



The United Voice

"USW Local 310's Information Resource"

December 2020

12/10/2020

Sisters and Brothers,

Although I've never been one to wish away time, I must admit that I am anxious to put 2020 behind us. What started out as a very promising and exciting year turned tragic in March with the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic. Covid has dramatically changed the way we work and the way we live. The necessary precautions that have been put in place in the factory have made coming to work much more difficult than usual. I'm sure that most of us will agree that this has been the most difficult year we can remember. The Covid pandemic forced the cancellation of monthly membership meetings, committee meetings, the Labor Day celebration, and our children's Christmas parties. The spring and fall Union-Company Interim meetings were also cancelled, along with our USW International Convention and District 11 Conference and Women's Conference. Early in the year we were meeting with the Company planning our 75th anniversary celebration. We were also working together on having a bigger presence at events like the state fair to better promote our tires.

In addition to the pandemic 2020 saw us go through the most difficult election cycle in history. I want to thank everyone for respecting others' political views and remaining civil during this election process. USW Local 310L intentionally tried to limit handouts and literature so as not to fan the flames. I am looking forward to 2021 for professional reasons because we will see the National Labor Relations Board change from the most anti-union, anti-worker in history to a more labor-friendly board. If you have time, google recent rulings from the NLRB. The rulings involving Covid issues alone are staggering. Rulings that allowed companies to lay off anyone at any time regardless of seniority or contract language, barred unions from negotiating hazard pay, and upheld the discharge of medical professionals who refused to wear PPE previously worn by others, are just some of the many examples of anti-worker rulings during just the last year. A labor friendly NLRB is extremely important to our success in daily issues that may arise and also in contract negotiations.

I am hopeful that 2021 will be a good year. Hopefully now that we are starting to see the rollout of vaccines, we can return to a more normal life both in and out of the plant. On a personal level, I'm looking forward to retiring midyear, although I'm not looking forward to turning 65. We will be holding our Officer Elections in April with the installation of officers at the May monthly membership meeting. There are many talented individuals in our Local Union, so rest assured that however our elections go we will be in good hands. Later in 2021 we will begin preparations for contract negotiations that will start in June 2022. Our solidarity will be of the utmost importance for what has the potential to be a difficult set of contract negotiations. I have always said that our diversity gives us strength. Regardless of our differences, always remember that we are on the same team. **UNITED WE BARGAIN/DIVIDED WE BEG!!!** Enjoy the holiday season and please stay safe.

In Solidarity,

Steve Vonk
President USW Local 310L

WOMEN OF STEEL YEAR IN REVIEW

This year has been a trying year for us all. Our Women of Steel committee has felt the strain of this year's pandemic with nearly all our scheduled meetings and activities like Ladies Night and our annual bake sale for Breast Cancer Awareness being cancelled. But the pandemic could not stop the giving spirit that our WOS committee is so known for. Instead of the bake sale, we showed our support with sugar cookies for the Mammography Department of Broadlawns Hospital decorated with a frosted pink ribbon. With the uncertainty of a gate collection even being possible the old saying "it doesn't hurt to ask" paid off. With much appreciation we were given the approval for a gate collection and this year did not disappoint. The annual gate collection raised over \$930.00. This money is used for the adoption of families for Thanksgiving and children for Christmas.

This year for Thanksgiving we adopted three families from Hawthorn Hill/New Direction Shelter. This is a shelter for homeless families with children. We shopped the local Fareway store and purchased everything a family would need to prepare a traditional Thanksgiving meal for their family, including many extras for the kids. This adoption supported five adults and 10 children. For Christmas we adopted six children from Orchard Place. This year we had little boys under the age of 7 to buy for. Toys, clothes and a winter coat were a few items we purchased. With all the gifts wrapped and ready for delivery we could not be happier with this year's outcome. All of this could not happen without the support of our local's sisters and brothers. Our WOS committee would like thank each one of you and hope to continue with your support next year.

*Chrissy Lehman
Women of Steel Chair*

NEXT GEN FOOD DRIVE A SUCCESS

The Next Generation food drive in November was a huge success! We were able to help out several organizations through your generous donations.

- Approximately 600 non-perishable food items were donated to Oak Park Elementary's food pantry.
- A full vanload of men's and women's clothing items, shoes, coats, hygiene items, etc. were donated to Central Iowa Shelter and Services

- Children's clothing, coats, household items, etc. were donated to Hawthorn Hill
- Monetary donations of \$266.45 were donated to DMARC food pantry

As we all know, charitable organizations are always in great need at this time of year, but especially so this year. All of these organizations were extremely thankful for our donations. Next Gen would like to thank the Local 310 membership and other coworkers who gave so generously. As usual, you all came through when called to make a positive impact on our community.

In Solidarity,
USW Local 310 Next Generation Committee

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS

You may have heard the saying, "Union membership is not a spectator sport." You are the Union, and an actively engaged membership makes our Union strong. Maybe you've been looking for a way to get more involved in the Local, and want to make 2021 the year that happens. If so, there are lots of opportunities available for you to find your niche.

While most of our committee activities were suspended in 2020, we have begun to pick things back up. For example, you've just read about WOS and Next Gen. WOS typically meets on the first Monday of the month and is next scheduled for February 1. Next Gen typically meets on the third Thursday of the month, and is next scheduled for January 21. Both committees meet at 6:30 PM and are open for any member in good standing to attend. If neither of these seem like your cup of tea, we have several other committees including Committee on Political Education (COPE), Rapid Response, and Civil Rights. Some of these are currently meeting on an as-needed basis only, so if you are interested, contact President Vonk to find out how to get involved.

Another way to be involved and to make your voice heard is at monthly union meetings. As with committees, these were suspended in 2020 as well. We had begun to hold them again before COVID cases spiked. We hope to be able to resume them regularly again soon.

Keep an eye on the Union bulletin boards, Facebook, and our website to keep up to speed on what's going on at Local 310.