



Wrapping Up

The USW's 2017 International Convention closed Thursday, April 13, with some 3,000 delegates and observers joining hands and singing the labor anthem, "Solidarity Forever."

In closing remarks, International President Leo W. Gerard urged delegates to share their experiences and what they had learned over four days of convention with their local union officers and members.

"The knowledge you gained here doesn't belong just to you," he said. "It belongs to the members whom we are privileged to represent."

Gerard thanked staff and volunteers who worked at the convention both on the stage and behind the scenes, and in Pittsburgh and Toronto, to make sure the event went on as planned.

Referring to the convention's theme, The Power of Unity, Gerard urged members to become active in the union and run for elected office in their local communities, states or provinces.

He noted that the union's Next Generation program for younger members and its retiree organization, Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR) allow members to stay active no matter their age.

Attending union meetings isn't enough, he said.

"Going to meetings, getting involved, then mobilizing and mentoring your co-workers makes you a really good trade

unionist. When we mentor each other well, no one can beat the power of unity."

Gerard thanked delegates for the positive remarks made about the union over the week and their generosity in donating money through raffles and an evening concert that will help to fund disaster relief in both the United States and Canada.

"The message I got out of this is we have to do more work with our rank and file," Gerard said. "We have got to do more work to mobilize people."

The problems facing labor that were outlined during the convention, he said, "can all be fixed if we elect the right people to office and they can all be fixed if we elect our co-workers."

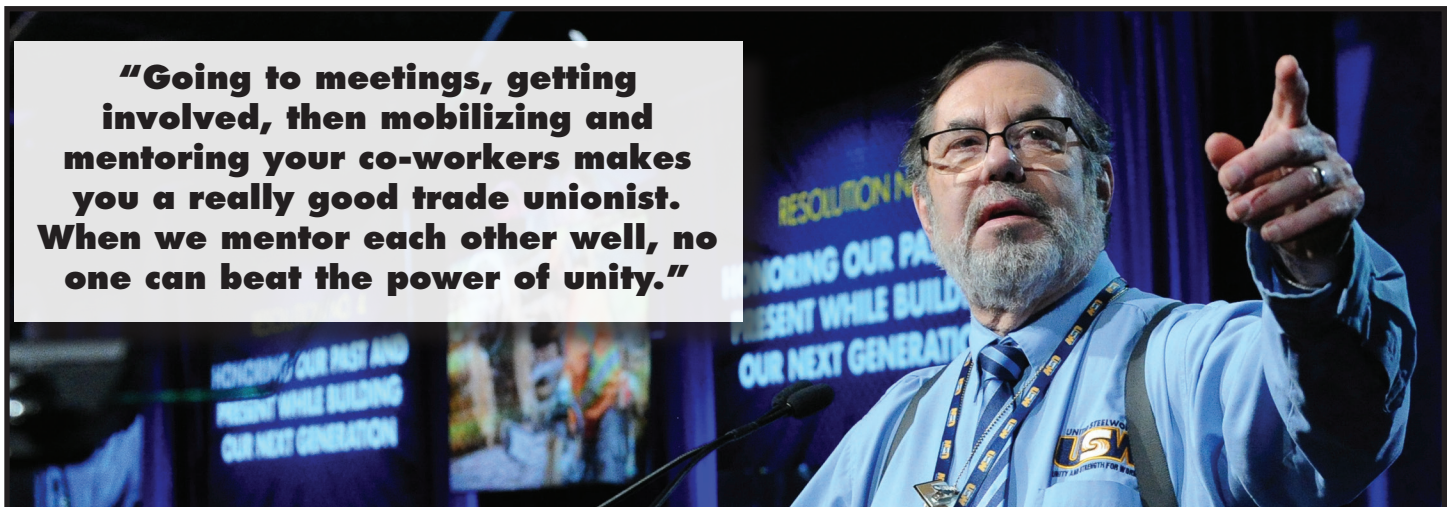
He urged USW members to run for office at every level of government, from school board to city council and state and federal offices.

"We've got to get people who share our values to run for Congress," he said. "In Canada, we need to have people who share our values run for the New Democratic Party."

Gerard told the delegates that being president of the USW, "the greatest union on earth," is a humbling experience.

"I'm not so naïve as to think it's me," he said. "What makes this the greatest union on earth is you. What makes this the greatest union on earth is the people you are going to back (home) and work with, who don't have the opportunity to be here, but love the union as much as we do."

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Resolution Round-Up: Day Four

On the final day of the 2017 USW Constitutional Convention, delegates worked overtime to pass 16 resolutions. The meeting continued for more than two hours beyond its scheduled time as delegates deliberated over resolutions ranging from support for the NextGen program to committing the USW to education and membership development.

Delegates began the day by unanimously adopting Resolution No. 8 backing the Steelworkers Organization of Active Retirees (SOAR). SOAR President and former District 4 Director Bill Pienta told the assembly, “SOAR recently concluded its conference and reaffirmed its commitment to fight like hell to help active and retired members of our union and all working men and women.”

Pienta urged locals without SOAR chapters to start them, adding, “If you help SOAR grow, we will stand shoulder to shoulder with you in your time of need.”

Scott Marshall, a SOAR member in District 7, pointed out that his chapter helped elect to Chicago City Council Susan Sadlowski Garza, daughter of the former USW activist Ed Sadlowski. Marshall said District 7 Director Mike Millsap was a great aid in Sadlowski’s victory and that she has been terrific for labor.

The convention moved from seniors to juniors, with consideration of Resolution No. 4 supporting the NextGen program. Kristy Bard of Local 1998 in District 6 said she has benefitted from the program’s informal mentorship. Also, she said, because of the union, “I have been given tremendous opportunities that I never could have imagined.”

“Bandanna” Dan Jackson, vice president of Local 560 in District 11, also rose to endorse the resolution, saying, “It is extremely important to take our up-and-coming leaders under our wings.”

The convention spent significant time discussing the importance of Resolution No. 23 which commits the USW to organizing and servicing health care, education, office, technical, professional, security and public and service sector workers.

Jim Williams of Local 8599 in District 12 noted that conservative politicians and judges are trying to revoke the

rights of public sector workers such as teachers to unionize. He pledged opposition to that retrenchment: “I will be seen with my eyes blackened and my teeth broken from that fight.”

District 11 Director Emil Ramirez noted that since the last convention, the USW has organized its first group of medical doctors.

Canadian National Director Ken Neumann talked about a campaign to help office workers titled, “Hang Up on Abuse.” It would enable call center workers to hang up on the verbally abusive. A video showed some of the dehumanizing insults that call center workers endured because they may be fired for disconnecting.

These included, “I am going to come over there and kill you,” “I hope you get cancer and die,” and “Listen honey, could you put a man on the phone who knows how to do his job?”

Late in the morning, delegates passed Resolutions No. 15 and 16 championing the union’s health and safety efforts and its Emergency Response Team (ERT).

Gary Reay of Local 9014 in District 11 said the USW Health, Safety and Environment Department was crucial in investigating a crushing death at his plant. He said Health and Safety advised him to take photographs of the scene immediately. Later, these photos proved crucial because someone removed the dead worker’s lock device before OSHA arrived. Because the local had photos of it, the company was unable to blame the worker for doing something wrong.

“There ought to be a law where someone is held accountable for the loss of a life like that,” Reay said.

Alexis Clemmons of Local 9-00738 in District 9 said employers know the risks, choose to ignore them and are never brought to justice. She agreed with Reay, “I say let’s hold them accountable!”

When there is a death or serious injury, the ERT responds. Kent Holsing of Local 12075 in District 2 said Duronda Pope of the ERT team and Steve Sallman of the Health and Safety department provided priceless help after two members of his local were killed. “This is very difficult and hard work for those who serve on ERT,” he said.

Randy Virgin of Local 1899 in District 7 said, “ERT is one of the most vital services our union provides. ERT is the face

of caring and compassion for our members and their families and co-workers when a workplace tragedy occurs.”

Several delegates rose to speak for Resolution 18, “The Fight to Keep Basic Labor Rights.” Carolyn Egan of Local 8300 in District 6 urged the assembly to back it, saying, “Labor rights are under attack in Canada, Quebec and the United States. Labor has made such an incredible difference in the lives of people in both of our countries. Corporations know that as well, and that is why they are engaged in outright attacks. They want to do us in.”

President Leo W. Gerard noted that members of Egan’s local trained, educated and mobilized hundreds of workers who then defeated regressive politicians.

Delegates unanimously supported Resolution No. 26, calling for expanded training and career development, and Resolution No. 25, calling for improving education and membership development. Mark Austin of Local 1998 in District 6 thanked the USW for scholarships that advanced his career as a union worker.

Jessie Edwards, president of Local 2-00232 in District 2, said the USW education and membership development helped him deal with difficult times. “We were going through job elimination. The company moved out 2,500 jobs, but because of the training I received, I was able to keep the membership together. Now we are in the process of bargaining to bring in 200 new jobs.”

The convention also passed with very little discussion several other resolutions. They are Resolution No. 10 Building Bargaining Power and Strategic Campaigns; Resolution No. 17 Amalgamation; Resolution No. 20 Building Unity Through Helping Others, Resolution No. 21 Improving and Protecting Our Social Safety Nets; Resolution No. 22 Retirement



Security; Resolution No. 27 Worker Ownership and Workers’ Capital, and Resolution No. 28 Reaffirming Our Commitment to a Strong PAC Program.

In addition, the delegates adopted Resolution No. 29 which referred several matters to the USW executive board for consideration, including a call for creation of a Veterans of Steel program to honor military veteran members and a call for the USW to poll members before endorsing for the U.S. President of Canadian Prime Minister.

USW Honors Top PAC Performers

The USW convention delegation honored the top-performing Political Action Committee (PAC) fundraisers, both by district and by local, on the closing day of the convention.

The USW’s PAC, which fuels the union’s member-driven political program, gets its funds entirely from the voluntary contributions of members.

PAC helps build a stronger union because it allows the USW to keep members well informed on workers’ issues and to fight for political candidates who support collective

bargaining and the right to organize, said USW Political Director Tim Waters.

“Since 2010, state legislators have made it harder for us to do political work,” Waters said.

The union is prepared to help any local that does not have a functioning PAC to set one up, Waters said. Visit usw.org/act/activism/pac to learn more.

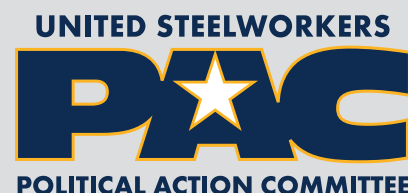
The 2017 PAC Award winners were:

Districts:

1. District 7 (Mike Millsap, director)
2. District 12 (Bob LaVenture, director)
3. District 8 (Billy Thompson, director)

Locals:

1. Local 715L, Woodburn, Ind.
2. Local 307L, Topeka, Kan.
3. Local 1014, Gary, Ind.



Rapid Response Awards Top Achievers

Rapid Response, the USW's nonpartisan grassroots education, communication and action program, recognized high-performing local unions and a high-achieving district on the convention's last day.

"We are grateful to every member who stepped up to educate another sister or brother, to empower others to take action, and to engage in this important work," Rapid Response Director Kim Miller said in announcing the 2017 awards.

The Rapid Response award for the top-performing district went to District 10, which covers Pennsylvania. Bob McAuliffe is the District 10 director and George Piasecki is the Rapid Response coordinator.

"We begin our awards by recognizing a district that never stops building, never stops educating, never stops finding ways to go above and beyond every time there's a call for action," Miller said.

District 10 produced the top results in "the majority of national actions we've taken on since the last convention," Miller said. "And they've approached targeted and state-level efforts with tremendous energy and determination, consistently resulting in progress and measurable outcomes."

The "Spirit of the Fight Awards" went to the top-achieving local in each U.S. district. The award was initiated two conventions earlier to honor Local 878L from Union City, Tenn., for lifetime achievement. The facility was closed by Goodyear in 2011.

The 1,900 members at Union City "consistently led the way on issues, from saving Social Security to saving the steel industry," Miller said in her remarks.

"When we mobilized to fight for a trade case that involved the kinds of tires they produced, it was our turn to fight for them," Miller said. "The positive decision in the case resulted in a couple extra years of operation, but sadly, it was not

enough to keep the facility open. With that plant closure, we lost an unrivaled local in Rapid Response."

In keeping with the activist legacy of Local 878L, the Rapid Response program honors one local from each district at convention time.

"The locals receiving this award have demonstrated commitment to the program, innovation in their approaches, and exceptional results when called up to act," Miller said. "They exemplify our fighting spirit to build good jobs and a better life for all workers."

The 2017 "Spirit of the Fight Awards" winners are:

District 1 - Local 979, President Dan Boone, Rapid Response Coordinator James Evanoff.

District 2 - Local 1299, President Jim Allen.

District 4 - Local 12012, President John Buonopane, Rapid Response Coordinator David Dellisola.

District 7 - Local 12775, President Vernon Beck, Rapid Response Coordinator Ryan Baker.

District 8 - Local 831L, President Danny Barber, Rapid Response Coordinator Mark Powers.

District 9 - Local 759L, President Mark Casto, Rapid Response Coordinator John Peebles.

District 10 - Local 10-00086, President Mike Gauger, Rapid Response Co-Coordinators George Walsh and Dan Peterson.

District 11 - Local 11228, President Christian Ward, Rapid Response Coordinator Michael McCombs.

District 12 - Local 9424, President Richard Madrid.

District 13 - Local 752L, President David Boone, Rapid Response Coordinator Greg Knowles.

