

# Border/Line Health & Safety

NEWSLETTER OF THE MAQUILADORA HEALTH & SAFETY SUPPORT NETWORK

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## Network Projects Continue in the Americas

Mariano Kramer is the "MHSSN Volunteer of the Year" working on ongoing MHSSN projects with partners in the Dominican Republic and Los Angeles. A recently retired Senior Safety Engineer with the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA), Kramer has been leading the charge in improving conditions in garment plants in the Americas.

In February 2011, Kramer went to the Dominican Republic with Scott Nova, Executive Director, and Sarah Adler-Milstein, country representative, of the US-based Workers Rights Consortium (WRC) to work on three workplace health and safety projects.

First up was a day-long inspection of ITIC factory in San Pedro de Macoris, which

produces prison uniforms for the city of San Francisco. The 200-worker plant has a variety of unsafe conditions typical of garment factories throughout the island, as well as wage, hour and sexual harassment issues. Kramer's report on his inspection is posted on the Network's website at [http://mhssn.igc.org/AltaGraciaH&SRpt\\_Feb2011.pdf](http://mhssn.igc.org/AltaGraciaH&SRpt_Feb2011.pdf).

The next day Kramer returned to the Alta Gracia factory where the Network has been involved for several years in the start-up and ongoing production of the only genuine "no sweat" factory in the Americas. Previous reports and related materials are posted on the Network website. At Alta Gracia, Kramer did a brief walk-around to verify correction of haz-

(See **Network Projects**, page 3)

## Partnership Strengthens Asian Labor Rights Groups

A three-way partnership involving our Network has provided two dozen scholarships in 2011 for grassroots workplace safety organizations to attend professional-level workshops in Asia on occupational safety and health. The International Affairs Committee of the national American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) has matched grants provided by our Network for scholarships for three years, and the Developing World Outreach Initiative (DWOI) of the Northern California local section of AIHA has provided additional resources since 2008.

In July 2011, the grassroots Local Initiative for OSH Network (LION) with chapters in eight cities in Indonesia received a MHSSN-AIHA grant to put on a training in Tangerang attended by 30 worker leaders from local unions



LION training in Tangerang, Indonesia

and communities. This workplace safety training was the first most participants had ever received, despite working for contract manufacturers producing shoes, garments and sports equipment

(See **Asian Labor Rights Groups**, page 3)

# Letter from the Coordinator

Our Network has been in something of suspended animation since April 2011 as its volunteer coordinator (that would be me) has had work assignments that have greatly reduced the time available for coordinating the MHSSN work. I have become a Special Assistant to Ellen Widess, the new Chief of the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA), who assumed her office in April, and tasked with coordinating special projects in Cal/OSHA headquarters.

Like most management positions, my work hours are now considerably more than 8-hour days, five days a week, and the intensity of work leaves little time or energy at the end of the day for the off-hours coordination of our network that I have been able to do since 1993. This situation is likely to continue for the foreseeable future, although I am hoping that the hours could head back toward a standard work week next year.

As an all-volunteer organization, we have not been able to find someone with more time than me at present (anyone interested should be sure to contact me) to play the coordinator role.

As evidenced in this issue of the newsletter, however, the work continues, and I will be able to direct specific projects to the Network members with the appropriate skills and expertise. We continue to explore possible joint projects with key partner organizations, such as Workers Rights Consortium and NGO partners in the Caribbean and Bangladesh, Canada's Maquila Solidarity Network and NGO

partners in Central America and Mexico, and the United Steel Workers and Mexican Miners unions and NGO partners in Mexico as well.

Rest assured that the Network lives on and we will respond to all requests for assistance, and continue to facilitate communication between worker and community-based organizations seeking information, training and technical assistance and the Network members who have volunteered to provide this support for the last 18 years.

For Network members chomping at the bit to get active right now in health and safety projects in the developing world, there are two organizations they should consider contacting. These groups are:

- Occupational Knowledge International, or "OK International," led by Perry Gottesfeld in San Francisco. Check out their website at [www.okinternational.org](http://www.okinternational.org) and write to Perry at [okperry@gmail.com](mailto:okperry@gmail.com).
- Workplace Health Without Borders, a new Canadian-based volunteer effort of industrial hygienists led by Marianne Levitsky in Toronto. The organization is still in its infancy, but check out their website at [www.whwb.org/](http://www.whwb.org/) and write Marianne at [marilev@sympatico.ca](mailto:marilev@sympatico.ca)

■ ■ ■

With the award money the Network received from the AIHA's "Social Responsibility" award in May, we have been able to contract with recent UC Berkeley School of Journalism graduate Nancy López for assistance in putting out this and future newsletters. Nancy will also be helping research and write a major MHSSN report early next year on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of "corporate social responsibility" codes of conduct, monitoring organizations, books and conferences, among other branches of the \$40 million global CSR "cottage industry." We hope to share more about the report in the next newsletter.

■ ■ ■

Certainly one of the biggest developments in 2011 has been the "Occupy

Wall Street" movement that established "occupy" encampments and activities in dozens of cities around the globe. Whatever happens with any specific encampment — all but a few in the US have just been closed down in nationally-coordinated police actions — this grassroots movement has reframed the political debates in the United States and elsewhere. Now, at last, the focus is on the unmet needs of the "99%" in a system rigged at all levels, and in all arenas, to put the interests and desires of the "1%" above all else. The call for jobs, housing, medical care, education, political reform and environmental protection — to be paid for by the end of the systemic inequality that has given a tiny minority the lion's share of the wealth created by the vast majority — is in line with the efforts of our Network since 1993.

Since the beginning we have been providing workers and community organizations with the tools needed to understand key concepts of occupational health and safety, including how workplace hazards can be recognized, evaluated and corrected, and providing support for workers' efforts to exercise their rights under national and international law.

The "1%" are precisely the owners of the global corporations who have gutted the economies in the developed world by off-shoring work to countries without the resources or political will to enforce workplace safety protections, but with millions of desperate, vulnerable workers whose poverty is so deep that they cannot refuse any work — no matter how dangerous and unhealthy, nor how low paid.

Now is our moment, in the discussions sparked by the occupy movement, to promote the concept that the world's workers, at home and abroad, deserve safe and healthy workplaces that allow them all to return to their families at the end of their shift alive and in one piece — and that the global economy has all the resources needed to make this a reality as long as it puts the interests of the "99%" first and foremost.

Another world is possible! ■

## Border/Line Health & Safety

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**(Network Projects, from page 1)**

ards identified in the last inspection in 2010, and also met with the plant's labor-management safety committee.

Factory safety committees are required by Dominican law, but it is a challenge in the DR — as elsewhere — to have fully functional committees that meet their potential to identify and correct hazards, conduct accident investigations, and put on worker training.

The following day Kramer went with Nova and Adler-Milstein to meet with a group of 20 workers from a major textile factory operated by the Canadian-based Gildan Corporation. This plant has been the center of an intense labor conflict as workers have tried to establish a democratic union of their own choosing rather than a union chosen by the employer. In addition to the WRC, the Canadian Maquila Solidarity Network has been very active in the workers' defense.

Kramer and MHSSN Coordinator Garrett Brown first met with workers at the Gildan plant in February 2010, and this year's meeting indicated that serious health and safety hazards continue at the facility. These hazards include unguarded machinery, high levels of

noise, exposure to toxic chemicals and high temperatures in the Caribbean-climate factory.

In another part of the Americas, Kramer has been working with the WRC to improve working conditions at a 45-worker garment factory in Los Angeles, California. Kramer made three site visits to the "17 Inc." facility south of downtown LA between August and November 2011.

The work has included a thorough H&S audit of the Korean-owned factory, development of an effective, state-required "Injury and Illness Prevention Program," and Spanish-language training on chemical hazards with the Latino workforce. The WRC was appointed by a California



Alta Gracia plant in the Dominican Republic

**(Asian Labor Rights Groups, from page 1)**

for international brand-name retailers. Topics included general H&S principles, hazards associated with specific factory departments and operations, and workers' rights under both Indonesian and international law.

A copy of the LION report of the training is posted on our website at [http://mhssn.igc.org/LIONTrainingRpt\\_Aug2011.pdf](http://mhssn.igc.org/LIONTrainingRpt_Aug2011.pdf)

A similar training was conducted with 25 chemical workers in India in December 2010 and January 2011, which was organized by the Peoples Training and Research Centre in Gujarat, India, with funding from the MHSSN and AIHA.

The China Labor Support Network (CSLN), based in Hong Kong but with staff throughout the Pearl River Delta

around Guangzhou, China, sent eight field staff to four separate H&S courses between July and December 2011. Most of the CSLN field staff are former migrant workers from western China who worked in the giant export factories producing clothing, toys, sportswear and electronics for US-based transnational corporations.

The MHSSN-AIHA scholarships allowed the Chinese grassroots activists to expand their skills in H&S topics such as root cause analysis of accidents, managing chemicals, worker participation, and effective workplace safety programs.

Another DWOI project where MHSSN members have contributed time and "sweat equity" is collecting, sorting and packing occupational safety and health reference books and materials to be sent to universities, worker and com-

court to oversee correction of wage and hour violations, as well as health and safety hazards on site.

Other MHSSN projects in the Americas are under consideration for 2012 with grassroots organizations in Mexico, Central America and the Caribbean. Network members with Spanish-language skills and the willingness to donate time and expertise (all expenses will be covered) should contact Coordinator Garrett Brown. ■

munity groups in Africa and Asia. The donated books, packed and shipped by volunteers, are provided free of charge to non-governmental organizations who use them for professional training courses as well as for technical information for grassroots groups.

Since 2007 when the project started, 25 shipments of books — over 1,000 pounds of materials — have been shipped to a dozen countries, including South Africa, Kenya, Uganda, Zambia, Singapore, Thailand and Indonesia. The national AIHA's International Affairs Committee has provided funds for shipping the books for three years.

DWOI and our Network submitted two proposals in November to the national AIHA's International Affairs Committee to continue both the training scholarships and book project into 2012. ■



# Campaign Update: Cancer among Samsung workers in Korea

As the list of Samsung workers in Korea dying of cancer adds up — 53 to date — activists are stepping up their efforts to inform the international community of the electronic company's continued lack of accountability, while pressuring the Korean government to take a stand.

For the past four years, SHARPS — a network of unions, human rights organizations and safety and health groups — has lead an educational and outreach campaign to make Samsung's unsafe working conditions public. The "Stop Samsung" campaign has revealed that workers in electronic facilities across Korea are being exposed to carcinogenic agents. And so far, SHARPS has collected the names of 149 victims who have fallen ill — of the 59 workers who have died, 53 passed away from cancer. Most of the victims have been young women, many with only a few years of exposure on the job.

But despite the mounting deaths, Samsung has yet to acknowledge any wrongdoing and has, in fact, managed to get the Korean government on its side — even when it seemed the government was making a move in the right direction. In June, the Seoul Administrative Court made an unprecedented ruling that would have compensated the families of two Samsung workers who died of leukemia. Samsung fought back and with the help of the government agency KCOMWEL — Korean Worker's Compensation and Welfare Service — succeeded in appealing the court's decision.

An online petition urging the international community to call for the Ministry of Labor to withdraw the court appeal and support Samsung workers and their families can be found here: <http://www.gopetition.com/petitions/open-letter-in-support-of-samsung-workers-and-families/sign.html#se>.

Ted Smith, with the International Campaign for Responsible Technology, explained that the Korean government is ultimately responsible for determining work-related cancers.

But Samsung's position as one of the largest electronics producer in the world has allowed the company to leverage its power even over government agencies such as KCOMWEL — among labor rights advocates, the country is known as the "Republic of Samsung." "They're enormously powerful," said Smith, "and the Korean government hasn't felt in a position to disagree with them."

As a result, activists are putting pressure on the Korean government to take equal responsibility for Samsung's unwillingness to compensate its workers. Six weeks of actions, known in Korean as Bahn-Dahl, culminated in early November in Suwon city, where the major Samsung semiconductor factories are located. Petitions have been circulated demanding full monetary compensation to victims and full disclosure and transparency by government agencies in their decision-making. In the long-term, they also demand that the government and Samsung take responsibility for improving working conditions on the factory floor, ensuring the safety and health

of workers across the electronics sector.

On November 12th, an international symposium on Labor Rights & Environmental Justice of the Electronics Industry was held at Seoul National University's School of Public Health. Labor unions, human rights organizations and occupational safety professionals from Korea, Taiwan, China and the US gathered to document the environmental and occupational hazards of the electronics industry, and to define steps that unions, public health professionals and civil society organizations can take to effectively hold electronics manufacturers and government agencies accountable.

According to Ted Smith, many activists in Korea "believe that the electronics industry itself is a carcinogenic industry" and needs to be completely revamped with safer practices and enforceable codes.

For further information and ongoing updates, see the SHARPS website at <http://stopsamsung.wordpress.com>. ■

— Reported by Nancy López

## MHSSN wins AIHA "Social Responsibility" award

Our Maquiladora Health & Safety Support Network has received the American Industrial Hygiene Association's 2011 "Social Responsibility Award" and a monetary prize.

Established in 2009, the AIHA Social Responsibility Award is presented to "an entity, group, organization, or an individual who works inside organizations to develop and promote practical solutions to social responsibility issues related to industrial hygiene or environmental health and safety issues." Sponsored by Bureau Veritas North America Inc., the award carries a \$2,500 prize from Bureau Veritas for the winning organization.

MHSSN Coordinator Garrett Brown received the award at the Opening General Session of American Industrial Hygiene Conference and Exhibition (AIHCE) in Portland, Oregon, on May 16th. The 10,000-member AIHA was founded in 1939 and is the leading organization of industrial hygienists in the US.

*The Synergist*, the AIHA's monthly magazine, ran an article and an interview in its June/July 2011 edition related to the award. The "Honor Roll" column on the award was headline "A World without Sweatshops" and can be accessed at <http://www.aihasynergist-digital.org/aihasynergist/20110607/#pg51>. The magazine's website also posted a blog interview with MHSSN Coordinator Garrett Brown accessible at <http://www.aiha.org/news-pubs/synergist/synergistblog/Pages/GarrettBrownInterview.aspx#BrownContinued>. The articles can also be accessed from our Network's website.

# Campaign Update: Sandblasting, blue jeans & silicosis

A new pair of worn out vintage jeans may cost consumers in the United States and Europe upwards of \$200. But for garment workers who labor away day in and day out sandblasting jeans with crystalline silica to give them that fashionable faded look, it is costing the workers their health, sometimes even their lives.

The hazardous effects of sandblasting have been especially well documented in Turkey, one of the largest manufacturers of jeans. More than 500 sandblasting workers there have been diagnosed with silicosis — a usually fatal disease caused by continuous exposure to crystalline silica. The fine dust particles, when inhaled over long periods of time, seriously damage one's respiratory passages.

Moreover, silicosis is a progressive disease where damage occurs even after exposure to silica stops. People who suffer from silicosis experience an increasingly hard time breathing, and, in many cases, essentially suffocate to death. In Turkey, at least 50 garment workers, many of them in their 20s, have died from silicosis since 2005.

Now thanks to the efforts of the Clean Clothes Campaign, which in the last year has called on the garment industry to ban sandblasting, a growing number of big name brands are promising to stop using the hazardous practice. Levi's Strauss, H&M and Gucci have acknowledged that sandblasting unnecessarily exposes workers to harmful airborne dust and have eliminated the use of sandblasting from production.

In July, Versace also agreed to ban the practice and in September, Giorgio Armani followed suit. Armani even announced on its Twitter and Facebook accounts that sandblasting “has been eliminated from our production processes starting from the autumn-winter 2011/2012 collection that is currently available in the stores worldwide.”

Historically, silicosis mainly existed among workers in the mining, construction and excavation industries, where sandblasting is common practice. But with the growing popularity of faded jeans, the garment industry has relied heavily on this process to give jeans that desired worn-out finish; it's quick, reliable and inexpensive.

But compared to other industries, the disease has proven to be more deadly among garment workers as they tend to develop acute silicosis from high levels of airborne dust. A 2010 report by the Fair Trade Center found that people often work in small, unventilated rooms. They labor for long hours, usually without any protective equipment. The constant, high-level exposure to silica causes symptoms to develop rapidly, from as little as a few months to 5 years.

Information gathered by the International Textile Union shows that most workers are migrants from eastern European countries such as Romania, Bulgaria and Moldavia. The average age of workers is 23, many of them started working in their teens.

Despite growing awareness, much more needs to be done. The garment industry as a whole remains largely unaccountable to the dangers workers face when sandblasting. Although Turkey banned the use of sandblasting with silica in 2009, the practice has popped up in rural

regions of the country where enforcement has been nearly impossible.

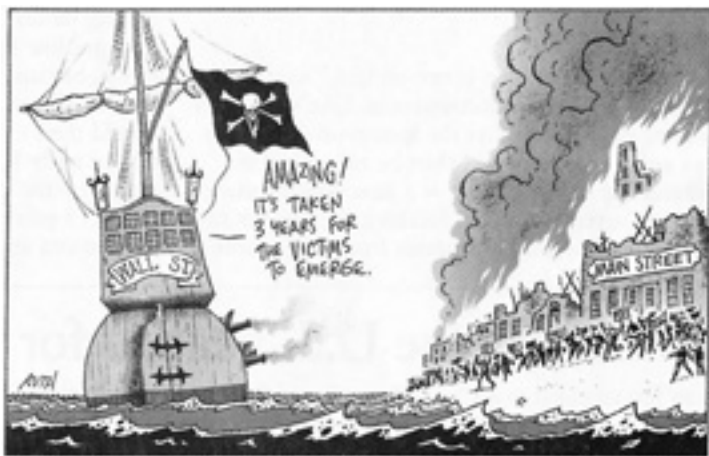
Many companies have since moved production abroad to other countries, such as Mexico, China, India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, where safeguards for workers don't generally exist. Meanwhile in Turkey, production factories also have moved to the informal sector where working conditions remain deplorable, and where health inspectors rarely set foot to correct unsafe conditions. The Turkish Solidarity Committee of Sandblasting Laborers estimates that as many as 5,000 sandblasting workers have developed silicosis.

Also, some designer names still refuse to cooperate with the campaign's call. Prada and Roberto Cavalli, for example, claim their supply chains don't use the sandblasting method, but have yet to formally ban the practice. Dolce & Gabbana has been even less cooperative. The Italian company refuses to ban the practice, blatantly ignoring the mounting evidence that links sandblasting of jeans to silicosis.

The Clean Clothes Campaign has joined with Change.org to launch an online petition urging Dolce & Gabbana to “Stop the Killer Jeans.” More than 45,000 signatures have been gathered. To sign the petition, visit the following link: <http://www.change.org/petitions/dolce-gabbana-stop-the-killer-jeans>.

In an ideal world, garment factories would be equipped with sandblasting booths, ventilation systems and (as a last resort) personal respirators for workers. Since that world is still in the making, advocates are calling on the garment industry to completely ban the use of sandblasting, to guarantee safe working conditions and to provide disability pensions to silicosis victims. For the latest news on the Clean Clothes Campaign's efforts against the dangerous practice of sandblasting, visit this link: <http://www.cleanclothes.org/news/killer-jeans>. ■

— Reported by Nancy López



# Campaign Update: Bangladesh's endless factory fires

Human rights abuses against labor activists in Bangladesh have not stopped them from waging a fight against unsafe working conditions in the country's garment industry. Over the last year leaders of the Bangladesh Center for Worker Solidarity have been arrested, threatened and beaten for demanding that garment workers receive better pay and worker compensation.

Internationally, organizations such as the Clean Clothes Campaign (Europe), the Maquila Solidarity Network (Canada), and the Worker Rights Consortium and International Labor Rights Forum (both US) are calling on all stakeholders — from apparel buyers to factory owners to the Bangladeshi government — to enforce workplace safety laws.

That is because hundreds of garment workers have died in Bangladesh in the last decade. A flagrant lack of government oversight has led to numerous factories operating under deplorable conditions — blocked stairways, no emergency exits, bad ventilation, missing or inappropriate fire extinguishers, and no emergency evacuation training. At least 33 major factory fires have been documented since 1990.

For international clothing retailers looking for cheap labor, Bangladesh has never been riper for the taking. Its economy relies heavily on garment exports, which now account for 78 percent of total exports. In the last five years, countries such as Canada have come to depend on Bangladesh for the cheap production of textiles and apparel — 10 percent of Canada's clothing is imported from Bangladesh. While the extra business has boosted jobs in the South Asian country, Bangladesh is still among the lowest-wage countries in the garment industry. Workers are paid extremely low wages (between \$23 and \$43 a month) and forced to work more than 12 hours a day, five to six days a week. Activists say that now more than ever, a "living wage" and safety regulations need to be enforced.

Years of factory audits by for-profit corporate code of conduct monitor-

ing companies have done little to curb the continued trend of fires erupting at factories and killing scores of innocent people. In fact, last year was marked with major disasters that have left at least 49 workers dead. When an electrical short-circuit began to emit thick smoke at the Garib & Garib Sweater Ltd factory in Bangladesh in late February 2010, 21 workers suffocated to death, another 50 were injured. Blocked stairways and locked exits obstructed them from escaping to safety. Then in March 2011, a fluorescent light at the Matrix Sweater factory exploded, causing a thick cloud of smoke.

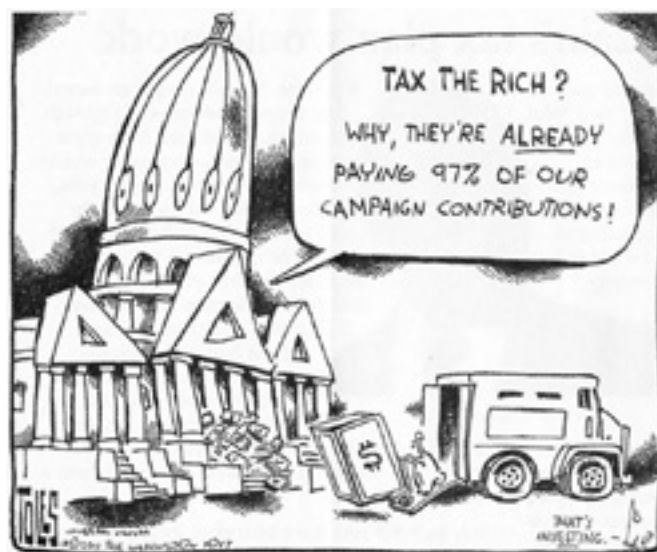
Despite the presence of a fire alarm, there were no emergency exits and the stairways were reportedly blocked with cartons. Twenty-five workers were injured that day, and one woman was crushed to death.

According to the international clothing retailers that contract with Garib & Garib, Matrix and other factories, compensa-

tion has been offered to families of the deceased in the 2010 and 2011 fires. Workers of the factory are also demanding, however, that the government and the Bangladeshi industry association improve factory working conditions to prevent another disaster from happening.

To learn more about the international campaign to put a stop to the unsafe working conditions rampant in the Bangladeshi garment industry, please visit Canada's Maquila Solidarity Network at <http://en.maquilasolidarity.org/node/934>. ■

— Reported by Nancy López



## ANROEV 2011 meeting held in India

The annual meeting of the Asian Network for the Rights of Occupational and Environmental Victims (ANROEV) was held in Jaipur, India, November 16-18th. A meeting of the Asian Ban Asbestos Network (ABAN) was held the two days before the conference. ANROEV is a grassroots network of 21 organizations in 14 Asian countries concerned about occupational safety and health issues, and other labor rights, affecting workers in both global supply chains and domestic industry in Asia.

In addition to plenary sessions and a business meeting of the organization, six workshops were held to share experiences, and to further coordinate international campaigns to eliminate hazardous exposures, and to secure compensation for ill workers and community members. The workshop topics included information and campaigns around asbestos, silicosis, victim organizing, electronics workers, and the resource mining industry.

US participants in the conference included representatives of the AFL-CIO's Solidarity Center, the International Campaign for Responsible Technology, and the Hesperian Foundation. A future newsletter will include a report of the conference's proceedings.



# Apple's Steve Jobs: The unpublicized legacy

When Steve Jobs, the co-founder of Apple, died from cancer in October it spawned a flurry of accolades from all around the world for the technological legacy he left behind. Thanks to Jobs' innovations, many enjoy a digital lifestyle where all media content is right at their fingertips. The iPod, the iPhone and most recently the iPad have essentially revolutionized the way we communicate, the way we read, and how we listen to music.

Also noteworthy, but less talked about however, is Apple's questionable legacy abroad, in China, for example, where most of the company's supply chains and manufacturers are located. These supplier companies are known to maintain unsafe working conditions while also paying workers low wages. The death of Jobs has overshadowed the fact that earlier this year, Apple was ranked last out of 29 technological companies for their lack of transparency and responsiveness to environmental concerns and working conditions in their supply chains in China, according to advocacy groups there.

Just this May, an explosion at a Foxconn factory in Chengdu where iPad2's are manufactured killed three workers and injured 15. The facility lacked adequate ventilation, causing dust to accumulate and ignite when a faulty pipe leaked gas. To make matters worse, almost a week later, the Hong Kong China news agency reported that a 20-year-old male worker at the company's plant jumped off the top of a company building. In the last two years, 19 Foxconn workers in Shenzhen have attempted suicide by throwing themselves off roofs, and 16 of these young people have died.

China is known for its seemingly endless supply of cheap labor, which is why so many manufacturing industries set up shop there. According to the China Household Electronic Appliance Association, about half all computers, cell phones and digital cameras are made in China. As it stands, Foxconn is one of the country's largest contract manufacturers, employing more than 400,000 workers who continue to be subject to these risks. Labor groups say

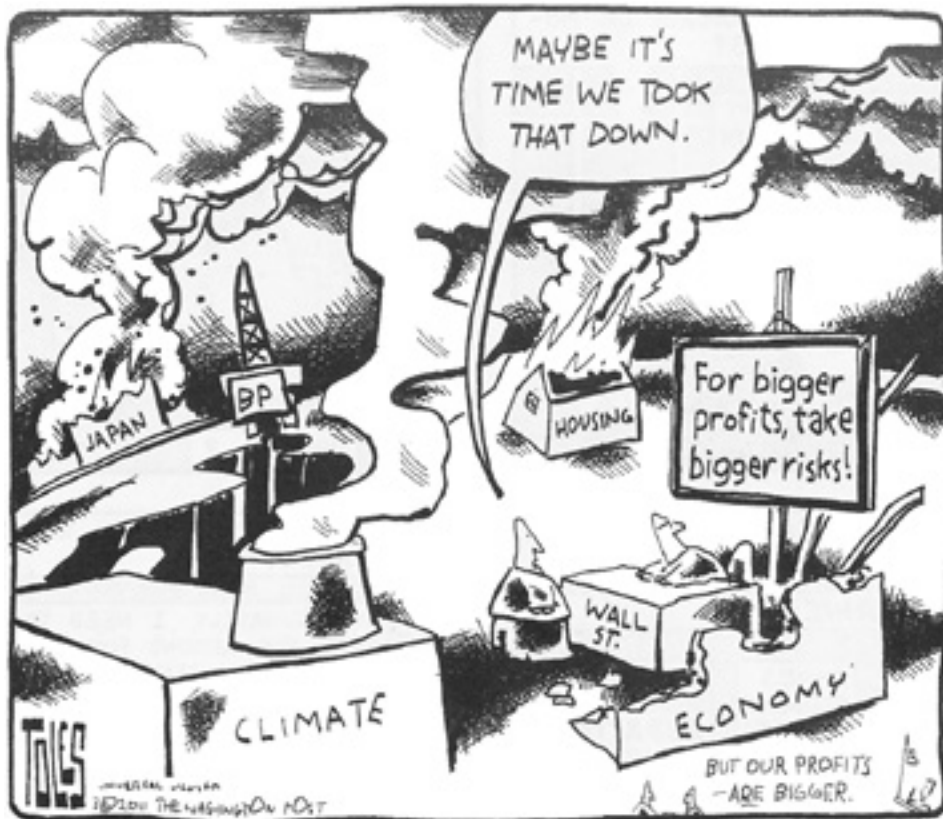
that large companies such as Apple need to hold their manufacturing contractors accountable to the health of their factory employees and should improve working conditions to also ensure their safety.

Apple and other electronics companies have responded to these complaints via highly-publicized corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs. Apple has hired "third party auditors" to inspect the safety of their factories abroad. They have established a Supplier Code of Conduct in which contractors agree to a maintain worker conditions safe as well as maintain factory conditions up to code. The company also began to publish a Supplier Responsibility report annually, which specifies the steps contractors must take to ensure worker safety. "We insist that our suppliers provide safe working conditions, treat workers with dignity and respect, and use environmentally responsible manufacturing processes," states the Apple website.

But many advocacy groups say these steps are not enough as conditions on the shop floor remain in clear violation of workers rights. Apple's own audit reports document many suppliers are way out of compliance with Apple's internal wage, hour and safety codes, as well as national and international laws — yet the contract factories continue to receive orders from Apple.

In the spring of this year, SACOM — Students & Scholars Against Corporate Misbehavior, a Hong Kong-based organization that advocates for labor rights in China — visited the new

(See *Apple's Steve Jobs*, page 8)



Check out our website for archived newsletters, extensive updated reading and resource lists, and more.

[www.igc.org/mhssn](http://www.igc.org/mhssn)

(Apple's Steve Jobs, from page 7)

Foxconn site in Chengdu where iPad's are being produced. The group reports that workers labor very long hours, including many hours of mandatory overtime. Workers are expected to stand for 10 hours on end and are forbidden to speak with one another while at work. They are forced to skip meals if they don't meet production quotas, according to the report, and workers are exposed to high levels of aluminum dust and not given personal protective equipment.

Apple's Chinese supply chains have also garnered negative attention on the environmental front. A coalition of Chinese NGOs led a seven-month investigation of the major electronics manufacturers in the country and found that high amounts of production produce comparable quantities of waste.

In their report, *The Other Side of Apple II — Pollution Spreads through*

*Apple's Supply Chain*, they document cases of serious environmental damage at more than 27 Apple supply chain factories, where laptop and smart phone parts are manufactured. For example, they found that Meiko Electronics of Wuhan, whose customers include Apple, Motorola and Siemens, has a 150-meter ditch where contaminated water runs through one side of the facility to Nantaizi Lake, eventually spilling milky-white fluids into Yangtze River.

Earlier this year, the European-based non-governmental organizations "makeITfair" and "GoodElectronics" started an international campaign under the banner: "Time to bite into a fair Apple." The campaign aims to pressure Apple to lead the way in guaranteeing proper work conditions in all its supply chains in China and set an example to all the other major players in the electronics industry.

To learn more about the campaign and what you can do, visit the following link: <http://goodelectronics.org/news-en/new-iphone-2013-old-problems/>. ■

— Reported by Nancy López

## NETWORKING NOTES

- The Hong Kong-based Asia Monitor Resource Center (AMRC) has published a series of challenging, thought-provoking reports regarding the nature and impact of "corporate social responsibility" (CSR) programs of transnational corporations in Asia. In 2010, AMRC issued a "Position Statement on Corporate Social Responsibility" (<http://amrc.01power.net/node/1061>). In January 2011, AMRC's *Asian Labour Update* magazine published an editorial "Global Supply Chains — Struggle within or against them?" ([www.amrc.org.hk/node/11720](http://www.amrc.org.hk/node/11720)). In September 2011, AMRC began a series of research papers on CSR with the first one entitled "Corporate Social Responsibility Revisited: Can it address Chinese workers' needs in a changing socio-economic context?" ([www.amrc.org.hk/node/1205](http://www.amrc.org.hk/node/1205)).
- MHSSN Coordinator Garrett Brown was invited to speak about the Network's work, as well as the underlying issues of worker H&S in global supply chains, several times this year. In February he spoke at the School of Public Health at San Diego State University. In March, Brown gave the closing remarks — to be published in the OHS journal *New Solutions* next year — to a health and safety conference sponsored by the WorkSafe organization based in Oakland, CA. In May, he made a presentation on the Dominican Republic "no sweat" Alta Gracia garment plant at the AIHA conference in Portland, OR. In July, Brown spoke at a conference organized by the UCLA Labor Center in Los Angeles on cross-border (US-Mexico) organizing and solidarity.
- Global workplace safety was the theme of several publications written in 2011 by Network coordinator Garrett Brown. Brown contributed to collection of essays on the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist factory fire published in March by the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH). In May 2011, Brown published an article on factory fires in Bangladesh, and the failure of CSR programs to stop them, in the trade publication *Industrial Safety and Hygiene News* ([www.ishn.com/articles/90824-corporate-social-responsibility-what-is-it-good-for](http://www.ishn.com/articles/90824-corporate-social-responsibility-what-is-it-good-for)).

## Quotes of the Year

*"One particular threat exists to worker safety and health due to the climate of uncertainty. It is directly expressed in the ISHN survey: 52 percent agree with the statement, 'The majority of safety and health pros lack the courage of their convictions to put their current jobs and future career aspirations at risk by standing up and speaking out about problems due to economic conditions and corporate politics.'"*

— Dave Johnson, "Are you ready for the new normal?," *Industrial Safety and Hygiene News*, January 2011.

*"Yet side by side with the ugliest of humanity, you find the best. The two sisters stood their ground. They explained calmly to the mob why they favor democratic reform and listened patiently to the screams of the pro-Mubarak mob. When the women refused to be cowed, the men lost interest and began to move on — then the two women continued to walk to the center of Tahrir Square... And incredibly, the democracy protesters held their ground all day at Tahrir Square despite this armed onslaught. Above all, I'll be inspired by those two sisters standing up to Mr. Mubarak's hoodlums. If they, armed only with their principles, can stand up to Mr. Mubarak's thuggery, can't we all do the same?"*

— Nicholas Kristof, "Watching Thugs with Razors and Clubs at Tahrir Sq," *New York Times*, February 2, 2011.