

FIRST LOCAL NEWS

Published by United Auto Workers Local 249—Kansas City, Missouri

March 2019



**Making readers
into leaders | p5**

**Pat Stoufer: A
steadfast union
activist | p6**

International Union United Auto,
Aerospace and Agricultural Workers Local 249
8040 NE 69 Highway
Pleasant Valley, MO 64068



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Abby Alley got a rose on Valentine's Day in the secret Valentine event sponsored by the Local 249 Member to Member Committee. The committee delivered a rose, a small box of chocolates and a card for a donation of \$10.



The UAW Local 249 Veterans Committee donated \$1,200 to the Veterans Affairs Volunteer Services and St. Michaels Veterans home in Kansas City February 14 .



The UAW Local 249 Motorcycle Committee passed out roses and cards to widows on Valentine's Day in cooperation with Widow Wednesdays, an organization committed to regularly visit widows and offer practical assistance with house & yard work.



Local 249's Consumer Affairs Committee sold yard signs and bumper stickers with the Union Label at the February membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

First Local News

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Retiree Representative Larry Rupp

The Regular Membership Meeting of United Automobile Workers Amalgamated Local Union 249 is held on the third Sunday of each month at 2:00 p.m. in the local union hall, 8040 NE 69 Highway, Pleasant Valley, Mo. The Executive Board Meeting is held at 1:00 p.m. prior to the Regular Membership Meeting.

UAW-Ford Joint Programs

Apprentice Training

Cortez Bradley 816-459-2060

Benefits

Steve Hibbs, Derron Joyner and Jason Hartman 816-454-6333

Employee Involvement

Chad Troncin 816-459-1372
Darroyce Thornton 816-459-1490

Employee Support Services

Kenny Alexander 816-459-1226

Health and Safety

Ed Samborski 816-459-1210 • Terry Tharp 816-459-1407
Ulysses Bales 816-459-1605 • Joe Camper 816-459-5559
Dave Sambol 816-459-1223

Quality

John Lowe and Jeff Wright 816-459-1232

Dealer Rep. Danny Mata

Job Sourcing and Production Standards

Jim Ryan and Todd Wyse 816-459-1466

Helpful Numbers

Quality Hotline 1-866-723-3937

Employee Health Services 816-459-1226

National Employee Service Center 1-800-248-4444

Blue Care 816-395-2700

Blue Cross PPO 1-800-482-5146

Preferred Care Blue PPO 816-395-3193

Child Care Referrals 866-327-7952

UNICARE Life Insurance 1-800-843-8184

UNICARE Medical/Disability Leave Claims 1-877-475-9652

Delta Dental (Active) 844-223-8520

Delta Dental (Retired) 800-524-0149

United Concordia Dental Plan 1-800-937-6432

Ford A,X,& Z Plan 1-800-348-7709

www.fordvehicleprograms.com

UAW-Ford Legal Services 800-482-7700

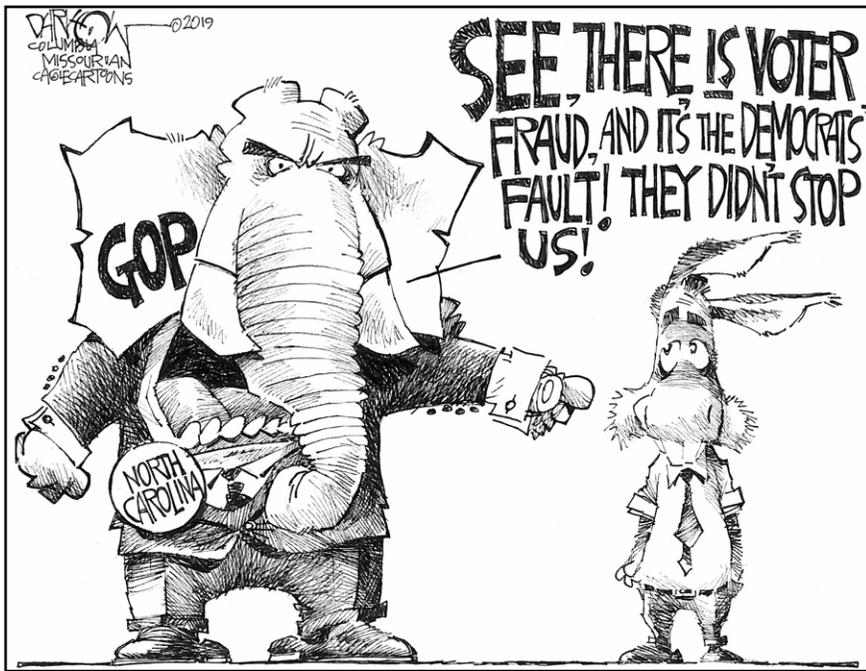
UAW-Ford TESPHE 1-800-248-4444

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GM cuts show labor contracts are more essential than ever

By Gary Jones

UAW members at General Motors plants are at a pivotal time in their lives. Faced with facility shutdowns and thousands of lost jobs — all while heading into 2019's collective bargaining process — their tomorrows bring uncertainty, questions and fear.

But what it doesn't bring is feeling alone. Because for the more than 130,000 UAW members affected by this next round of Detroit Three bargaining, they know the UAW has their back.

GM's devastating blow to idle four U.S. plants means the UAW will be called upon to show its might; to demonstrate our long-held purpose. We intend to enforce GM's promise not

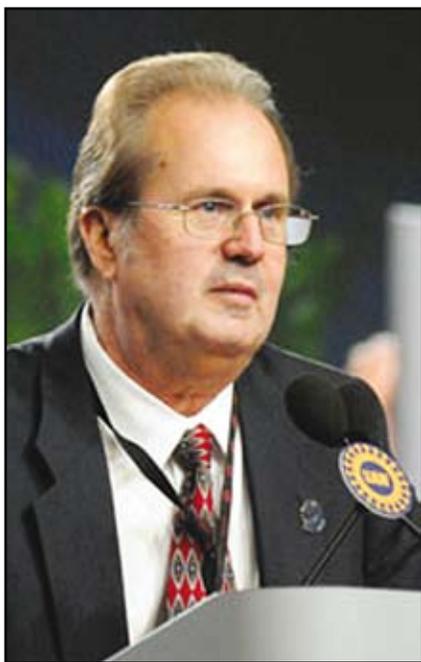
to close any UAW plant during the term of our contract. As we move toward negotiations this fall, we will build our collective bargaining power, standing united with our brothers and sisters.

Closing the four plants — Detroit-Hamtramck; Warren; Lordstown, Ohio; and Baltimore, Maryland — will depress local economies. These closings will impact thousands of UAW jobs and challenge the viability of ancillary businesses that depend on GM and put communities in peril.

The situation sets the stage for a major battle at the bargaining table to keep the plants open and save union jobs. It's a battle that can be won — and victory is possible solely because of our ability to collectively bargain.

Without a UAW contract, the UAW members affected by potential plant closings would have little recourse. There would be no hope, little job support, and the power on plant workers future and benefits would be solely with the employer. As a union, we have fought via collective bargaining for workers' rights since we were founded in May 1935. Since that day in Detroit, we have created a system of support and solidarity for all of our brothers and sisters impacted by GM's decision.

This guest column by UAW President Gary Jones first appeared in the Detroit Free Press.



President Gary Jones says the union will enforce GM's promise not to close any UAW plant during the term of our contract.

The Picket Line

Ford, VW continue talking

Despite a report that Volkswagen plans to invest \$1.7 billion in Ford's autonomous vehicle partner, a person close to the negotiations tells the Free Press that the talks continue with no specific numbers on the horizon.

"Both parties are still at the table and will be for months before a deal is reached, if a deal is reached at all," said a person who is involved with the meetings but not authorized to comment publicly.

Volkswagen and Ford Motor Co. have been talking since mid-2018 about collaboration, and in January 2019 announced an alliance to build light commercial vehicles and midsize pickup trucks. In addition, the carmakers have signed an agreement to keep talking about an additional partnership on costly driverless and electric vehicles. — *Phoebe Wall Howard, Detroit Free Press*

UAW sues GM over plans to 'unallocate' 3 plants before contract expires

The United Auto Workers is suing General Motors Co. over the automaker's plans to stop production at three U.S. plants before the current labor contract expires later this year.

The lawsuit filed by the UAW Tuesday in Ohio accuses GM of violating the terms of the 2015 UAW-GM national contract, specifically the Plant Closing and Sale Moratorium outlined in the agreement.

The union is seeking to keep Lordstown Assembly, Warren Transmission and Baltimore Operations running at least until the existing agreement between the UAW and GM expires in September. All three plants are slated to stop production in the coming months, with Lordstown the first to close its doors on March 8.

The automaker's Detroit-Hamtramck Assembly is not included in the lawsuit because production of the Cadillac CT6 and Chevrolet Impala was recently extended through January 2020, reaching beyond the expiration of the 2015 GM-UAW agreement. — *Nora Naughton, The Detroit News*

UAW VP Cindy Estrada on FCA US investment and jobs announcement

Today's announcement is great news for the members of the UAW, our represented suppliers and the communities that our members work in. At a time when the Detroit area and other communities are seeing auto plants without work and in jeopardy of closing while companies continue to ship vehicles into the US from Mexico, China, Korea and other countries it is exciting to see that we can work with FCA and secure good union jobs here in Michigan.

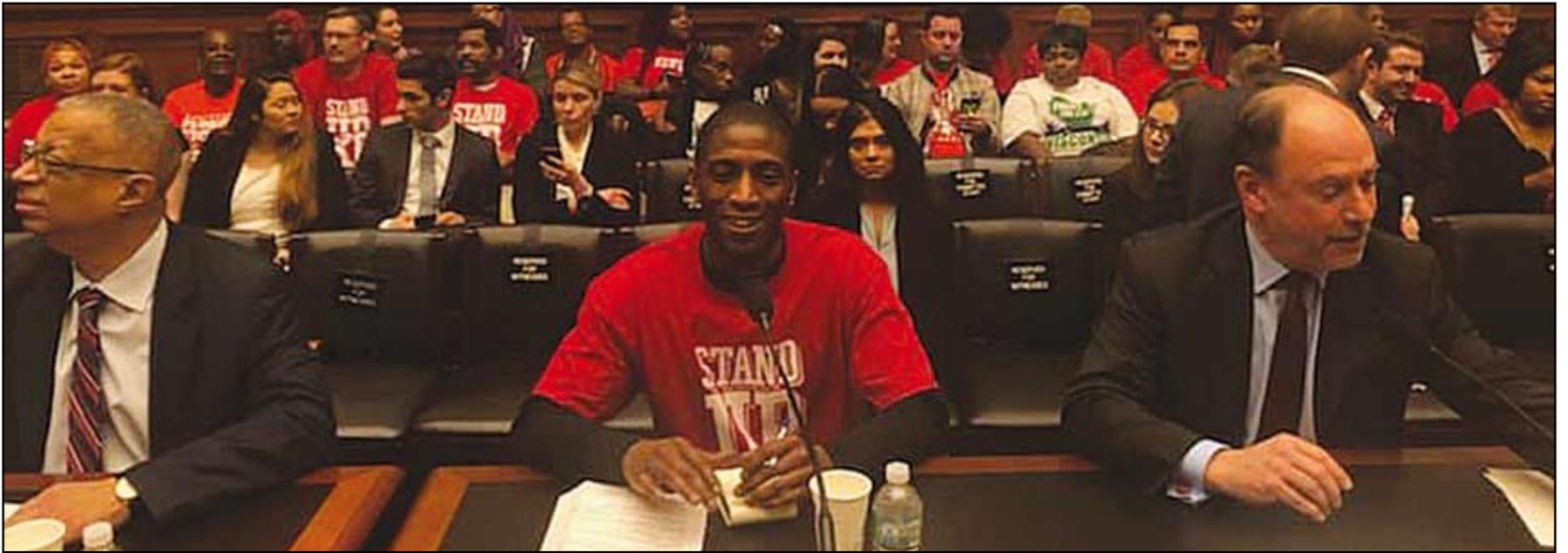
The UAW membership of FCA has lived through some tough times over the last 10-15 years. But through all of this they have continued to work hard and have been dedicated to building first class products for our customers. I look at this investment as a reward for these efforts and a show of confidence that the members of the UAW are the best auto workers in the world.

The new jobs that come with this announcement will be good UAW represented jobs. Jobs that will provide a good standard of living for our members and their families.

Today is also a great opportunity for the people of the Detroit area. The Motor City was built on the foundation of the auto industry with the UAW working with the Leadership of the City, State and Federal governments and the manufacturers to create thriving communities that provided a good livelihood for its citizens.

Walter Reuther said, "Labor has to make progress with the community, and not at the expense of the community."

So, I am dedicated not only to the needs of our membership as we transform our plants but also our neighbors as we transform our neighborhoods.— *UAW*



Testimony by Terrence Wise to the United States House of Representatives, speaking to Chairman Scott, Ranking Member Foxx, and Members of the Committee on February 7th about life as a second-generation fast-food worker and promoting raising the federal minimum wage to \$15.

Turning bad jobs into good jobs

By Terrence Wise

I'm a 39 year old, second generation fast food worker from Kansas City, Missouri. I am honored to speak with you about the Raise The Wage Act, the bill to raise the federal minimum wage to \$15.

I began fighting for \$15 and a Union six years ago, because I knew that just asking the boss for a raise and benefits wasn't enough. I felt the struggle of raising a family on low wages my whole life. It all began in South Carolina. I grew up in government housing with my two brothers and a sister. My mother worked full time at Hardee's for 30 years. My dad also served in the military as a cook.

My mom would wake me up at 4am when she left for Hardee's. I had to get my siblings off to school. It was also my job to get the mail and sign for food stamps from the postman. Even with two full-time incomes and food stamps, our family had to skip meals. One winter I didn't even have a coat until my guidance counselor gave me one from the lost and found. Hardworking people with two full-time incomes shouldn't live like this, in the richest nation on earth.

I was a great student and by the eighth grade was in advanced placement classes. My teachers said, "Terrence you're going to do great things. You can be anything." I wanted to be a Gamecock at the University of South Carolina. I was going to be a writer.

But I went to work at age 16 to try to help my family survive. One day I came home from school, there were no lights or food in the fridge and I couldn't do homework without food and lights.

So I went and got my first job at Taco Bell. I only made \$4.25 an hour, which I believe was the minimum wage at the time but I knew my family needed the money, desperately. My first paycheck was \$150. It went to the light bill. One job wasn't enough. So I got a second job at Wendy's to bring in more money for my family.

I tried to balance both work and school. I had As in AP History, English, Science, and Math. I started falling asleep in class. My teachers asked, "Terrence, what's wrong?" I told them I was working two jobs. I didn't need my AP Calculus to run the numbers at home. There simply wasn't enough money for basic necessities. I had left school and my dream of college behind. At 17, I became a full-time worker and was left with no other choice but to dropout of school. I've been working in fast food ever since.

Now, I have a family of my own. My fiancée is a home health care provider and we have three daughters.

I'd leave for work at Burger King at 2pm and then work the overnight shift at McDonald's from 10pm until 6am. Working 70 hours was a normal work week for me. I couldn't get my two jobs to line up with my off days. Sometimes I'd work for weeks without a day off.

Working for poverty wages doesn't just harm me. They hurt my whole family when I would only get to see my children when they were asleep.

My family has been homeless despite two incomes. We've endured freezing temperatures in our purple minivan. I'd see my daughters' eyes wide open, tossing and turning, in the back seat. Try waking up in the morning and getting ready for work and school in a parking lot with your family of five. That's something a parent can never forget and a memory you can never take away from your children.

I work for McDonald's, the second largest private employer in the world and still rely on food stamps and Medicaid. Like other working people in America fighting for \$15 and a Union, I want to stand on my own. I want to provide my girls with three meals a day and give them the opportunities I didn't have.

This is what generational poverty in America looks like. It's what our movement is fighting to end. It's why I joined the Fight for \$15 and a Union six years ago. I'm fighting to ensure my mother's past and my present is not my daughters' future.

This movement has changed my life and empowered my entire family. My daughters march on the front lines with me during strikes and rallies in the Fight For \$15 and a Union. They understand what it means to fight for justice and do whatever it takes. Many people didn't believe that \$15 was possible. But \$15 an hour has become a reality for 22 million workers.

75 percent of voters in Kansas City voted for a \$15 minimum wage in 2017. Workers won that victory by taking big, bold, and dramatic actions like going on strike, marching, and sleeping on

the steps of City Hall for a week in our "Fast for \$15." It was a huge victory for us until the state legislature preempted the minimum wage, returning it to \$7.65. Missouri voters increased the minimum wage in 2018 but we're still not achieving \$15 per hour—the minimum we need to support our families. That's why we need Congress to take action immediately to raise the federal minimum wage.

I often imagine what \$15 an hour would mean for me and my family. I wouldn't have to worry about providing the basic necessities for my family. We could keep food on the table. No one would have to worry about doing homework in the dark.

With a \$15 living wage, I could afford to take them out to do something fun. Honestly, the last time I went on a date with my fiancée, was to see the movie 'Matrix'. That was in 1999. It would mean my daughters could meet their grandmother for the very first time, because we could afford to travel to South Carolina to visit her.

We know that there is more work to do. Low wage workers like me, will continue to organize and fight so all working people have economic justice. My coworkers and I have lifted our voices from the steps of City Hall in Kansas City to the White House, and right here on Capitol Hill today.

Everyone who wakes up and works in our country deserves access to the promise that America made to each and every one of us: "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness." \$15 brings us closer to living out our values as a nation. The Raise the Wage Act will do just that.



Members of the UAW Local 249 Education Committee gathered with Martin Rucker and YMCA staff to organize and pack bags for the Head Start Raising a Reader program. Children receive a new bag weekly with a different set of books and learning DVDs after volunteers read to them. Photo by Don Lehman.

Making readers into leaders

By Chrissy Kline

Margaret Fuller, a nineteenth century female writer, once said “Today a reader, tomorrow a leader.” This embodies the spirit behind a project in which members of UAW Local 249 teamed up with YMCA leaders and a former pro-football player turned politician to bring the joy of reading to underprivileged children in Kansas City.

When UAW member and activist Shirley Mata was put on the Local 249 Education Committee, she had an idea for a project she called “Unions Read to Kids.” The intent was to have members of UAW Local 249 attend an after-school program and read books to children that would then be donated to those in attendance.

Mata was able to collect 350 books from members in the plant by walking up and down the assembly lines in search of donations and volunteers. By all counts the project appeared to be off to a roaring start, however state funding fell through and the after-school program was cancelled leaving a lot of books and disappointment on both sides.

The books were donated to kids during a joint program with Urban Success and the Local 249 Civil and Human Rights Committee, however the passion that had been stirred up amongst the membership still did not have a home.

Shirley never gave up hope on her

original idea and kept it in the back of her mind as she transitioned into focusing more of her efforts into politics. She began working with former Kansas City Chiefs tight-end Martin Rucker as he campaigned for the Missouri State Senate in District 34 and shared her union reader program idea with him.

When asked what drew her to him, she paused and said, “he is so involved in his community, seems truly genuine and was part of helping get Northland Progress [a non-profit, non-partisan group that Mata is also affiliated with] off the ground.” His connections in the communities that she was trying to reach, combined with a great deal of patience would help pave the way to the program we know today.

Two years later Martin was appointed to the Board of the YMCA, taking over a Head Start program in 5 greater Kansas City YMCAs. He contacted Mata and said, “This is where we do this.”

When Shirley was asked why the unions would want to be involved,

she was surprised. Her response, “Why wouldn’t we? We want to be involved in our communities, to help give our children a fighting chance in this world and to show a side of unions the media doesn’t let people see. We are committed to helping as many as we can.” According to Rucker, it was a “tremendous feeling of satisfaction and gratitude. We found a hole in the community, a need that needed filled and we were able to fill it with people who were passionate to serve.” He shared that he may not understand or have experienced the same situations as these folks but he can empathize with their situations and wants to help.

Mata and Rucker worked with staff to secure funding for the YMCA side of the plan to prevent a recurrence of the first attempt at starting this enterprise. As the program and its demands grew, Mata recruited another Local 249 member Terri Hall to the project and within two weeks they had enough volunteers to staff all the locations.

A subcommittee of the UAW Local 249 Education Committee was created for the sole purpose of managing the Raising a Reader program, led by Hall. This allows them to organize and staff all events, have backup readers and plan for any future changes.

Head Start came to the Local 249

union hall and trained all volunteers, did background checks and gave them badges for entry to the YMCA locations. Children who participate in the program receive a reusable red canvas bag each week containing a laminated book list, eight to ten books and some even contain a reading DVD. The bags are returned the following week and rotated so that children can receive new books each week.

Upon graduation from the program they turn in their final red bag and receive a blue bag as a gift. This bag contains books they have never read before and helps to encourage reading even after leaving the program.

“The kids get to know you and they expect to see you, so it is important to be consistent. They get attached quickly, it is hard work, but also incredibly fulfilling,” Hall shared. The program took off so successfully there has been discussion about taking the project nationwide, using Kansas City as their pilot program.

When asked how it felt to be a part of such an undertaking, Mata smiled, “I gave my dream to Martin. Martin gave it to Head Start. It then came together between all our minds and made this amazing project. Local 249 has never failed to come through.”

Pat Stoufer: A steadfast union activist

By Gwen Starkey

You can't do that kind of work was the first thing her dad blurted out when UAW Local 249 member Pat Stoufer told him that she wanted to work alongside him at Ford Motor Company back in the fall of 1991. She asked him if there were other women that worked there and when he replied yes, that was all she needed to hear. "If they can do it, so can I," she said and when she found out that they were getting ready to hire 600 people, she put in 10 applications thinking she'd have a better chance of snagging a job. That thinking paid off two fold as they called her twice for an interview.

She showed up at her interview in a skirt and pumps. "I didn't even own a pair of tennis shoes," she said. "All I've ever done is office work." When she landed the job and reported for work, things weren't exactly as she had envisioned. She wanted her first day to be her last day.

"What have I gotten myself into? I wanted to quit so bad," she said. "I've never done any kind of factory work and I sure didn't want to do this. I had no idea it was going to be like this, but I couldn't quit because my daddy already said I couldn't do it and I didn't want him to be right. I thought, well, if they fired me then that wouldn't really be my fault, and I could go back to my old job". But they didn't fire her, and 27 years later she's still here. "I'm glad I stayed," she says. After the first couple of months, she fell into a routine and has never looked back.

Stoufer, who currently works dayshift Transit, Dept. 85 as an inspector, has held many positions on the plant floor. She's noticed that things are much different from when she first hired in. Gone are the big heavy guns hanging from the ceiling on the frame line.

"I would push the torque button on the gun and it would move my body and whip me around the vehicle. They were so much more powerful than me," she says. "Now the power tools are much smaller, and much less torque is needed to complete the job. The company has made so many changes. I feel as if I'm a part of something now instead of being treated like a robot or machine."

"Don't think the company did that all on their own, just because they're trying to be nice. That's not at all how it happened," she says. "This is 100 percent because we have a strong union backing us. If there were no union in here, we would still be robots. I have no doubt about that."

That's when the spark went off in Pat's head. She wanted to become involved and learn as much as she could about the humble beginnings of the

UAW. She immersed herself in gaining knowledge. She became involved in the Worker-to-Worker program eventually becoming its chairperson. She joined the Education Committee and then moved over to the CAP Committee. It's there where she learned the political ins and outs of the union. "I loved the CAP Committee and always gave to VCAP," she said. "I finally understood what they were doing with all my donations."

For over 17 years, Pat's been quite active in our union teaching diversity classes, along with green and black belt classes. During Summer School, she taught at the union hall about Walter Reuther and the history of the UAW. She also taught the new hire orientation classes. "I pushed a lot of Walter Reuther and the UAW history to the new hires," she said. "New hires think that it's Ford that gives them everything and they don't realize who Walter Reuther was and how he fought for freedom and equal rights just as Martin Luther King did. I had to drill this into their heads. They just never realized that. This actually motivated them to get interested in wanting to learn more."

Pat has been the motivating force behind many of the plant fundraisers becoming the top fundraiser in the plant. Over the years she's had several members come up to her that remember her teaching them in a class or helping with a fundraiser and said the many things they learned from her are reasons why they are still working at Ford today. "This is only something you can learn by becoming active in the union," she says. "Ford doesn't teach you that."

When her husband Jim was elected UAW Local 249 President, she convinced him to return her to the Education Committee, eventually becoming Chairperson. "I was very active and I learned a lot," Stoufer says. "I love everything about the union and I know 100 percent why Ford is the way it is and that's because of our strong union. I love telling our UAW history.



UAW Local 249 member Pat Stoufer has been on the job for 27 years. Stoufer, who currently works on dayshift in Transit, Dept. 85 as an inspector, has held many positions on the plant floor. Photo by Don Lehman.

Our new hires need to know about Walter Reuther and appreciate their jobs. They just think they have walked into a great job and what they don't realize is all the fight that it took to get that job. These people need to know all that history."

Stoufer has slowed down some after going through the fight of her life with a double mastectomy trying to fight cancer, but that hasn't stopped this fireball. Going through 18 weeks of very aggressive chemotherapy treatments, the last thing she had to worry about was the costs. "Our insurance was a godsend," she said. It covered my cancer 100 percent. One chemo treatment was \$250K and I didn't pay one dime while I was going through

chemo. I wasn't even paying a copay. I paid nothing." She is so thankful for her union negotiated insurance benefits.

Pat is one heck of a volunteer and an even better coworker. When a coworker of hers lost a family member, she and fellow workers donated and helped organized a repast dinner for her and her family. She volunteers wherever she is needed, whenever she is called.

What's the future hold for us? "Support your union," she says. "We have a wonderful leadership team in place, and our current president and bargaining committeemen are the best and we need that considering we are headed into what might be a very heated contract negotiation time."



"When you are on a job that you love, you never have to work a day in your life," says UAW Local 249 member Willa Leach. Leach, who works in E-Coat as a body sealer, is in her 42nd year at Ford Motor Company and still going strong. Photo by Don Lehman.

Pioneer UAW women in the workforce

By Gwen Starkey

More women in the workforce are working longer and retiring later than ever before yet very few of them toil long enough to receive a 50-year pin or party from a single employer, but that's not stopping UAW Local 249's Willa Leach from trying. She's quickly coming up on her 42nd anniversary with Ford Motor Company and doesn't see an end in sight.

Her 42-year tenure puts her among a handful of UAW Local 249 women workers who have celebrated such historic work anniversaries. Hiring on in May of 1977 Leach says, "When you're on a job you love, you never have to work a day in your life." Leach has been a body sealer on the finesse deck in the Commercial E-Coat system since hiring in.

Don't let her kid you, work at the plant 40 some years ago was anything but fun. "It was hot, and the hours were long. We didn't have the cooler air coming in through the vents like we do now, and half the time even the fans were broken," she says. We were here to work. We didn't have restrictions available to us as they do now; we even had to share the restrooms with the men," but that didn't stop her.

Leach says that working in a "man's

world" never bothered her. "We never received any favoritism because we were women," she said. I was told that if you wanted a job here, then you are here to work, if not, you can take Highway 69, North or South, it's your choice."

What keeps Willa returning day after day? She says there were good and bad times too, but whatever problems arose, she just worked her way through them and moved along. "I got on a job and I enjoyed it, she says. I like my co-workers. I don't like just sitting all day. I have to be moving around," and moving around she does, as it is quite the hike from the parking lot to the E-Coat area on the second floor at the rear of the plant.

Willa keeps busy outside of work as well, as she works tirelessly helping the Kansas City homeless population

by donating her time and energy trying to make their lives better. "I work with the homeless people living on the street through my church and on my own," she says. I give them some of the things that I think they might need like food and clothing. You can't judge a person. They are sleeping on the streets and to me they are there for a reason. I do this on my days off. I hand out coats, blankets, gloves and snack foods."

"I just load up my vehicle and head to the areas that I know I'll be able to reach out to folks. Everyone is so grateful to see that someone cares about them."

Leach also supports the City Union Mission "They take in so many people off the streets and help them," she says. "I do this because I want to help and I'm able to help." It's something she's been doing for 15 years or more.

Leach says that she is thankful that she's able to work as long as she has and credits the union for negotiating equal pay and benefits for women when women weren't always considered equal in the workplace. "I love my

union and I'm thankful for the benefits we have fought for. If it weren't for the UAW, many people wouldn't have the great jobs and benefits that we have now. It's a tremendous help."

She does express concern about the amount of temporary workers in the plant and worries about their job security. "You have to do your part and support your union," she says. What we have today was not given to us from the generosity of the company; you had to fight for everything you got. You can't expect the union to do everything for you; you've got to stand with them."

What's the secret to her longevity? "I get my rest and eat properly," she says. I have a very good doctor and I don't let anything worry me. If something arises and I can fix it, I fix it. If I can't, I do what I practice. I give it to the lord and then keep on moving." She says worrying about stuff will make you sicker than any other kind of disease. She has a fantastic attitude and at this rate, there's no doubt that she'll make her golden anniversary with Ford Motor Company.



Tribunes of the people

By Pat Hayes

When it comes to doing the people's business, foot dragging has been refined into the highest of arts in Jefferson City. If it could be captured by a painting or memorialized in sculpture it would be auctioned off at Sotheby's to the highest bidder alongside the Picassos and Rembrandts, perhaps to be donated at a later date by some billionaire to one of those monuments of high culture like the Guggenheim or the Museum of Modern Art.

These delaying tactics nearly cost Local 249 members their jobs in 2009 when the legislature initially refused to take up Gov. Jay Nixon's Missouri Manufacturing Jobs Act which provided incentives to Ford Motor Co. to bring the Transit commercial van to the Kansas City Assembly Plant when Escape production was moved to Louisville. It took a special session of the legislature and the breaking of a filibuster to get the Jobs Act through the Republican-controlled legislature to save the plant and the thousands of jobs that go with it.

It doesn't happen often, but every now and then people get so fed up that they take it on themselves to do the legislators jobs for them. Last August, following a hugely successful petition drive to place repeal of right to work on the ballot, voters overwhelmingly rejected the legislature's cynical union busting law. This was followed in November when the citizens of the state rebelled once again to place four constitutional amendments and three propositions on the ballot. Of those – ethics reform, minimum wage and medical marijuana – were approved with 60 percent approval.

Naturally, this turn of events set off alarm bells in Jefferson City. As the new session of the legislature got underway, once plodding legislators threw off the traces and came out of the gate like Triple Crown winners.

The first target of our newly energized legislators was the ethics reform amendment to the state constitution approved by the voters in November. Clean Missouri was designed to make state government more transparent, limit the power of big money in our legislature, and hold legislators accountable when they fail to act in the public interest.

The legislators were particularly incensed by the open records provisions in the ethics reform amendment which would require them to follow the same Sunshine Laws that apply to other government agencies. This challenge to sanctity "constituent communications" acted like a jolt of adrenalin to the once sleepy House which quickly approved a new house rule to exempt any "correspondence, written or electronic, between a member and a constituent" from the open records provisions of the state constitution.

To the great relief of our elected

officials, the new house rule, much like the "Mission Impossible" messages that self-destruct in five seconds, will protect these precious "constituent communications" from the prying eyes of the press and public.

In this the legislature has taken a page from disgraced Republican Gov. Eric Greitens who used the message-destroying smartphone app, Confide, to conduct state business, conceal an extramarital affair with his hair dresser and deal with the messy consequences of having blackmailed her with nude photos he allegedly took while she was tied up in his basement rec room.

They may also have been mentored by Josh Hawley, Missouri's newly elected junior senator. The boyish Hawley, who served as the state's Attorney General before escaping from the backwaters of Jefferson City to the bright lights of the nation's capital, "was using the private accounts to communicate with his out-of-state consultants," according to the *Kansas City Star*.

Those "out of state consultants," it appears, were tasked with instructing employees in the attorney general's office to put their shoulders to the wheel of their boss's senate campaign while on the state payroll. To avoid momentum-killing reports in the media that he had outsourced the running of his office, Hawley too became a fan of unofficial private e-mail services and secret messaging apps.

Having so successfully gotten the bit between their teeth to overturn the open records provisions approved by

the voters, once lethargic legislators have now turned their attention to making it more difficult for the citizens of the state to petition to place initiatives on the ballot.

"The current initiative process is no longer a citizens-driven grassroots process, but a corporate one that circumvents the will of the people expressed in our republic form of government," according to Republican state senator Dave Sater. "Our constitution is a very sacred document and it should not be for sale to the highest bidder."

Normally, an initiative that passes with a 60 percent majority is thought to express the will of the people. On the planet where most of us live, raising the minimum wage, ethics reform and repeal of right to work are not life and death priorities for the corporate titans who rule our state through the kind of "constituent communications" that must be hidden from public view.

The idea that elected officials, like Sater, would avoid making laughably untrue public statements is hopelessly naive, because there is no penalty. Republicans, who are the authors of union busting right to work bills and other outrages against working people currently hold what is called a trifecta in Missouri politics. They not only have all three branches of government, they hold overwhelming majorities in both houses of the legislature.

Until anti-worker Republican legislators pay a price for their betrayal of the people they're supposed to represent there will be no change in Jefferson City.

Local 249 prepares for negotiations

By Jim Fisher

The Truck System will remain on a 3-Crew pattern with B Crew scheduled for a Super Production Day on March 9th. The last couple of Super Production Days have been used to make up lost units from the recent snow storms. At the time of this article there are no other Super Production Days scheduled for the Truck Side. The Transit System will remain on a 5-Day pattern. The Transit Day Shift is scheduled for a Super Production Day on March 9th as well. The Transit System has also used a couple Super Production Days to make up lost production from the recent storms. We have been told that the Transit System could start scheduling more Saturdays beginning in April. As always the schedules are subject to change.

In September of this year both our Local and National agreements with Ford are set to expire. I know for many of our members this will be the first time they have gone through contract negotiations.

To break down the differences in the two agreements, the International Agreement covers issues such as pay raises, bonuses, temporary workers, health care benefits, product commitment, and holidays.

The Local Agreement covers how we run the day to day business here at Kansas City Assembly Plant. Such issues covered in our local agreement would be things like the calendar program, overtime equalization, shift preference agreements, and the Stop Button Procedure.

In March the UAW will begin to take the first steps in preparing for negotiations both on the local level and International level. The first part of this process has already been completed, and that is taking national proposals from the membership. As I reported out earlier Local 249 has submitted 67 proposals for consideration.

In March the UAW will hold its National Bargaining Convention. This is an opportunity for the delegates to state their position on topics of negotiations for the next contract. After that, the Local 249 leadership team will attend meetings to explain why our national proposals need to be sent to the bargaining table.

For the local negotiations another bulletin will be handed out for local proposals. Once all have been collected our bargaining team will begin to sort through the proposals. As you can imagine this takes some time and those selected will be drafted into local proposals used for our negotiations here at KCAP.

Sometimes, while negotiations are in progress there is typically a point where there won't be as many updates. No details does not mean there is no progress being made. The reason for this is we do not wish to leak too much

information to the company on what the bargaining teams are trying to accomplish. We strongly encourage our members to attend the union meetings for updates and to ask questions.

The next few months have the potential to be very trying for our membership and quite hectic for those in leadership. There is no one in our local leadership that wishes for any kind of work stoppage due to negotiations, however this is the time to begin to plan for that being a possibility. With members receiving tax refunds and profit sharing checks, now is the time to plan for how a work stoppage would affect you financially.

Take advantage of every resource you have available to you. Speak with your bank or a financial planner to see what changes could be made to help you save money. Consider holding off on any large purchases until next year that might make your monthly



At the UAW Local 249 monthly membership meeting, Jim Fisher informed the membership that now is the time to plan how a work stoppage would affect you financially. We must all stand together and truly act as a union to get through the upcoming contract negotiations. Photo by Don Lehman

finances difficult to manage during a work stoppage. Look into any areas you can be stricter with your finances personally, as we strive to do the same as a local.

One thing about a plant of our size, is there is always some lighthearted bickering about which shift works more hours, builds more units, or is the most important to the plant. Sometimes lighthearted can turn mean

spirited with the help of social media and the disengaged. Now is the time to put all that behind us. We must all stand together as there are much more important issues for us to be talking about. We must truly act as a union to get through the next few months and stand united as one voice. We cannot let the company, the news, or misinformation get between us. Here at KCAP we are better than that.

Open Enrollment Hourly Optional Life Insurance



April 22nd – May 31, 2019.
In Addition this year,

ONE-TIME ONLY

Open Enrollment for
Optional Long
Term Disability
will be available with the
Optional Life Insurance
Open Enrollment.

The UAW Local 249 Education Committee 1st Annual Diaper Drive



This will benefit the local YMCA Headstart Program. Some families struggle with getting the basic needs for their families like diapers, wipes, bottles, etc...

You can help by donating:
Diapers (Size newborn to Pull Ups)
Diaper Cream
Wipes
New Bottles
Formula

You can bring your donations over to the
Union Hall M-F 7:30 AM - 5:00 PM
From now until Friday, April 5th, 2019

UAW prepares for contract negotiations

By Jason Starr

Local 249 delegates Jim Fisher, Dean Freed, Steve Chorbak, Dana Davidson, Sade Ott, Ron Pangborn, Tony Renfro, Ed Scaggs and I head for Detroit March 11 for the UAW Special Bargaining Convention. At the convention, delegates from across the country and from many UAW-represented industries, including auto, aerospace and agricultural implements, will hammer out a broad strategy for the next round of contract negotiations.

With the current contracts with Ford, General Motors and Fiat-Chrysler set to expire Sept. 15, the attention of UAW members — and the nation — will turn to our union's negotiations with the Detroit 3 automakers.

Local unions across the country — including Local 249 — have forwarded resolutions submitted by members to the Resolutions Committee for presentation to the convention.

In addition, there have been a number of leadership meetings over the past several months to prepare for the convention.

General Motors laid down a big marker with its announcement that it will halt production at the Lordstown Assembly plant in northeast Ohio, Detroit-Hamtramck Assembly plant in southeast Michigan, Oshawa Assembly plant in Ontario, Baltimore Operations parts plant in Maryland and its Warren Transmission Operations plant in southeast Michigan by the end of 2019.

The announcement threatens the jobs of some 5,600 UAW members at the affected plants.

UAW President Gary Jones believes that General Motors is in breach

of the 2015 Collective Bargaining terms. He is determined to leave no stone unturned to make sure that UAW members' contractual rights are honored. The union filed a lawsuit Feb. 26 demanding that GM fulfill its contractual obligations by continuing operations at those plants.

Whatever the result of the lawsuit, the announcement by GM should alert UAW members that getting viable products into plants to keep them open and jobs safe will probably be at the center of negotiations in the coming year.

UAW members are rightly frustrated because we believe that our hard work and sacrifices should have resulted in higher wages and better benefits than we currently earn.

In 2008, when GM and Fiat-Chrysler went into bankruptcy during the Great Recession, one of the requirements to get a government bailout to preserve jobs and retiree benefits was that the union agree to concessions, including two-tier contracts.

This was difficult — and let's be honest — divisive, but it protected the jobs of existing UAW members and



President Jason Starr displayed UAW Region 5 V-CAP awards won Local 249 at the February membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

paved the way for hiring thousands of new autoworkers who otherwise would not have gotten jobs.

In the contracts since, the legacy members have seen only small gains while we tried to close the gap for in-progression members.

There are a number of reasons that the union hasn't been able to win the big gains that our members surely deserve.

Chief among them is that less than half of auto production in the country is unionized. Foreign companies have taken advantage of right-to-work laws that prevent unionization in the South, and anti-worker Republicans have weakened labor protections that once gave workers the right to organize.

Aggregate wages and benefits are lower for foreign-owned auto manufacturers in the South giving them a competitive advantage. That makes it harder for the UAW to win higher wages and better benefits for our members in unionized plants.

Many had hoped that renegotiating NAFTA might raise wages in Mexico so that auto workers in both countries could compete on an even playing field, but the results have been disappointing. Despite all the publicity, the only real change to the trade pact has been the name.

The rising cost of health care insurance has also played a role. Because the United States doesn't have a national health care plan, like other advanced industrial countries, much of the money that might have been directed to the wage increases we deserve has

gone instead to maintain health care coverage for our members.

Despite the difficult circumstances we've faced in negotiations over the past decade, UAW-Ford members, on aggregate, remain the highest paid and have the best benefits in the auto industry.

What will it take to win the kind of contracts we successfully negotiated when the UAW represented nearly 100 percent of the industry? The kind of contracts we truly deserve?

First we will have to elect representatives at the state and federal level who will strengthen and enforce labor laws that give all workers the right to join unions, negotiate contracts and go on strike if necessary. Above all that means that workers in the right-to-work South must be unionized.

Second, our trade laws have to be renegotiated to prevent greedy corporations from exploiting workers in low-wage countries such as Mexico.

Third, enacting a single payer national health plan, such as Medicare for All, will allow us to fight for higher wages rather than direct more money to insurance premiums.

What will it take for those things to happen? It will require voting out corporate-owned politicians. To do that, our membership will have to become more engaged and active in the fight. It will also require rebuilding the labor movement. To do that, we have to understand that power of the union comes not from the leadership, but from an active membership that is ready and willing to fight.



UAW-Ford Fitness Center

Open Monday through Friday 9:00 a.m. to 7:00 a.m. (22 hrs.)
Saturday 10:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Sunday 2:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

Located in the Education Bldg.

Call 459-1945 for more information.

Too old to work and too young to die

There's a pension in your future, Bugas, was written on the picket sign of one old worker who marched in support of the UAW drive for pensions for workers in 1949. "How about ours?" Bugas referred to John Bugas, Ford Motor Company's chief negotiator, who like other Ford executives, had their retirement security nailed down. But for the \$3,000-a year auto worker, life was different. They worked until they dropped from exhaustion, and the lines had aged workers with gnarled hands and weathered faces who couldn't afford to retire.

Social Security, which had begun to pay out benefits in 1941, had been stuck at a low level for 12 years. The UAW set out to change these conditions the double standard that characterized American industry. And we got some needed help. Under President Harry Truman, The National Labor Relations Board ruled in March, 1949 that companies must bargain with their unions on pensions.

That ruling opened the door. Walter Reuther, the visionary president of the UAW, called for pro-pension rallies around the country to mobilize popular support. "Too old to work and too young to die," became the slogan of autoworkers.

"We won't sign a contract at Ford in '49 that does not include a pension plan," Reuther told 5,000 Ford workers at Cass Technical High School in Detroit. When Reuther called for a strike vote, Ford workers authorized it by a huge majority.

Finally, the break-through came in September 1949 when the UAW won a \$100-a-month pension, including Social Security benefits which averaged \$32.50 a month at age 65 with 30 years of service. It was far better than any worker had expected the UAW to win.

Congress also got the message. Within 24 hours of Ford signing the contract, the U.S. House of Representatives raised Social Security benefits for all Americans. That was no coincidence. With a pro-pension fervor sweeping the country, business lobbyists saw a Social Security increase as a way to save their employers money.

The UAW established important principles with the Ford pension: There was joint and equal administration of the plan. The entire cost of the pensions would be paid by Ford Motor Company. Benefits were guaranteed to the retired worker through an actuarially sound fund. These basic rules have remained intact because they have been proven sound for more than 40 years.

Then the UAW sought to expand pensions to other employers. Chrysler readily agreed to the \$100 benefit won at Ford. But they didn't want to agree

to fund the benefits. UAW workers at Chrysler walked the picket line for 104 days in the bitter cold winter of 1950 to convince the company to agree to a funded plan.

In those days, the UAW didn't have a strike fund so the Chrysler workers relied on meager help from a special assessment.

Another important step was taken in negotiations with General Motors. The UAW proposed, and the corporation agreed, to break the link with Social Security and instead base the workers' pension on the length of service with the corporation.

The agreement provided GM workers \$1.50 a month in benefits for every year of service up to 30 years. With \$45 added to the new Social Security benefit of \$72, the GM retiree with 30 years of service, would get more than \$117 a month.

The UAW pattern set at these big companies soon was accepted in negotiations at a diverse range of smaller firms: Massey Harris, Nash-Kelvinator, Budd, Detroit Tool and Die shops, Allis-Chalmers, American Seating, Briggs, Borg-Warner, Dana, Caterpillar, Doehler-Jarvis, Bendix, Hudson, Packard and Mack Truck.

The UAW's newspaper in the early 1950s told the stories of workers who were able to retire: a 72-year old worker at the Nash paint shop in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and a 78-year old grandmother at a small shop in Detroit. And in subsequent negotiations, the UAW improved our pensions, adding medical care for retirees, the right to take pensions before age 65 and many other features.

We have come a long way since 1951, but the battle still continues. The UAW has done well for its older and retired workers. Here's what has happened to the benefits of the average member.

From the beginning in the 1950s, of the \$100 pension benefit – which included Social Security – the union's negotiators have steadily increased pensions. UAW members with pensions are fortunate indeed. Not all UAW retirees receive pensions and only 45 percent of American retirees



The UAW, with the help of its members and retirees have come a long way, but we still have a hard fight ahead of us.

have any pension at all. UAW pensions in the auto industry rank in the top 10 percent of private pensions.

A large proportion of the UAW auto industry workforce is eligible to retire in the next few years. Nearly half of the UAW members at the Big Three and Delphi will have the necessary combination of age and years of service to retire within the next five years. Currently, GM has about 2 retirees per active worker compared to the one to one ratio of active workers to retirees at Ford and DaimlerChrysler.

We have come a long way since 1951, but the cost of retiree pensions and benefits or "legacy costs" has caused companies and the government to try to pass more of these costs onto retirees. A study released by the Kaiser Foundation and Hewitt Associates reported that premiums for retirees who get health care benefits from their former employers jumped an average of 25 percent in 2004.

According to a study conducted by Hewitt Associates and the Kaiser

Foundation, only 14 years ago, 80 percent of employers with 1,000 or more workers offered health care coverage to retirees. By 2003, the number is down to only 57 percent. For employers with 200 or fewer employees, just 38 percent provide retiree health insurance.

The UAW is continuing to fight to maintain and enact legislation to protect retirees and the lifestyle to which they are entitled. This is why it is so critical for retirees to become involved and support their union and the active membership in their struggles to retain pension plans, social security, health care and organizing.

"The essence of trade unionism is social uplift. The labor movement has been the haven for the dispossessed, the despised, the neglected, the downtrodden, the poor," quote from A. Phillip Randolph.

The UAW, with the help of its members and retirees have come a long way, but we still have a hard fight ahead of us. - **UAW**

<p>PROUD</p>  <p>LOCAL 249</p> <p>UNION HOME</p> <p>UNITED AUTO WORKERS</p>	<p>Yard Signs and Bumper Stickers</p> <p>\$20 Buys Both! Details at the Union Hall.</p>
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UAW Local 249 member Ryan Franke, a recent addition to the KCAP Emergency Response Team, was at the right place at the right time when recently dining at a local Applebee's. When a man began to choke, Franke stepped in and put his training to use, saving the man's life and calming a chaotic situation. Paramedics said his training was perfect. He did exactly what he was supposed to do. Photo by Don Lehman.

KCAP ERT rings in the new year by saving a life

By Pat Hayes

Ryan Franke, a member of the Emergency Response Team at the Ford Motor Kansas City Assembly Plant, really knows how to ring in the new year. On New Year's Eve Franke was enjoying a bite to eat at the Applebee's in Gladstone after he finished his shift in MP&L on A-Crew in the Truck System. He was talking to friends when a commotion started right behind where he was sitting.

The restaurant manager came running. "He's choking," he shouted, "he's choking."

Franke turned to see a diner at the table behind him in severe distress. His hands were at his throat, the universal sign that someone is choking. He couldn't breathe. He was turning red. Franke, who joined the ERT at KCAP in August knew that without immediate help, the man could die.

Although Franke was relatively new to the plant's ERT, he'd successfully completed a number of basic first

responder courses including First Aid, AED, CPR and Blood Borne Pathogens with trainers from Emergency Response Solutions International. ERSI, based in Plymouth, Mich. provides on-site first responder training to all Ford Motor ERTs in the U.S., Canada and Mexico. All ERSI trainers are working firefighters and paramedics with years of hands-on experience in the disciplines they teach.

In sizing up the situation, Franke saw that the Applebee's manager was attempting, unsuccessfully, to perform

the Heimlich Maneuver, a first-aid procedure for dislodging an obstruction from a person's windpipe in which a sudden strong pressure is applied on the abdomen, between the navel and the rib cage.

People were starting to panic. That's when Franke's training kicked in. He knew he had to take charge of the situation.

"Call 911," he told a lady with a phone as he took over from the restaurant manager.

Franke got behind the choking man, bent him forward and put his hands around his waist. He made a fist and performed abdominal thrusts as he had been trained.

"A big piece of steak popped out of the man's mouth," says Franke. "He was able to breathe again."

Within minutes, Gladstone para-

medics arrived on the scene. They examined the patient who was recovering and declined to be taken to the hospital. After talking to the patient and the Applebee's manager, the ambulance crew talked to Franke.

"You did just what you were supposed to do," they told him. "The training was perfect."

Franke has also completed basic training in HAZMAT Operations, Confined Space and High Angle Rescue. He's waiting for an opportunity to take the Incipient Fire Fighting class that is offered to all ERTs.

"The world class training each of our ERTs get when they join the team makes our plant a safer place to work," says KCAP ERT Coordinator Keith Jones. "As Ryan's experience shows, it also makes the communities where we live stronger and safer. That benefits everyone."