

SIXTY

AN INTERVIEW WITH MR. CARILLI

"The largest responsibility is doing the best overall job for each member, to try and maintain the best package of benefits that you can for them," said Dan Carilli, a staff representative with the United Steel Workers of America for six years. Mr. Carilli is responsible for negotiating contracts of a full spectrum of benefits, wages, pensions, insurances, vacations, holidays, working conditions, and he is also responsible for handling grievances which is a challenging task especially considering the different personalities and people involved.

The process of negotiating a contract can be a short term or a long term event. Mr Carilli has had contracts up to as long as a five years. The process begins when the company or the union notifies the other party that they desire to negotiate. Then each side decides the issue that they seek to attain through negotiations. The two parties get together during mutually acceptable times and bargain over the issues. Hopefully they reach the agreements by the deadline. Rarely is a strike necessary according to Mr. Carilli. Strikes occur in two to three percent of the negotiations that take place. Mr. Carilli said that sometimes his side helps in the negotiation. Since most large employers use an attorney. If negotiations get

carried into court, at that point, a lawyer is needed for certain.

In addition to negotiating, an important part of Mr. Carilli's job is handling grievances. During a grievance procedure, an employee meets with his or her immediate supervisor. In some cases the worker is able to have union representation to put their grievance in the form of a complaint. Sometimes that's as far as a grievance goes. If the employee still feels he has a problem, that he is not satisfied by the answer he supervisor gives him, it goes to step two. This is when the grievance is put into writing, the release the employers request is also on there. If it is not settled between the two parties, it goes to step three. In this step there will be a Labor Relations person, the person filing the grievance and the committee. The two unions try to get them to realize the problem and the employee should get the relieve. If it is not settled in that step, grievance goes to the arbitration. If the employee wants to go to a higher level, it can be dealt with in the courts.

The purpose of a picket line is to let people be aware that there is a work stoppage taking place. Mr. Carilli said that he has been involved in many picket lines before.

Mr. Carilli said that there are a variety of rallies that can take place. One would be a rally strictly over union functions sometimes rallies are of a political nature. We feel as a union member and working people that the Democratic party does far more for the working class of people. Sometimes the union membership organizes fund raising rallies for people who need it. For instance, there was an accident with two men who were killed by a

bulldozer. And a fundraiser was held so that their families can go to collage and have money for themselves.

Mr Carilli said that although there are about eighteen hundred union employees at Cleveland Cliffs, The United Steel Workers also represent workers at O.K. Auto, Negaunee School custodians, and Bell Hospital employees.

1943 was when the local mines first organized with the unions. The way workers organize with the unions is by contacting someone working with the union and inform the United Steelworkers of an interest in joining a union. From there they try to establish or implement an organizing committee that will organise and get employees to sign cards. Card signing is the first offical process to start to organize driving for union affiliation. Once over thirty percent of the cards are signed by employee the unit seeking membership is eligible to have a National Labor Relations Board election. Typically seventy percent of the signed would be a goal, because a majority is needed to get the union certified in the election. During the campaign, card signing advocates try to point to some advantages of belonging to a union.

Mr. Carilli was a very interesting person to interview. I learned a great deal about his job that I did not know. Doing the job that Mr. Carilli has sounds like it would be a very difficult task. In order to have this kind of job you would have to have lots of patience. I hope that all the other people who read this story will also find this story very interesting, and will also learn that having this kind of job would be very nerve racking.