

LETTER TO THE BRIGGS WORKER

If you work in Dept. 394, what is your reply when asked, "How do you like it?"

Your first thought is about your foreman, Paul Kaliska. He is better described as a joke. He is well known throughout the company for his strange personality and strange actions such as no self-control, untruthfulness, disrespect, and inconsistency.

Once, when he saw a floor sweeper sitting and smoking a cigarette, he promptly lost all control and chewed the man out. It so happens that this floor sweeper was one of the best and most prideful workers. After that display of narrow-minded justice, I wonder what his attitude is like now. This is one example of many.

QUALITY IMPAIRED

Then, when the quality and quantity of production goes down, Paul is too stupid to see why. Even when people work to their full capacity and then take a well deserved break, they are hounded by Paul. How can anyone feel good about Dept. 394 knowing that he is sneaking around?

And the worst part is that he likes it! It makes him feel like the master of the world. So out here on the floor, we just say

the hell with it.

What about his own work? Paul is always having set-up men sort things out for him, and he does not know what stock he has. When making a request to him, he gets very nervous and tells you to see a supervisor because he can't do everything. NOTE THE WORDS he can't do everything. He is admitting that he can't do his job and he is covering it up by being a petty tyrant.

Paul thinks no one knows. Yet, we all know that a failure-type personality always tries to blame everyone else for his own shortcomings.

The end result is that everyone is pushed to the limit of their tolerance. This leads to threats and vengeance. Now, why do we have to be pushed and pestered to the point of actual violence?

To save a lot of trouble and embarrassment for the company, the union and others concerned Paul Kaliska should be removed and replaced with someone who is competent. We feel we deserve better management. In fact, we need it.

For obvious reasons, the author of this letter prefers to remain anonymous

BRIGGS WORKER

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NIX TO QUALITY CIRCLES

All of a sudden there is a big push to introduce Quality Circles at Briggs. For most people the opening shot in this campaign was Anne Schmitt's enthusiastic article in the 232 Reporter. Then came the company's Newsbrief. For some time now the company has been talking with union officials trying to pave the way. To hear the propaganda being put out in favor of Quality Circles, you would think that this is some cure-all for workers' problems.

Supposedly these little groups of volunteers from the departments would get together with company people to make suggestions for improving the quality of the product and the "quality of work life" (or "job enrichment" as the company puts it).

Wonderful, isn't it? How can anyone be against quality?

The danger is that this

could turn out to be one big hoax by the company to find new ways to cut costs, eliminate or combine jobs, and undermine the union. Most workers have learned, many through bitter experience, that it is dangerous to give the company suggestions on how to improve production or how to save time on a job. These suggestions can get workers laid off, speeded up, rates cut, or put on poorer jobs. So workers tend to keep these ideas to themselves, and rightly so.

JOB COMBINATION CIRCLES

Obviously, the company would like to get workers to let down their defenses and tell them these suggestions. But they wouldn't stand a chance if they came out with groups named "Speed-up Teams," "Job Combination Circles," or "Cost Cutting

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...QUALITY CIRCLES CONT.

Committees." Business Week magazine, which is gung-ho on Quality Circles, brags that the number of suggestions made by employees may increase as much as 20 times due to the Circles. A certain percentage of these thousands of extra suggestions are bound to apply directly or indirectly to rates, job descriptions, automation and other things that could undermine job security and working conditions. Who can be sure that the company won't latch onto these things, lie in the weeds until the '83 contract negotiations, and then try to shove contract language down our throats that would allow them to put these suggestions into effect?

Of course they won't admit to it. They say they are only concerned about "quality of work life" and product quality. But common sense tells you that a company that has kept hated slave-drivers like Paul Kaliska, Frank Bolz, Harold Baum, etc. on our backs all these years is not really very interested in "the quality of work life" or "job enrichment." When the demand for engines was high and we were working Saturdays and Sundays to get out production, how fussy was the company about "product quality?" Anyone with eyes knows that company men let

tons of garbage pass then. The company seems eager to get the union to put its blessing on these Quality Circles in order to get workers to drop their defenses and spill the beans. But when the union and skilled trades workers wanted to have some say over how apprentices were going to be chosen, the company killed the apprentice proposal rather than giving the union some say in it.

MODERN MANAGEMENT TYPE METHODS

It is rumored that one of the consulting firms leading nationally in the training of company men in how to set up Quality Circles is the infamous union busting firm, Modern Management Methods. If true, this would raise more questions about the motives of business in this whole campaign.

In short, why should Local 232 endorse a program which presents so many dangers for union members?

PUT CO. ON PROBATION

Maybe the union should put the company on probation for a couple of years. Let them prove they are interested in the quality of work life. Let them get rid of Kaliska, Bolz, Baum and a whole batch of other bad eggs who make our lives miserable.

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...QUALITY CIRCLES CONT.

Let them lighten up on Rehab 5000. Let them show some heart in discharge cases. Let them come back with an apprenticeship proposal that the union could accept. Let them clean up air pollution in die cast. Let them take the cap off our COLA and come up with a real 30-and-out plan so that people could live on their pensions. Maybe then we could believe some of the pretty talk about Quality Circles. Until then, the union should not endorse this dubious program.

MANY NEW STEWARDS ELECTED

The month of February saw steward elections in all departments. We will be having steward elections every two years in February, due to a change in the by-laws of our local (stewards used to be elected for "life"). These elections saw many turnovers which mainly represented the people's choice to replace stagnant stewards with fresh blood.

The February steward's meeting saw a huge turnout and very lively discussion. Most of the time was devoted to a sentence by sentence explanation and discussion of all the layoff language in our contract. It was announced that there will be steward training workshops. Be sure to encourage your steward to attend.

One drawback to having these recent elections is that some people ran and won simply to obtain seniority status. This is a definite problem, but either these people will become good stewards, face recall, or be booted out at the next elections. By far, these recent elections have been a good move for enriching and strengthening the first line union representation.

PARTY!

only \$2.00 gets you

BEER SNACKS
MUSIC DANCING

SATURDAY MARCH 28

9:00PM 2721 N. Pierce St.

two blocks west of
Holton and Center

food and mixed
drinks will be sold

A FUNDRAISER FOR THE
BRIGGS WORKER

LETTER: Dear Mr. Socks

I must take this opportunity to thank you for figuring out a new way in which to alienate and further belittle the "peons" at Briggs & Stratton.

In the short time I have been with the Briggs family, I have slowly but surely watched you strip us of what little dignity we have.

Your latest brainchild has come close to topping the cake.

I know I wasn't hired for my brain, so can you please explain to me why you find it so imperative that "all jackets be put into our lockers?"

This can't be a safety measure or we would be wearing them on our faces or on our feet to protect them from heavy objects falling on them.

They couldn't be "eye sores" detracting from the beauty of the place or we would have been asked to hang them over the machines to cover up the filth which now hangs there.

They couldn't be in anyone's way or we would have to remove all the unused stock which overcrowds the aisles.

Please tell me what everpressing emergency makes such an asinine, petty, harassing idea so important.

In these inflationary times I can hardly afford to

buy a jacket a week to wear to work. I can cite multiple instances of people who have used their lockers and abandoned it because their possessions were constantly being ripped off, even with locks on them.

Some people are now forced to miss their buses going home at night because they must first go to their locker to get their jackets.

I, myself, went to find my locker only to find a lock on it which I have no idea who owns or how to get it open. What do you suggest I do?

I would also like to know if Briggs intends on allowing some girls industrial pay because they work under ceiling blowers all day and use their coats to keep warm enough to do their jobs.

One of your lines even threatened to go home awhile ago when they all had to wear jackets, hats and scarfs to keep from freezing.

If you could tell me that my jacket is a safety hazard, or in some way interfering with my job, or hindering the production of another, or in any way demeaning the good name of Briggs & Stratton; I would be more than willing to comply with your wishes.

It seems your time would be much better spent in an

4 DAY WEEK: NO ANSWER TO LAYOFFS

On Wed., March 11, John Langford and Anne Schmitt met with Vern Socks to discuss the layoff situation. Socks said the company had plans for two more assembly lines to go down on Friday, March 27. He proposed a 4 day work week. He said the 4 day work week would not necessarily prevent further layoffs.

Socks wanted an immediate answer. Our union officials rightfully told him that they would have to leave the decision up to the membership. Socks was not willing to wait for this.

The rights of seniority and the right to a 40 hour week are protections that unions have had to fight for. Years ago at Briggs our contract did not provide for this.

effort to make the twin engine a better engine with a minimum of repairs so it can bring Briggs back to a top-ranking high-employment company.

Really, when you come up with a new way to de-humanize me by taking away my right to protection of my own possessions and in return to expect me to take pride in my work and the product I produce my only answer can be, frankly, Vern, it's almost impossible to give a dam!

Last year at Maynard Steel, a non-union foundry, the company first put people on a 4 day, 32 hour week. Then it was a 24 hour week. By the end, workers were forced to work "part time" on their full time jobs.

Workers with high seniority have the right to a 40 hour work week. They've endured their share of layoffs and shutdowns in the past. In large part, it should be their decision whether to accept a 4 day week.

The rights to 40 hours work should not be given up lightly. Many people feel that if we all sacrifice a little, then more layoffs could be prevented. But if the company will not give us any assurance that there will be no further layoffs, we will gain nothing.

People should keep some of these things in mind about a 4 day week:

- *What will the effect be on our pension?
- *What about our vacation hours--if the company wants us to seriously consider a 4 day week, it should give pension and vacation credits for 40 hours.
- *A 4 day week will lower average wages for those people who might be laid off in the future.

GOING TOO FAR BROCKMAN'S ABUSE

Dick Brockman is known as a supervisor who treats those under him (truckers and women on miscellaneous touchup) like kids. Brockman who is a supervisor in department 330 is someone who most people stay away from if their seniority permits. His bag of tricks includes the usual favoritism, name calling, personalized harrassment, and special rules; and of course he can never admit he was wrong.

In one case he told three women to put air cleaners on three engines right before lunch. The women did it. After lunch, he found three more motors which needed air cleaners so naturally he reacted. He didn't think! He assumed the three women hadn't done their job. He picked out one of the women who he liked to harass and started shouting at her to put on the air cleaners. He wagged his finger in her face knocking her in the nose. He shouted a few nasty names like dummy and fat-head. He added a racial slur, "You ain't worth it nigger" in a soft voice.

The woman shouted back and didn't mince words.

When the union official appeared Brockman threatened to get her in trouble if she pressed for action. So no action was taken.

This case is more the norm than the exception. Why then is this man still a supervisor. First of all, he is backed up by one of the most obnoxious foreman at 124th street, Dick Courtney. Courtney is a former foreman of the month who thinks that foreman is such a lofty position that he doesn't have to talk to the workers, not even stewards or grievance reps. If you are having a problem with Brockman don't go to Courtney expecting him to speak to Brockman, but don't be surprised if Courtney speaks to Personnel about any complaints Brockman has about you.

A second reason that Brockman sticks around is that most of the people are afraid to stand up to Brockman & Courtney and those who aren't afraid have only been willing to stand up for themselves.

The department just elected its third steward in two years. Needless to say, she will need all the support she can get against

BOSS OF THE MONTH

HAROLD BAUM

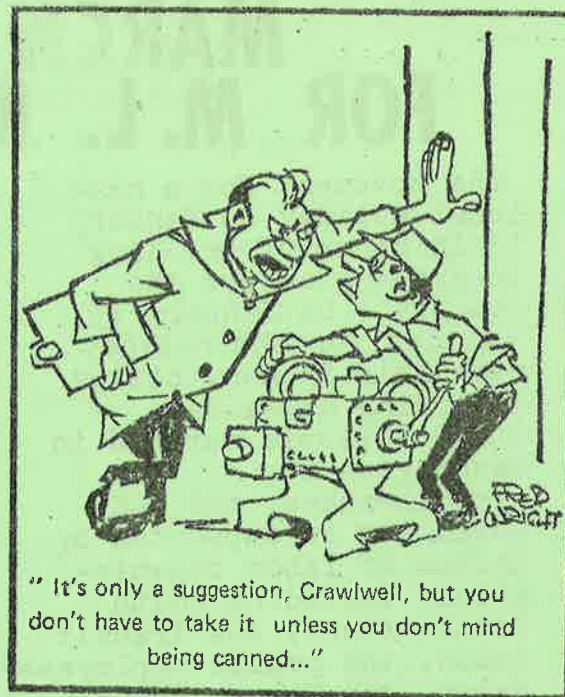
Harold Baum, Asst. Superintendent at the Burleigh plant, is the Briggs Worker Boss of the Month.

Baum was promoted to his present position after several years of penny-pinching rule as foreman of Dept. 168. He was noted for practically never giving merit raises, for savage tongue-lashings of workers who broke gear shaper cutters, for his schemes to get rid of people he didn't like, and for humiliating people by chewing them out in front of their friends.

For years, Harold was able to hold the line against such frills as fans for pieceworkers. That is why such a high percentage of fans in 168 are still shiny- they were installed after Harold left the department.

Harold was also the foreman who swore that no woman would ever make setup in 168 as long as he was foreman. He was right.

Now that he has been promoted, Harold has filled the role of first shift



Supersnoop with great enthusiasm. While his main job is to facilitate flow and smooth out production problems, he still can't resist an opportunity to catch someone coming out of the cafeteria late, approaching a timeclock too early, taking an extra minute on break, or (God forbid) holding a contraband coat.

Harold has a special knack for overruling "lenient" formen and forcing grievances to higher stages.

Harold Baum is the kind of boss that people purposely work slower for, just to get even. For these and other reasons too numerous to mention, he is our Boss of the month.

MARCH APRIL 4 FOR M. L. KING HOLIDAY

The movement for a national holiday on January 15 in honor of Dr. King is growing across the country. On January 15, rallies for the holiday were held in many cities including Milwaukee, 100,000 people marched in Washington DC.

In Milwaukee, the MLK Coalition is supported by dozens of labor organizations including Smith Steelworkers, the transit union, the public employees' union, the Milwaukee County Labor Council and the UAW regional office. In addition, activists from many other unions including Local 232 are involved.

On Saturday, April 4th, the thirteenth anniversary of Dr. King's assassination the MLK Coalition is sponsoring a march to build support for the demand that Jan 15, King's birthday, be declared a national holiday. The march will begin at noon at St Gall's Church, 2628 N. 3rd St. and will end in a rally at MacArthur Square downtown.

The holiday is important, not only to recognize Dr. King's role in the movement for dignity, equality and freedom for black people but also as a symbol of the continuing struggle

for these goals. The collapse of the economy has hit black workers particularly hard while, at the same time, the government is plotting drastic cuts in social services.

Violence against blacks is on the increase and the KKK, Nazis, and other racists, have become more open and more violent. Twenty black children were murdered in Atlanta before the federal government released money for the investigation there. It has never been more important to rebuild the freedom movement.

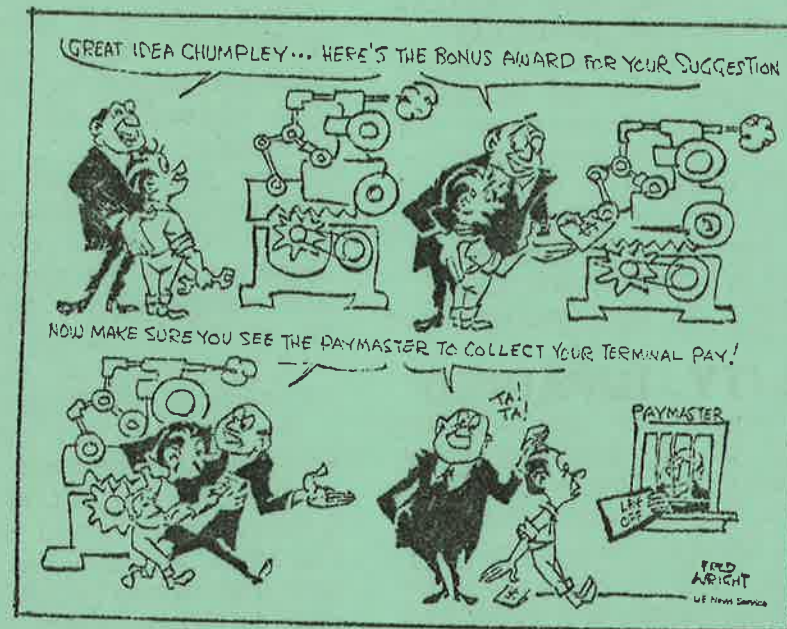
M. L. KING COALITION FUNDRAISER

This Saturday, March 21, a fundraising party will be held at Chez 21, 2253 W. Fond du Lac at 9:00 p.m. The fundraiser will feature live music by Reconstruction and the Reconstruction Singers. Tickets are \$3.50 at the door. Half of the money will go to the MLK Coalition, and the other half will go to the Committee to Stop Children's Murders, an Atlanta organization of the mothers of the murdered children.

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Brockman & Courtney. Hopefully; she will stand up to Brockman & Courtney and familiarize herself with Article XI, Section 7, paragraph 2, of our contract which states; "It is hereby agreed between the Union and the Company that in the event of any complaints regarding supervisory personnel, the Company and the Union will meet and review such complaints and, if necessary, remedial action will be taken by the Company."

IS A ROBOT AFTER YOUR JOB?

Several workers from 168 were shocked by a robot recently. They discovered a robot sitting in Dept. 265 holding a crankshaft in its grippers apparently being programmed to chuck it in a fay lathe. Dozens of people in 168 make their living by running fay lathes, and this little experiment has to be taken as an ominous sign of the company's future plans.



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*For many people in the lower labor grades with transportation and childcare expenses, working 4 days a week will hardly pay. The company ends up being the

only one who really benefits. We urge everyone to think about the entire union membership if this should come up for a vote.