

FIRST LOCAL NEWS

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

February 2020



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



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Members of UAW Local 249 helped load 820 turkeys donated to area social service agencies that were purchased with \$15,000 in donations collected from the Thanksgiving Turkey gate drive. Photo by Don Lehman.



Children make merry by decorating homemade Christmas bells, crafting reindeer antlers and writing letters to Santa at the UAW Local 249 Women's Committee breakfast with Santa event.



UAW Local 249 partnered once again with Outlaw Harley-Davidson to put on the Harley's and Hashbrowns event to raise money for the children of Jackson County MO CASA. By providing for those who cannot provide for themselves we build a brighter future and a stronger community.



UAW Local 249 Motorcycle Committee members toured the Lexington Fire Department after making a donation of more than 40 blankets to first responders. The need is so great within the communities the blankets were used within two hours of being donated.

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

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Employee Involvement

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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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The Picket Line

Is UAW headed for federal takeover?

The embattled UAW is in for more indictments and more scandal, sources say, as scores of tips about corrupt labor leaders continue to pour in — all of which could end in a federal takeover of the nation's sixth largest labor union.

U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider said Thursday that once the criminal case is over — and it's far from over — there's a possibility that the federal government will step in and oversee the UAW.

"What we need to do is get the criminal cases further," Schneider said, adding "we'll be in a better position" to consider a takeover "after that is done."

"All options are on the table. And (a takeover) is one of the options," Schneider said. — *Detroit Free Press*

UAW President Rory Gamble denies federal investigation allegations

Last week we learned that federal investigators were looking into current UAW President Rory Gamble. Agents announced last week that they were investigating a tip that linked Gamble to secret cash payments that were paid to UAW officials at a strip club in Detroit. Gamble has now penned a letter to UAW members denouncing the allegations that he was involved in a kickback and bribery scheme that has ensnared two other former presidents of the union and multiple union leaders.

Gamble notes that he would never have accepted the role of president of UAW if he was unable to withstand the scrutiny that the union and the office of the president would be under. Gamble also denied having ever visited the strip club where the alleged cash payments were delivered. Gamble states, "that is simply untrue and never happened." — *Ford Authority*

Scandal may mute UAW's political influence

The bribery and kickback scandal that has engulfed the top leadership of the United Auto Workers is expected to reduce the union's influence and limit its ability to push a challenger to President Donald Trump over the top in Michigan, predicted again to be one of a half dozen that will decide the election. "It will impact their influence, because leadership is going to be distracted and can't give their full attention to this upcoming election," says Michigan Democratic political consultant Howard Edelson.

It also may raise questions about whether membership will provide the political dues the union needs. But if I were a Democratic presidential candidate or a statewide candidate, I'd be more concerned about whether the UAW can deliver the votes of rank and file members. "The added worry is whether an official endorsement from the UAW might do more harm than good with an angry and mistrustful membership." "I'm not sure I'm going to ask the UAW for an endorsement this time," says a Democratic officeholder who was backed by the union in her first campaign and is seeking reelection this fall. "With the scrutiny on corruption, it may not be a good idea. Stealing money from your members is about as bad as it gets." — *Detroit News*

GM and the UAW at odds over temps

The strike between the UAW and General Motors might be over, but a new battle is waging at an important GM plant that could pull in laid off workers at GM's Detroit Hamtramck. Late Friday night, GM began letting go about 240 temporary workers at its Fort Wayne Assembly plant in Roanoke, Indiana, said GM and UAW sources. GM builds its hot-selling light-duty Chevrolet Silverado and GMC Sierra pickups there.

The terminations followed a failed push by the local UAW 2209 leaders to get GM to convert some of those temporary workers to permanent full-time status. — *UAW*



Open letter from UAW President Rory Gamble

Sisters and Brothers,

I want to address the irresponsible headlines that you may have seen in the last 24 hours concerning me personally. I want to say this clearly to all UAW members and staff: I would not have accepted the role of president if I couldn't withstand the scrutiny that I knew this job would bring. So, let me take these one by one.

You've seen in the news stories questions concerning a vendor who worked with the Ford Department. Here is the reality: I worked with Custom Promotions, a union vendor, for

that got business from the NPC during that time obtained the business as the result of winning that competitive bid process. Period.

That is true not just of the vendor

"I want to say this clearly to all UAW members and staff: I would not have accepted the role of president if I couldn't withstand the scrutiny that I knew this job would bring." — Rory Gamble

years while in Region 1A.

They produced many excellent and well received marketing materials for our members. In all those years of working with this vendor, they never approached me in any manner that was less than professional or questionable in any way, and I absolutely never requested or received any cash or kickback from that vendor or any other.

Nor did I ever approach them in any unprofessional or questionable manner. As Jason Gordon, the owner of Custom Promotions, said in his statement through his attorney, "My client vehemently denies all of the allegations as being untrue."

Additionally, when I became Vice President over the Ford Department, I instituted a strict three-bid process for all purchases over \$5,000. Any vendor

in question but all vendors. Additionally, I have never been to the establishment cited in the article with Mr. Gordon or any other vendor. That is simply untrue and never happened.

Concerning my GIVES charity: I never personally solicited any money directly for the charity from any vendor. All proceeds from that charity went to praiseworthy programs to help the homeless in our community and to provide lunches for underprivileged children.

I've said this before and I'm going to repeat it here: I am very proud of the good that we did in this community through GIVES. In keeping with the new UAW policies on charities, the charity is no longer operating, but it helped many children and many homeless in Detroit when it was operating.

USMCA

UAW says Nafta 2.0 “not a fix”

By Pat Hayes

The House voted 385 to 41 to approve a trade agreement to replace the North America Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with a new agreement -- NAFTA 2.0 -- on Dec. 19. The Senate followed suit 89 to 10 on Jan. 16 with nine Democrats and one Republican voting no. The replacement, the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA) free trade pact is expected to be signed into law by President Donald Trump when it reaches his desk on Jan. 29.

NAFTA, signed into law in 1993 by President Bill Clinton, was a disaster for U.S. factory workers. Although we were assured that NAFTA “means jobs” by the president, payrolls fell by almost 6 million following the agreement and China’s 2001 entry into the World Trade Organization.

The new U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, NAFTA’s successor, promises to replace only 50,000 of them, according to a study by the International Trade Commission despite promises by the Trump Administration that it’s “a more balanced, reciprocal trade that supports high-paying jobs for Americans and grows the North American economies.”

The Economic Policy Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank created in 1986, says that while the USMCA is slightly better than NAFTA, its changes “still constitute Band-Aids on a fundamentally flawed agreement and process.”

“Powerful multinational corporations have used and controlled the negotiation of trade and investment deals to facilitate offshoring and the deregulation of the U.S. and global economy,” adds the EPI.

And while federal analyses show the USMCA “will result, at best, in roughly 51,000 new manufacturing, mining, and farming jobs over the next

six years,” that’s a far cry from the millions of factory jobs NAFTA cost the U.S.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi demanded changes in the agreement as negotiated by the Trump administration before bringing it to a vote in the House. Those changes include:

- Stronger enforcement of labor standards. The revised deal outlines benchmarks that Mexico will have to meet as it reforms its labor laws. If it fails to meet those benchmarks, the U.S. or Canada could argue Mexico is violating the agreement and take a series of enforcement measures.

- Addition of environmental protections including removal of protections for high-cost pharmaceuticals.

- Strengthening of dispute settlements with added provisions that force companies to cooperate with the panel process.

Pelosi says the revamped deal is “infinitely better than what was initially proposed by the administration.” The White House calls the deal a “huge win” for American workers, farmers and businesses.

“It will be the best and most important trade deal ever made by the USA. Good for everybody – Farmers, Manufacturers, Energy, Unions – tremendous support. Importantly, we will finally end our Country’s worst Trade Deal, NAFTA!,” the president said

in a tweet.

For autoworkers, the key provisions of the new agreement include:

- While NAFTA originally required automakers to use 62.5 percent of North American-made parts in their cars to be imported duty free, the new agreement gradually raises the bar to 75 percent by 2023, which will incentivize automakers to increase the amount of North American parts they use in their cars and light trucks.

- The USMCA also mandates that automakers manufacture 40 percent of their motor vehicles in facilities where assembly workers are earning at least US\$16 an hour. While average wages are even higher than that for auto assembly workers in Canada and the U.S., they are not in Mexico, where a number of U.S. automakers have shifted production in recent years to take advantage of the lower costs.

- Furthermore, Mexican government authorities are required to allow workers to form collective bargaining units, supporting a more union-friendly regulatory environment.

- Finally, the agreement includes side letters from the U.S. to the Mexican and Canadian governments promising exemptions from potential future tariffs imposed by the U.S. on some motor vehicles and auto parts, specifically 2.6 million Mexican-made passenger vehicles, all Mexican light trucks, and US\$108 billion and US\$32.4 billion dollars worth of auto parts from Mexico and Canada, respectively.

Both Ford and General Motors have lined up to support the new trade agreement.

“The new USMCA is good for Ford jobs, our dealerships, our suppliers

and the families and communities that depend on us,” says Ford. “It allows the U.S. auto industry to be globally competitive, encourages U.S. research and development in this new era of mobility, and provides a framework to support good paying jobs in the U.S.”

“General Motors is pleased to see the USMCA agreement moving forward on a path toward approval. We view the agreement as vital to the success of the North American auto industry and have long supported efforts to modernize it in a way that strengthens the industry and positions it to be a global leader.”

The revisions to the Trump agreement demanded by Pelosi were enough to win approval from the AFL-CIO.

“The USMCA isn’t perfect -- no deal ever is,” says AFL-CIO President Rich Trumka, “But it’s a far cry from the original NAFTA, and that is a huge win for working people in North America. While it won’t bring back every job lost under NAFTA, it will help stop the bleeding and add important new protections for workers across the continent.”

However, the UAW isn’t jumping on the bandwagon. “It is important to discuss what this agreement is and what it is not, says UAW President Rory Gamble. “It is not a ‘fix’ for the many problems created by NAFTA and other misguided tax and labor policies that have flourished for decades in our nation’s capital and statehouses throughout the country. Hundreds of thousands of U.S. jobs that have gone to Mexico since NAFTA came into being 25 years ago will not return because of USMCA.”

UAW International Executive Board names Gerald Kariem VP and Dir. of UAW Ford Dept.

UAW Region 1D Director Gerald Kariem was unanimously selected by the UAW International Board to the position of Vice President and Director of the UAW Ford Department. Kariem will serve out the term left vacant when Rory Gamble was elected President last Fall.

"Gerald brings a wealth of leadership in contract implementation, and he will be able to pick up on the recently ratified Ford contract," said UAW President Gamble. "His experience in implementing the merger of Regions 1C and 1D and building teamwork through his leadership will be invaluable as we implement reforms within the UAW."

During his almost decade as an IEB Member, and at the helm of one of the most diverse regions in the union, Kariem skillfully managed the merger between Regions 1C and 1D. His leadership and guidance brought the Aerospace-GM-IPS-TOP region together. The leadership, staff, retirees, support staff, and membership now proudly serve under the single banner of Region 1D.

Kariem is a leader in touch with the membership. He is a strong believer in leadership development and empowerment of workers and in communities. His state-wide community relationship led to him being selected to serve on Governor Whitmer's Transition Team.

"I look forward to working with our members as well as the Ford Corporation, which has demonstrated good corporate citizenship in the past," said Kariem. "We will also aggressively implement the new contract. Our members will benefit from the pathways to

full pay they created and the launch of new products and new technologies. This is an exciting time for UAW Ford members."

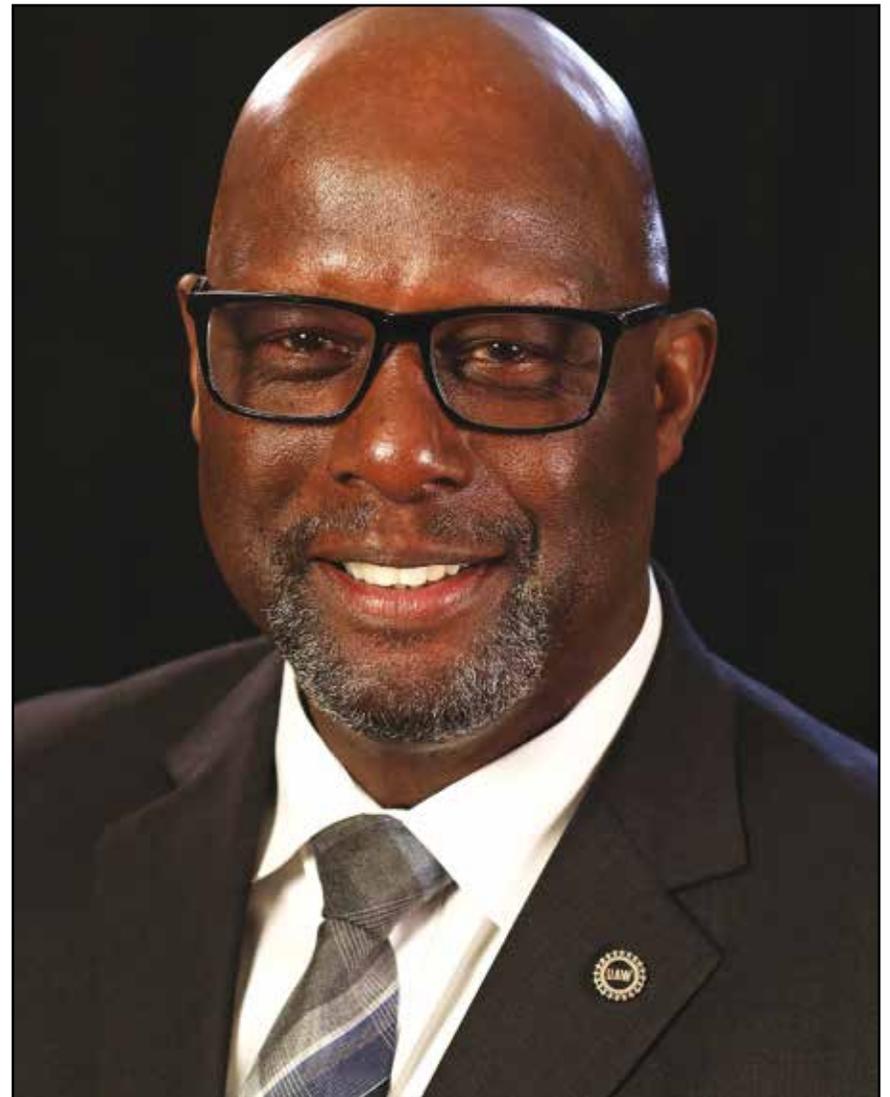
Kariem was appointed assistant director by then Region 1D Director Don Oetman in June 2008. He started his union/work career in 1976 at 20 years old when he began working at Saginaw Steering Gear, represented by UAW Local 699. He is currently a member of UAW Local 362.

Kariem was appointed to International Staff as a servicing representative in 2001 by UAW President Stephen P. Yokich, as recommended by Region 1D Director George Andros.

Assistant Director Steve Dawes will serve as the region's point of contact until delegates from the region's locals meet and elect a new leader.

Promoting Kariem "represents a savvy move at a critical juncture. He brings a wealth of experience and a fresh perspective to the UAW's Ford Department," labor observer Marick Masters, a business professor at Wayne State University told the *Detroit Free Press*. "It sends a very positive message to the rank and file."

"I understand the scrutiny we're going through," Kariem told the *Free Press*. "What we do as a UAW is huge. It affects so many lives that we have to continue to make sure we do the right thing."



UAW Region 1D Director Gerald Kariem was unanimously selected by the UAW International Board to the position of Vice President and Director of the UAW Ford Department. Kariem will serve out the term left vacant when Rory Gamble was elected President last Fall.

What they're saying about the USMCA

"The USMCA may yield benefits for workers in a few industries, such as glass and steel," says the Economic Policy Institute. "It may result in significant improvements in labor rights for Mexican workers, which could help them in the long-run. But those changes will have virtually no measurable impacts on wages or incomes for U.S. workers, as shown (unintentionally) by the United States International Trade Commission's USMCA report.

Supporting the USMCA is better than having President Trump withdraw from NAFTA, which would pitch North America into economic turmoil, especially for Mexico and Canada. At the end of the day, the USMCA is the best of a set of bad choices. And only concessions obtained through tough negotiations by labor, environment, and consumer activists made it any

better than the status quo. As a result, it is better than the alternatives.

Despite the revisions, environmental groups have expressed reservations about the deal. Sierra Club Executive Director Michael Brune says the deal still falls short of "fundamental changes" that environmental groups wanted to see, including binding climate standards and "meaning-

ful limits" on air and water pollution.

Senator and presidential candidate Bernie Sanders, one of nine Senate Democrats to vote against the USMCA says, "We need to fundamentally rewrite our disastrous trade agreements and create and protect good-paying American jobs. This agreement does virtually nothing to stop the outsourcing of jobs to Mexico."

Senator Elizabeth Warren, also a candidate for president, voted for the agreement.

Warren said she'd support Trump's trade agreement because

she believes the updated version of the deal improves upon the version she previously didn't support.

"Workers have had the legs taken out from underneath them and this agreement makes improvements," says Warren. "It's going to help open up some markets for farmers, they need that stability. It's going to help with enforceable labor standards."

Former Vice President Joe Biden, who voted for NAFTA when he was in the Senate, also supports the USMCA. "What I've seen change is that the vast majority of the labor movement supported it," he says.



The Women's Committee hosted their annual Breakfast with Santa and Craft Fair held at the union hall on Dec. 14. Kids enjoyed pancakes and lots of activities before making a list of presents they wanted Santa to bring them for Christmas.

Santa is the star at the pancake breakfast bar

By Gwen Starkey

With only a few more days until Christmas, Santa and his crew, were working overtime-making children's dreams come true. However, he wasn't too busy to make a pit stop on Dec. 14 for breakfast at UAW Local 249's union hall for their annual Breakfast with Santa.

Breakfast with Santa, sponsored by the Women's Committee, celebrated their 10th year putting on this wonderful event, which includes breakfast, activities and of course a chat with the big kahuna himself, Santa Claus.

"It's a fantastic time of the year and we enjoy doing activities like this with the kids," Karen Mahoney, Chairperson of the Women's Committee said.

Originating at Applebee's in Liberty, the event eventually found its permanent home at the union hall.

Normally it's catered, but at the last minute, the caterer cancelled so Santa's elves, Financial Secretary Dana Davidson and Secretary Cheryl McClure, got behind the griddle and flipped flapjacks for the kids.

"It actually worked out better for us making our own pancakes," Mahoney said. "We were able to

include a new topping bar that had chocolate chips, sprinkles, M & M's, whipped cream, and syrup that they could put on top of their pancakes. I think that was a really big hit." The cost to attend was \$10 and for that, you had an all-you-can-eat pancake breakfast, sausage, topping bar, drinks and activities. Mahoney estimates that around 70 kids attended.

After breakfast, the kids had several craft activities available to do before visiting with Santa. They could color, decorate small ceramic bells and reindeer hats and end up at the letter writing station provided for them to make a list of everything they wanted for Christmas from Santa.

Then it was time to meet with Santa and Mrs. Claus, played by Bargaining Committeeman Don Picard and his wife Tana. This was the first year

that Mrs. Claus attended with Santa and she was a huge hit. Kids that were too afraid to sit with Santa found comfort in Mrs. Claus's arms. They handed out candy canes and stuffed animals and posed for pictures with the kids. "It was a good time," Picard said. "I like playing Santa."

Motorcycle Committee Chairperson Josh Curtis took his 9-year-old son to the Breakfast with Santa event and they had a blast. "My son was a little bit nervous to go and talk to Santa at first because he is at that age where kids are not sure if they still believe or not," Curtis said.

At that point, though, did he really want to take any chances? "After Santa talked to him for a few minutes," Curtis said, "it was a total different view, any doubt he had was washed away."

"Don is priceless. While at this event, he is not Don. He is not Mr. Picard. He is Santa! He takes this role very seriously and he is awesome at it," Curtis said. "He is top notch with these kids, that's all I can say. Our hall is very blessed to have Don "Santa"

Picard as a member. Tana feeds off his energy as well and does an amazing job. Together, they are Santa and Mrs. Claus. My son was very excited to be there."

After Breakfast with Santa, the event continued with their second annual Craft Fair. For a non-refundable, payable in advance fee of \$25, vendors can set up a table to sell their items. About 15 vendors showed up selling Christmas wreathes, candles, hats and scarves, BBQ sauce, Scentsy warmers, and a variety of other wares. You do not need to be a member of Local 249 to sell.

Breakfast with Santa is the main fundraiser for the Women's Committee and the money they make helps fund their activities throughout the year. Upcoming events are the Easter Egg Hunt scheduled for April 5, the Father Daughter Dance and the Halloween and Trunk or Treat Party.

Mahoney would like to thank everyone who participated in helping make the Breakfast with Santa and Craft Fair a success.

Republican contempt for Missouri voters reaches new high

By Pat Hayes

Here's the good news: Republicans in the Missouri Legislature know who they're working for. The bad news? It ain't us.

Missouri Republicans have announced their top priority is overturning voter-approved reform of the redistricting process in the upcoming 2020 session of the legislature. They tried and failed in 2019, but they're nothing if not persistent. If you doubt that, just cast your mind back to the years-long effort to jam right to work down the throats of unwilling Missouri voters.

Like a burr under the saddle, nothing gets Republican legislators going more quickly than a chance to overrule the will of the voters they were once thought to represent.

"I think it's safe to say we will move on it very quickly," says Republican House Speaker Elijah Haahr of Springfield.

This time the spur to action is the Clean Missouri initiative overwhelmingly approved by voters in 2018. Clean Missouri was designed to make our state government more transparent, limit the power of big money in our legislature, and ensure we're able to hold legislators accountable when they fail to act in the public interest. Clean Missouri is a big step forward in cleaning up Missouri's notoriously dirty politics because it:

- Requires that legislative records be open to the public
- Requires politicians to wait two years before becoming lobbyists

- Eliminates almost all lobbyist gifts in the General Assembly
- Lowers campaign contribution limits for state legislative candidates
- Ensures that neither political party is given an unfair advantage when new maps are drawn after the next census

Limit the flood of dark money into the state? Hold legislators accountable? Fairness? What's the problem?

Well, says Haahr, "The voters had one option in 2018 and they picked it. I think it's important to give them another option."

Yes. Obviously. Voters wanted business as usual. Hidden agendas. Dark money corruption. That's what the voters really wanted when they voted nearly 2-1 to clean up their government. They just weren't given the option.

Republicans put the task at the top of their agenda for 2020 because a new census will be conducted this year and that will lead to redistricting in Missouri and across the nation.

In 2010, the Republican majority re-drew Missouri voting districts to give themselves an unfair advantage. That gerrymandering of districts took Republicans from a mere majority to a veto-proof supermajority in the state legislature. And, that led to a decade

of attacks on the living standards and rights of working people: right to work, so-called paycheck protection and attacks on prevailing wage to name just a few.

Clean Missouri changes the process by requiring a nonpartisan expert to draw fair legislative district maps, which would then be reviewed by a citizen commission. It calls for an independent state demographer to lead the technical work of creating district maps, instead of entrusting political appointees to do all of that work.

The vast majority Missouri voters have made clear that they oppose right to work, support raising the minimum wage, favor clean government and fair elections. The problem is, they keep voting for politicians who work not for them, but for the corporate lobbyists and right-wing billionaires who fund dark money PACs.

Republicans have contempt for voters who they've come to believe are too stupid to figure out they're being conned. As long as this cluelessness continues and Republican politicians reap the corporate dark money rewards, the game will go on.

It's really that simple.

Until Republicans pay a price for their contempt for the people who elect them, they won't stop. They'll keep doing the bidding of their corporate masters by passing legislation that makes life worse for working men and women. They'll keep lining the

pockets of billionaires. They'll keep working diligently behind closed doors to weaken what's left of our democracy until there's nothing left.

And, if the arguments they've fashioned about why they plan to overturn Clean Missouri are any indication, they won't even bother to make their lies believable. Perhaps, if we're unwilling to defend our families and our way of life by voting them out, we should at least make them sweat just a little. We'll may still lose everything we once had as a middle-class nation, but at least the lies won't leave such a bad taste in our mouths.

What can UAW members who refused to be played do about it? First, be active in your union. The UAW, despite its current problems, is still the best weapon we have to fight against the low-wage future on offer from the Republicans.

Second, maintain or increase your voluntary donation to V-CAP. V-CAP led the victorious fight against right to work in Missouri and it's helping pro-worker candidates like Lauren Arthur and Mark Ellebracht defeat corporate-funded politicians.

Third, remember who stood with us on the picket line at the GM Fairfax Plant. If you have trouble remembering, here's a hint: dozens of national, state and local Democrats brought donations to the strike pantry and walked the picket line with us. Not one Republican was there.

Local 249 members rise by lifting others

By Chrissy Kline

“We rise by lifting others,” wrote Robert Ingersoll, the great American writer and orator. That quote captures the spirit of service practiced here at UAW Local 249. Helping others is not a new concept within our union family, but in 2019 we took lifting others to new heights. With charitable donations totaling nearly \$100,000 and countless hours of volunteering, no matter the threats looming over us, or lurking within our own leaders, we remained steadfast in serving our communities and raising the spirits of those around us.

For that I commend you Local 249; from rank and file and standing committee members to elected and appointed leadership, you have all embraced the spirit of lifting those in need and sharing your time, money, talents and hearts over this past year.

UAW Local 249 kicked off the new year in January of 2019 by standing in solidarity with those furloughed by the government shutdown.

The following colder months included many “firsts” for several standing committees including the first “Team Up to Clean Up” event sponsored by the Recreation & Conservation Committee and a diaper drive hosted by the Education Committee to help ease the burden of struggling families through the YMCA Headstart Program.

As winter began to thaw, working women brought the heat to the Capitol with another bout of activism. Members of UAW Local 249 and 2250 joined other women of the working class in Jefferson City for International Women’s Day to lobby for women’s rights.

April showers bring May flowers, and to help keep our parks beautiful the Recreation & Conservation Committee hosted an Earth Day clean up at several Liberty city parks, joined by Representative Mark Ellebracht to get the task done.

With spring in full swing, and warmer weather on its way, members of the Human & Civil Rights Committee held a Cinco de Mayo heritage celebration. This provided an opportunity to embrace new cultures and allowed community vendors to shine a spotlight on their local businesses.

Later in May, a little girl battling childhood cancer received a pick me up in the form of a band of bikers from the Motorcycle Committee and other fellow riders, ready to give not only from their pockets but also from their hearts.

Gaining momentum, members of all the UAW Local 249 standing committees stepped up for Stand Up KC as they rallied together and marched for fair wages and the opportunity to join a union.

May proved to be a busy month, wrapping up with tree trimming and brush removal for a UAW Local 249 retiree and a huge donation of water to Linwood, Kansas following a disastrous tornado.

As the temperatures heated up, so did UAW Local 249’s efforts in the community. KC PrideFest kicked off with the Civil & Human Rights Committee showing their love and support by sponsoring a booth promoting diversity and inclusion.

Members supported Argosy Casino workers who were voting on joining the ranks of the UAW. June also brought about the all Women’s Build at Habitat for Humanity, assistance at a Stand Down at St. Michaels Veteran’s Center, making care packages for troops deployed overseas, and the building of a wheelchair ramp for a woman in desperate need.

All the while these events were taking place, members of UAW Local 249 did not slow their advancements in the political arena as Local 249’s CAP committee knocked doors, phone banked, and endorsed pro-labor candidates. The dedication of our members did not waver in the face of the heavy burdens and stress of the looming contract discussions that lay ahead of them.

In July, the Education Committee came back after shutdown with a check for the Clay County CASA Program to help kids in foster care with school supplies and the Motorcycle Committee donated a banner to Stand Up KC emblazoned with the phrase “Make America Union Again: Greatness Will Follow” to be utilized at their marches.

September brought the spirit of selflessness as members of each of the standing committees came together and donated nearly \$1000 to a young woman with Hodgkin’s Lymphoma as a joint effort with the Make a Wish Foundation to brighten her day while she battles this terrible disease.

The heat showed no signs of slowing down and neither did Local 249’s momentum as they supported local citizens in getting signatures for Medic-



aid expansion and helping KC Tenants attempt to achieve the formation of a Tenant’s Bill of Rights.

A shocking turn of events put the brothers and sisters of General Motors out on strike and in dire need of support and supplies. UAW Local 249 showed up every day in droves, bringing food, sunscreen, household supplies, picketers to help fill the lines, and most of all they brought brotherhood in all of it’s forms.

The much needed morale boosts carried on until the strike ended 41 days later. As contracts were settled among the automakers, leftovers from the strike pantry were donated to Metro Lutheran Ministries to fill their bare shelves.

With fall quickly approaching, the Recreation & Conservation Committee maintained its commitment to keeping clean parks and the Local 249 Wheelchair Ramp crew helped both a Lawson senior citizen and a UAW member on strike with General Motors to regain their independence with ramps to their homes.

November brought about the annual turkey drive at UAW Local 249. This year the local was able to provide 820 turkeys to families in need within our own communities.

The generosity of our members does not extend only to people, but to our four legged friends in need as well. Twice the Motorcycle Committee helped a local senior dog rescue, Shep’s Place. One such undertaking being building a large storage shed at their facility.

Winter approaching drove members indoors, but did not diminish their passion. The Civil and Human Rights Committee assisted in being a men-

tor for youth in all aspects of creative art by volunteering at the Latino Arts Foundation. The Veterans Committee was joined with other standing committee members to serve lunch at St. Michaels Veteran’s Center prior to Thanksgiving. This offered an opportunity for both service and fellowship to all in attendance.

Rain or shine, blistering heat or blustery cold, members of UAW Local 249 show up.

The year ended with picketing in November as MCC NEA’s contract negotiations stalled, honoring veterans during Wreaths Across America, making a donation to the Ronald McDonald House and still the members were not satisfied.

Before going on Christmas break Local 249 presented a check for \$5000 to Clay County CASA to provide Christmas for some of the most vulnerable children in our community.

Even during a shutdown at the plant for the holidays, our members sacrificed time away from their own families, taking to the streets handing out blankets, socks, and coats to the homeless reminding them that they are not forgotten.

Nothing hindered the hard work and dedication of our membership to its community or the families within. Nothing is too much for solidarity to overcome, not politics, threats of strike, corruption or even difficult weather conditions.

Above all, the one thing that UAW Local 249 is known for, is our ability to rise from the ashes of our circumstances and band together as one cohesive unit and lift those around us. Let’s continue to carry this spirit of service into 2020 and surpass the legacy we have already left behind.

Big changes ahead for KCAP

By Jim Fisher

As we enter the new year, I expect 2020 to be a very busy year full of changes. We have several significant projects we will be working on this year that will show improvements for our members. The first thing to be completed was fixing the North parking lot drain in front the turnstiles. The old 4-inch drain was removed and replaced with an 8-inch drain. Also, the drain was extended all the way past the turnstiles. The goal is to remove the water off the parking lot faster and reduce pooling around the turnstiles.

The Transit System is currently scheduled on a 5 x 11-hour schedule. The Transit day shift is scheduled for Super Production on February 1, February 15, and February 22. The Transit night shift also has a Super Production scheduled for February 8th. The plant has also stated they anticipate Super Production days being scheduled for March and April for the Transit System.

The Truck System will remain on a 3-Crew Pattern with no Super Production scheduled at this time. Obviously, if there are any changes, we will keep everyone updated.

On January 6, seven of our TFT's were converted to Full Time In-Progression. We would like to congratulate these members for their dedication and commitment. We continue to monitor the plant's usage of temporary workers and track the percentages of temporary workers as stated in the new national agreement.

On January 16 it was announced that the International Executive Board had unanimously voted to move Gerald Kariem from Region 1D Director to Vice President of the National Ford Department.

He will be replacing Rory Gamble who has become the President of the International UAW. We look forward to working with both in their new positions over the next few months.

I expect to see a large shift in the manpower at KCAP over the next few months. The stamping plant expansion is almost completed and in February our members will begin moving to the stamping plant for their new jobs.

In addition, there has been a high interest in the buyout packages provided in the national agreement.

With the new jobs created in stamping and the members leaving from the buyout, this will create a large number of open bids that will need to be filled. We encourage everyone to be watching the bid postings for opportunities to change jobs.

Starting January 27 and running through February 28 there will be a sign up book posted in labor relations

for the Special Retirement Incentive (SRI) and the Special Termination of Employment Program (STEP). If you are going to take one of these packages you must sign up for them in labor relations within those dates. No one can help you or do it for you.

If you have questions about one of these packages, feel free to talk to one of the three benefits reps at the hall. They can explain to you how eligibility works and answer any or all of your questions.

The SRI package is for members that are retiring and getting the \$60,000 incentive to leave, however, you must still order a retirement package through the NESC.

You can do this on your own by calling the NESC at 1-800-248-4444 or go online at www.myfordbenefits.com. If you are doing this, you must know your user name and password. If you don't know this information, or just feel uncomfortable ordering your own, feel free to visit one of the benefit reps at the hall.

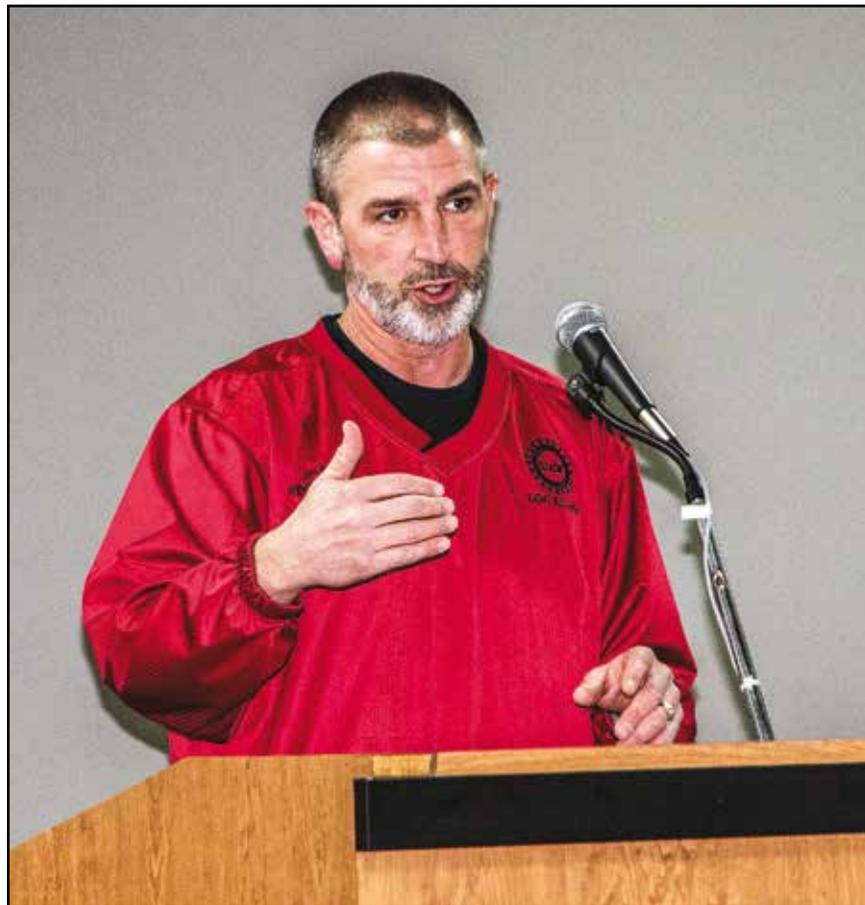
Eligibility for the SRI package includes the following: 30 or more years of credited service under the Ford-UAW retirement plan, or total of 85 points (age plus years of service) under the Ford-UAW retirement plan, age 55 with 10 or more years of credited service under the Ford-UAW retirement plan, or at least age 65 with one or more years of credited service under the Ford-UAW retirement plan.

Employees who meet one of the above SRI eligibility requirements by November 30, 2020 will be able to apply for the SRI during the application period.

Eligibility for the STEP program includes: full-time active non-skilled legacy and skilled trade employees hired before November 19, 2007.

If you have any questions regarding how to determine years of credited service, retirement packages or any other benefits questions call the union hall and request a benefits rep at 816-454-6333.

One of the largest costs to the plant comes from absenteeism. Unfortunately, over the last few months



UAW Local 249 Bargaining Chairman Jim Fisher stresses the importance of the new national language pertaining to AWOL's at the monthly membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

there has been a large spike in our absenteeism. The increase has been large enough that our plant has gone from one of the best in the Ford System to now we are the third worst in the Ford System.

I ask all our members to review the new language in the National Agreement over absenteeism. While there was an improvement in the new language that an AWOL only stays on your record 12 months instead of 18 months, the penalties are more severe once a member reaches the discipline phase.

For the first 3 AWOL's there is no penalty, the fourth receives a day off, the fifth receives a week off, the sixth receives a month off, and the seventh AWOL is termination.

Transit is in the middle of a major model launch and the Truck System will be starting theirs this fall. There have already been questions asked about when the vacation shutdowns will be this year.

There has been some discussion from Ford management that they are looking at the shutdowns to be in August or September this year instead of the usual time in July.

Any delay or deviation from the normal vacation times would be due to the new launches. This is a move we have seen them already do at other facilities over the past years.

The reality is that it's too far out yet to know for sure. The company must notify us by April 1 as to when vacation shut down will be.

New national language pertaining to AWOLs

Under new language: AWOLs now only remain on your record for 12 months instead of 18 months

| | |
|--------------|-------------|
| 1st Absence: | No penalty |
| 2nd Absence: | No Penalty |
| 3rd Absence: | No Penalty |
| 4th Absence: | 1 Day DLO |
| 5th Absence: | 1 Week DLO |
| 6th Absence: | 1 Month DLO |
| 7th Absence: | Termination |

Out of great challenges comes opportunity

By Jason Starr

When life hands you lemons, as the old saying goes, make lemonade. Certainly, UAW members have been handed plenty of lemons in recent years. We've suffered through plant closings due to NAFTA and automation. We've watched non-union, foreign-owned auto plants based in right-to-work states take over 50 percent of vehicle production in the U.S. We've been forced to accept contracts that opened the door to two-tier pay and temp workers. We've been the victims of a coordinated political assault on unions and union workers at the federal, state and local levels. And now, we find ourselves in the middle of a corruption scandal in our International union.

We can, and should, hold the companies, politicians and union officials who've betrayed us responsible.

But, if we're honest, we have to shoulder some of the responsibility, too.

Too often, we autoworkers have stood on the sidelines while our living standards and union rights were under attack.

We hoped that someone else — a union official, a politician or even a CEO — would solve our problems for us.

But the hard truth is, the only way out of the crisis we now find ourselves in, is to stop relying on others to solve our problems.

We cannot be bystanders anymore. We have to take on the fight ourselves.

That's hard, believe me I know it.

But, if we don't do it — and do it now — we'll see the lives we planned for ourselves and our children slip through our fingers.

We are in the midst of a deep and ongoing crisis. Corruption at the very top of the UAW endangers everything we've worked for and won since our union was founded in 1935.

This is a betrayal of trust at the highest level of our organization. These betrayals make it harder to negotiate on behalf of our members.

They create doubt in the minds of the public. They are causing our political allies to put distance between themselves and our union.

They make organizing non-union auto plants — a key to our survival — a near impossibility.

One immediate effect of all of this is that Local 249's home base — Region 5 — is being dissolved because some of our leaders conspired to embezzle union funds.

I feel personally betrayed by this, and I know that many Local 249 activists do too.

At the end of February Local 249 will become part of Region 4 which is based in Illinois. Other locals along the southern tier of Region 5 will end up in Region 8, based out of Nashville.

Other UAW locals are beginning to take action by passing resolutions calling for a special convention of the UAW to demand greater accountability over the elected officers by changing the method for election to the International Executive Board.

The resolution also calls for detailed financial reports and for the minutes of the International Executive Board to be published.

These resolutions are based on Article 8 of the UAW constitution. The constitution requires majorities of 15 locals in five states.

They must be representative of at least 20 percent of the total UAW membership to support a resolution before the union would be required to hold a referendum vote on whether to have a special convention.

As I write this, the resolution has been passed by 18 locals. Some Local 249 members have been discussing the resolution and may bring it to the next meeting for a vote.

The place where our efforts can make the most difference now is inside our own union.

This is only one example of how members can take back control.

Another way members can take back their union is by educating themselves and using the tools provided in the local and national agreements as well as the UAW Constitution to affect change on a daily basis.

Some members — particularly our activist members — are beginning to turn their sense of betrayal into a spur to action.

In the midst of this crisis, there may come the opportunity to reform the union. We can turn it into the kind of fighting organization it was when we took on GM, Ford and Chrysler in the 1930s.

Those battles created the American middle class. They made the American Dream real.

None of those victories were handed to us by the companies or politicians. They weren't even won by shrewd



Local 249 President Jason Starr announced classes on building membership power at the January membership meeting. Classes will focus on understanding the UAW Constitution and the power it provides members. Photo by Don Lehman.

union leadership.

They were won by massive numbers of rank and file members, taking history into their own hands. They were won during high risk sit-down strikes and on lonely picket lines on cold, icy streets.

The decades long decline in American living standards and worker's rights

have brought us to a situation almost identical to the one the sit-down strikers found themselves in during the Great Depression.

They turned that crisis into an opportunity. We can do that too, but if it's going to be done right — or done at all — we're going to have to do it ourselves and do it together.



Get the official APP of United Auto Workers Local 249!

Connect with us to get the latest updates, sign up for text alerts, learn about Local 249 events, take action, and read stories that are relevant to you.

Download from the Google Play Store <http://bit.ly/2qZwEq6> or Apple Store <http://apple.co/2qq5E0l>



Like us on Facebook
www.facebook.com/UAWLocal249

Happy New Year Retirees

By Natalie Wood

Happy New Year to all our UAW retirees and their families. We hope you all had a safe, happy and healthy holiday season. January is the beginning of a new year with lots of things to look forward to. We received a thank you letter from the Salvation Army for the very generous donation of \$1,844.86 we sent to them. We collect money at every retiree meeting throughout the year to help make this donation possible.

Thank you to all that contributed and all that wanted to contribute but were unable to at this time. I'm sure many families will be blessed and appreciate these funds.

Chairman Mel Thompson spoke about the defibrillator at the union hall and future training that will be offered. No date has been set at this time, but we will keep you posted when that is made available.

Bill Parker, our Service Officer reported that there were three deaths in December: William Henderson, Terry Johnson and James Sullivan passed away. Let's keep their families in our thoughts and prayers during this difficult time.

It is very important to notify Local 249 of any loss of life of our members. We want to recognize all our brothers and sisters, as well as offer any support to their families in times of need and we cannot do so if we are unaware of the loss.

Mary Sanders our Chairman of the Auxiliary reported that there were no reported illnesses. This is a good thing. However, if there is a member that has fallen ill please report it by calling the hall and leaving

a message for Mary Sanders.

Tanya Moore from Blue Cross Blue Shield wishes us all a Happy New Year. We are so happy that she has been able to be with us during our retiree's meetings.

If you have any questions about your prescriptions or any bill problems, she makes herself available to us during this time. She is ready and willing to assist you with any of your health care issues.

You can leave a message for her by giving a call to Local 249 and she will get back to you. Or better yet, come to our retirees meeting and ask her in person, you'll be glad you did.

Lori Marin our Vice Chairman of the Family Auxiliary reported that there were two couples celebrating their wedding anniversaries this month.

Harvey and Sue Ballenger are celebrating 68 wonderful years together and Glen and Mary Sanders are celebrating 54 years of equally wedded bliss. Congratulations to each of the couples, and God bless you all.

There were also seven members



Retirees enjoy a nice meal together at the December retiree meeting where they celebrated Christmas, anniversaries, birthdays and enjoyed fellowship together. Join the fun at the February meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

celebrating birthdays for the month of January. We had them stand and be recognized during the meeting and we sang happy birthday to them all.

January had a small turn out with 63 people present. Let's try and beat that number at our February meeting. We welcome all retirees to join us for information and fellowship.

The February retirees meeting is scheduled to be held on the 19th. Come expecting answers to your questions, updates and information

on upcoming events, dining with your union brothers and sisters as you catch up on one another's lives, and as always, having a good time. Bring a covered dish or dessert and join us, we would be happy to have you.

Bingo is the Friday following the retirees meeting. Please remember to call and check to see if the weather has changed any of these plans.

A dessert and white elephant gift are appreciated but it is your attendance we would like most. Hope to see you soon.



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.



NEED HELP?

Are you worried about money? Do you have problems on the job? Is someone in your family ill? Has a loved one passed away? Have you been physically or mentally abused? Are there drug or alcohol problems in your family? Having thoughts of suicide?

The UAW Chaplaincy Committee is here to listen or to offer spiritual advice. Call the Union Hall at 816-454-6333 and the Local will put you in touch with one of our caring Chaplaincy Committee members.



Mr. and Mrs. Claus visit the Kansas City Assembly Plant to spread Christmas cheer to the UAW Local 249 autoworkers before heading to Developmental Potential Inc. and Healing Pathways with his Hog riding reindeer leading the way.

Move over Rudolph, it's a Hogs world

By Gwen Starkey

From the horizon, there came such a noisy clatter; they shook their heads, what could be the matter? Standing outside, their eyes all aglow; looking down the street, where'd all that noise go? Then a throb from the heavens, like straight pipes so hearty, gave summer's good thoughts, a loud biker's party? When, what to their wondering eyes should appear, but eight antlered Hog Ultra Classics with a Red F150 bringing up the rear. In the back, a little old rider, so lively and quick, they knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.

Well, maybe it was something like that when Santa & Mrs. Claus paraded into town spreading Christmas cheer arriving in the back of a shiny red F150 to the developmentally disabled clients at the three Kansas City area Developmental Potential, Inc. locations. Developmental Potential is a day habilitation program that provides support services to adults with developmental disabilities.

Santa, also known as UAW Local 249 Bargaining Committee member Don Picard, and his wife Tana are a big hit with their spot-on portrayal of Santa

and Mrs. Claus. "I love playing Santa, everyone knows that," Picard said. This time of year, Santa is in big demand and Picard is the master.

After his recent gig at the successful Breakfast with Santa event, Santa then went on to arrive in style at three Developmental Potential locations handing out stuffed animals and singing carols with clients. "I stand up in the back of a red F150 with the Motorcycle Committee leading the way and they all have their antlers on their helmets so it looks like deer are pulling the sleigh and we pull in full bore with the

engines roaring and those guys just love it," Picard said. "They are entranced with the all the motorcycles and noise and then they spot Santa and they just lose their mind."

This is the fifth year Picard has been playing Santa with the last three joined by his wife Tana and the Local 249 Motorcycle Committee.

They look forward to it each year. There are lots of hugs and excitement for everyone. They would love to be able to do more for this organization and are trying to put together an Angel Tree sort of program for next year.

Many of these folks live in a group home setting and they don't ask for much, maybe a new pair of shoes or a TV for their recreation room. "I think that's something we can do," Picard said. Plans are in the works for that.

Santa didn't stop his visits there, as he was also the main attraction at the Healing Pathway Victim Service Agencies, (a non-profit organization

that services the children of and siblings of murder victims), Christmas Party held on Dec. 7 at the Kansas City Police Department South Patrol Headquarters. Santa and the approximately 160 kids that attended enjoyed an evening filled with fun, food and many activities.

"My wife and I were Santa and Mrs. Claus for this, and it was a huge deal," Don Picard said. "The mayor was there and we were on TV. It was a crazy fun event. There was a marching band, KC Wolf, and we were even escorted by the police."

"Don and Tana Picard are the most awesome Santa and Mrs. Claus that you will ever run into," Kim Rowland a Healing Pathways board member and UAW Local 249 Chairperson of the Community Services Committee said. "They look and act the part so well."

So, until next year we heard him exclaim as he drove out of sight, Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night.