



INFORMATION UPDATE #44

December 8, 2011

In the Plant

The first coils finally came off the 4-stand rolling mill on Monday, December 5. The plan is to have the Z-line up and running by Thursday, December 8. Delays are due to the usual glitches and repairs which accompany a start-up after a protracted shutdown of these departments.

Update on MANA

Information Update has been informed that besides some 25 Local 1005 members employed to begin replacing the water box, the entire Max Aicher North America (MANA) plant in Hamilton will be shut down for two weeks starting December 18, with only firewatch supervisors at work. The plans for the plant in the new year are still not known.

Announcements

General Membership Meeting

December 14, 2011 @ 4:15 pm
Downstairs at the Union Hall
350 Kenilworth Ave. N., Hamilton

Christmas 2011 Plant Gate Collection

December 14th, 2011,
5:30am - 7:00pm, Main Gate

As the festive season draws near our thoughts go out to those less fortunate. Please take this opportunity to help by giving generously. We will do everything possible to keep the traffic going smoothly.

Local 1005 USW "Christmas Night" Dinner Dance

Friday December 16th, 2011
Michelangelo Banquet Centre
1555 Upper Ottawa

\$5 per ticket first come first serve
Doors open @ 6:00pm; Cash bar
@ 6:30pm; Dinner @ 7:00pm

USW Basic Steel Industry Conference Canadian Steelworkers Stand with American Steelworkers as They Prepare for 2012 Contract Negotiations

On Dec. 1, the United Steelworkers held a Basic Steel Industry Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania to prepare for the 2012 contract negotiations. A Local 1005 USW delegation comprised of President Rolf Gerstenberger and executive members Dennis Van Meer, Tony McLaughlin and Ron Wells joined 200 other delegates representing USW locals across the U.S. and Canada employed in the steel industry, including those at U.S. Steel and ArcelorMittal.

The negotiations involve 41,000 American steelworkers whose contracts expire in September 2012. The conference received eleven presentations on issues of concern to the negotiations including an assessment of the industry prepared by "Steel Market Intelligence" and power point presentations on "The U.S. and World Markets"; "Raw Material Update"; "Taking on the Global Economy," amongst others. Information was also presented on the status of the Steelworker Pension Trust and the Voluntary Employee's Beneficiary Association (VEBA) plans. These are programs which the USW has put in place since the steel industry abandoned more than 240,000 pensioners from 2000 to 2003 and because of the imposition of two-tier pension plans – the defined benefit plan and the defined contribution plan.

In his introductory remarks, USW President Leo Gerard prepared steelworkers for "difficult negotiations." The 2008 negotiations ended just before the steel market collapsed and half the North American steel industry was shut

down, he said.

To underscore the point, a barrage of media disinformation is filled with gloom about the prospects of a slump in steel production in the U.S. and the dismal situation in Europe, as well as dim prospects for Canada as a result of the Buy American clause and refusal of the Canadian government to demand that the 16 million tons of steel required in Canada be produced in Canada.

The disinformation of the monopolies and the media seeks to prepare the workers to give up anything the steel industry demands on the grounds that they are a "cost of production" which impedes the "global competitiveness" of the monopolies.* The workers should compete in a race to the bottom with one another and be happy if they have a job at the end of it. Meanwhile, the bonuses that CEOs and top executives negotiate for themselves are obscene and the companies think they can get away with acting with impunity.

USW is already in a fight with Cooper Tire, Leo Gerard said, explaining that Cooper is demanding more concessions from the workers.

The members of Local 1005 took the opportunity to thank various U.S. locals for their support during the phony lock-out and exchange experiences with delegates. The main message conveyed by the 1005 delegation was that our security lies in our fight for the rights of all and that Canadian steelworkers will be in the fight right alongside the American workers.

** Hamilton steelworkers recently saw once again how this disinformation works. On October 25, Juergen Schachler, President and CEO of Dofasco Hamilton sent a letter to its 5,200 steelworkers. The letter announces unilateral changes to the working conditions and focuses on a \$70-85 million reduction*

in the annual claims of steelworkers on the value they produce. The letter states the transfer of added-value from workers to owners of capital is meant "to address some of the elements of cost and value generation which will influence our profitability and sustainability in the short and long term."

Workers Want to Know Why U.S. Steel Fired Pregnant Probationary Employee?

Information Update has learned that on Friday, December 2, U.S. Steel management fired a woman employee for alleged poor work performance **before the phony lock-out.**

- This fired probationary employee was hired one year ago, on September 7, 2010 and worked on the basic oxygen furnace (BOF) as a first furnaceman.
- Due to the eleven month phony lockout, she was still on probation when she got fired. **She only had 16 more hours to go to qualify for full-time status and Union membership.**
- She never received any warnings either before or after the phony lockout that her work performance was not satisfactory. (Before the phony lockout, her department, BOF, was idled on October 4, 2010 when the blast furnace was shut down. The workforce just cleaned up and painted for a month until the workers were locked-out. In the last month since returning to work, other than the coke ovens, the rest of the plant hasn't been operating until this week.)

• This fired employee is the daughter of a steelworker. Prior to being hired at Hamilton Works, she worked as a summer student for two summers at Lake Erie Works. At no time did she ever receive any complaints about poor work performance.

• She is pregnant with twins and has two young children at home.

• Because of the phony lockout, she is not eligible for EI.

What is going on here? The workers want to know. More importantly, they want her back at work. Stat. Under no circumstances will the Union permit U.S. Steel to start acting with impunity on the shop floor. Attacking the most vulnerable is cowardly and will not be tolerated.

Information Update is informed the Union is also investigating the case of another probationary employee fired for alleged absenteeism. Make sure you report all cases of injustice to the Union.

ArcelorMittal, Contrecoeur, Quebec

Workers Defend Manufacturing Jobs in the Steel Sector

The workers at ArcelorMittal in Contrecoeur, Quebec have launched a campaign demanding that the steel monopoly create manufacturing jobs in Quebec, instead of just extracting raw materials and shipping them abroad for processing.

The campaign is called "The lemon has been squeezed enough – Invest!" It addresses the loss of manufacturing jobs in the steel industry, one of the heaviest of which was caused by ArcelorMittal, when the steel giant stopped production of its hot and cold flat rollers at its mill in Contrecoeur at the end of 2007 and cut 500 jobs. (The mill was previously owned by Sidbec-Dosco.) At that time, ArcelorMittal promised to build a steel beam mill at the Contrecoeur plant, but never did so. Production of metal slabs, still done at this mill, is threatened, and the company is refusing to modernize the equipment to produce a different steel product. ArcelorMittal's excuse is

the same one it gave the workers when the company closed the two mills in 2007 – that production could be carried out in better, more modern conditions at the Dofasco mill in Hamilton, which ArcelorMittal had just acquired so it could expand its empire.

The workers do not want to end up in a similar situation where outmoded equipment is raised as an excuse to shut down the mills. They also say that there are not enough workers at the mill to meet the production schedules, and that many unionized jobs have already been lost to contractors. It is also to the credit of the Contrecoeur workers and other Quebec steelworkers that they are fighting to defend all steelworkers, as they showed on January 29, when they demonstrated in Hamilton against U.S. Steel's lockout of the Local 1005 steelworkers. - *Pierre Chénier*

Christmas Party/Appreciation Dinner/Festivus for the Restovus

Preparations for the Appreciation Dinner/Christmas Party/Festivus for the Restovus are in full swing, Tom Pollock told *Information Update*. He says the Committee that is preparing the event for December 16 at Michelangelo's is having a good time and welcomes more volunteers.

More than 600 people have confirmed their participation. Members are bringing their spouses and other invited guests. The union is also welcoming the Mayor and members of other Hamilton union locals and the community who assisted us during the phony lockout, including the businesses who generously made last year's party in the midst of the lockout such a success. Space has also been reserved for pensioners, especially the 46ers who we honoured on the occasion of the 65th anniversary of the union's founding and the strike of '46.

Let's celebrate the season and, most importantly, the Spirit of '46 which unites us and makes us strong. There will be door prizes and live music with a DJ, Tommy says!

Heartfelt Thanks

To the pensioner who brought a card with a \$100 bill for our coffee fund at the Thursday meetings – thank you very much.

"I am not one for words," he wrote. "I just want to say many thank yous, many times. ...I have been on pension for 28 years.... Here is a little coffee money. I wish I could give more but my pension is \$824.61.

"Thank you again... I will never forget you."

Signed

To contact USW Local 1005: Call 905-547-1417 or e-mail info@uswa1005.ca.
Visit the website: www.uswa1005.ca