaces.

In February 2016, Carrier announced that they'd be closing our plant, eliminating 1,400 jobs and sending all our work to Monterrey, Mexico.

The day they made the announcement started just like any regular workday. Then we saw supervisors blocking the walkways. When we asked them what was going on, they told us they didn't know. There were so many of us crowded together that we had to be really quiet as the CEO finally told us they'd be shutting us down.

Everyone was obviously really devastated because it was such a shock. There were lots of people crying. They sent us all home after the announcement and set up a bunch of new security measures. I guess they were worried we'd tear up the plant or something.

The next day it was so quiet you could hear a pin drop. It stayed like that for a long time as people processed what was happening.

In the meantime, they still expected us to bust our butts like we had before, expected us to make them a bunch of money like we had before.

After they made the announcement, the supervisors started cracking down on everything. Carrier was a good place to work before they told us they were sending our jobs to Mexico, but afterward people were angry and it seemed like supervisors were looking for reasons to write people up.

BAD TRADE DEALS DEVASTATE WORKERS

BY **LAKITA CLARK**

Former member, USW Local 1999

Honestly, no one wanted to give it their 110 percent like we used to because we knew what our hard work meant to the company: nothing. We even had to watch as the people from Mexico came in and took measurements. I mean, we did our jobs, but we weren't going to go above

and beyond like we did before. People were quitting every week so they could find new jobs, which meant everyone else had to work even harder just to keep the lines running.

When Donald Trump came in December 2016 and told us he was saving our jobs, we didn't really know what to think. Only about 80 people were able to go into the meeting, and the rest of us watched social media to find out what happened.

The company agreed to keep some of the jobs in Indiana, and I'm happy for the people who were close to retirement. It was going to be hardest for them to find new jobs. But the deal still left 550 hourly workers and some supervisors out on the street.

I decided to take a buy-out because, like a lot of people, I just couldn't trust that Carrier wouldn't do this again. Ten years from now I'll be 50, and I'll be in the same boat as the older folks at Carrier. No one's going to hire me then. Now at least I have a few options.

I've been applying to jobs, and I've even gotten an interview at a local hospital, although I think my 15 years in manufacturing hurt my chances of getting that position.

I can honestly say I'm in a better place than I was in

“There were so many of us crowded together that we had to be really quiet as the CEO finally told us they'd be shutting us down.”

the last few months at Carrier, even though I don't know what the future holds. It's not draining me anymore. Everyone left at Carrier is getting pinched harder and harder, and the trust is broken.

There were a lot of us with rotator cuff problems, and I think my job may have been the cause. I was just cleared by my doctor this month to go back to work after my surgery earlier this year. So I'm done with manufacturing. I'll do something else, administrative work maybe.

Laying off all those hundreds of workers is going to hurt the area around the plant. There's another plant, Rexnord, down the road that's also moving to Mexico, and the local businesses are really going to feel that we're not there.

Before this happened to me, I didn't really understand what bad trade meant. We used to make all our parts in house. Then we started having more and more of them shipped to us. Now I realize they were outsourcing our work. There should have been more education so that we knew what was at stake.

NAFTA took away a lot of our jobs here. It took away a lot of meals. It's killing the middle class.

I'm a mother of four, I'm active in my community and I have to trust that something will come through for me before my severance benefits run out. Carrier dumped us when its leaders thought they could make even more money in Mexico. We need to let people know it could happen to them too.



Lakita Clark

WISCONSIN-MADE FURNITURE NOW MADE IN MEXICO

BY MAURY KING

Former President, USW Local 333

Just weeks before the Joerns Healthcare furniture factory in Stevens Point, Wis., closed forever, the former company president joined me and members of the United Steelworkers union to protest bad trade deals that send plants like mine to Mexico.

His name is Ray Nass. He is a great guy, and was a wonderful employer. Nobody was more upset about our work moving to Mexico than he was, even though he had been retired for 25 years at that point. He says that although he resigned in 1987, his heart never left. And I believe that's true.

He was committed to his workers, to Wisconsin, and to high-quality American-made products. The new owners, a venture capital group that the company was sold to after he left, had no love for Wisconsin or for American manufacturing.

In fact, those venture capitalists knew nothing about the product or how it was made. They didn't know the furniture business. All they cared about was the money. That's why they built a factory in Mexico, for the "freedom" to push up their profits by paying dirt-poor wages and polluting at will.

They don't have an American soul like the Steelworkers who made the furniture or like Ray, who nurtured the company that his wife's grandfather, a man named Joerns, started with his brothers. The allegiance of venture capitalists isn't to God or country but only to the almighty dollar.

Like the Joernses, this factory was in my family's blood. My dad worked there before me. I began work

there in 1972, just six months out of high school, and stayed 43 years. That included a year or so doing maintenance after the machines went quiet in 2012.

If Ray had been in charge, the shutdown never would have happened. A hundred and fifty U.S. factory workers and another 50 office workers would not have lost their jobs.

The venture capitalists lied to us about a factory they opened in Mexico. They said it would not affect our work. Then all of a sudden, the CEO came up to Stevens Point and told us they were shutting us down.

They gathered us together in the factory for the announcement. He was up there for five minutes. He said they were closing us down. He said some people from the local management team would give us the details. Then he walked out. He didn't hang around to listen to anyone. He hopped on a plane back to North Carolina, where the headquarters was.

There was no time for us to react. We were just in shock.

After that, Ray and I and the mayor and some others did everything we could to try to keep the place open. I had been president of the United Steelworkers local union at the factory for about a dozen years, so I felt it was my

“We put more sweat into saving the place than they did. They didn't make any effort. It was going to close no matter what we did.”

responsibility to try to preserve those jobs. Ray was in his mid-70s then, but he was right there with the rest of us trying to work a deal to keep that factory in Stevens Point.

We went to the governor's office and to our state representatives. The state offered to give the company some money to retain the factory. We came up with a whole package of benefits. But those venture capitalists wouldn't even listen.

We put more sweat into saving the place than they did. They didn't make any effort. It was going to close no matter what we did. They didn't care about anybody in Wisconsin.

This wasn't even the first time they sent our work off shore. In 2004, they moved almost all of the wood manufacturing business to China.

Initially, when the Joerns brothers started the company decades before I worked there, it made wooden household furniture. Highly skilled workers crafted expensive furniture. Later, Joerns began manufacturing a lot of furniture for medical and nursing home use, including wooden and metal-framed hospital beds.

We still did some woodwork after the bulk of it went to China. The Chinese-made cabinets would be shipped to Wisconsin, where we would install locks and move doors because the Chinese fastened all of them as right-hand opening and some needed to open left. For some reason they couldn't handle left-opening doors.

The factory in China wouldn't take special orders either. They produced only a couple of standard sizes. The Wisconsin workers, by contrast, could easily produce cabinets in a multitude of depths and widths. And we could quickly change styles and colors. The Chinese factory wasn't flexible like that.

Also, the quality of the cabinets fell dramatically. They were cheaply put together. There were times when we would open a carton and the thing would basically fall apart right out of the box. I am sure they got complaints from customers.

They thought it was a way to save money, to get it made in China. But eventually, toward the end, they admitted it didn't really work.

When the Joerns family and Ray ran the factory, it wasn't like that. The Joerns brothers started the company in the area of Minneapolis and St. Paul. They moved it to

Sheboygan. When that factory burned down, they rebuilt in Stevens Point, not Mexico or China.

Later, when that Stevens Point factory was, as Ray put it, "falling down around our ears," he worked with the governor to get a new kind of funding, industrial revenue bonds, approved by the state supreme court. A new factory was constructed with the first of those bonds ever issued in Wisconsin.

I was accustomed to working for Ray, a guy who did whatever he could to keep Joerns in Wisconsin and to preserve the good jobs it provided. Ray went to Catholic school and lives his life by Catholic social teaching. He says he believes that company executives who have control over worker pay scales, vendors' balance sheets, and customer treatment will answer to the good Lord for how they do their jobs. He says, "people will lose or win their souls by the way they run their companies."

That obviously is not what those venture capital guys believe.

Some workers retired after the factory closed. Others were able to find jobs at other factories around Stevens Point. I got a position with Greenheck Manufacturing, which is headquartered in Schofield, Wis. It's a union job, so I earn good money, but not as much as I did at Joerns.

I think most of the former Joerns workers were not able to get union jobs, so they're making a lot less without many of the benefits or the level of benefits we received at Joerns. For many workers who had been with the company for 25 years or more, just losing their vacation time at that age was difficult.

Every year, Joerns would hold a company picnic in the Stevens Point Park. After the shutdown notice, Ray and his wife sponsored the picnic. Several hundred people came, including retirees.

He gave a speech and thanked everyone for all of their efforts over the years. He said the closure was something that never should have happened.



Former plant owner Ray Nass, second from left in front row, and Maury King, beside him, listen to USW District 2 Director Mike Bolton at protest.

I wasn't at work when Rexnord made the announcement. I had taken off that day, Oct. 14, 2015, to drive to Hanover College to pick up my daughter for a weekend visit home.

I was sitting at a four-way stop in Madison, Ind., when my local union president, Don Zering, called. He asked, "You got a minute?" I said I did. Then he said, "I've got bad news." I knew what was happening when he said it. He didn't even have to tell me.

I knew that Rexnord was closing its Indianapolis ball bearing plant.

Tom Kress, the new factory manager, called the workers together for a meeting at the plant, then told them their jobs were being shipped to Mexico. Rexnord was building a new factory there.

I heard later that some workers shed tears. A couple got loud and just short of obnoxious, calling Rexnord executives a bunch of greedy SOBs, which was true, really, because they were closing a profitable American plant and reopening in Mexico where they could exploit workers by paying them \$3 an hour and pollute without fear of retribution.

The young workers, who had just started families and bought houses, were a wreck. They were scared because their lives were about to totally change. It absolutely stinks that corporate greed ruins people's lives.

I had worked for Rexnord since I was 21. Now, in my mid-40s and with two teen-age children, I am faced with starting over completely.

In those early days, it was hard for me to sleep sometimes as I tried to figure out how I was going to pay for three more years of tuition for my daughter. It is her dream to be the first from either side of the family to graduate from college. And I am determined to make it happen.

My son is an athlete, and there were times after he knew I would be losing my job that he needed something for sports but would say, "That's alright. I don't need it." I made sure he got it.

FROM RAGE TO REALITY COPING WITH THE CLOSING OF REXNORD

BY BRIAN REED

Former Griever, Steward, Contract Negotiator with USW Local 1999

We had just recently moved to the town of Martinsville, about a 35-minute drive from the Rexnord plant, and my wife, Jenny, was trying to get the new house in order. But she went out and got a job right away. She had run her own small business for eight years in the town where we'd lived before, but she wanted a job now that had good health benefits, just in case. That's why she picked Starbucks.

My dad, Bruce Reed, was crushed by the news. He had retired from Rexnord after 47 years. He had served as the local union president for six years and as a business agent for the union for a dozen years. He'd seen Rexnord close down its Indianapolis chain manufacturing factory, where we'd both started work. And now this.

The thing is, you work with these people every day. They become like family. The plant is like a home. It is a place where we made something together as a team, and did it with pride. Rexnord was taking all of that away to get a few extra bucks for already-wealthy shareholders and CEOs.

Because I had a lot of seniority at Rexnord, just short of 25 years by the end, I was among the last to be laid off. But we started making changes as a family right away because I knew there were not a lot of jobs around that

paid good, family-supporting wages. That's mainly because Indiana lost 235,058 manufacturing jobs, or 31 percent, between 1969 to 2014.

Before this, I would take my family out to dinner once a week. We don't do that anymore. We have a fire pit at our house, and we enjoyed having people over. But you can't invite people and ask them to bring the food.

Generally, we just slowed down. We looked at each potential purchase and decided whether it was something we really needed or something we just wanted.

Four months after Rexnord announced it was turning its back on its 300 workers in Indianapolis, United Technologies (UT) told the 1,400 workers at its Carrier furnace plant just five blocks from Rexnord, as well as the 700 workers at its control panel factory in Huntington, Ind., that Mexican workers would get their jobs too.

This was in February of 2016, and then-candidate Donald Trump began tweeting about how horrible this was. He told rally after rally that companies like Carrier weren't going to offshore on his watch. He said he would place huge tariffs on products imported into the United States from corporations that had moved manufacturing to other countries.

When Trump was elected, he asked for a list of companies that had announced plans to move to Mexico and said he would call the CEOs himself, after which, he said, they wouldn't be leaving the United States.

In December, the President-elect tweeted this: "Rexnord of Indiana is moving to Mexico and rather viciously firing all of its 300 workers. This is happening all over our country. No more!"

This raised hopes, especially after it was announced that Trump actually had called the United Technologies CEO and saved some jobs at the Carrier plant. I admit, I was among those who hoped. Hell yeah, I did. But did I believe he would really do it? No.

And he didn't. Rexnord issued its first layoff notices to workers in March of 2017, just a few months after the tweet. I got it on Sept. 26. And the whole place went dark on Nov. 22.

In the months before the closure, Rexnord asked us to train our Mexican counterparts. Even though I knew I was soon going to be hurting for money, I refused the extra pay Rexnord offered to those who tutored the foreign workers.

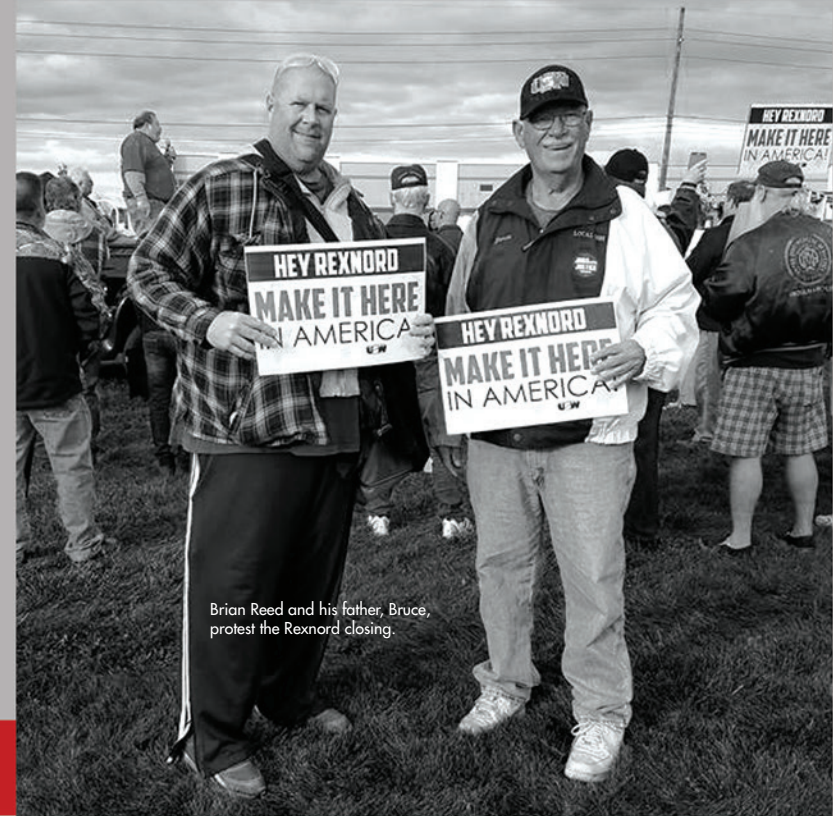
Managers were asking us to help the company that ripped the life out from under us. To me, it was a moral issue. I wouldn't do it.

It took me a couple of weeks of searching before I landed a new job. I drove a delivery truck for FedEx for \$450 a week less than I earned at Rexnord. That lasted two weeks before I got a better job driving a fork truck at a warehouse, paying \$360 less a week.

Then, in February this year, I got my current job with Acuren, a company that performs nondestructive testing, inspection and engineering. I am still earning less than I did at Rexnord, but I hope that over the next several years, as I earn certifications, I will catch up.

I think that most people from Rexnord, like me, will start over. Most will move on. But a handful will never recover.

At first when Rexnord announced the move to Mexico, I was angry, of course. Every day when I got up to go to work, it was just miserable. But over time, as I watched the work wind down, as Rexnord moved the machines to Mexico or sold them off, the rage subsided and reality settled in.



Brian Reed and his father, Bruce, protest the Rexnord closing.

WERNER LADDER LET DOWN ITS AMERICAN WORKERS

BY PHILLIP DEMATTEIS

Former President, USW Local 3713-0

My wife had been sick for a while before my employer, the Werner ladder company, began dropping hints that it would close shop in Greenville, Pa. This was a big deal to me, obviously, because we needed the health insurance.

I was the United Steelworkers local union president at the factory in Greenville, so I heard the crap from the bosses for a while, stuff like, “Things are going to change around here,” and “We have to be more global.”

This was just after the turn of the century, not quite a decade after the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) took effect in 1994. I had seen other factories pull up their American stakes and skip off to Mexico. So I knew what Werner was going to do.

The company announced in March of 2003 that it would shut down ladder production in the plant located right next to the corporate headquarters.

Werner said it would eliminate 500 family-supporting jobs making aluminum ladders in little Greenville, population 6,400. This was a big deal to Mercer County because Werner was the second-largest industrial employer there. It was a big deal to all of us who worked there too. I was 38 and had 15 years in, but others were older and had more time. It was harder for them.

Werner was the largest manufacturer of ladders and

climbing products in the United States and was making tens of millions of dollars in profits each year – \$180 million in 2003. Just a year before they told us they were closing the Greenville plant, Werner had handed a company officer \$1.6 million to get rid of him.

Werner was paying the company president half a million in salary and doubling that with bonuses, but they were going to throw to the

curb the workers whose labor created the millions in profits from which executives siphoned off those extravagant salaries and perks.

Early on, Werner bosses told us that if we took concessions, they would reconsider the decision to leave.

Lots of guys wanted to believe that. They hoped it was true. The prospect of trying to find new jobs in rural Mercer County was daunting. But I told them there was no point in giving stuff back to the corporation. Nothing would change unless we were willing to work for nothing. Werner was going to take the money and leave anyway. It didn’t matter what we did.

“Although Werner abandoned manufacturing in the United States, other companies made a go of it in their old Greenville facilities.”

I got Werner to agree to make payments to the laid-off workers from accounts that had been our pension funds. We also received Trade Adjustment Assistance, which is federal money that helps workers who lose their jobs because of NAFTA get retrained and pay their bills until they can find new work.

And, of course, Werner was supposed to provide COBRA health insurance for 18 months for the workers who could afford to make the payments. That was

important to me because my wife was sick, so I paid.

Werner closed the Greenville factory within months after it announced it would. Then, a few months later, it began ladder production in leased space in Mexico.

Early the following year, Werner killed more American jobs by closing its wooden ladder plant in Carrollton, Ky. Then it announced plans to construct a brand new ladder factory in Juarez, Mexico. That would become the largest ladder production facility in the world, employing 1,500 people in five buildings.

In the meantime, though, Werner shut a third American factory, the Anniston, Ala., shop, destroying another 530 American jobs.

In 2011, as Werner expanded the Juarez facilities, it padlocked its Merced, Calif., factory and sent another 140 skilled and dedicated American workers packing. The year before, those workers had produced 1.1 million ladders.

Werner began another huge addition to its Juarez campus in 2015. It included a warehouse, new offices, a cafeteria and tool shops. The plant manager said the main reasons Werner was constructing in Juarez were the great population, educated work force and training facilities.

That’s all a bunch of bull. A great population, educated work force and training facilities are all available in the United States – in Greenville and Anniston and Carrollton and Merced.

The main reason Werner dumped American workers and keeps hiring in Mexico is the dirt-cheap wages there. This is a place where the minimum wage is \$4. That’s for a day, not an hour. NAFTA didn’t benefit Mexican workers either. They earn less now than they did before it was enacted. And the less Werner pays its workers, the more the top dogs get.

A few months after Werner laid me off, my wife needed surgery. But when the physician called the health insurer, they said we weren’t covered. I said something must be wrong because I had been paying the COBRA premiums to Werner every month, and Werner had cashed the checks.

I went to Werner, and they told me there was no insurance. When Werner operated in Greenville, they were self-insured, which means they put money aside to pay the medical claims, and Blue Cross/Blue Shield administered the plan, basically doing the paperwork.

Werner told me the company didn’t exist anymore, so there was nothing they could do. They gave me my money back – after I insisted – but my wife and I didn’t have health insurance.

The first insurance company I applied to turned me down. This was years before Obamacare stopped insurers from rejecting applicants with pre-existing conditions, so I was lucky to find one that would cover us.

Werner called me back from time to time to work in the aluminum extrusion part of the factory, which it didn’t close until 2005. In the meantime, I expanded a small business that I had operated on the side doing lawncare, landscaping and installing outdoor Christmas lighting.

Although Werner abandoned manufacturing in the United States, other companies made a go of it in their old Greenville facilities. ILSCO extrudes aluminum there, Clifton set up its precision tube-cutting shop, and Dad’s Dog Food operates a distribution center out of part of the building.

I was irritated when it happened, when Werner shut the place down, but I feel like I am better off now. I have my own business. I control my life. They don’t. Why work for someone when you don’t know if you are going to have a job the next day?

My wife died last year. It was a long battle with cancer, back and forth. She had surgery, and she was good, then it came back. It was hard. Werner made it worse.



Phillip DeMatteis

CARELESS PURSUIT OF PROFIT KILLS JOBS

BY REX STAPP

Former President, USW Local 11-770

Runaway corporate greed cost me my job, a job I'd had for more than two decades, a job that enabled me to raise two children, a job that is now being done in Mexico.

I started as a welder building gas-hauling trailers in 1993. First I worked for a small, locally owned company in Springfield, Mo., called Custom Trailers. Then after Custom Trailers was purchased by a Minnesota-based company called Polar Tank, I worked for them.

Over the 22 years I was there, our plant grew. When I began, there were around 70 of us. When they shut us down in April 2016, there were close to 300.

Making gas trailers isn't like making cars. We didn't work on assembly lines. We had a lot of custom jobs, and we welded the parts for them ourselves. We did good work, and most of the time we had more orders than we

could fill, even at the end. Polar was a profitable company.

But when Polar was bought by an investment group called American Industrial Partners (AIP) in 2015, they decided they could make more money if they shut us down.

This group had just bought a company called Heil Trailer, and they invested a bunch of money in a new Heil plant in Mexico. They bought our company because shutting us down eliminated a big part of their competition.

To them it was just profits. For us it was 300 jobs, 300 livelihoods, 300 families struck down.

We were angry, obviously, because many of us felt like we had built that company from scratch. We put our whole lives into it, and for a lot of us, it was the only job we ever knew. A person can't just start over when he's 50 or 60 years old, even if the government does offer retraining.

And sure, there's plenty of factory work in the area, but it pays \$10 or maybe \$12 an hour, with no benefits. We were making an average of \$19 an hour at Polar, and our families depended on every cent of our checks to make ends meet.

If you looked at our community 20 years ago before NAFTA and free trade had a chance to really turn the tables on the American worker, you might see one person who was homeless or needed help. Now there are people standing with a sign on every corner.

That can only go on so long before something drastic happens. Our country can't keep starving the working class and expect to remain the most powerful nation on earth.

A lot of people in the media and in the community want to blame us, the workers, for what happened at Polar.

“ I don't know what the exact answer is, but I know that this country can't survive if we're willing to let the middle class die. ”

We were on strike when we got the word that AIP planned to shut us down, and everyone assumed it was because we'd made some unreasonable demand.

The truth is, it was exactly the opposite. We weren't fighting over wages. We were willing to compromise. But AIP forced us to strike because after months of trying, we couldn't get AIP to negotiate with us. Now we know that they never had any intention of bargaining a contract with us. They were just stringing us along until they could shut us down. They even told us that much after it was all over.

The other workers and I really felt like this was our company. We took pride in our work, building these tanks by hand. We burned up in the summer, welding in 110 degree heat. We froze in the winter. We got injured and breathed in clouds of smoke.

We've had four people from our bargaining unit under the age of 50 die of cancer, and I'm currently on a medical disability. I can't say for sure if my poor health is directly

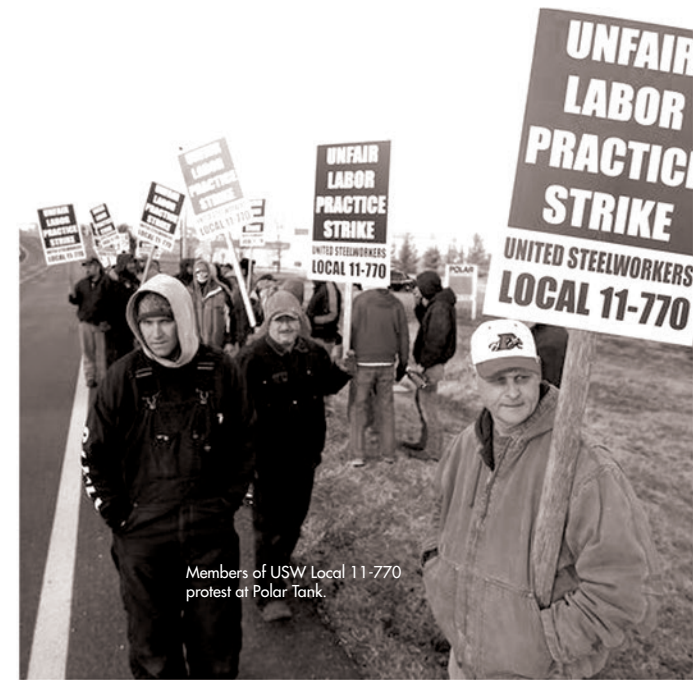
related to my time at Polar, but I do know our working conditions were tough, and we gave everything we had to this company.

And now our company, the one we built through decades of hard work, is gone because a few rich people wanted to get even richer. They even asked us to go down to Mexico to train workers there to do the jobs we spent our whole lives perfecting.

Our country's trade agreements failed us. All they're doing is letting these same rich people take advantage of workers in Mexico. We exported American greed to Mexico, losing American jobs and leaving Mexican workers to keep living in poverty.

I don't know what the exact answer is, but I know that this country can't survive if we're willing to let the middle class die.

Some of the folks who used to work at Polar are now working two and three jobs just to feed their families. All the while CEOs keep getting richer and richer. It makes me wonder, if it takes thousands of people suffering, how much money does one person really need?



Members of USW Local 11-770 protest at Polar Tank.

UNFAIR TRADE

WEDGES STEELWORKERS BETWEEN ROCK AND HARD PLACE

BY **ROBIN BAKER**

Former member, Safety Committee, USW Local 1899

It came down to two bad choices.

I could retain the opportunity to be recalled from layoff if U.S. Steel resumed operations in Granite City, Ill., but, as I waited, lose the health insurance my family needs.

Or I could retire, foreclosing the chance to be rehired but gaining affordable health insurance subsidized by U.S. Steel for its retirees.

Like many of the 2,000 Granite City steelworkers laid off by U.S. Steel in 2015, I was trapped between a rock and a hard place by bad trade deals and bad trade policies.

U.S. Steel cited imports as one of the reasons for shutting down its Granite City mill, but United Steelworkers Vice President Tom Conway put it more bluntly. He said, "U.S. Steel's announcement this morning is a result of the continuing effect of a surge of unfairly traded, record-level imports."

The furloughs began in November of 2015. They got me in December. A little over a year later, in February 2017, U.S. Steel recalled 225 workers. That was right after the U.S. International Trade Commission ruled that subsidized imports violated trade agreements.

Even though I had 28 years in, it wasn't enough seniority for me to be among those 225 called back.

The months dragged on. The two-year date when my health benefits would end unless I retired or got recalled drew closer and closer.

That day arrived in December of 2017. I had to make the decision. I knew steel imports had increased by nearly 20 percent in 2017, so the prospect of being recalled didn't seem good. My family really needed the health benefits. So, reluctantly, I chose retirement.

I held out as long as I could, hoping to return to the mill. I had spent nearly three decades there. I had trained to perform numerous dangerous and complex tasks in several departments. I made decent, union-negotiated wages and had good health insurance, pension and other benefits.

It was hard work, but a good job. I wanted it back.

Instead, I am driving a lift truck in a warehouse for half the pay and paltry benefits.

I searched for a better job. I am still looking, really. But when 2,000 people are forced out of work all at once in a city of fewer than 30,000 residents, it's rough. Also, my age was no asset. When employers can choose between a 30-year-old and someone twice that age, they don't go with the old guy.

I got unemployment benefits for six months. And I received SUB pay for two years, but the amount shrank as the shutdown dragged on. SUB pay is supplemental unemployment benefits (SUB) negotiated by the union and paid by the company. God bless the union and the contract we had. I have a wife and four kids to support, two in college. I needed the help.

The local union assisted with food giveaways and gift cards. There is nothing good about being laid off, but the



A Baker family portrait

union support was wonderful.

My family rarely goes out to eat or to shows now. We haven't had a vacation in two years. I haven't bought a new vehicle in ages. My wife cut back everywhere and watches every dollar. She sacrificed everything to keep the kids in school.

Trying to figure out what I could do next to keep everyone fed and the bills paid gave me more grey hairs than I had already.

After a year without work, I got the job at the warehouse. But the pay is so bad that if I can't find a better job, I am going to have to delay retirement. It is difficult because there just are no other manufacturers in the area. A bunch of us from the mill are working in warehouses now.

I know people say that furloughed mill workers should just get retrained. Become a nurse or a computer programmer or something, they say. But talk is cheap. Try figuring out the problems in your kids' math books. The world is different now from when I was in school.

Also, frankly, I've got skills. These are proficiencies honed over decades at U.S. Steel. In one job, I had to know and monitor five different computer systems. In another, I took samples of molten iron to determine how much magnesium and calcium to inject to achieve the correct level of sulfur. From a pulpit, I operated computers and robotic arms to place lances containing additives into ladles of molten iron. I ran lab tests on steel and entered

results in a computer log. I operated X-ray machines to determine the thickness of steel and its galvanized coating.

I learned to run all sorts of machines in the basic oxygen furnace pit, including a remote controlled KT-Grant machine, a grade-all with a jackhammer that descaled the ladles, and a rivet buster, which is 45-pound mini jackhammer that removed layers of heat-resistant brick for replacement.

Just like people tell you to get retrained, others say pick up and move to where there are jobs. But I grew up in Granite City. This is where my kids were born and raised, in this house. My mom and dad are buried down the road from us.

It would be hard to sell my house when so many people around here still are without work. And then there is the expense of moving. After all of that, I could end up with a position that would pay no better than the warehouse job I've got and would be non-union, meaning they could just fire me on a whim.

Around Granite City, 2,000 workers like me and their families are suffering hardship because government-subsidized steel is being dumped illegally on the world market, primarily by China, but also by some of our so-called allies like South Korea.

I just can't figure out how it is that my taxes pay for aircraft carriers to protect South Korea when my government won't protect American-made steel from illegally subsidized foreign imports.

“It was hard work, but a good job. I wanted it back.”

REPUBLIC STORAGE CLOSURE IN CANTON COSTS 300 THEIR LIVELIHOODS

BY **TERRY BENNINGTON**

Former member, Executive Committee, USW Local 2345

Just after lunch on April 10, 2015, I saw the guys from Republic Storage's powder coat shop going home. Sometimes they left early when they got ahead, so I didn't think much of it.

Then their foreman came walking by. I asked him if they were done for the day. He said, "You haven't heard?"

I said, "What are you talking about?"

He said, "We're done for good. They're locking the doors."

It was over, with no notice, no niceties.

A few minutes later, Bob Roberts, the president of our United Steelworkers local union, walked past me with that deer-in-the-headlights look on his face. He was broken. He didn't know what to say. He didn't know it was coming.

In fact, just a few days earlier, Roberts had met with officials from Echelon Capital, another firm that made lockers, because Echelon was talking about buying Republic. The Philadelphia investment bankers, Versa Capital Management, who owned Republic then, were at that meeting too. Echelon agreed to labor terms and talked about bringing back 150 of the guys who Republic had laid off earlier that year.

Then they sucker punched Roberts, closing like that after getting hopes up. They sucker punched all of us, 300 dedicated workers, all thrown to the curb.

The closing also smacked down the town of Canton, Ohio, where the company was founded. When the compa-

ny launched in Canton in 1886, its workers formed metal conductor pipe. During World War II, its workers made components for ships and planes. Afterwards, it became famous for fabricating lockers. Go to any school or YMCA, and you probably will put your stuff in a Republic locker. They're at Disney World and professional sports stadiums. We made the Cadillac of the industry.

Just a couple of days after Versa slammed the doors on Republic, Echelon did buy the company. But instead of resuming fabrication in Canton, Echelon took our dies, our machinery and our equipment and moved it to their other factories. Echelon claims to fabricate Republic lockers now, but they're not the same. They're not made by people like me, with 40 years of experience doing it in Canton.

The real problems were cheap lockers imported from China and cheap steel imported from Mexico and China that other American locker companies began using. That price pressure forced the reduction and consolidation of American locker companies. This was an issue way back in 2004, even before Versa bought Republic and another locker company called Lyon. That year, John Colm, executive director of the West Side Industrial Retention Network, a nonprofit economic development organization, testified to the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission that cheap Chinese imports and China's currency manipulation were injuring Republic.

The cheap steel and lockers from China are why the workers at Republic qualified for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA). That's a federal program to help workers who lose their jobs because of bad trade. The petition for TAA said, "One of the reasons for Republic's failure was the continual erosion in pricing – that was driven significantly by the relentless pricing pressure caused by Chinese

imports."

The thing is, China allows companies to pay its workers pennies and to pollute the environment. And China subsidizes its industries. There is no way American workers and American corporations in a capitalist system can compete with that.

So 300 of us in Canton were out of work and out of our pensions, vacation pay and severance. It was a nasty deal all the way around.

I started there as a helper when I was 19. It was a good place to work then. They paid decent wages and provided health insurance and a pension. I met my wife, Charlotte, there. She supplied the plant with its work orders. We found ourselves on the same team at a company-sponsored volleyball competition.

The workers believed in Republic. We wanted it to succeed. It was called Republic because it was part of Republic Steel Corp. in the 1930s. Republic sold it to LTV Corp. Then when LTV was in financial trouble, it was going to shut Republic down in 1986. So the workers bought it. We had an employee stock ownership plan, an ESOP. And we ran it for 20 years until Versa bought it in 2006. I had a huge investment there. We all did.

“ Things like this get swept under the rug and no one ever hears about it. But lawmakers should be doing something to stop it. ”

And we all suffered when it shut down. There was one young guy, Dave, who worked there a dozen years. He had a kid coming and house payments. He was scared. You could see it in his eyes.

Canton suffered too. It has some big employers like TimkenSteel and the hospitals, but mostly it's small businesses. And they supplied Republic. They provided paint, nuts, bolts and other products for production. All that

business disappeared. In a day.

I was 60, and getting another job was a joke. Companies aren't supposed to discriminate against you because of your age, but when they see 60 on that application, things happen. They say you aren't qualified or you don't have enough education.

I submitted about 50 applications. Finally, just before my unemployment ran out, the Fairless School System hired me. I went from being a production leader, making sure a line was running properly at Republic for \$17.50 an hour, to working as a janitor for minimum wage.

I worked there until I was 62, then I quit and took my Social Security. Charlotte is 65 and qualifies for Medicare, but I've got another year and a half of paying \$1,000 a month for a bare-bones health plan before I qualify.

This changed our lives, our plans. We lost our company pensions. The federal Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. took them over when Republic bailed. That means instead of getting \$2,200 a month, I will get about \$900. Same for Charlotte, who had 34 years at Republic.

Everything we planned on doing when we retired went away. We can't afford to travel now. The biggest traveling I do is to the basement to oil paint. Thank God we have our grandkids around.

Because of our age, Charlotte and I didn't have to struggle that long. But there were young people with 17 years in the plant, people whose dads and granddads worked there before them. What do you do if you are 45 and thrown out of the only work you have ever known?

There were a lot of bitter people in this whole thing. There were rumors of two suicides not long after the plant shut. I read one of the obits in the paper.

But I see some people, and they are okay. Some of us get together for breakfast once in a while. I saw Dave recently, and he told me he'd used the Trade Adjustment Assistance to go to nursing school and he'd graduated.

Still, in the 1970s, Republic employed 1,200 people, working three shifts. That's opportunity and family-supporting jobs for 1,200. Bad trade killed it all.

Things like this get swept under the rug and no one ever hears about it. But lawmakers should be doing something to stop it.

BAD TRADE COSTS ONE WORKER 2 JOBS

BY JEREMY BUSKIRK

Former member, USW Locals 644L and 5668



USW member working at an aluminum smelter.

I am 39 years old, and I've already personally experienced the horrible effects of unfair trade on two major American industries: aluminum and plastics.

In June of 2001, I got a job in the smelting side of the Century Aluminum facility in Ravenswood, W.Va., not far from where I grew up, in Point Pleasant, W.Va.

I worked for Century for almost nine years, and there I was a member of USW Local 5668. That was until 2009 when the bottom fell of aluminum prices around the world, and the company shut down the smelting operation. We didn't realize it at the time, but this was the beginning of a crisis for American-made aluminum. Smelters started closing across the country as China flooded the world market with cheap, unfairly traded aluminum. Now, there are only a handful of U.S. smelters left.

There's more than one reason why things like this happen. Sometimes corporate greed gets in the way of smart decisions. But in the case of aluminum, unfair trade is the No. 1 problem. Our leaders have made agreements with too many countries that make the same products we do here, only companies in those countries get government subsidies that violate trade rules, pay workers pennies and don't have to meet the same environmental or safety standards as U.S. companies. It just doesn't make sense that our country lets this happen.

It started with NAFTA, but that's just one of many bad trade decisions we've made. If it doesn't stop, factories and mills like the one at Ravenswood will just keep closing.

In the end, it comes down to corporate greed. Everybody has seen it happening over the years. Companies are always looking for ways to cut costs and make more money.

If a company can get cheap labor and operate with no regard for the environment elsewhere, what's stopping them from just going overseas? This is something we as a country need to address. We need to do a better job of standing up for our workers to make sure we still have American-made aluminum because too many smelters have shut down.

Initially, we hoped that Century's smelter

closure would be temporary. But it wasn't. That meant almost 700 people lost good, family-supporting jobs forever. The aluminum finishing side of the business is still operating there, but it's not the same.

The aluminum can be smelted overseas, then imported and finished here. But we should be doing that first step, smelting it, here ourselves.

These factory closures don't just hurt the workers. There's a huge ripple effect on everyone in the community. Taxes go up. Shops go under because people aren't spending as much money. And it hurts our school systems.

The American people want to buy good products that are made here, and they want good jobs to stay here. When we get products like this shipped from overseas, it takes money out of our economy. As a consumer, though, sometimes you're stuck buying an import because that's your only option. It shouldn't be that way.

After I lost my job at Century, I went back to school through funding from the federal Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program, which helps workers who lose their jobs because of bad trade. Eventually, I was able to find another job at a company called M&G Polymers in Apple Grove, W.Va..

I was hired at M&G in April 2012. It was a good union job. I was a member of USW Local 644L. I worked there until October of 2017, when the company filed for bankruptcy and shut down. Once again, unfair competition from overseas was a big factor in the loss of more good jobs.

Shortly before closing, M&G joined three other companies in petitioning the U.S. Commerce Department to impose penalties on imports of polyethylene terephthalate (PET) resin from five countries. The American firms said the PET from those countries was being dumped here, which means it was sold at prices below the cost of production.

Trade cases like this require that the petitioning American companies show that the dumping injured their business. I think forcing M&G to close, costing 100 of us our jobs, should qualify.

These job losses have taken a toll on my family. My oldest son is 21. I have a daughter who is 15 and another son who just turned 5. It's difficult to deal with losing a

job when you have people who rely on you.

I've always been the kind of person who lives within my means, so when things get tough, we try to save money any way we can.

My oldest son is in college, so we've make sacrifices to make sure he can have a better life. You always want your children to have a better life than you had, but it's not easy. There are things we'd like to have, things we would like to do as a family. But you have to make do with what you have.

“I'm not sure yet what the future holds, but I'm going to keep working hard, keep getting out of bed every morning, and keep trying to find something that will last.”

Right now, I'm unemployed and trying to figure out what to do next. We're looking at getting more assistance through the TAA program. I'm not sure yet what the future holds, but I'm going to keep working hard, keep getting out of bed every morning, and try to find something that will last.

At the M&G plant, there has been some talk of another company coming in, but I'm not sure what it'll be. I hope it's not a situation where they come in and stay for five years and shut down again.

Sometimes I wish I could see the future. My kids will be looking for jobs someday. I hope they can find good jobs that will be around for a long time. But the way bad trade keeps sending these good jobs overseas, I'm not sure.



Lisa Crissman

BAD TRADE KILLS JOB SECURITY

BY **LISA CRISSMAN**

Member, USW Local 126; former member, USW Local 9445-13

I am about to be snake-bitten again.

It first happened in 2012 when Flabeg closed down its Brackenridge, Pa., auto mirror plant and ditched me and 100 other workers.

Now it's happening again. My new employer, Pittsburgh Glass Works (PGW), announced in October that it would shutter its East Deer, Pa., auto windshield factory in June and send half of our work to a factory in Mexico.

This is what bad trade does to American factories, American workers, American communities.

I worked for Flabeg for 16 years. I can tell you the exact date when I started, Feb.

12, 1996. That was a good job, but it vanished when they closed in June of 2012. We made 14 million auto mirrors a year then, 70 percent of the domestic market.

Not long after that, the hydro-electric plant where my husband worked was sold, and the new owner laid off all the guys with the most seniority, including my husband.

So both of us were out in the cold. My daughter, who was only 15, was scared we would lose our home, that the bank would foreclose on us.

I am always fearful about something, so I had some concerns too. But we were okay because I was getting extended unemployment benefits through the federal Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. The Flabeg workers qualified for it because the company moved our work to Brazil and China. And Flabeg flat out told the federal government it moved because it could get low-cost labor there. Flabeg said cheap mirrors imported from Asia forced it to offshore

“**No job is secure. Nothing is set in stone. Nothing is safe.**”

what had been our work.

So Flabeg dumped 100 dedicated and skilled American workers, moved production overseas, exploits workers there, then ships the mirrors back to the United States to be installed on cars here. It's not right.

With the help of TAA, I went to school to become a medical biller and coder. I graduated and was looking for a job in that when I saw this position at PGW advertised. I applied and got it. I was a member of the United Steelworkers union again, just like I was at Flabeg.

What that means is decent pay and benefits. And when a company like PGW skips town, it means the union bargains for severance benefits. I am afraid I won't get any this time, though, because I have only three years at PGW.

The Steelworkers have applied for TAA for the 200 workers at PGW in East Deer. I think we should get it since the company is moving so much of our work to Mexico. Frankly, that's not too surprising because PGW is owned by Mexico's largest glass maker, Vitro S.A.B. de C.V. The Mexican company bought PGW in March of 2017, and little over a year later, they're shutting our factory down and taking our work.

There are several PGW plants across the United States, and Vitro says it plans to transfer some of our work to factories in Evansville, Ind., and Berea, Ky.

But Vitro admitted that half of the work we do now in East Deer will go to Mexico. It's just like my experience with Flabeg, which closed my plant to move production to low-wage countries.

Vitro said the East Deer plant is too old to keep up with industry demands. Well, why doesn't Vitro invest in

upgrading it? Why didn't the previous owner, LKQ?

It is a shame too. The workers will all get hurt. And the little town of East Deer will get hurt. East Deer officials already announced they won't repair tennis and hockey courts in Memorial Park this year because they're afraid the town won't receive sufficient tax revenue. The factory is the largest employer and largest taxpayer. When it closes, all those jobs and all that tax money will vanish.

In addition, a community treasure will be lost. That two-story factory along the Allegheny River was where the giant Pittsburgh Plate Glass (PPG) first operated in 1883. It was Works No. 1.

It produced glass for the military during World War II. It employed more than 4,000 during the 1950s. In the 1960s, it began fabricating windshields, and by the 1990s, the number of workers dropped to less than a tenth of what it had been 40 years earlier.

Once the Mexican company, Vitro, abandons the building, it will be just another hulking factory zombie, joining too many others in Western Pennsylvania, including the Flabeg plant in Brackenridge. Standing but lacking the heart of production.

Our government did this with bad trade. They ran us into the ground. They need to fix that. And they need to spend some money to upgrade infrastructure, so American factories get contracts and American workers get jobs.

I think, though, when PGW closes, I will try to get a job in what I was trained to do after Flabeg shut down, medical biller and coder. I am 52 and have been through enough that I have learned my lesson. No job is secure. Nothing is set in stone. Nothing is safe.

ILLEGALLY SUBSIDIZED IMPORTS TAKE JOBS FROM 1,900 TIRE BUILDERS

BY JACKIE STARKS

Former Alternate Steward, USW Local 878L

For years, people talked about the possibility that Goodyear would shut down the Union City, Tenn., tire plant. I never really believed it was going to happen. The factory wasn't ancient or anything. It was built in 1968.

Then, all of the sudden, they did it. It was announced on February 10, 2011.

More than 1,900 people worked there then on several shifts, people from Tennessee, Kentucky and Missouri. They called us together in groups of about 100 or 150 and spilled the beans to us. Then they moved to the next section of the plant and did it again. You have to understand, this was a massive factory, 52 acres under roof.

When those guys said the place was done for, everybody got quiet. You could hear a pin drop.

Some were in shock. Some guys believed it would shut down, but some, until the day Goodyear closed the door, really thought it wasn't happening. As for me, I took them at their word.

Goodyear said they'd stop production before year's end. They claimed our work wasn't going overseas. But just a month later, in March of 2011, Goodyear announced



it was spending half a billion dollars to modernize a tire plant in Chile and another \$200 million on a factory in Brazil.

Why weren't they spending that money on Union City? It's simple. They could pay people in Chile and Brazil less for a day of work than what they paid us for an hour.

Also, this happened just shortly after cheap, illegally subsidized foreign tires had begun flooding the American market. Between 2004 and 2008, there was a 215 percent surge in imports, mostly from China, of passenger and light truck tires. That's what we made in Union City. That import surge bankrupted American tire plants and destroyed 8,100 good American jobs.

The United Steelworkers (USW) union, which represented the tire workers at Goodyear, filed a tire trade case. Because the Steelworkers won that case in September of

2009, tariffs were placed on imports of passenger and light truck tires. But it wasn't enough to save Union City.

We thought the plant would be open until year's end. But then Goodyear jumped us. In the middle of the summer, on July 11, 2011, they showed up at the beginning of each shift and told us the place was closed as of that day. We could get our stuff out of our lockers, but then we had to leave. We were done.

That threw 1,900 people into an already bad job market. Factories in that area had been closing and going overseas for years. In 1970, the eight counties in western

“ At one point, my 10-year-old son asked me if he should get a job. ”

Tennessee and southwestern Kentucky that are called the Jackson Purchase employed more than 30,000 people in 28 factories. By Goodyear's announcement in 2011, most of those plants had moved overseas. Goodyear was the last one employing more than 2,000.

You just couldn't find a job then.

I was out of work for two years. My wife works, but before I lost my job at Goodyear, we both made good money. On my last day at the tire plant, I earned \$24.76 an hour and had a decent health care plan.

So when I got laid off, we had to cut back on a lot of stuff, on everything really. We had a camper and a little place at the lake, and we had to let all of that go. We sold the camper.

I had to draw down my 401(k) savings, my retirement money, for us to live on.

At one point, my 10-year-old son asked me if he should get a job.

This was the first time I had been without work since I was 15 years old. It sucked. It takes a toll on you. I didn't blame myself because I didn't do anything wrong. They up and left me. I am still kind of bitter about it. They cost me quite a bit.

We got Trade Adjustment Assistance, which is federal money to help retrain workers who lose their jobs because of bad trade. I used it to go to welding school, but after I got certified, I couldn't find a job welding anyway.

Finally, I got a job at Insteel in Hickman, Ky. I started at \$10.25 on June 18, 2013. That's less than I made at the job I got right out of high school with a company that was bought by Kohler, the faucet manufacturer. I am topped out now at \$14.25 an hour. That's a \$10-an-hour pay cut from what I made at Goodyear. And I have to contribute a lot more for health insurance.

I am trying to put some money back in my 401(k) for retirement now, but it's hard because I make so much less.

Don't get me wrong, though. I am thankful to have a job. And it's a good job. I am the lab technician and storeroom attendant. I test the tensile strength of the wire mesh we make.

You know, my dad worked at Goodyear. And it would have been nice if I could have spent my career there. And maybe if one of my boys had wanted to work there, he could have, and he would have earned wages that are enough to support a family.

But, instead, Goodyear went to Chile and Brazil and China.

Now there are no jobs that pay anything in this area.

If you could rewind it, and put everything back where it was, it would be awesome. But for that to happen, somebody's got to fix the problems this country has with trade. I believe it can be fixed. Everything can be fixed.

I just don't trust lawmakers to actually do it. They certainly haven't yet.

BAD TRADE **DEVASTATED** AMERICAN PAPER INDUSTRY

BY **LINDA DEANE**

Member, USW Local 4-900, Maine Council Chair, USW Women of Steel

The paper industry isn't just a job for me. It's part of my family's legacy. My father worked at a paper mill. Following in his footsteps, I've worked at paper mills my whole life, first at an International Paper mill and then, for the past 29 years, for the paper mill in Rumford, Maine.

Today, my plant is run by Catalyst Paper, but over the years it has had several different owners, including Boise Cascade, Mead and Verso.

To us in this region, paper has always meant jobs. It was the basis for our entire economy at one time.

Through those years, no matter who ran our plant, we always took pride in the fact that we – especially as USW members – made some of the best paper products on the planet.

It's sad to say that over the past 20 or 30 years, mostly because of the problem of unfair trade, our industry and our communities have been struggling to survive. It doesn't matter how good our products are – it's really hard to compete when the playing field is so out of whack.

Since NAFTA started in 1994, so much has changed in

my town of Livermore Falls, Maine.

What was once a thriving industrial town is now not that much more than a bedroom community for people who work in bigger cities like Lewiston and Portland. In the morning, you'll see a line of cars leaving town and, at night, you'll see a line of cars coming back.

Over the years, thanks to NAFTA and other bad trade deals coming out of Washington, we've seen paper mills in Maine and around the country closing down.

At my plant, we used to have 12 machines running. Now, we're running four.

Fewer machines running means fewer people working, of course. When I first started working at the plant, there were more than 1,000 people. In fact, at one time there were 1,200 people working there. Now we have less than half that many.

In 1906, there were more than 100 pulp and paper mills in Maine; today there are six.

And it hasn't just been the paper industry that's been hurting. Since NAFTA went into effect, other industries around here have been hurt, too.

At one time, we had a lot of shoe factories in this area. They were the first to go. When they started closing, the companies made the workers train the people in Mexico who were going to take their place. Imagine that.

Then, after the shoe shops, it was the textile mills. Now, it seems to be the paper industry that's hurting.

When NAFTA first took effect, I noticed the companies started shutting down paper machines in the mills. Then, they started selling the machines for parts.

That's when I realized how bad it was – that meant they were never coming back. We could see what was happening while it was happening, but we couldn't do anything to stop it.

The factories – they are just falling like dominoes, and a lot of the reason is trade deals that give other countries the upper hand over us, and it just isn't right.

Then, the people who lose their jobs end up working for much less. That means people have less money to spend. Then local businesses end up closing because they're making less money, too.

This area used to be booming – we had malls and shops, all kinds of main street businesses. There's just not much here anymore. All the mom and pop stores are gone. They just can't make it.

A lot of the people who used to work in the mills have had to find jobs at other places. But unless you are lucky

“**In 1906, there were more than 100 pulp and paper mills in Maine; today there are six.**”

to work in the medical field or Bath Iron Works, which involves a 100-mile round trip commute, you're never going to make the same wages you made at the paper mill.

You're lucky if you can find a \$15-an-hour job around here these days. Most people end up going to work at fast-food restaurants, McDonald's, Dunkin' Donuts, or someplace like that. Those places don't pay much more than minimum wage. They don't have good benefits like a union job does.

The truth is, unless we can really change the way our trade laws work, it's just going to end up being more of the same – here and in other towns like this around the country.

I hope when they finally renegotiate NAFTA, they think about places like this and the effect that trade can have on one little town. Take this town and multiply it by hundreds – there are hundreds of other places out there like this that are hurting, too, thanks to bad trade.

Young people today, they're afraid to go into the paper trade. They think that it's a dying industry. But it doesn't have to be.

Whenever I go shopping, I always look for “Made in America” on the label. When I talk to my family and friends, I tell them to buy American-made products, especially paper.

We can turn places like this around, but it's going to take real trade deals that protect workers, not the kind like NAFTA that keep sending our jobs overseas.



Linda Deane

NOT MADE IN AMERICA ANYMORE

BY DOUG HILLIARD

Former member, Executive Committee, USW Local 13300

I will always remember my 40th birthday. Not for a special gift or party, but I'll recall it bitterly as the day an employer forced me to change my life, my expectations, my goals.

Indspec, a chemical company with a factory in Petrolia, Pa., laid me off that day, April 13, 2017, along with 100 of my co-workers. Guys with less seniority like me, a pipefitter and general maintenance technician with 13 years of experience, got axed first. But in the end, everyone from Indspec, all 220 of us, were on the street by Sept. 1.

That's because Occidental Chemical Corp. of Dallas, which owns Indspec, sold its Penacolate resins business to a foreign competitor, Sumitomo Chemicals of Japan.

As a result, not one American firm will produce Indspec's main product, resorcinol, a chemical used primarily to aid in bonding rubber to steel cords in tire manufacturing, but also in pharmaceuticals and as an adhesive in wood products. Although the United States consumes nearly a quarter of the resorcinol produced in the world,

Occidental's decision means the nation will have to import all of it. The United States will manufacture none.

It won't be made in America anymore.

This is all so wrong. If Japan and Germany and China can make resorcinol, there's no reason America can't. There's no reason for America to find itself dependent on foreign firms for this essential product.

Also, what this deal means is that Occidental walks away with all the profits while U.S. taxpayers cover the cost of retraining workers. In addition, families are devastated, shops in Petrolia face bankruptcy and the school district is forced to raise taxes and cut programs.

Some of us contacted our local lawmakers and President Donald Trump because he intervened to save some jobs at the Carrier plant in Indiana after its owner, United Technologies, announced it would move that manufacturing to Mexico.

I tweeted to President Trump and explained the situation at Indspec. He never responded. I know he can't save everything. But I wish there were some kind of contact. I wish they would change the rules so companies can't just sell out American workers and American manufacturing.

The sudden revelation that you are out on your ear with no prospects hurts. The company first told the officers for the local union representing the workers, United Steelworkers Local 13300. I served on the executive committee, so I was there. It was a shock. When they told the guys in the plant, there were a few questions, but everyone was pretty silent. People were numb.

Once it set in, a few spoke out. One guy said, "This is our livelihood. You guys have a corporate office to go back to in Texas. But we will be out in the street without a job, and you didn't give anyone a head's up."

The past couple of months have been hard. I had to explain to my eight-year-old daughter that a lot of things we used to spend money on or do, we just can't do anymore, like vacations and buying things she wants at the store.

I was making as much as \$85,000 a year with overtime, and now, with unemployment, it's down to like \$29,000, and I am going to have to pay close to \$600 a month for

health insurance out of that.

For 220 workers to find new jobs here will not be easy. This is a rural area. Petrolia has a population of 200. There are two other chemical plants, but neither is hiring.

Like many of my co-workers, I want to stay. My wife is from here. I was born and raised six miles from Petrolia. I am active in the local hunting club, and I coach Little League baseball in nearby Eau Claire. My parents and brother and sister and my wife's parents are here. The grandparents are close to my daughter and would miss her terribly if we left.

Also, I've been away, and I didn't like it. After high school, I served four years in the Air Force. Then I worked four years at Andrews Air Force Base as a civilian refueling Air Force One and Marine One. I lived on the outskirts of Washington, D.C., and the traffic and crime made me homesick for rural Western Pennsylvania.

I got the chance to return in 2004, and I don't like the prospect of going back to D.C. But I needed a job. So I called my old employer at Andrews. They weren't hiring either.

For a time, I considered attending New Castle School of Trades to get an associate's degree in industrial maintenance or HVAC. Because so-called free trade cost Indspec workers our jobs, we all qualify for federal Trade Adjustment Assistance benefits. That includes limited tuition for retraining and some help with health care costs.

But now I have accepted a job with an oil and gas exploration and development company. It is, however, in no way, shape or form comparable to my job at Indspec. I'll be making \$14 less an hour. I will have a high, \$6,000 deductible on my health insurance. There will be no pension and no company match on the 401(k).

“ This is our livelihood. You guys have a corporate office to go back to in Texas. But we will be out in the street without a job. ”

At Indspec, we had good pension and health benefits. Now, I have to rebuild with a new company and try to do without these benefits. With a much lower wage, a whole new set of obstacles has emerged. How can I afford to pay a high deductible on my health insurance? How can I save for retirement when I'm barely making enough to live? How can I contribute to the 401(k) when I'm making so much less and there's no company match?

Even though I have accepted a new job, it doesn't mean that my problems have been solved and my prayers answered. I've spent many sleepless nights leading up to this point trying to decide whether to accept this offer. I have decided to give it a shot since there's no guarantee that I could find a good job here after getting my associate's degree.

Either way you look at this situation, whether you go to school or get a job, Indspec and the government sold us out and our lives have changed forever.

Petrolia has been in this spot before. The site of America's first oil boom, the town had 5,000 residents in 1876. Four years later, after those initial wells went dry, the population was down to 1,180.

But this is different. This isn't depleted natural resources. This is a lack of commitment to loyal workers and a lack of enforcement of trade laws in the best interest of the American people.



Doug Hilliard at Indspec

NAFTA SHIPS WHIRLPOOL REFRIGERATOR JOBS FROM ARKANSAS TO MEXICO

BY **TIM CRASE**
Former Vice President, USW Local 370

Before Whirlpool announced they were shutting down our refrigerator plant in Fort Smith, Ark., the writing was on the wall. Folks at the top started to leave, and layoffs kicked up again for the first time since the early 1990s when NAFTA was enacted.

We knew something was up, but we couldn't get management to admit what they eventually told us in 2011 – they were closing our plant and sending our jobs to Mexico.

I started working at Whirlpool when I was 18. Like most people, I got the coveted manufacturing job because of family ties. My mother had worked there her whole life and retired with 28 years under her belt. I thought the



same would happen for me even though we would occasionally be laid off for a few months at a time here or there due to temporary downturns in the market.

That temporary aspect changed after NAFTA.

This trade deal killed us. We were told it was going to bring up standards in Mexico. We were told that would help us. Nobody said that corporations were going to be allowed to move their factories there and use cheap Mexican labor.

As soon as it was passed, companies started moving to Mexico, including GE. Next thing we knew, Whirlpool followed. But our plant was reassured time and time again not to worry – we were their most reliable ship in the fleet. We made a high-quality product that wasn't like the products coming out of Mexico. So we thought we were safe.

“These are the things our lawmakers didn't think about when they approved NAFTA.”

When we first shut down, it really hurt our town. Businesses that relied on us buying parts from them closed up shop. Restaurants shuttered. The jobs that some of the workers found weren't paying nearly as well, the benefits weren't as good, and none of them were union facilities.

These are the things our lawmakers didn't think about when they approved NAFTA.

At the time, I felt like the whole world was crashing down on me. To make matters worse, I was diagnosed with cancer the same year we closed. And since I was on medical leave to take care of myself, I didn't qualify for the severance package. That left me struggling to get one of my kids through college. I'm on medical disability still to this day.

The Fort Smith plant had been there since the early 1960s. It was a staple of the community. To just walk away from that – it's sad. It's sad to even drive by and see it. You just see grass growing in the parking lot where there used to be cars. It's difficult knowing you've spent

your life in that building – that's how you supported your family, how you fed your kids.

I know we need trade agreements, whether we want them or not. But they absolutely need to be better for the workers – the people who actually make the products that make the companies money.

They negotiated NAFTA to benefit CEOs. They didn't consider any of us on the factory floors. They cleaned up on it, and we were just left holding the empty bag.

If I could tell the people at the table renegotiating NAFTA one thing, it would be to think before you sign a document that is going to affect the entire U.S. economy. And be honest with us. Label it what it is instead of deceiving us with coded language, like right-to-work laws.

I'm glad the American people are finally waking up. And I hope something good comes out of these renegotiations.



BAD TRADE DESTROYS HIGH-PAYING JOBS IN WEST VIRGINIA

BY JAY DILLON

Former President, USW Local 8-0180

Until October of 2017, I worked at Flint Group Pigments in Huntington, W.Va., where we made a high-strength toner for black ink called alkali blue. I was 30 years old when I got the job in 1993. Even back then, it was one of the highest-paying jobs in the county, and there were more than 130 workers in the plant.

Last October, when the doors finally shut on us, there

were 40 of us working there in the factory that first opened in 1912 as Standard Ultramarine. It was sold several times over the years with Flint buying it in 2005.

I liked my job. I liked everyone I worked with, even those from corporate. We had a great relationship with them, which made it even harder when, in June 2017, they told me Flint was shutting our plant down.

Even before the formal announcement, I knew something was going on. People were walking around with almost nothing to do, which normally wouldn't happen. Still, when I got called in for a meeting and they told me that they were closing the plant, it hit me like a sledgehammer.

As it turns out, Flint had gotten into bed with a company overseas in a country that regularly cheats trade laws by subsidizing corporations. With the way tariffs are set up under trade deals like NAFTA, these corporations can bring government-subsidized ink, and any other product, into the United States way cheaper than we can produce it, especially when workers in the foreign country are paid poverty wages and pollution is ignored.

How are we supposed to compete with that?

We can't. And we haven't. American factories just close or move overseas.

The only jobs left in Huntington now are service jobs, like burger flipping and housekeeping. But service jobs pay poorly compared to factory jobs, and they're no good if you have no one to service, and nobody here has any money anymore.

It's like the Wild West here, to be honest. The crime rate shot up over the past 10 years in the area, and now

we're also known as the heroin capital of the world. There's just nowhere for people to turn. And it's getting worse.

Most of us who were left at Flint are in our 50s. Luckily, we got awarded Trade Adjustment Assistance, which provides tuition assistance for retraining to people who lost their jobs because of bad trade. But even if we do that at our age, there are no good jobs here. And if we wanted to move, we wouldn't be able to sell our homes because they're in Huntington. No one is moving here because there aren't any decent jobs left.

The only hope I have for us or for anyone is to bring manufacturing back.

I understand that we want trade deals that make business fair for all workers, especially those in disadvantaged countries, but we got sold out with NAFTA.

We need to take care of what we have here first and make sure American workers can compete. We need to put the "fair" back in fair trade.

“The only hope I have for us or for anyone is to bring manufacturing back.”

Flint Group Pigments, Huntington W.Va.



COMMERCIAL VEHICLE

FACTORY CLOSURE

AFFECTS EVERY CITIZEN IN COMMUNITY

BY ED GOOD

Trustee, Mead Township, Ohio

In my years as a utility worker and union member in rural southeastern Ohio, I've seen the highs and the lows of the American industrial economy.

In my 38 years spent at work, as well as more than two decades as a local township trustee, I've also seen the failure of elected leaders, especially those in Washington, D.C., to stand up for good-paying, family-supporting American jobs in places like Mead Township, which I call home.

Thanks to failed deals like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), I have seen members of my community go from gainful employment – the kind that allows workers to care for their families, put their kids through college and retire with dignity – to being displaced from those careers and ending up grasping for any work they could get their hands on just to make ends meet.

These stories have become way too common in towns throughout my home state of Ohio and in other towns – big and small – across the country.

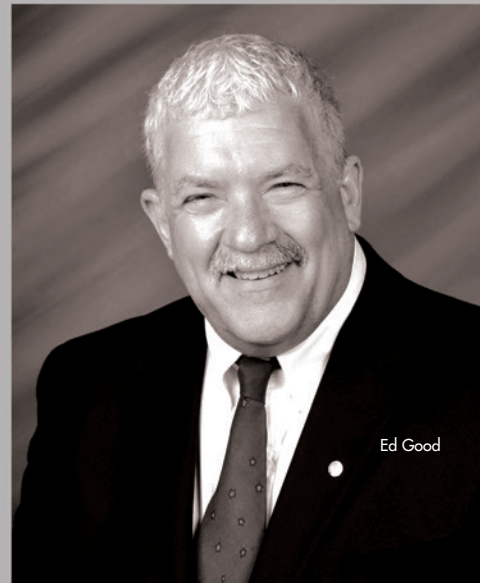
Just this year in Mead Township, a small, mostly rural community in southeastern Ohio, we saw the Commercial Vehicle Group (CVG) stamping plant, which had been a fixture in our community for years, announce plans to

close its doors and move operations to Mexico. The 170 workers at CVG, who were members of United Steelworkers Local Union 9419, stamped body parts, such as fenders and cabs, for large commercial trucks for customers that included Mack and Navistar.

This may seem like an isolated incident, but the sad fact is that there are many, many dots that people in Washington don't connect when things like this happen.

To them, 170 jobs might not sound like much. But to a small community like mine, that's 170 families that are going to struggle to put food on the table and to provide health care for their families.

Not only that, when these companies close, that means people are spending less money at our grocery stores, our



gas stations, our local restaurants.

Churches, charities, non-profits, they're all taking a hit, too.

The ripple effect is just huge. When a company like CVG picks up and leaves, it even affects utility workers like me.

When even one company moves out, that means our community needs a lot less electricity. That means that people who work for power companies can be in danger of losing their jobs as well.

As for tax revenue, while we haven't seen the full impact of CVG's closure in our community yet, I have no doubt it's going to mean smaller budgets for our municipality and our schools. This will have an effect on every single person in the community, young and old alike, as we will have less money to spend on libraries, roads, parks, law enforcement and other essential services.

As a trustee, I see this first hand. In some cases, we have had to impose special levies to make sure we could preserve some of these services.

It's important to remember that the CVG story and the story of Mead Township is just a drop in the bucket compared to the devastation that NAFTA has inflicted on manufacturing towns all over the country.

For me, the story is kind of personal – my father-in-law worked at the plant years ago. My brother-in-law worked there, too. I had friends and neighbors who worked there. It was one of the larger employers in the community.

“There are many, many dots that people in Washington don't connect when things like this happen.”

For people who worked there 20, 25 years, that might have been the only job they ever had.

And then they're in a situation like that, where they are unemployed for the first time in their life. That's a tough position to be in at that point in your life.

Even the process of applying for unemployment is hard for a lot of people. Some people in an area like this, they may not have a computer, or an internet connection. That alone can be a problem.

Some people in this area, thanks to the recent natural gas drilling boom, haven't suffered as much as some others have, or as much as we might have if we didn't have those natural gas jobs to fall back on.

But those jobs can't replace everything that these bad trade agreements like NAFTA have taken away from us.

Now, some people have to work two jobs to make what they were making at one job before. Imagine what that does to a family.

Also, look at Ormet, an aluminum smelter located nearby that employed more than 1,000 workers until it closed in 2014. That had a huge impact on us, too.

Our economy shouldn't be a race to the bottom. But when we sign bad trade deals like NAFTA, that's exactly what happens.

American workers have proven to be the most productive in the world when we give them a fair, level playing field. We just need to make sure that the playing field really is level.



NAFTA KILLED THE BOX BUSINESS IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

BY **NICK SILK**
President, Advance Paper Box Co.

There used to be eight rigid paper box plants in Southern California. Then NAFTA happened. Customers began leaving the Golden State because the trade deal opened up the doors to Mexico.

Now my company, Advance Paper Box Co., is one of only three rigid box plants left standing here.

We've been around since 1922 offering a full range of packaging products for many different industries — from

cosmetic packaging and inserts to boxes and cases for pharmaceutical companies and high-end food products. We operate in the heart of Los Angeles in a manufacturing and warehouse space that covers about 500,000 square feet, and we employ around 140 workers who are proud members of Unit #60 of Amalgamated USW Local 675.

Most of these employees have been with us for 20 to 35 years, and I hope they can all be here long enough to retire from here with dignity and security. I sometimes worry about that, though, because of the changes that are taking place, including NAFTA and cheap labor in China.

I started working with Advance Paper Box about 43 years ago as a controller and became president of the company 15 years ago. In that time, I've definitely seen us navigate through some difficulties.

When the recession hit in 2008, I did everything I could to lessen the burden on our workers. I suspended my own wages for two years, and we did not ask any of our employees to take a pay cut. Since that time, things have improved. But business has never been the same as it was prior to the recession.

Many of our customers are leaving the state as fast as they can for other states and countries with cheaper labor as a result of NAFTA. And it's obvious. We recently lost our biggest customer, a multi-billion dollar audio equipment manufacturer, to Mexico. And we can't replace their business because there's no one here to replace them.

It's pretty hard to compete with cheap labor in Mexico. NAFTA was supposed to help all three countries prosper. But we've lost several million dollars in business to our southern neighbor that sits just 150 miles away.

We've worked very hard not to lay off any employees

during these setbacks, but we definitely aren't hiring any new ones. We hope the manufacturing community isn't heading into a downward spiral. Because if we don't find a way to compete with China and Mexico, we will likely end up having to be a smaller company down the line, and we won't really have a choice.

One of the ways we're trying to compete is with the purchase of robots. But we don't know how much that will help us in every division of our company. And honestly, we're not out to save money. We're out to stay alive.

I see my workers every day. They're like family. I'm concerned about all of the consolidations that are taking place in the industry, and I worry about them as I see our competitors closing their doors. I don't know what the answer is. But we have to find a better way to service our customers and compete. I'd like to keep the faith that a new trade deal will be reached so we can do that, for the sake of all of our futures.

“It's pretty hard to compete with cheap labor in Mexico. NAFTA was supposed to help all three countries prosper.”



Nick Silk

BAD TRADE DEALS SHATTERED LIVES



- JOERNS**
STEVENS POINT, WIS.
- CATALYST PAPER**
RUMFORD, MAINE
- WERNER LADDER**
GREENVILLE, PA
- INDSPEC**
PETROLIA, PA
- FLABEG**
BRACKENRIDGE, PA
- PITTSBURGH GLASS WORKS**
EAST DEER, PA
- REPUBLIC STORAGE**
CANTON, OHIO
- COMMERCIAL VEHICLE GROUP**
MEADE TOWNSHIP, OHIO
- CARRIER**
INDIANAPOLIS, IND.
- REXNORD**
INDIANAPOLIS, IND.
- CENTURY ALUMINUM**
RAVENSWOOD, W.VA.
- M&G POLYMERS**
APPLE GROVE, W.VA.
- FLINT GROUP PIGMENTS**
HUNTINGTON, W.VA.
- U.S. STEEL**
GRANITE CITY, ILL.
- GOODYEAR**
UNION CITY, TENN.
- POLAR TANK**
SPRINGFIELD, MO.
- WHIRLPOOL**
FORT SMITH, ARK.
- ADVANCE PAPER BOX CO.**
LOS ANGELES, CALIF.



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SHATTERED LIVES**

A Publication by the
United Steelworkers.



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60 Blvd. of the Allies
Pittsburgh, PA 15222