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AUTHOR Zwerdling, Daniel
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ABSTRACT

Beginning an an informal, unstructured information interchange among 100 union, worker, and management representatives from seventeen public and private sector organizations operationally involved in quality of work life activities, a 1977 conference evolved into the first annual meeting of the American Quality of Work Life Association. Participants shared their activities to achieve the simultaneous goals of improved quality of work life for all members of the orgnization and greater company and union effectiveness. Development of a quality of work life project was described as a multi-phase process. Someone in the union, management, or outside organization seeks to initiate interest in his idea in the startup phase. The get-going phase involves creation of the project structure--committees with joint labor and management representation. Implementation and expansion in the "going" phase depend on effective resolution of issues concerning activities and goals. From the start ground rules (contracts and letters of agreement) should be defined. Project participation and involvement should be continually expanded and maintained when changes appear imperceptible. Benefits include improved communications, drop in grievance rates, and attitudinal changes. Future issues include self-sustaining projects, committee authority, and work sharing of the fruits of increased efficiency and productivity. (YLB)

toward a more human way of working in america

A Report on the
First National Conference
of the
American Quality of Work Life
Association
Convoked by the
American Center for the
Quality of Work Life,
May 20 - 22, 1977

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH, EDUCATION,
AND WELFARE
Public Health Service
Alcohol, Drug Abuse,
and Mental Health
Administration

National Institute of Mental Health
5600 Fishers Lane
Rockville, Maryland 20857

This report describes in detail the proceedings and results of a conference sponsored by the American Center for the Quality of Work Life, Washington, D.C., under a grant from the Ford Foundation. The report was prepared and written by Mr. Daniel Zwerdling, and edited by American Center staff, under contract number PLD-09410-77 with the National Institute of Mental Health through its Center for Studies of Metropolitan Problems. The opinions expressed herein are the views of Mr. Zwerdling, the American Center, and conference participants, and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the National Institute of Mental Health, the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration, or the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

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Almost 5 years ago, I came to Airlie House and there was a conference here. The ***idea*** *was the quality of work life, although I don't remember what it was called then. This was the first time that a group of people—18 people, some Congressmen, some Senators—had gotten together to discuss the quality of work life. That was 5 years ago. Look at the 80 or 90 people in this room today.*

You've experimented with it, you've dealt with it, you've had emotional experiences with it, you've lived it. You are the pioneers in the United States of something that has literally transformed Europe. Ten years from now, this group could be ***10,000 people****—both labor and management.*

Opening remarks,
May 20, 1977

Ted Mills
Director
American Center for the
Quality of Work Life

Preface

From May 20 to 22, 1977 at a conference retreat outside of Washington, D.C., over 100 workers, supervisors, union leaders, and top managers from 17 unionized public and private organizations in the United States came together to spend 2 1/2 days at a conference on quality of work life.

The conference started out as an informal, unstructured information interchange. It ended up, by unanimous vote, as the First Annual Meeting of the American Quality of Work Life Association.

Made possible through grants from the Ford Foundation and the National Center for Productivity and Quality of Working Life, the conference was the first of its kind anywhere in the world. The speakers and experts were the working men and women in quality of work life projects, who had come together from all over the United States, to explore for the first time what the emerging movement called "quality of work life" is, or should be, to working people.

The conference was carefully designed to optimize the opportunity for the participants to find out *from each other* what their very different quality of work life activities, in their factory or city or hospital or school, means or can mean to their organizations, to their unions, to the relationship between unions and managements, and most important of all, to an emerging new way of working in America.

This conference report was made possible by a contract from the Center for Studies of Metropolitan Problems of the National Institute of Mental Health. It is a report by a journalist selected by the American Center for the Quality of Work Life for his excellent reporting in various newspapers and journals about work in the United States. He was asked to observe, note, talk, and provide his own impression of what he saw, with total (and as the reader will discover, at times, painful) candor.

It is worth noting that the June 1977 issue of the AFL-CIO magazine *The Federationist* contained an article entitled "Humanizing Work—A New Ideology," by Dr. Jack Barbash. Dr. Barbash strongly attacked the "humanization of work movement" as essentially a plaything of a handful of academic ideologues seeking to create unneeded work for themselves.

In October 1977, I suggested to Dr. Barbash that the article contained no research whatsoever since 1973. Dr. Barbash agreed that the criticism was merited; the piece, funded in 1972 by the Ford Foundation, had not been updated since written in early 1973.

Just 4 years ago, when the Barbash article was written:

- *No American union was yet actively involved in a joint labor/management quality of work life project;*
- *no American management was yet actively **jointly** involved in such a project;*
- *no neutral third-party instrumentality devoted to development and implementation of such projects existed in either the private or public sectors;*
- *the term "quality of work life" was virtually unknown in either labor or management circles;*
- *the leading advocates of what was to become the quality of work life joint union/management movement in the United States were, as stated by Dr. Barbash, principally a handful of behavioral scientists.*

In May 1977 the American Center for the Quality of Work Life convened 100 union, worker, and management representatives from 17 public and private sector organizations operationally involved in quality of work life activities. It is worth noting that *not one of the active projects represented at that conference, nor the center itself, was in existence in 1973.* Three of the projects represented were "failures," for various reasons cited in this report. Further, three were projects about to commence; their participants had come to the conference to find out from their peers what they would be getting into.

However, from those going strong and growing in strength, from those beginning and those having failed, the reader may discover at least a beginner's understanding of what those actually involved in the

quality of work life process perceive it to be in *its day-to-day living.*

One word of caution: The pages that follow are just an account of that conference. They neither are, nor seek to be, an accounting of what a quality of work life project actually is, how it is structured, how it is nurtured, and how it grows. This is not a case history.

To the American working men and women pioneering in the growing quality of work life processes in the United States, the dialogs in this book are only the beginning of the beginning.

What is important is that they have indeed begun. They are taking place today, in an ever-increasing number of public and private workplaces, from the executive suites to the shopfloor, across the country, in a new kind of lifelong learning.

As they grow and spread new learning and understanding about working together in the United States, they can — and we believe will — build basic foundations for a more dynamic, more relevant, and more human kind of American industrial society in the years immediately ahead.

Ted Mills
Director
American Center for the
Quality of Work Life
27 November 1977

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I. Introduction: *What Is a Quality of Work Life Project?*

As I looked around the dining room at the first dinner session Friday night, I realized the participants were a living Who's Who—a Who's Who of Typical Working Americans. There were almost 100 of them: a drill press operator, a millwright, a hospital nurse, a mirror buffer, a coal miner. There were stewards, supervisors, top executives, and union leaders. They had come from 17 public and private organizations across the country—from a public school system, a multinational conglomerate, a biscuit and cookie plant. Their objective was to share experiences and explore future possibilities concerning participation in labor/management quality of work life projects.

What's a quality of work life project? An American Center for the Quality of Work Life (ACQWL) booklet in the conference registration packets said it is "any kind of activity at every level of an organization which seeks greater organizational effectiveness through enhancement of human dignity and growth ... a *process* through which the stakeholders in any organization—the managers and union(s), the employees—learn how to work *together* ... to determine for themselves what actions, changes, and improvements are desirable and workable in order to achieve the twin and simultaneous goals of an improved quality of work life *for all* members of the organization and greater effectiveness of both the company and union."

The participants at the conference and their colleagues back home have translated this definition in their own ways. The workplace innovations and changes reported to the conference were as widely varied as the organizations themselves:

- At one factory, shopfloor employees who can work quickly and efficiently can leave work after 4 hours instead of the usual 8, yet still earn a full day's pay.

- Coal miners who used to follow military-style orders from their foremen now manage their own work day-to-day as a team.
- Factory workers churning out brand-name cookies and biscuits have used their newly formed quality of work life project to redecorate the cafeteria and install air-conditioning, for the first time, in the restrooms.
- Transmission-line engineers have worked out a flexitime schedule so they can work 4 days a week, with 3 full days off.
- Managers at an auto parts factory have taken "transactional analysis" training seminars to learn more "sensitive" and humanistic styles of management.
- Newspaper reporters and clerical workers consult with their publisher about which editors they want to hire.

Conference participants reported that these and other changes at their workplaces have often paid off psychologically and economically for both management and workers. Shopfloor workers, managers, and union officials alike ticked off some of their results: Labor/management communications have improved, negotiations have gone smoother than ever before, productivity and efficiency have increased, workers have boosted their pay, managers find they can manage the factory more easily, and union officials find the union organization and member loyalty stronger than ever.

But the conference was not just about successes. As an ACQWL facilitator told the participants at their dinner, "Some of the things we're going to share are going to be good experiences, some are going to be bad experiences." The conference was important, participants agreed, because it provided the first opportunity most had ever had to share their quality of work life experiences, good *or* bad. Until they came together at this conference, most of the participants had been forging their quality of work life projects (or stumbling through their quality of work life projects) virtually alone. They had no guidebooks to help them, no blueprints to tell them which experiments would work and which would fail. Most participants had never talked with managers, union officials, or shopfloor workers at other companies who were struggling with the same questions and problems. As difficulties arose, the participants had no way of knowing whether these difficulties were normal growing pains or symptoms of something which would surely kill the quality of work life experiment.

"I don't think we can overestimate the value to the conferees of realizing that they are not alone in this effort, that other people face the same problems, have the same sense that it is at some level *right* for people to have greater participation in their workplaces, that it makes sense for labor and management to cooperate, and that now is the time to begin," one of the conference facilitators reflected after the conference had ended. "The members from ongoing projects are pioneers in the most rugged of frontiers—fundamental social change. And it can be a lonely, frustrating business. People willing to hang out with that have to be dedicated. Finding that a lot of people share their perspective was very reassuring."

"Before I came to the conference I always imagined that quality of work life projects at other companies must be all smooth, everything whipping along, talking about weighty subjects—while we were dragging behind," said one union participant. "Now I've discovered that with very few exceptions, everybody else is doing basically what we're doing, facing the same problems. And in a number of cases we're probably more advanced than many other projects. It's given me a sort of psychic boost."

"I came here very depressed about the progress of our project," one company president told the participants during the final session. "But now I'm really going back with a lot of ideas, feeling a lot more hope—for the human race and for management/labor relations in particular."

II. Startup Phase: *Initiating Interest in a Project*

How is a quality of work life project born? Someone in the union, in the management, or in an outside organization like ACQWL has the idea and acts on it.

There was no common or typical pattern. Some of the projects' representatives at the conference said the union sparked the first talks; some said management initiated the idea. Local union or management officials began talks locally and started locally without wider organizational or union support. In many, ACQWL was the catalytic moving force getting unions and managements together in projects. Two were the brainchildren of consultants who made it happen. Four were from one city, Jamestown, New York, where the moving force was the citywide Labor/Management Committee.

At Nabisco, top officials of the Bakery, Confectionary, and Tobacco Workers' International Union planted the seeds of the project when they announced at master negotiations that they would like to launch a quality of work life experiment. Coincidentally, Nabisco management with ACQWL assistance had decided some 12 months later, after a senior-level labor/management committee had been formed, to begin startup somewhere in Nabisco, Inc. The committee agreed to try a pilot project at Nabisco's Atlanta plant. The local union voted not to join the experiment, though, so the corporation turned to Houston where local union officials said they were enthusiastic. The union membership voted to join the experiment. Local management said they'd be willing to try it. The project was born in January 1977.

Local Newspaper Guild officials made the first move at the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*. During contract negotiations in the summer of 1972, the Guild proposed forming joint management/

labor committees which could discuss anything not covered by normal bargaining machinery. Management agreed.

At General Motors' Fisher Body Number Two Plant, the management had launched its own unilateral (nonjoint) version of a quality of work life project without involving the union. "Our people didn't even know it was going on. Neither did the union officers," says a United Auto Workers committee person who attended the conference. As management representatives said, "This led to some frustration and later reluctance to participate by some of the union people...." When local union officials told the UAW international about the project, they were told that because of a collectively bargained clause in the 1973 UAW contract, a quality of work life project would be jointly owned by both management and union. Union officers approached the local management, and the joint management/union quality of work life project began.

In the Robbinsdale school district in Minneapolis, with ACQWL help, local union leaders affiliated with the American Federation of Teachers asked school board officials if they would be interested in creating a quality of work life program in the schools. After a series of talks with the union, the superintendent, his administrative officers, and the district principals, the school board voted to try a pilot project in several schools.

If the union and management officials who launched these projects had known then some of what they learned at the Airlie House conference about how to start a project, almost all participants agreed each project would have been far better. For instance, management participants from Fisher Body acknowledged that their *failure to include union officials in the project from the beginning* caused "basic mistrust in our sincerity." This mistrust would hamper the project as it struggled to grow.

Participants from both union and management stressed again and again at the conference: *One of the major stumbling blocks* at virtually every project has been initial *middle-management resistance* before the project gets going. One reason middle-management has been hostile to startup of quality of work life projects in so many organizations, participants agreed, is the neglect of this important segment of work in initial planning and development. "Thank God we included our middle-management [the principals] right from the onset," said the chief negotiator for the school board.

All of the projects would have enjoyed a smoother birth, participants agreed, if union and management officials could have

learned in detail what a quality of work life project is all about *before* they embarked on one. "We didn't know too much what the quality of work life was all about," said a Nabisco union representative. "If we could have talked like we are here, with other people actually involved in a project like ours, and had them come to some of our meetings to really explain what we were getting into, it would have made things much better in the long run."

Common advice from veteran quality of work life project participants is: When you begin to explore the possibilities of launching a project, *be sure to invite an experienced QWLer to describe the history and experiences of other projects to union and management officials alike.*

III. Get-Going Phase: *Role of Labor/Management Committees*

Once the initial decision is made to get going by whatever original source, the next step, most conference participants seemed to agree, is creation of the *project structure*—the various committees which will develop the project to move it along toward maturity.

One characteristic which virtually all quality of work life projects share is *joint union and management "ownership,"* or joint representation on the various committees from the top down. But each project develops its own committee formulas. Some projects had a top-level advisory committee whose members are officials from the international union and high officers from corporate headquarters, even presidents. Some projects had only a plant-level committee, represented by local union officers and plant managers with no basic connection to other plants or locals in the organization. Still other projects created a linear network of shopfloor-level committees composed of firstline supervisors, stewards, and hourly workers.

At Harman Industries International, at Bolivar, Tennessee, the top union and management officials agreed at the outset that the project should have a joint labor/management committee at every level of the hierarchy. The structure looks like a ladder with three rungs. The top rung is the advisory committee, including the UAW International vice president, Harman's former owner and president, and a nationally known expert on workplace participation projects. This committee gave broad guidance to the project, but no orders or directives.

The next rung of the committee ladder at Harman is the *working committee*, the plant managers, general foremen, and local union officials. At most other projects, this group might be called

the "steering committee." It screens and approves all of the major projects and policies under the quality of work life program which is called the Work Improvement Program at Harman. There are an equal number of union and management representatives on these working committees who make decisions either by consensus or by majority vote.

The heart of the quality of work life program at Harman is the more than 30 shopfloor "mini-committees" or *core groups* sprinkled throughout every department in the plant. Each core group includes a foreman, a steward, and at least one hourly worker elected by fellow workers on the shopfloor. The core groups suggest projects, discuss shopfloor policies and problems, and develop experiments, all of which are subject to approval by the working committee.

At Nabisco, two levels of joint committees oversee the quality of work life project in the Biscuit Division at Houston. The top-level committee consists of senior manufacturing vice presidents from Nabisco World Headquarters and three senior officers from the BCTWIU International, including the executive vice president of BCTWIU. The Houston project has nine management representatives, including department heads, supervisors, and foremen, and nine union representatives, the top union officers, and some rank-and-file workers elected by their colleagues. The union made sure to elect at least one representative from each department in the plant (baking, packing, warehouse, etc.). The top-level committee's concern is quality of work life throughout the Bakery Division (and perhaps all of Nabisco) if the pilot project in Houston succeeds. But largely, it gives the Houston committee free reign to do what it decides.

The labor/management committee at Falconer Plate Glass in Jamestown, New York is unbalanced. There are up to a dozen representatives from the union, including the entire bargaining committee picked because of their "natural leadership," as one union participant said at the conference. Only a few top managers are on the committee.

At Weyerhaeuser there are three levels of committees: one at headquarters, involving senior corporate officers and the president and two vice presidents of the union's northwest region; one at the Springfield Region, including the company's regional vice president and others on the management side, and the president of the 4,000 union members in one local and stewards on the union side; and the third-level, site committees at the plywood and particleboard plants in the region, with some 24 union and middle-management personnel.

There are also two levels of committees in the City of Springfield/American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees project in Springfield, Ohio. The top-level committee which directs the project is called the *Central Committee*. Management members include the city manager and four department heads; there is an equal number of union members, including the district director, the local president and vice president, and two union members chosen by the local's president. Ideas for project activities originate in the 13 *working-level committees*. Each committee has from 4 to 12 workers, sometimes chosen by the union officers and sometimes elected by their colleagues.

At the Mount Sinai Hospital project there are two levels of joint committees. One, called the Steering Committee, involves high-level officers from many hospital departments and representatives of the three major hospital unions. The other is a Work Committee involving all three unions and supervisors.

IV. The Critical "Going" Phase: *Implementation and Expansion*

Once the basic structures of the quality of work life project are in place, it is time for the project participants to begin discussing, communicating, and suggesting project activities and goals. Both union and management participants at the conference stressed that the success or failure of the project depends almost entirely on how effectively the union and management participants resolve crucial issues in this critical moment of a project's lifetime. This is literally the make-or-break phase. For with new, unknown, and defined roles as yet undetermined, and as a UAW shop steward pointed out, "with no manuals to guide us," this is the most fearful, suspicious, and stressful period of the entire project.

The Union View

Union officials have fears. The shopfloor workers have fears. All are embarking on something new with all the consequent risks of the unknown. The project "jointness" itself is strange and disquieting. The fears are natural; but unless the labor/management committees are well prepared to deal with them in advance, the fears (expressed through behaviors) could scuttle the project as they often have.

As union participants describe it, union officials and members typically fear that management really intends to use the quality of work life project to "bust the union." Particularly the older union veterans fear the whole project is a clever gimmick.

"When it comes to the quality of work life, there's nothing but an advantage in it for management—they can't lose a thing," one union participant from Weyerhaeuser said. "But the union has plenty to lose. Everyone in the union puts down their defenses. For years, Weyerhaeuser's been the bad guy and people knew it. I can remember the day when we had to fight just to get breaks. I remember the day we didn't have job posting. Now all of a sudden, with this quality of work thing, Weyerhaeuser says, 'Hey, I'm the good guy. I won't hurt you every time I get the chance.' And all the union guys start putting down their defenses. You turn your back and management sticks the knife in your back."

Perhaps management intends to use the quality of work life project to "bust the union" by co-opting union officials—another typical union fear. One Nabisco union representative said now that union officers are hearing management's side of the story, "... the company has marketing problems, paper stock problems, building problems, lighting and gas problems, and we tell this to our people; they feel like we are alibiing as officers of the local union to cover up something we're not doing. As union officers, we don't have the people's trust."

Some union officials and members fear, in the startup phase, that the quality of work life project will intrude into issues covered by the collective bargaining contract, bypassing the union's power. The project, they suspect, may disrupt the carefully contracted way of settling grievances fought for over years or decades. As one union participant worried, "For years certain problems were 'union problems,' such as grievances. Now all of a sudden you have 'quality of work' problems. How do you separate them?" If the union loses its control over grievances, the individual workers fear they will be more vulnerable to management exploitation. Furthermore, union officers fear they may lose their source of personal power. "If the quality of work life program takes on handling grievances, it denies the union's control of grievances, and handling grievances is one way I build and keep my membership," one union officer said.

Other union members expressed fears that if the quality of work life project is *too* successful, it may sap the union's strength, both jeopardizing the personal power of union officials and making workers more vulnerable to management in the long run. "Why were unions formed in the first place?" the union representative from Fisher Body asked rhetorically. "They were formed to right the wrongs of management. If management is completely sincere about wanting to treat people right and pay them a decent wage, then there isn't any need for a union is

there?" "Some union and labor relations people are wondering what will happen to their jobs," said another union participant. "They're afraid, if you [workers] have got this [quality of work life] utopia, then why do you need us?" A good question.

Another basic union fear is "speedup." Many workers expressed their original fear that the quality of work life project would be used as a management tool to do what one union participant described as "work us to death." They've heard that QWL projects often increase productivity. "That's why I'm here today," one union representative told the conference, "to assure myself, and take back to the people, that this [project] can work without unfairly taxing the people."

The older workers—some of the younger workers called them the "30-year men"—plainly fear changes; change of any kind threatens the structure (good or not) which they have fought for and nurtured so militantly over decades on the shopfloor. As one young Eaton worker (and former local president thrown out over QWL issues) said, "You got guys working in the plant, say 30 years, and you've got guys working there 3 years. The older workers say, 'You younger guys working with this program aren't going to do anything but tear a good contract down. We worked 30 years to get a good contract. Work in the quality of work life project and you'll throw it all away and be peddling in the streets.'" He added that in their project the older workers watched the younger ones carefully to make sure they didn't put out too much and destroy union practices embodied in the contract.

The Management View

Most of the problems discussed so far have been from the union and employee point of view. Managers, participants agreed, confront their own set of problems when they become involved in a quality of work life project.

Most managers, the management and union participants acknowledged, fear that this new and unknown program might fail and, as a result, corporate headquarters will fire them. These managers were hired to run a business, not dabble in social experiments. "You talk about trust and taking risks," one general supervisor told a session on union concerns, "Managers themselves have got some real problems with the quality of work life in regard to risk. If it doesn't work, and I'm part of that program, I won't be [in the job] very long," he said. "You [union members] will still be on the job even if the program falls apart. But I sure won't."

Some managers expressed their initial fears that the quality of work life program would trample on their "management prerogatives" and threaten management's control of the work production process. "I was worried the program could become a Pandora's box," one company president said. "I had a lot of personal trouble with it. Because it felt to me like it might get out of control..."

Specifically firstline and middle managers who maintain power over the work force by managing in a traditional authoritarian way fear with total justification they will lose that power by allowing workers to participate in decisionmaking. Many of them know only the whip kind of authority, which in QWL projects doesn't work, as both management and union conferees pointed out again and again The equation, as they expressed it, was simple: If workers gain more power and influence, then managers' power and influence are bound to diminish proportionately. And in some senses they do, but the "threat" that management perceives usually ends up being negated by the fact that the committees are capable of making good decisions concerning the ways in which the work gets done.

"We decided we were going to relinquish the right to direct the work force in our autonomous section," the Rushton president said. "And," he said, "by giving the miners a special training program, giving them the same kind of information which the foremen knew, the rank-and-file workers would make as good decisions as the foremen were making. "In fact," he said, "the workers usually made the same decisions which management would have made on its own. I felt that, overall, we wouldn't be losing control."

"What I had to face up to in my mind was facing any challenge that might come up and dealing with it openly. You have to be open and be unafraid to deal with the questions. The only threat to us is the threat we feel."

Management and union participants alike seemed to agree that middle-management resistance to the quality of work life program is one of the most widespread and deep-rooted problems which thwarts quality of work life projects. The phrase "middle-management is resisting" popped up at the conference almost as much as the phrase "we've got to build trust." Middle managers, participants said, are caught in a painful bind.

Top management has expected middle managers to rule the workforce with an authoritarian hand, yet suddenly the project requires (with top management sanction) that shopfloor workers should make important decisions on their own. Middle managers

are being asked to revamp their managerial style, a product of years of conditioning.

Middle managers traditionally gained their power by wielding power over the shopfloor. If workers are now gaining power, middle managers fear, then they will lose power.

Middle managers are the link between shopfloor workers and top management; they get squeezed and pressured from the top and from below. "The quality of work life project puts us in a bind between labor and top management," one middle manager said, "and it's causing a breakdown. The union members say, 'Hey, you guys ought to do this'—but top management says, 'Don't spend any money.' "

Now that top management is talking directly to the union and to employees via the labor/management committees, middle managers are being neglected and left out. "Management communicates with *me*," a union official told the conference, "but they don't even tell their middle managers what's happening until after we've [the union] already heard about it."

The Rushton president described the dilemma of middle management at his own company's quality of work life program. He could have been describing most of the other projects, too. "I bought the quality of work project as president of the company, and I said, 'Hey, that's great. It will help the employees.' So we [top management] started dealing with the employees and the union, holding meetings, drafting proposals, and that kind of thing. But we never really had meetings with the middle management. I figured I'd say it was a good program, and the whole management would say it was a good program and support it. I guess I always assumed, since we had been an authoritarian type organization and I gave directions and middle managers followed orders, that they would automatically agree with me in the quality of work life project, too.

"Well, I found out they sure weren't supporting it. We had a lot of guys in middle management who gave me lip service, but who didn't really believe in the program—and who still are working very actively against it. It never really occurred to me to have a meeting with those guys, and say: 'Here's what we want to do. What do you think? What responsibilities do you want to take?' "

He continued: "So when we introduced change, we were relying on an authoritarian structure to motivate the foremen to make radical changes in their thinking and management styles, which was really unnatural to them. We were relying on an authoritarian structure to motivate them to be more democratic.

"Traditionally, the responsibility of the foremen was to get out production, however they could work it out with their crews. We just kind of left it up to the foremen to devise their own authoritarian methods of motivation. Suddenly we came upon the scene with a management style that's radically different from the psychological makeup that was conditioned in them since they were born. The foremen very definitely wanted to continue managing in the old style. They became confused—between management's wanting and needing optimum productivity, yet management saying 'we want you to use this new management style,' which the foremen felt wasn't as effective. We seemed to be asking two different things," he said, "with conflicting results."

But through all of the growth and learning which has occurred over the short 4-year history of United States quality of work life programs, much has been learned—knowledge from which developing projects can learn, thus avoiding similar mistakes. As the Rushton president says: "If I had it to do over again, I'd start the quality of work life project with management and work thoroughly with all levels of management to make sure they understand the quality of work life philosophy. I'd have classes, with role playing and that sort of thing, and then I'd turn over responsibility for making the project happen to the middle-management people." At the same time, he suggested that union officials should be conducting the same sort of process inside the union.

Some companies have emphasized training all levels of management, with special emphasis on the most vulnerable levels—supervisors and foremen. Heinz conducted more than a year of managerial training in quality of work life principles and participative management skills, according to the Heinz union representative, although the project collapsed before the managers had a chance to put their careful training to use. Supervisors at Fisher Body have taken several sessions in transactional analysis techniques, to help them learn participative management attitudes and techniques.

In the Robbinsdale school district, top administrators carefully involved middle managers—the school principals—in discussing and planning the quality of work life project from the start. "We felt the principals were crucial," a management representative said. "If they weren't willing to work with the project from the start it would fall flat on its face." After hearing tales of middle-management resistance at the conference, the manager said, "Thank God we included our middle management from the beginning."

Many managers were concerned with the time investment the quality of work life programs require. Those in the more mature projects had already come to grips with that problem and realized that the time spent in meetings is productive and functional.

Some participants said they require management members of the quality of work life committees to attend the meetings, period. "We've committed ourselves to 3½ hours of meetings every 2 weeks, no matter what," a Mount Sinai administrator said. "You just have to take the time. You have to *make* time. You can't just go along the way you have been, because you'll never *find* the time."

Several managers said they cured themselves of an "I'm indispensable" complex when they reluctantly left the plant to attend a 3-day special training session. "People asked,'How can the plant survive without the supervisors or without the union representatives?' " one said. "The answer was it was running without us—in some ways maybe better. It forced the people to take more responsibility instead of waiting for the supervisors to solve their problems."

Participants said managers—as well as union officials—are more likely to commit themselves to attend meetings when the meetings are scheduled at exactly the same time every week. "That way," one manager laughed, "we can't plead ignorance and say we thought it was tomorrow." At Harman, for instance, the working committee meets every Thursday without fail, at 2 p.m.

"In some ways I think the issue of having enough time or not is a phony one," one manager said. "For this thing [the quality of work life project] to work we need commitment from all levels of management, from headquarters down to the plant. Either we're committed to the concept or we're not. And if we're committed, it's because we believe it's a better way of running the workplace. Saying stuff like 'The quality of work project takes me away from my normal job' doesn't make sense. Because working the quality of work life way *is* our job."

V. Contracts and Letters of Agreement: *Ground Rules to Diminish Initial Fears*

It's worth noting that all these union and management fears were recounted, with astonishing candor, as basically pre-project "what if" concerns which tended to diminish proportionately with the number of months a project has been operative. A QWL project has the greatest chance of success, union and management participants alike agreed with surprising unanimity, if the union and management write some nuts-and-bolts ground rules and limits for it from the start. In projects whose ground rules are vague and hazy, conference anecdotes made clear, participants have the most room to fantasize and to fear. In projects where the ground rules are relatively carefully defined and everyone knows fairly precisely where he stands, all involved feel more secure, the conferees seemed to be saying.

One of the first critical issues the project participants must resolve in the diagnosis period, most agreed, is one which probably will affect the future of the entire project: *Exactly how much or how little power and authority the labor/management committee will have.* Union and management representatives alike seemed to agree that the worst situation by far in a quality of work life project—a situation guaranteed to destroy the project—occurs when members of the labor/management committee don't know precisely how much or little power and authority they have. When it comes to power and authority, as conference discussions made clear, there seem to be three more or less basic kinds of quality of work life committees:

(1) *committees which have no power to act on their own but which recommend activities and projects for management approval or disapproval.*

(2) committees which have power and authority to make decisions on their own.

(3) committees whose real responsibilities and powers have been so vaguely defined that none of the participants is sure just how much power and authority it has or should have

Probably the only two labor/management committees which exert independent power and authority are the committees at Harman Industries, Bolivar, and at the Rushton Mine (the quality of work life project at Rushton was officially halted by the union in 1975, but has continued, nevertheless, under an assumed name). It was the Rushton joint steering committee which drafted the details for the entire Rushton project—transforming the miners into autonomous teams, paying participating miners top rates, giving miners special safety and job training, creating a new two-step grievance procedure, etc.

The working committee at Harman also exerted—and still does exert—a good deal of decisionmaking power over shopfloor activities. The committee set up the network of shopfloor core groups. It approved all the major QWL innovations from redesigning production lines to allowing workers to go home hours early. The working committee vote is a final vote; the plant manager doesn't get the final say although he's on the committee.

Most of the quality of work life committees, however, only make recommendations, not actual decisions. "We recommend projects to the plant manager," a Nabisco union representative said. One Weyerhaeuser participant reported, "The committee just recommends and takes what it can get." Some participants—union members in most cases—said the lack of power has caused confusion and frustration. "It's just confusing," a Weyerhaeuser labor/management committee representative said. "We've got no authority. We've got a union, we've got a management, and now we've got this third element called the quality of work life, which has its own ideas but no power to do anything with them, but go back to union and management."

After a long and rambling discussion in a conference session examining "power and authority," the director of TVA's Transmission Planning Division (where TVA's pilot project began) suddenly said, "Our QWL committee has never truly defined our role to decide whether we actually *make* decisions or whether we *recommend* decisions to the division director. And I'm the division director." This uncertainty could be a cause of what some TVA representatives said was employee discontent with the TVA quality of work life project. "A lot of people question wheth-

er the committee has been able to to address their needs," one representative said. "If a union vote was held tomorrow, there's some doubt the project would survive."

At Eaton, disappointed shopfloor workers told the conference, the elusive and uncertain power of the quality of work life committee was one of the major factors which eventually killed the project. Another was the hostility of older union members to change. Still another, they said, was suspicion of a "management trick" since the consultant team was brought in by management (Eaton management chose not to attend the conference). But the Eaton workers said there was no one individual, no one committee, to whom shopfloor workers could go for a firm decision. On some issues, shopfloor representatives fed the proposals to the senior labor/management committee. On other issues, shopfloor workers would go to the foremen with their recommendations. "Then we'd wait and wait and sometimes we'd never even get an answer, or find out what happened to our request," one Eaton worker said. "We didn't have any guidelines as to what we could do, or what we couldn't do." They had no ground rules—that essential startup ingredient. And they failed

At Mount Sinai Hospital, representatives told the conference, the quality of work life project has, until recently, suffered from the same confusion as to its authority. For instance, some of the employees on the pilot project ward (the second-level committee) wanted to explore the possibility of getting entire weekends off—a luxury they so far had not enjoyed. They invested considerable time and energy drafting a proposal complete with a detailed work schedule and submitted it to the joint upper-level steering committee. According to one management representative, that committee decided to explore the proposal in a serious way. "But when we presented the idea to the administrator [a senior nurse] who is in charge of that area [work schedules]," the management representative told the conference, "she said, 'This is a management right, to set up schedules. You can't do this.'" End of proposal. "She's the kind of administrator who always says 'no' instantly to any new ideas or changes," the representative added.

This incident left the work committee members frustrated and demoralized; they didn't really know whether or not they had the power to go over the reluctant administrator's head. Some members believed that the committee is *supposed* to have power. "The steering committee has the power and authority to change the situation," one member said, but they feel in practice

"we've abdicated our power to one administrator." Others on the steering committee at Mount Sinai feel the committee only has the power to recommend. None of the participants listening at the session really seemed to know the right answer. But they knew—and agreed—that each committee *should* know.

Some participants at the conference urged careful defining of the powers and responsibilities of the quality of work life committee—just where it fits into the chain of recommendations or command—on paper. As one conferee noted philosophically, "paper doesn't forget."

At the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, "The union had originally proposed that the joint committee have the power to *'advise and consent'* about editorial appointments," said a Newspaper Guild representative. "But it became obvious we weren't going to get off the ground unless we conceded management would have the ultimate power."

Union and management have defined the joint committee's role in writing. There is no doubt who holds the power. "The Guild agrees that all matters which are discussed [by the joint committee] will be on a consultative basis," the official contract reads, "and, that, in any case, the publisher retains the right to make all final decisions."

The union and management can dispel troubling fears by clearly declaring their respective commitments to the quality of work life project (a practice mandatory in all projects in the ACQWL list of associated projects).

"We felt a firm commitment from both management and union was a necessity of paramount importance," one management participant told the conference, describing what his base group had concluded. "You can't function properly if you don't, if you are not convinced that the people above you are 100 percent behind you."

Most unions and managements represented at the conference have declared their commitments in writing although, with only one exception, the declarations are not legally binding.

At Fisher Body Number Two, Grand Rapids, for instance, the management and local union officials signed an agreement declaring they are "committed to improving the Quality of Work Life (QWL) for all of our employees....QWL is a process which stimulates everyone to achieve greater self-satisfaction in their everyday work environment. This process includes mutual trust, group participation, information sharing and decisionmaking within the framework of existing agreements, and sound commonsense business practices. This will require that everyone

recognize the value of individuals, their ideas, their needs, and their feelings."

Some agreements help put union and worker fears to rest by specifically declaring what the quality of work life project will *not* do.

At Harman, in 1973, the plant management and union signed an agreement declaring, "The purpose of the joint management-labor *Work Improvement Program* is to make work better and more satisfying for all employees, salaried and hourly, while maintaining the necessary productivity for job security.

"The purpose is *not* to increase productivity. If increased productivity is a byproduct of the program, ways of rewarding the employees for increased productivity will become legitimate matters for inclusion in the program."

Some agreements, such as a 1975 agreement signed by a national Nabisco executive and the executive vice president of the BCTWIU, stipulate unambiguously that "no employee will lose his/her job due to the program"—further easing worker fears. In all ACQWL projects, by the way, such agreements are required.

The 1973 Rushton agreement noted that the union agreed to set aside certain contract grievance procedures in order to give workers and managers a chance to settle disputes without resorting to the lengthy and exhausting grievance process. But the agreement specifically declared that the normal grievance procedure could be used any time a worker (or manager) felt his or her grievance wasn't being adequately solved.

The only quality of work life project which locked itself into the collective bargaining contract is the Newspaper Guild/*Minneapolis Star-Tribune* project. Here's how it reads:

Worker Participation Committee

The Publisher and the Guild agree that committees will be formed in each news department by both parties and will meet upon request of either party, with a minimum of one meeting a month.

In an effort to encourage discussions of subjects not covered by the normal bargaining and grievance machinery, the Guild and the Publisher stipulate that top-level personnel will participate in the meeting.

It is stipulated that committees, meeting under the terms as outlined in this letter, shall discuss matters affecting relations between employees and the employer, including matters relative to the introduction

and operation of new automated equipment and the effects of such equipment on the job duties of employees who operate such equipment, but will not take up grievances which would normally come up in the regular contract grievance machinery.

The Publishers will continue to consult with the Guild before the appointment of newsroom supervisors...

The Guild agrees that all matters which are discussed will be on a consultative basis, and that in any case, the Publisher retains the right to make all final decisions.

A Guild representative argued that putting the union/management committee in the contract is the only way to make the union and workers secure. "Putting it in the contract gives you stability," he said. "It's an old trade unionist attitude. If you want to know what you've got, you put it in the contract. That way, you know that nobody's going to take it away from you. It gives you a psychological advantage."

One other union participant agreed, noting that, "if you really believe in something, you write it—and sign it." When his union proposed writing the quality of work life project into the contract to test the management's commitment—"we wanted to say something like 'to make the factory more rewarding for everyone concerned' "—the management refused.

But these two unionists were lone advocates of locking the project into a binding agreement. "We talked in the last negotiation about putting some of the programs into the contract, but I was really against it myself," one union local president said, echoing what most other participants declared. "Right now, we're doing this experiment and we can drop out of it anytime we want. If you put it in the union contract then you're forcing it down someone's throat and they may not like it."

"The reason our project is so good," another union representative said, "is because there is no letter [of agreement] in the contract. If you don't want to participate in it, you don't have to. It's strictly voluntary."

One important way to ease fears and give the QWL project strength, participants said, is to get top corporate and union officials to declare their commitment to the project—right to the local management's and union leaders' faces.

At Nabisco, some participants reported, some of the bakery supervisors had never been aware how strongly the corporate management and top union leaders supported the QWL project.

Their insecurity stunted the growth of the program. "Every once in a while you got to wondering," one Nabisco department manager said. "I mean, if you hear from the site manager a second- or third-hand assurance that there's a top-level commitment—'Oh yes, my boss says he's 100 percent behind the project'—well, you're not too sure about it. It means a lot more if the people holding the purse strings say they're behind it. It makes me feel more secure." (Several weeks after the Airlie conference, top executives from Nabisco headquarters visited the Houston plant, sat down with the plant managers and assured them they supported the QWL project completely. Local managers say it made a tremendous difference.)

The same kind of insecurity hindered the project at Weyerhaeuser, according to union participants. "People held back until the corporate and international union executives came to the plant and sat down with us [the plant-level labor/management committees] and said: 'This is where we stand. This is our commitment.' That was the turning point of our project. From that moment on we felt we had something. Why? *Hearing* a commitment from the very highest people with our own ears."

If management openly and frankly spells out its goals for the QWL project, even increased productivity, union officials and members will be more inclined to trust management's commitment and be less suspicious that the project is a trick to "bust the union."

"The men won't cooperate with the quality of work life program until they understand exactly what the management will get out of it," said one management representative from the Rushton Mine. "Management should be up front—otherwise the men will be suspicious—with reason. Management should say, for instance, 'OK. What we want is a 10 percent decrease in absenteeism and a 25 percent decrease in costs and the way we're going to get there is to help improve the quality of work life.' Then a lot of mistrust and suspicion are wiped away. People say, 'Oh, now I understand why you're giving us all this stuff.' " A quid pro quo, out in the open.

A Weyerhaeuser union representative agreed. "Weyerhaeuser's not here [at the conference] to improve the quality of work life," he said. "They're here to get back the dollar. Let's put it all out on the table. Don't tell me that you're doing it [the QWL project] for me. Don't tell me the new cafeteria and lamp out in the parking lot are for me. Put it out on the table," he said, "and acknowledge that management is interested in the program to in-

crease profits. And that the quality of work life program is a method of achieving them."

According to one union representative, that's precisely how his company did it. "Management came to us in a very honest and blatant way," he told the conference. "They said: 'We're here to make money. And to make money we need your help. What we're going to do in the quality of work life is to make your job as interesting as possible. We want your job to be as secure as possible.' " And in return, management told the workers, it expected their efficiency and productivity to improve.

At least one manager at the conference was persuaded. "I'm sitting here listening and some things hurt, really hit home," he told a group of union participants. "Management [at my company] really has not told their goals. We've been so busy listening to union's goals that we haven't even told them what our goals are. I think I'll work a little bit differently when I get back home because of this discussion.

VI. Expanding Project Participation and Involvement

Once the project structure is established, co. mittees are functioning, decisions are being jointly made, and discussions of mutual problems are being tackled, the initial concerns expressed by both union(s) and management begin to subside. But other, less superficial apprehensions and anxieties surface.

Misgivings on the part of participants will always be there, throughout any project. The fact that participants begin to find ways to discuss their concerns—get them out in the open—is a clear sign that the QWL process is providing opportunities for participants and their projects to do precisely what they are intended to do. Participants become more acutely aware of problems facing them. Their thinking toward solving these problems becomes more incisive. Project participation demands ever-growing awareness.

Union and management representatives from one project after another voiced this similar concern: The quality of work life project touches scarcely a handful of employees in the organization. There seemed to be a few basic variations to this theme, each with its own possible causes and possible solutions.

Participants can't figure out how to *expand the project* from one or two committees to all the employees on the production floor. Most employees know scarcely anything about the project, but those involved in a more mature project at the Tennessee Valley Authority had already surpassed that hurdle and were thus a help to the others who felt deep frustration. Workers in an organization who are not involved in a quality of work life project (where it is still at the pilot stage) become jealous and hostile toward the workers who are part of the experiment.

Many employees, who are part of the quality of work life project and know it, shrink back from participating and deliberately

don't get involved—a common problem which longer-term project involvement eventually addresses and resolves. It's difficult for those just beginning to comprehend that these changes will take place down the road. That's where contact with more mature projects truly aided the newer ones. "That's why I'm here [at the conference], trying to learn how to get the rank-and-file to feel as though this is their program," said one union representative from Weyerhaeuser. "The problem is we have only a few individuals sitting on the QWL committees—and that's where all the quality of work life is. We don't seem to be able to get it out to the people on the shopfloor."

He was by no means alone. At AMSCO, one worker was concerned that only about 12 workers out of several hundred were involved in the project. At Nabisco, the only employees directly involved were the committee members, perhaps half a dozen of them. At Mount Sinai, the only employees involved in the project besides committee members were the staff on one ward, in the midst of numerous wards in one of 11 hospital buildings. "Out of 300 people in this plant, only a handful are involved," one union participant said. "That's the real biggie, the big question: how to get those other people involved." The problems of project pilot sites vs. project expansion will continue to arise with all new and growing efforts.

Participants said they often felt caught in a dilemma: On the one hand, they wanted to expand the project to involve all the workers in the organization. On the other hand, they feared expanding the project too quickly, leaping into the unknown too suddenly, thus causing chaos. "We rushed into it overnight, too fast, going from four people to a whole plant," one Harman union participant said. "It created a whole lot of problems because a lot of the people weren't ready for it." Instead of dwelling on problems, people at the conference addressed these issues as they do and will in their project sites.

Some participants suggested establishing a loose timetable—not a rigid command—which would prod the labor/management committee to introduce QWL projects in one department after another, step-by-step. "It's too easy to start with one small pilot project and then sit back on our laurels and let inertia set in," one management participant said. "When we have a plan to go by it gives us some more motivation to continue moving forward and getting everybody involved."

Some participants suggested sending members of the QWL committee throughout the plant to chat with workers, one by one, about the project. At Nabisco, for instance, the QWL com-

mittee got permission from the plant manager to shut down parts of the production line so union representatives could take a survey of the workers to see what innovations and changes they would like the project to bring to the plant. The production lines will be shut down again, so the union can discuss the *results* of the survey with the workers.

At Harman, the QWL committee has formed more than 30 mini-committees throughout the plant. The mini-committees, or core groups, give shopfloor workers in each department a closer tie with the quality of work life project. The core groups provide a forum where workers can discuss ideas or problems or proposals, which can then be sent to the main working committee. "The core groups," said one union participant, "are the most effective part of the whole quality of work life project."

Managers and union officials at Falconer Plate Glass hold meetings with workers from every department on a rotating basis. One week they meet with one department; a second week they meet with another department, until they have made a full circle and start the process again. "This gives people a feeling of being involved," one participant said. "When you take them to a meeting it gives them that certain sense of pride in what they're doing."

Often, workers in the organization who are not involved in the quality of work life experiments become jealous and hostile toward the workers who are. For instance, at AMSCO, one union participant said, only about a dozen workers were actually "living" the quality of work life project—working as an autonomous team without a foreman and earning $10 extra per month. And the rest of the workers in the plant were furious about it. "People saw these men working with higher pay, without a foreman," the union participant said. "Since the men on the team were doing their work more efficiently they sometimes had time left over, and they'd fool around, and the other men saw this, and felt they weren't doing their share of the work. In the other departments if a man would fool around, the foreman would get down on his neck. But in the pilot project the men had no foreman at all to get on their necks. Other guys in the union started saying they wanted the company to put a foreman [in the autonomous team] too." Jealousy finally killed the project. The union voted several weeks after the Airlie House conference to pull out of the project, once again indicating the necessity of an organization-wide approach to QWL improvements.

Management and union representatives from Rushton believed that jealousy was partly to blame for the collapse of their project,

too. The project never affected more than half the miners—in the early stages it affected less—and the miners who did not participate grew increasingly resentful. Veterans with 20 years experience, miners at the conference said, were furious that young "greenhorns" with scarcely any experience were already earning top rates, one of the innovations in the QWL project. Miners who still followed the commands of the foreman grew jealous toward friends in the QWL sections, who told them the pleasures of working autonomously as a team. Miners participating in the experimental sections—"super-miners," they were derisively called—enjoyed the luxury of spending entire days out of the dark and dust of the mine to attend classroom sessions at full pay. "Union members on the steering committee started coming under heavy fire from some of the members," one manager said. "We'd have our meetings at a hotel, and the guys had steak dinners." Union members finally killed the project by a 79-75 vote. Interviews with the miners, participants said, suggested that the miners who did not participate in the project voted almost unanimously against it, while miners who had participated voted unanimously in favor.

While these problems play heavy emotional and psychological games with project participants, once again those involved discovered some possible solutions through open discussion. Participants suggested that the jealousy problem might be eased if the labor/management committee asked for workers to *volunteer* for the pilot projects—with the full understanding that workers who do not volunteer will be working under different conditions, some of them perhaps not as pleasant. Otherwise, if the labor/management committee handpicks project participants, participants said, the employees left out will feel neglected and hostile, as if they are the victims of favoritism. But participants from Rushton noted that asking for volunteers won't make the climate any better *if all the workers aren't fully informed*, in detail, about precisely how the pilot project will change their jobs and working conditions. At Rushton the steering committee *did* call for volunteers. Still jealousy grew strong and killed the project. "We did a terrible job of communicating," one union member said. "Some of the guys who didn't volunteer said later, 'If *that's* what the quality of work was all about, then why didn't you tell us in the first place?' "

Worker jealousy can be avoided, some participants said, if the quality of work life project is expanded fairly rapidly to the entire plant. They cautioned that the labor/management committee

must find the best balance—between not hurtling into the project too fast, yet not expanding the project too slowly.

Yet, there are other problems more difficult to solve. Some shopfloor workers, participants suggested, don't get involved in the program because being involved means voicing their opinions. They're afraid management will crack down on "malcontents." "I know some people who are afraid to speak out," a Weyerhaeuser union representative said. "They say, 'I'm afraid to say this because I'm afraid it will get back to management and they'll come down on me.' "

Others shrink from taking an active part in team and committee meetings and other projects, some participants suggested, because they feel insecure. "No one ever asked them for their opinion before, and now they don't want to throw out an idea or a comment and then have everyone think they're stupid," one shopfloor representative said.

QWL projects have intimidated some workers, several participants suggested, by suddenly imposing *too much* independence and autonomy on the shopfloor employees. "You can't give people orders for 25 years and then suddenly say, 'All right, everybody get out there and think for yourselves,' " a management representative from Mount Sinai hospital said. "It's not that they *can't* think for themselves, but they need to adjust to the change. It's almost condescending to say, after years of giving orders, 'Hey, tomorrow everyone does their own thing.' The people will say, 'you're just setting me up for failure.' " A management representative from Rushton added, "We still have submissive types of union people who really are very uncomfortable without a concrete sense of direction which has been given to them externally. They don't have an internal sense of direction. They need, and want, to be *told* what to do."

Yet, participants said one way to encourage shopfloor employees to contribute their ideas is to create a climate which assures them their ideas are valued—not ridiculed. One company, according to a participant, has a steadfast rule: "No matter what anyone says, do not laugh. You have to take everyone's comments and suggestions seriously and make the people feel they have contributed something." One Eaton employee said, "You shouldn't jump on people just because you think they're not as bright or fast as the others. Remember, some day *you* may be put down by someone who's a little brighter than you."

A valuable tool for building this supportive climate, some participants said, is special training in transactional analysis or other techniques which help people become more sensitive to others'

emotions and needs. Supervisors and union officials at Fisher Body took 2 days of transactional analysis. "We learned how to deal with people, we learned to know the other guy has feelings too," one union representative said. "Supervisors learned that people need to be listened to. 'Act like an adult and treat others as an adult,' that's the basic message," he said.

One way to guarantee that shopfloor employees will shrink back and not participate in the project, some participants said, is for top managers and union officials to impose their own ideas of "what makes the workers satisfied," from the top down. The labor/management committee will encourage widespread participation, they said, if they let the workers themselves initiate the projects and changes that they desire. "A lot of people don't understand that the needs I have are different from other people," said one worker from Harman. "You have to approach each person as an individual. You can't just go out and say, 'This is what's good for the group.' You have to get out there and try as hard as you can, and communicate; try to find out what *their* needs are. Don't try to force something on them."

The very talk of launching projects to "give workers satisfaction" is misleading, one management representative argued, because "when different people talk about satisfaction they mean different things. What makes one worker happy might make another break down. We're dealing with complex combinations of motives people have," the top manager said, adding that the quality of work life committees need to "think about a specific individual and what his specific needs are and how we're going to help him in the workplace."

At Harman, the quality of work life committee—the working committee—has stressed that the shopfloor workers should generate their own projects to satisfy their individual needs through the network of shopfloor core groups.

VII. Growing Pains: *The Slow Process of Changing Attitudes*

Workers say that they are easily frustrated because changes initially occur slowly. Clearly, in the beginning, cosmetic alterations are the easiest and least threatening. At the same time, these cosmetic alterations provide project participants with the opportunity to test out just how and what happens in a quality of work life project, without rushing and getting in over their heads.

At the conference, participants did feel free enough to express these frustrations:

At Weyerhaeuser, "We're not really getting to the gut issues," one union participant said. "The only tangible results people can see are a couple of fans, some patches on the walls to keep out cold air, and a nonsmokers' lunchroom which hardly anyone uses." At Eaton "it was a major accomplishment just to get those big, bright yellow trashcans," one Eaton employee says. And at Fisher Body, the most visible result of the quality of work life program has been coffee and doughnuts.

As shopfloor workers see few tangible results from the quality of work life program, participants said, they are likely to turn their backs on the program in indifference. Or they may actively suspect that the management is insincere and trying to "bust the union" with gimmicks.

"More and more I get the feeling that you can't maintain this kind of [quality of work life] process when you just discuss minor things," said one union negotiator at the conference. "You probably have to start out like that but if it doesn't grow—if you don't start handling substantive issues—then the committee and the project will just wither.

At Nabisco, according to one union participant, "We're having problems because the people on the floor haven't seen the re-

sults they had hoped to see by now. Recently we said we wanted to get into gains sharing and we said we wanted to get into discussing a 4-day week. The plant manager said no." The shopfloor workers have not yet been told that management has declined to discuss gains sharing and 4-day weeks. One manager says such topics are "touchy" and "premature," adding that he fears employees will feel hostile toward the quality of work life program when they find out.

At least one manager said he understood the shopfloor employees' frustrations. "My God," he said, mentioning projects which have focused on minor physical changes such as new trashcans and decorating the lunchroom, "if that is all they can do after all that hard work, they might as well throw out the whole project. To me that's small potatoes. If I had to waste time talking about a light bulb or a wastebasket..."

One obvious solution to the "nothing is getting done" syndrome, participants said, is for the labor/management committee to tackle seriously the suggestions members propose, rather than squelching controversial suggestions with a flat "no."

"We've already had some discussions with management about moving toward more sophisticated decisionmaking," said a union representative from the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*. "For example, we've discussed whether there's a way we could become involved in the hiring process. Management has indicated they are in favor of elevating the discussion toward these issues, although these are only early discussions."

Some union participants said it is important to communicate to the members a sense that any management/labor discussions and innovations—even as minor as new trashcans—are an important step forward because they have started a *process*. They put a "foot in the door," as one participant said.

"Remember, this whole thing, the quality of work life, is still being pioneered," one union representative from Fisher Body said. "I'm disappointed that we can't get into gains sharing and shorter work weeks now," a Nabisco union representative said, "but I'm sure we'll get into it later. The problem is making the people understand it takes time to get these things done. We feel in the future we will be able to get into them. As things here begin to work so much better from the quality of work life, the management will want an incentive program."

The almost 100 participants at the Airlie House conference filled out a questionnaire that explored how they felt about their own projects. One of the questions was "What have been the *biggest problems* that your project has encountered so far?" The

most frequent answer by far was "problems of establishing trust."

Trust was perhaps the single most spoken word at the 2-day conference—management and union and shopfloor participants alike talked about the *crucial need* for trust and the *fatal lack* of trust. This report has already touched on some of the most common forms of mistrusts: Workers and union officials fear the management will try to bust the union; management fears the union will try to squeeze in demands it doesn't win at the bargaining table...and others. But participants cited a list of incidents in their plants and organizations which they felt added to years of already existing suspicion between union and management participants.

"How do you tell people," a union organizer from the Amalgamated Meatcutters and Butcher Workmen of America said, "that the company cares about you as a worker—and then the company turns around and shuts down the plant for a week?"

A union official from Harman noted that the quality of work life program endured even when the management laid off 300 workers for up to 5 months. "The laid-off workers kept getting communications about the work improvement program from the working committee," he said, "so they could keep in touch." The quality of work life projects did minimize the damage caused to workers' lives by layoffs, some Harman participants said, by providing skills training programs which could qualify the employees for better jobs. (And that is precisely why ACQWL requires in all its projects that both unions and managements sign an agreement stipulating that no one will lose his/her job as a result of the project.)

"We've learned the company was buying over $2 million in trucks," one union representative said, "when they had just told us they didn't have enough for raises."

"For years we've been trying to get heaters," a Weyerhaeuser union official said, "but the company takes such a negative attitude. They used to say 'Just work a little harder and you'll get warm.' Now that we're in the quality of work life, they're real nice, but they still won't give us the heaters. Why? Management says it's because of energy crisis—it would look bad in the paper if the company's putting in electric heaters and using up all that energy. We think they're just playing politics. And they haven't lost any time putting air-conditioning in the offices."

In this case, the management has clearly failed to adequately explain their position, and the workers develop a sense of rejection. Often, because a systemwide approach to quality of work

life is not taken, projects disband before employees are confident enough to address these issues.

In some cases, again, this calls for an approach to QWL improvements which (as ACQWL has learned) encompasses all levels of an organization, from corporation and union headquarters to the shopfloor. Organizationwide sanction and communication ensure that one or two persons transferred or resigning do not pull apart years of project building.

One project participant expressed a glaring example of a project that fell into this kind of a trap: Top managers who support the quality of work life project are fired or transferred by the corporate headquarters and replaced by managers who don't support the project.

"At Heinz one reason the program failed was because we had a revolving door," says a union representative. "All the top management were fired in the middle of the project. So you're faced with a factory manager you've been working with 1½ years, and suddenly he's gone—and you have someone who doesn't know what you're doing." ("Or," added another union representative who had worked with several different plant managers, "someone who is against it.") "I'd say if you want to have a quality of work life project," the Heinz union representative said, "you have to commit your top management to stability."

VIII. Results, Accomplishments, and Innovations

Most of the quality of work life projects, participants acknowledge, have confronted serious obstacles, stumbled through painful errors, and grappled with difficult problems. Yet the managers, union officials, and shopfloor workers living them say they have yielded important benefits. Each project has had its own mix of benefits—but participants at the Airlie House conference counted the following among the most common:

Of all of the changes which could occur through participation in QWL projects, perhaps the single most significant is the expressed *improvement in communications* among the management, the union, and the shopfloor workers.

"Before this project, management and union hardly even talked to each other, except if there was a grievance or contract negotiations," one union representative said. "Now we're talking all the time: discussing what jobs are coming up, what some of the problems will be, what kinds of things we should alert the people to watch out for, what equipment the people could use to do the job easier."

The improved communications, participants said, have had a marked effect on the employees' mood. "Most of us who participate in the worker participation committee think that the one thing this accomplishes—and management and union officers have said they agree—is substantially increased communications," said a Newspaper Guild representative. "My experience has been—and I've had a lot of experience with newspapers which don't have such labor/management agreements—is that bad communications is one of the most important ingredients of bad morale. The morale of the employees at the *Minneapolis Star-Tribune* is better," he said—because of the worker participation, joint management/labor committee.

Now that they understand the union members' points of view better, management participants said, they are more likely to grant union requests rather than automatically resist them. And the reverse is true for union leaders. The overall operation in labor/management relations runs much more smoothly. "We cooperate more often now, instead of fighting each other all the time," one union official said.

As a result, managers said they have more time to manage the organization—they can perform their jobs better. "I think we give the general supervisor and the foreman a lot more say-so on how to run their areas," a union representative from Fisher Body said. "One of our biggest problems in the past was people objecting constantly to assignments," another union participant said. "Now we're finding more and more people volunteering because they appreciate management's changed approach."

And union leaders at the conference said that quality of work life projects often permit them to perform *their* union jobs better, too. As one union official who represents Nabisco workers put it, "The quality of work program will take pressure off local union officials from going around and saying things like 'why don't you [management] paint this bathroom a different color?' It would take this kind of pressure away from the union representative so he can concentrate more on [nuts-and-bolts] contract issues." "And it makes my job easier," a Fisher Body union representative said, "if I can go to the general foreman and explain a person's plight, and he listens, instead of our going at each other like we used to. It makes things better for the employees."

In a few cases, the actual contract negotiations become easier for union and management alike. The union and management negotiators at Harman hammered out a contract in just 2 weeks. 3 months before the contract was up. That made history at a plant where only several years before there had been bitter management/union relationships and prolonged, difficult negotiations. "Quality of work life helped us negotiate more easily," a Harman union representative said. "Nobody gets mad, we just sit down and talk about issues and resolve them."

Another noted result is a *drop in grievance rates* and that those filed are generally less serious and more easily resolved. "Now we can sit down with the company and talk things out instead of hollering at them," one union representative said. Workers from Rushton said that often grievances get settled informally between the foreman and the work team, preventing grievances from ballooning in importance and draining valuable union and management time.

Even during a strike, a union organizer attending the conference said, the labor/management mood at Rushton had changed dramatically. "Even though it was a wildcat, both union and management handled themselves differently than normal," he said, recalling his visit to the mine during a wildcat strike. "The union did not have picket lines all over, as they normally do. Both sides said, 'We have problems, but we'll have to go through the [discussion] process until it resolves itself.' I saw real progress there."

There are less grievances at Harman, one shopfloor worker said, because the managers are often more sensitive and understanding. "Usually, when someone is absent a lot the foremen write up absentee slips and if it keeps up, you're fired," the employee said. "But now when someone's absent, people go talk to him to find out what his problem might be."

For union members, the union organization grows stronger—a far cry from the union "busting" fears expressed in initial project stages.

As one union official said, "The quality of work project has no doubt had a big effect on the members, getting them more involved in day-to-day activities. So they are beginning to feel joint ownership of the whole work environment and feel proud of being involved. They're proud the union has been the leader in this program. So there's greater appreciation for the union, and a stronger sense of need for the union."

"The constant meetings bring union members together," another union representative said, "and so it makes the bonds between union members stronger."

At Harman, for instance, many employees are producing in 4 hours what used to require 8. At AMSCO, a team of employees figured out how the company could produce some items cheaper than its competitors—winning back thousands of hours of contracts, thus ensuring greater job security. Shopfloor employees contribute valuable ideas they once kept to themselves, and the production process becomes more efficient.

Hourly workers feel less pressured and begin to *enjoy their work*—even their homelives—more. "Most coal miners have a bad image of themselves in their community," one miner said, "but now the men in the quality of work project feel proud about their jobs, they feel more like professionals." "I'm not as tired when I go home anymore," another miner said. "My wife ... told me just the other day that I'm a lot easier to get along with."

"The program that we were in," said one Harman employee, "affects the entire community .... I mean it has just spread all

over town. I mean, nobody else has joined it but they are talking about it....As far as having an effect on their homelife and everything, or the problems there, they find that working in a group and everything ... they can go home and work on their farms and these things, you know. They felt an effect on their homelife, and an effect on the school program. We had classes being taught at school. I mean, it's branching out."

Perhaps the most important changes, participants said, are the most intangible: the *attitudes of managers, union officials, and shopfloor workers.* "Before, if a foreman or supervisor thought someone was wrong, he wouldn't even give you a chance to open your mouth," a union representative from Fisher Body said. "Now they'll talk it over with you in the office. Instead of ordering people around—saying do this or do that—they'll tell people *why* they're doing things. I see supervisors treating people better. Instead of saying 'You, go over there and sew,' they say, 'I sure would appreciate it if you'd help out over there.' " One of the top plant managers, himself a participant at the conference "has changed enormously," the union representative added. "He used to be a hot-headed bull, but he's changed completely. He no longer says 'this is the way it is, the heck with you'—he talks things over."

Traditionally, participants agreed, management and labor approach virtually every problem and every decision with a "win-lose" mindset. If management wins, the union loses; if management loses, the union wins. The quality of work life projects, participants said, create a *new* mindset—"win-win." If labor and management work cooperatively, one participant after another testified, then both sides can gain simultaneously.

Some participants felt this meant that labor and management goals could become synonymous. "Through all these years we've come down with this adversarial role," one management representative said. "Yet now we [union and management] find out that our needs and wants and desires are the same. What's impressed me is, why haven't we done this for all these years? I've seen labor and management sit down with no animosity or anything. I can go home with the idea that we're all people—and all have the same desires and wants."

Other participants said they had a different vision. Management and union goals are ultimately conflicting, they said—but with the quality of work life structure, management and union can approach their conflicts in a more human and productive way. "We're sitting here across the table from each other," one manager said to a union representative, "and I know that, in your

element, one of your purposes is to create jobs. In my element, one of my main purposes is to get rid of them. I know that General Motors would just love to run that factory with 250 less people. So we're going to have problems." But the quality of work life, he said, can help management and union approach those problems in a more constructive, less destructive way.

Conference participants seemed most intrigued by three specific tangible innovations which have sprouted from quality of work life projects: (1) job rotation, (2) new pay structures, and (3) earned idle time.

Several organizations, such as Harman and Rushton Mine, have encouraged job rotation on semi-autonomous work teams. Most of the participants who have worked under a job rotation scheme were enthusiastic. "I can do every job out there, and it makes the work much more interesting," one miner said. "It's not boring like it used to be." Employees said rotating from one job to another makes them feel more secure, knowing they have mastered a number of different tasks.

At Rushton, all the miners participating on the semi-autonomous teams received top union rates, in some cases an instant boost of more than $12 a day. Miners said the extra pay was an important incentive which prodded them to volunteer for the experimental sections. But once they had worked autonomously, "We would still want to work this way even if they lowered our wages," said one miner.

At Harman, workers who can finish the production quota in less than 8 hours shut down their machine and go home if they wish. "I usually get my work done in about 4 hours," one Harman participant said. "I can go home to my family, spend time working my small farm, and take classes [formed by the quality of work life committee] when I want," another Harman worker said.

IX. Projections of the Future

The quality of work life field is, by definition, one of change, exploration, continual growth, and development. What direction, focus, and scope will these 17 quality of work life projects take? The conference participants tackled these questions repeatedly during the 2 days of sessions. But they left (having expanded their project horizons) with as many questions about the future of quality of work life and their projects as when they arrived.

The drift of discussions suggested that management, unions, and shopfloor workers more and more will be tackling these issues:

How can the quality of work life project become self-sustaining so that, when the consultant or a few key managers or union leaders leave, the project will continue growing and not collapse?

How much autonomy and authority and power will the labor/management committees wield? Some participants felt that the committees must gradually assume greater power over more substantive workplace issues; others believed the committees will never go beyond the power to recommend. It is potentially a controversial, perhaps explosive, issue.

How will workers share the fruits of increased efficiency and productivity? Virtually all of the union participants said they expected to create a gains-sharing program—some day. But so far none of the projects represented at the conference has hammered one out, in the strict monetary sense. Participants seemed to realize that gains sharing is a crucial issue which will create controversy not only between union and management but between workers, too. Will they compute gains based on increased productivity or decreased costs? How will they measure productivity? What percentage of gains will go to management; what percentage to the work force? Will gains be distributed

equally to each worker, from bottom to top rate, or according to a percentage of their wages? It is not surprising that, so far, none of the quality of work life projects represented at the conference has hammered out a gains-sharing plan.

All of these controversial issues will be explored at some point, as projects grow. As project participants—union and management alike—so aptly expressed at the conference (and as ACQWL believes), we need to have faith in and believe in human intelligence and the power of pooled and collective experience. It is not the belief that these processes are complete, but that if given a chance, they will grow and generate the knowledge and wisdom needed to guide collective action. And, perhaps that's the beauty of quality of work life efforts—that people feel free to question and explore, to discover through experience, to affect more pervasively the lives they live, to be and become as effective and important at work as they are in the functioning of their personal lives; for some, to enhance this functioning through their experiences in quality of work life processes; and perhaps most important, to continue to grow and learn and develop and live their lives to the fullest.

X. An Afterword

Did the Ainie House conference help the participants? "Fantastically," one manager said. "Enormously," said a machine operator. "Tremendously," a union official said. Most of the participants answered the question with superlatives.

Participants said they left the conference energized and inspired to plunge back into the quality of work life project back home. What they carried with them was not so much a satchel of detailed ideas and plans and blueprints, but a set of *emotions*—reassurances, affirmations, confirmations.

"I came away with a firmer belief that this thing is going to go," said one union representative. "I found that other people's problems aren't much different from ours. I guess you call it a feeling of warmth."

"When I came here I felt our project was at its lowest ebb ever," a manager said. "I felt very depressed. Now I'm going back feeling renewed and like this idea can really work."

"When we started this program we didn't know anything," a union representative said. "We expected the program would go real smooth. But then we had lots of problems, and some of the members of the QWL committee were ready to throw up their hands and quit. But we've learned here most every plant is having some of the same problems. In fact, we're as far advanced as some plants doing it for 2 or 3 years, and we've been at it only 1 year. That gave us incentive to go on."

"If I had been here [at the conference] before we started our project," one management representative told fellow participants, "I would have felt a lot more comfortable all the way along."

Some of the participants made specific critiques of the conference:

1. Most participants felt the ACQWL facilitators were crucial in bringing a dozen, sometimes 20 vastly different people together at one time—and somehow prodding rambling anecdotes into productive discussions.

Participants were especially impressed that the facilitators tried to encourage discussions rather than direct them.

2. Many were struck by how the interactions among participants in the conference sessions mimicked the dynamics which take place in their quality of work life committees back home. In some conference sessions, one or two or three participants dominated the discussion. In others, the discussion indicated that project participants had become aware of that dynamic and everyone who wanted to got a chance to speak. Some asked that at the next such gathering ACQWL turn some of the sessions into explorations of group dynamics—so participants could see, experience, and analyze, right there, some of the problems that plague them back home.

3. Participants said they got a lot of help from hearing bits and pieces about so many different quality of work life projects. Still, most said they know few details about these other projects, and they wanted to know more and have more continuing contact with other projects.

   Participants said they wanted more careful detail at future conferences. "I'd like to really get into the nuts-and-bolts of a few good projects," one union participant said after the conference, and he was echoing a common sentiment. "Let's hear all the details: Who started it, how did they start it, who came to the meetings, how the committee decided on its first experiment, why it did or didn't work, what they tried next...."

4. Many participants said they found some of the most valuable nuts-and-bolts information and discussions in informal settings. They would like more free time at the next conference for informal chats. Many said the Airlie House conference was too tightly scheduled; limited time (2 days) added to the pressure and intensity of the conference. Some suggested having a longer conference, 3 or 4 days.

5. A lot of participants said they would like special skill-building sessions at the next conference. How do you set up a job rotation experiment? How do you facilitate a quality of work life committee meeting? How do you conduct a role-playing workshop? How do you set up a gains-sharing program?

6. Some participants suggested holding a series of smaller, more specialized conferences—or sessions within a conference—in addition to holding general, broad-based discussions. For instance, there would be a conference (or session) for union people only; for management people only; for people who want to start a quality of work life project only; for people who are in the middle of a quality of work life project only....

If the participants at the conference have anything to say about it, there will be more conferences, possibly many more conferences exploring the quality of work life concept in the future.

> Because of our relationship here [at the conference], we felt a greater feeling of trust for labor, for management people, and vice versa. Insofar as we've built that trust here, and that feeling for each other and the confidence in what each other is trying to do, we go back to our plants and mines and school districts feeling that maybe there is a way that we could begin to build that feeling of trust for each other and to begin to work out our problems....There is certainly a great need for patience because human understanding seems to require a period of time to make such sweeping changes....
>
> Warren Hinks
> Rushton Mining Company

Appendix A

Conference Participants

1. American Store Equipment Company
   United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America
   Muskegon, Michigan
   Jerry Brooks - Union President, local
   Jerry George - Shop Steward
   Ron Wright - Comptroller

2. AMSCO
   International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
   Jamestown, New York
   Mike Auria - Union Vice President, local
   Don Camarata - Union President, local
   Dan Mason - Shopfloor Worker
   Bob Snow - Union Steward

3. Dahlstrom Manufacturing Company, Inc.
   International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
   Jamestown, New York
   Richard Seastedt - Union Secretary, Maintenance Dept.
   Robert Witcomb - Foreman, Gear Dept.

4. Eaton Corporation
   United Auto Workers
   Cleveland, Ohio
   Don Gorham - Milling Machine Operator
   Tom Hallaran - Broach Operator
   Ernest Hicks - Lathe Operator
   Beverly Johnson - General Laborer
   Richard Wesley

5. Falconer Plate Glass Company
Ceramic Workers of America
Jamestown, New York
Jim Barrett - Union President, Local 81
Vern Brawdy
Carl Carmen - Foreman, Tempering Division
Roger Reynolds - Foreman
Terry Shillings - Union Treasurer
Dave Sims - Union Steward

6. Fisher-Body Division, General Motors Corporation
United Auto Workers
Grand Rapids, Michigan
Carol Cierlak - Shop Committee Person
Richard DeYoung - General Supervisor
William Kidd - General Supervisor
Gerald Miske - General Supervisor
Warren Paxton - Shop Committee Person
Ruth Wilder - Shop Committee Person

7. Harman International
United Auto Workers
Bolivar, Tennessee
Earl Bowers - Polisher
Mildred Hazelgrove - Supervisor
Gus Howard - President, Local 1303
Bob Lewis - Plant Manager
Lizzie Woods - Automatic Buff Operator

8. H. J. Heinz
Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of America
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
George Nestler - International Rep., Meat Cutters Union

9. Minneapolis Star-Tribune
Newspaper Guild of the Twin Cities
Minneapolis, Minnesota
John Carmichael - Exec. Secretary, Newspaper Guild

10. Mount Sinai Hospital
New York State Nurses Association
National Union of Hospital and Health Care Workers
Committee of Interns and Residents
New York, New York

Marie Barkum - Housekeeping
Barry Bermet - Registered Nurse
Jean Clark - Union Representative
Audrey McAllister - Registered Nurse
Mildred Reeves - Ward Clerk
Alfreda Williams - Training Director

11. Nabisco, Inc.
Bakery, Confectionary, and Tobacco Workers' International Union
International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
Houston, Texas
Billy Jackson - Steward, Warehouse Dept.
Murrel Jackson - Business Agent, Union
J. R. Moody - Shop Steward
Tommy Rhodes - Baking Dept.
Ann Roberts - Foreperson
Robert Thulin - Superintendent, Baking Dept.

12. School District 281, Robbinsdale Area Schools
Robbinsdale Federation of Teachers
Minneapolis, Minnesota
Pat Benn - President, Local Union
Leroy Hood - Superintendent of Schools
Loren Johnson - Labor Relations
Barry Noack - Executive Secretary, Union

13. Rushton Mining Company
United Mine Workers
Philipsburg, Pennsylvania
Arthur Clark - Miner
Warren Hinks - Company President
Mike Repasky - Training Director
Bill Richardson - Union Vice President, Local 1520

14. City of San Diego
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
San Diego, California
Bill Espy - Union President
Terry Flynn - Director of General Services

15. City of Springfield
American Federation of State, County, and Municipal Employees
Springfield, Ohio

Rubin Eichman - Superintendent, Water Treatment
Mark Johnson - Maintenance, Parks Dept.
Al Salz - Traffic Engineer

16. Tennessee Valley Authority
TVA Engineers Association
Office of Professional Employees International Union
Chattanooga, Tennessee
William Ensign - Personnel Officer, Office of Power
Guy Gowen - Union Representative
Charles Harris - Business Representative, Council of TVA
Dorothy Shelton - Union Representative
Frank Smith - Management Representative
Gene Wilhoite - Management Representative

17. Weyerhaeuser Company
International Woodworkers of America
Springfield, Oregon
Jerry Abbott - Millwright
Gayle Barkelew - Union, Steward
Rob Flora - Foreman, Particleboard
Arlie Hamar - Plywood Supervisor
Frank Littlejohn - Foreman, Plywood
Lyle Pittman - Former Operator

Appendix B

Closing Remarks Made by Group Leaders

RUTH WILDER
Shop Committee Person
UAW Local 1231
GM Fisher Body Two
Grand Rapids, Michigan

We came away with a sense that quality of work life is working. It is in its infancy and has true hope for the future. Just being here and seeing labor and management working so well together, then we hear them working back in their plants or schools or whatever.

We've had a chance to have person-to-person contact—from people with different occupations, from different parts of the country, and with different ideas . . . . from different levels in the organization. And yet, it's surprising that everyone's ideas are similar.

We thought that we could use this conference as a model for back home activities. And we speak of cross fertilization.

This process needs constant stimulation in order to grow.

We thought we needed future conferences, along the same line, to keep the interest growing. . . As one of our members said, sort of like a revival meeting. In future conferences, we felt that these were some of the needs . . . teach skill-building classes. . . and sometimes the issues were getting a little bit cloudy; perhaps we should have more people scheduling the public versus private or industry versus service.

We thought we should have another conference within 6 months or a year, where some of the same people could come back and perhaps some new ones. And this would give us a

sense of evaluation—how much we learned from these conferences.

In our ongoing projects we thought we'd needed to know how to identify potential participants. How do we do this? How do you know or feel that they might want to become involved in quality of work life? How do you motivate these people in the present and future?

And how to spread the concept throughout your own organization. How do we get it known? Get people to participate? And how to survive after the consultant leaves. How to keep what he provided, keeping us alive and going, and put it into everyday use.

And how to free participants from production pressures to allow quality of work life activity. The business has to go on. But somehow we have to work out how people can participate in the meetings . . . because it is a very essential part of it.

LOREN JOHNSON
Assistant to the Superintendent
Robbinsdale District 281
Minneapolis, MN

It gave our group a lot of self-assurance and a reaffirmation to go home with and to work with our projects. We've picked up some new ideas to probably revitalize our particular group. It's opened our minds to new ideas . . . We've learned not to let our communications lag, to keep trust, and to continue the credibility that we have and build on that.

Especially useful are all the plans of those of you who have never seen failure, and you brought to us some candid suggestions and ideas, and shared those with us. There's been very bad pressure, and I think it takes a lot of guts to come and say that we failed and why we failed, to help all of us. I think that's extremely important.

. . . Most of our group senses that these are the things that we feel would be ongoing:

1. Ongoing exchange in the sharing between the participants at this conference in some way. We should follow a good pre-plan. The need for patience is most important, as well as learning from our failures and turning them around to give us success.
2. Defining some of our objectives before we just throw ourselves into something. And this conference has helped us dispel some of the fears that we have; some

of the concerns we have, both on labor and also on the management side.

It's been a great conference!

CAROL CIERLAK
Shop Committee Person
UAW Local 1231
GM Fisher Body Two
Grand Rapids, Michigan

These are some of the conclusions that we have reached, we as union leaders and members, and we as managers, in general, as organizations have common experiences and problems. That is, we are not alone in quality of work life.

We all agreed on the need to change our individual outlook and consider an individual's problems. There has to be mutual trust and total commitment established between all individuals involved in quality of work life.

We have learned through the successes and failures of others. There is less of a need to reinvent the wheel—it takes time. Some people are reluctant to change.

There are still some unresolved issues that we, as participants in quality of work life, are here to work out. There are no manuals to guide us.

We are here, we feel, to write those manuals, and we also consider ourselves as the *pioneers* in the quality of work life process.

WARREN H. HINKS, Jr.
President
Rushton Mining Company
Philipsburg,PA

We appreciated the opportunity to learn that communication between management and labor can be carried on in a cooperative spirit and that you want to go back and attempt to enlarge that—improve that communication in your home plants.

One of the things that came out here and came out in the survey was the fact that our managements (and in our own case, I think a number of people feel that the middle-management personnel) have been left out of the quality of work life understanding or at least the efforts to help them understand it better, and they have been because of their concentration on the productive effort. They're doing the best job they know how and they don't

quite understand the quality of work life group, and we need to help them.

. . . our people felt that the third party was extremely important in order to provide that objectivity that we really need to have our labor/management discussions.

A number of our people really felt that their projects . . . were lagging considerably and that they were going to come here and meet a lot of experts who really were moving right along in their programs and doing very well and they experienced some solace in finding that really all of us had a lot of problems. . . . They appeared pleased just to be able to discuss the problems and find out that their feeling of burden about their own particular project was lightened considerably by the fact that they know everybody else has the same problems and they're all trying to work them out individually and collectively.

The results showed that it was very helpful to have union people meet other union people who were involved in quality of work life projects and for management people to meet other management people who are involved in quality of work life projects.

. . . That serves to reinforce the feeling in union people that there is some hope in the union, and the same with management people.

There is no doubt about the need for total commitment through quality of work life projects. We felt in our group . . . that there is a feeling among the conferees that striving to improve the quality of working life is intrinsically right. I think most of us have seen some kind of a vision here about a better way of getting along, as the union/labor/management relationships have been torn with enough strife. It's time we learned to cooperate. We believe that cooperation is essentially right and worth pursuing.

And it was also recognized that because of our relationships here, we developed a greater feeling of trust for labor, for management people, and vice versa. Insofar as we've built that trust here, and that feeling for each other and the confidence in what each other is trying to do, we'll go back to our plants and mines and school districts feeling that maybe there is a way that we could begin to work out our problems.

. . . there is certainly a great need for patience because human understanding seems to require quite a period of time to make such sweeping changes.

There's one other thing that was brought out—that there's a need for permanence in these programs. It is very important to

analyze the power flow in your quality of work life committees, to see how the power flow is working in your organization, and to see that the power flow works to produce a permanent situation. The pilot projects should be expanded to become full-blown projects.

. . . in the way of future conference subjects—some people felt it would be helpful to have an extra day. One of the ideas was to explore the structures and processes of various types of quality of work life programs. A number of people are struggling with the idea of how we're going to structure this. How is it best going to suit our particular project?

. . . And then there was another suggestion that we have a meeting with all union people, talking together about the problems, and simultaneously having all the management people talking about their problems—then getting together afterwards to see what new ideas developed.

I'll express the same thanks from our particular group, that the people who have developed the conference have been extremely helpful to us . . . I think they've done a lot of positive things and we're really going back with some new ideas and feeling a lot more hope for the human race and for labor and managements.

ROBERT THULIN
Superintendent
Baking Department
Nabisco
Houston

We learned quite a few things. We have seen there is a great diversity in the projects, and yet there is a similarity in the problems. There is also tremendous diversity in the problems.

The sharing of ideas, we felt, would be very important because we can anticipate the problems we are liable to get into. If you know that another area has problems, and when you run across the same one, at least you don't feel like the Lone Ranger.

The realization that there is an appreciation on the part of both management and union for each other's problems is important. We are aiming a little more toward the blue sky, perhaps than some of our coworkers, but I think we could pass this on to them.

I think it is part of our job to convey this appreciation to the other guy as well, and not just nod your head and say, yes, I know there is a problem, but I can't do anything about it now.

We felt [that] the necessity for a firm commitment from both management and union was of paramount importance. You can't function properly if you don't have that, if you are not convinced that the people above you are 100 percent behind the project.

For future meetings, we felt that it would be good to have a conference for people just starting a project, or people anticipating starting a project—get those people here. Had this happened before we started our project, I would have felt a lot more comfortable all the way along the line.

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