

# FIRST LOCAL NEWS

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

March 2020



**Official election  
notice | p2**

**CAP Conference meets  
in Washington D.C. | p6**

**Anger over  
corruption fuels  
Article 8 vote | p4**

UAW Local 249 President Jason Starr, left to right, Ohio lawmaker U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan, and CAP Chairperson Shirley Mata met at the CAP Convention held in Washington D.C. on Feb. 2. Ryan spoke about how unions in the United States created the greatest middle class this world has ever seen.

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



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# Official Election Notice Amalgamated Local Union 249 UAW

In accordance with the UAW Constitution and Local Union 249 By-Laws, the election of all Executive Board Officers, Bargaining Chairperson of the Assembly Unit, District Committeepersons of the Assembly Unit, Alternate District Committeepersons of the Assembly Unit, Bargaining Committee Members of the Production Assembly Unit, Skilled Trades Bargaining Committee Member, Bargaining Chairperson of the Parts Depot Unit and Parts Depot Bargaining Committeeperson, Bargaining Chairperson of the Nurses Unit, Bargaining Chairperson of Team Solutions and Team Solutions Committeepersons, Bargaining Committeeperson of Duluth, Retiree's Executive Board Representative, and Convention Delegates and Alternate Convention Delegates will be held in the following manner:

## Nominations

Nominations will be held at the Regular Membership meeting on Sunday, March 15, 2020. If a member is unable to attend the nomination meeting because the employer has scheduled her/him to work during the nomination meeting the member may make a written nomination. Such a written nomination must be delivered to the Local Union hall during business hours the week before the nomination meeting. A signed statement must also be filed with the Local Union stating you were assigned to work during the nomination meeting. Anyone making such a written nomination is obligated to inform the person nominated, so that the member may accept or decline in a timely fashion.

## Election

Election will be held in the following manner:

Beginning at 5:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 7, 2020 and will close at 5:00 a.m. Friday, May 8, 2020 (24 continuous hours)

Beginning at 5:00 a.m. on Saturday, May 9, 2020 and will close at 5:00 a.m. on Sunday, May 10, 2020 (24 continuous hours)

Election held at UAW Local 249, 8040 NE 69 Hwy, Pleasant Valley, MO.

Parts Depot- HVC - Thursday, May 7, 2020 from 11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. (8 continuous hours). Voting held in cafeteria.

Voting machines will be used. Members in good standing are eligible to vote. Bring proper identification such as Ford I.D., Union Card, Drivers License, PMHV License, or other types of photo I.D.

## Runoff Election

If runoff is required for Executive Board positions, Bargaining Chairperson of the Assembly Unit, Bargaining Committee of the Production Assembly Unit, Skilled Trades Bargaining Committee member, election will be held for 24 hours from 5:00 a.m. Thursday, May 14, 2020 until 5:00 a.m. Friday, May 15, 2020, and 5:00 a.m. Saturday, May 16, to 5:00 a.m. on Sunday, May 17, 2020. If runoff is required for Committeeperson or Alternate Committeeperson, election will be four hours long (beginning two (2) hours prior to the end of the shift and concluding two (2) hours after the end of the shift) that began Thursday, May 21 or Saturday, May 23, 2014. Parts Depot- HVC - Thursday, May 14, 2020 from 11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. (8 continuous hours). Voting held in cafeteria.

## Acceptance of Nomination

Acceptance of nomination for Executive Board Officers, Bargaining Chairperson of the Assembly Unit, Bargaining Committee Members of the Production Assembly Unit, Skilled Trades Bargaining Committee Member, District Committeepersons of the Assembly Unit, Alternate District Committeepersons of the Assembly Unit, Bargaining Chairperson of the Parts Depot Unit and Parts Depot Bargaining Committeeperson, Bargaining Chairperson of the Nurses Unit, Bargaining Chairperson and Committeepersons of Team Solutions and Retiree's Executive Board Representative must be on a properly completed form available at the Local Union Hall. Acceptance of nomination must be deposited in the ballot box at the Local Union Hall no later than 4:00 p.m. on Friday, March 20, 2020.

All eligible members from the Parts Depot Unit will automatically stand nominated for all Executive Board Offices (excluding First Vice-President), Bargaining Chairperson of the Parts Depot Unit, and Bargaining Committeeperson of the Parts Depot Unit. All eligible members from the Nurses Unit will automatically stand nominated for all Executive Board Offices (excluding 2nd Vice President).

## Absentee Voting

Members may vote absentee for all elected positions if you are out of town on company or local union business. A signed statement must be filed with the Local Union in sufficient time for the member to secure a ballot and redeposit same with Amalgamated Local Union 249 prior to start of election.

*Shirley Mata, Recording Secretary*

## First Local News

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**Reporters** Chrissy Kline and Gwen Starkey  
**Photographer** Don Lehman

## UAW Local 249

8040 NE 69 Highway  
Pleasant Valley, Mo. 64068  
816-454-6333

## Officers of Local 249

**President** Jason Starr  
**1st Vice President** Tony Renfro  
**2nd Vice President** Tom Carr  
**Recording Secretary** Shirley Mata  
**Financial Secretary** Dana Davidson  
**Treasurer** Chrissy Kline  
**Trustees** Ed Scaggs, Connie Thomas, Sade Ott  
**Sergeant at Arms** Leon Allen  
**Guide** Jeremy Fue  
**Bargaining Chair** Jim Fisher  
**Bargaining Committee** Steve Chorbak, Dean Freed and Don Picard  
**Skilled Trades Bargaining Committee Member** Ron Pangborn  
**Parts Depot Bargaining Chair** Dave Rogers  
**Nurse's Bargaining Chair** Cathy Koogler  
**Team Solutions Bargaining Chair** David Norris  
**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](http://www.fordvehicleprograms.com)

**UAW-Ford Legal Services** 800-482-7700

**UAW-Ford TESPHE** 1-800-248-4444

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## Continued surge in strike activity signals worker dissatisfaction with wage growth

By Heidi Shierholz and Margaret Poydock

**D**ata from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) show that there was an upsurge in major strike activity in 2018 and 2019, marking a 35-year high for the number of workers involved in a major work stoppage over a two-year period. Further, 2019 recorded the greatest number of work stoppages involving 20,000 or more workers since at least 1993, when the BLS started providing data that made it possible to track work stoppages by size.

- After decades of decline, strike activity surged in 2018, with 485,200 workers involved in major work stoppages—a nearly twentyfold increase from 25,300 workers in 2017.

- The surge in strike activity continued in 2019, with 425,500 workers involved in major work stoppages.

- On average in 2018 and in 2019, 455,400 workers were involved in major work stoppages—the largest two-year average in 35 years.

- The upsurge in major work stoppages is largely fueled by an increase in stoppages involving at least 20,000 workers: In 2019, there were 10 work stoppages involving at least 20,000 workers.

- The increase in strike activity when the unemployment rate is less than 4 percent suggests two things.

- One, workers know that if they are fired for strike activity, they will be more likely to find another job.

- Two, workers are concluding that if even a sub-4 percent unemployment rate is not providing them with enough leverage to secure robust wage growth, they must join together to demand a fair share of the recovery.

From teachers in North Carolina to autoworkers in Michigan, workers across the United States have participated in a resurgence in major work stoppages in the last two years. By far the most common form of work stoppage is a strike, which is when workers withhold their labor from

their employer for a period of time during a labor dispute. By withholding their labor—labor that employers depend on to produce goods and provide services—workers are able to counteract the inherent power imbalance between themselves and their employer. In this way, strikes provide critical leverage to workers when bargaining with their employer over fair pay and working conditions or when their employer violates labor law.

At first blush, it may seem odd that the United States is seeing a resurgence in strike activity when the unemployment rate is below 4 percent. The increased activity likely stems from two factors. First, workers know that if they are fired or otherwise pushed out of their jobs for participating in a strike (which is illegal but common behavior among employers), they are more likely to be able to find another job. Second—and perhaps even more important—working people are not seeing the robust wage growth that one might expect with such a low unemployment rate, and inequality continues to grow. The increase in strike activity suggests that working people are concluding that if even a sub-4 percent unemployment rate 10 years into an economic recovery is not providing enough leverage to generate truly robust wage growth, workers must join together to demand a fair share of the recovery.

## Labor News From the World Wide Web

# The Picket Line

## Number of striking workers surged

**A**fter decades of declining strike activity, data on major work stoppages from the Bureau of Labor Statistics—including new 2019 data released this week—show that there was a substantial upsurge in 2018 and 2019, with 485,200 workers involved in major work stoppages in 2018 and 425,500 workers involved in major stoppages in 2019—together they make up the largest two-year average in 35 years. In 2017, only 25,300 workers were involved in work stoppages. Work stoppages are primarily composed of striking workers. – *Economic Policy Institute*

## Vance Pearson pleads guilty

**V**ance Pearson, a former head of the U.A.W.'s vast Region 5, which has run from Missouri to the West Coast, could face up to five years in prison and \$250,000 in fines.

Mr. Pearson was a onetime deputy to the former U.A.W. president Gary Jones, who has not been charged but is portrayed in documents filed by prosecutors as one of the orchestrators of the embezzlement scheme. Mr. Jones resigned as president last year. – *New York Times*

## Ford and Rivian to build electric vehicle

**F**ord will work with Rivian to build Lincoln's first fully electric vehicle, the Dearborn automaker announced Feb. 5.

The news puts some meat on the bones of the \$500 million investment Ford is making in the EV startup based in Plymouth Township, west of Detroit. Rivian, which has plans to produce its own electric truck and SUV at its plant in Normal, Ill., also has the backing of online retail and delivery giant Amazon. – *Detroit Free Press*

## Ford shakes up top executive team

**J**oe Hinrichs, Ford's 53-year-old automotive president, will leave on March 1 after almost two decades with the company. As a rising star under celebrated former CEO Alan Mulally, he was put on the fast track to be a potential heir to the top job.

With Hinrichs out of the picture, Ford is elevating Jim Farley, the company's only other president, to become the first chief operating officer since the automaker planned for Mulally's succession seven years ago. The announcement that the board will revive the role of COO came days after Hackett reported dismal earnings results, dogged by the disastrous rollout of the redesigned Explorer SUV, and forecast more disappointing numbers for the upcoming year. – *Bloomberg*

## UAW-Ford workers to get profit sharing

**F**ord has announced that it will pay 53,000 eligible hourly UAW employees profit-sharing checks of up to \$6,600 this year. The automaker announced profit-sharing as part of its full-year 2019 earnings earlier this week. The checks are based on pre-tax profits in North America of \$6.612 billion. Ford says that the UAW employees should see their checks by March. – *Ford Authority*

## Automaker Supplies Coronavirus Virus

**T**he threat from the coronavirus crisis closed in on the global auto industry, as Fiat Chrysler Automobiles NV warned that a European plant could shut down within two to four weeks if Chinese parts suppliers cannot get back to work. – *New York Times*



# Anger over corruption fuels Article 8 vote

By Pat Hayes

**Local 249 members voted overwhelmingly at the Feb. 16 membership meeting for a resolution to call a special convention to change how UAW leaders are elected in response to anger over corruption at the top of the union. The Article 8 resolution presented by Tino Scalici, a 20-year UAW member who works on the Truck Motor Line at KCAP, provoked a short but impassioned discussion before it was approved without opposition.**

"The corruption in the leadership of our union is destroying the work done by honest local leaders, standing committee members and activists," said Gary Thomas, the chair of Local 249's Education Committee, whose remarks were greeted with sustained applause.

"We have to take back our union," added Camalee Hefty, a member of the CAP Committee.

The Article 8 resolution presented by Scalici also proposes to "amend the UAW Constitution to require the Secretary-Treasurer to publish the minutes of the International Executive Board Meetings and a detailed quarterly financial report on the official UAW website."

It also proposes disconnecting the salaries of International Officers

from the percentage of the salary of International representatives, since the board negotiates their salaries creating a potential conflict of interest.

The UAW Constitution requires that at least 15 local unions from a minimum of five different states with an aggregate membership of not less than 20 percent of the total UAW membership must pass the resolution in order for a special convention to be called. That means locals with a combined membership of approximately 80,000 members are required.

Local 249 passed an updated version of the Article 8 resolution that gives locals until Feb. 19, 2021 to meet the requirement. Although 26 locals representing more than 60,000 UAW

members passed the original resolution it fell short of the 80,000 required by the deadline set in the resolution itself. That has set in motion a new round of voting on the updated resolution at locals around the country.

Membership action to compel the International Union to hold a special convention is a three-step process that is laid out in Article 8, Section 4 of the UAW Constitution. If enough locals pass the updated resolution, the next steps will be a nation-wide secret ballot referendum and an election of delegates.

The call for a special convention reflects the deep anger, embarrassment and frustration felt by rank and file workers over the corruption scandal at the top of the union.

To date, eleven defendants have pled guilty in connection with the ongoing criminal investigation into illegal payoffs to UAW officials by FCA executives and corruption within the UAW.

In addition to three high ranking FCA officials, seven former senior UAW officials including Virdell King, Keith Mickens, Nancy A. Johnson, Monica Morgan, the widow of UAW Vice Presi-

dent General Holiefield and former UAW Vice President Norwood Jewell have been sentenced to prison.

UAW officials Jeffery Pietrzyk and Michael Grimes have pleaded guilty and are awaiting sentencing. Region 5 Director Vance Pearson has agreed to a plea deal with federal prosecutors. Region 5 official Edward "Nick" Robinson has been charged by federal prosecutors.

Former UAW presidents Dennis Williams and Gary Jones have not been charged, but indictments of others charged in the corruption scheme have implicated them and they are widely expected to be charged, as well.

All of the corruption uncovered so far is in violation of the Ethical Practices section of the UAW Constitution which states that, "union funds are held in sacred trust for the benefit of the membership. The membership is entitled to assurance that Union funds are not dissipated and are spent for proper purposes. The membership is also entitled to be reasonably informed as to how Union funds are invested or used."



Labor, civil and women's rights supporters from the Bernie Sanders 2020 campaign attended the Feb. 16 membership meeting to present his Workplace Democracy Plan. Photo by Don Lehman.

# Bernie Sanders Workplace Democracy Plan

*Julie Baxter-Perry, is a registered nurse, a representative of the National Nurses United Union in Kansas City and the Bernie Sanders 2020 Campaign Committee. She presented Sanders' Workplace Democracy Plan at the Local 249 membership meeting Feb. 16. Perry is the wife of former Local 249 President Mike Perry. Her father was a long-time member of the local and an International Rep. Here are her remarks:*

For decades, working Americans have felt that the dream of America has been slipping away from them. Good-paying union jobs have been shipped overseas only to be replaced by minimum wage jobs with no benefits.

UAW autoworkers, the bedrock of the American middle class have been especially hard hit. Pay has stagnated for long-term workers. In-progression workers often make just half of what their higher seniority co-workers earn for doing the same job. And now the union is fighting to curb the increase of temporary workers.

The welfare of the men and women who built the nation and fought its wars has been cast aside so that billionaires can amass unimaginable fortunes. Sadly, this retreat from the America that promised a fair day's pay for a hard day's work has happened under both parties.

President Trump ran on the pledge to change all this, but his presidency has been a disaster for working families like ours. At a 2017 rally in Youngstown, Ohio, President Trump promised residents that manufacturing jobs would be returning to the state, telling the

crowd: "Don't move. Don't sell your house." Today, the General Motors plant in Lordstown is closed and those workers lucky enough to get work at other GM plants have been scattered to the wind. Many now cannot sell their old homes even as they are forced to rent or buy in the cities where they now live.

A fund-raising letter from Sen. Rand Paul to members of the National Right to Work Committee says that now is the best time to pass the National Right to Work Act "since Trump has personally pledged to support its passage."

Trump is working to gut the Affordable Care Act through the courts despite pledging to safeguard one of its key tenets: insurance coverage for people with preexisting conditions.

Trump's 2015 promise to protect Medicaid from cuts has been now broken by his plan to slash some \$800 billion over a decade from the health program for low-income Americans.

He has ordered OSHA to cut back investigations of workplace accidents and appointed anti-union CEOs to the National Labor Relations Board.

Unlike Trump, Bernie Sanders

believes that it was the trade union movement that built the middle class in this country, and it is the trade union movement that will rebuild the middle class in America once again.

As president, Bernie plans to double union membership within his first term.

He will establish federal protections against the unjust firing of workers

His plan provides unions with the ability to organize through a majority sign up process and provisions to ensure companies cannot prevent a union from forming by denying a first contract.

He will deny federal contracts to companies that pay poverty wages, outsource jobs overseas, engage in union busting, deny good benefits, and pay CEOs outrageous compensation packages.

Bernie will eliminate "Right to Work for Less" laws.

Bernie's plan for Workplace Democracy is not a slick marketing campaign. It's not the result of polling or focus groups conducted by political consultants. It's based on a life-long commitment to moral principles. Bernie was on the picket line with striking GM workers last fall – just as he's been all his life.

Some people complain that Bernie is too radical, but he isn't pushing the party left, he's bringing it home to its

roots in FDR's New Deal and the labor organizing that gave birth to the UAW.

Bernie's campaign doesn't take contributions from billionaires. It's financed by people like us. The average donation is \$18. To date, "teacher" was the most common occupation of Sanders donors and Amazon, Starbucks, Walmart, the United States Postal Service, and Target were the most common employers.

One thing we've learned is that no one is going to save us from the decline in our living standards. No billionaire. No CEO. No politician. We're going to have to do it ourselves. That's why Bernie's slogan is, "Not me, Us."

The Missouri Primary Election will be held on March 10, less than a month from today.

To elect Bernie Sanders and restore the American Dream, we need your help. If you want to be part of that movement stop by our table in the atrium. We have copies of Bernie's Workplace Democracy Plan. We can put you to work. Join us.

*Editors note: The UAW has not made an endorsement in the presidential election. Local 249 has invited all pro-union presidential candidates to speak at union meetings so that the membership can be informed on the issues. The Missouri Presidential Primary Election will be held March 10.*



Members of UAW Local 249 CAP Committee met in Washington DC Feb. 2 for their Bi-annual conference to discuss the union's legislative and political priorities for the coming year. Photo by Don Lehman.

# CAP Conference meets in Washington D.C.

By Gwen Starkey

**T**here's something fundamentally wrong with an economy where rich folks prosper while the working person struggles just to get by. Despite a soaring stock market and years of increased productivity, not everyone is sharing in the fruits of our labor. Something must change and the time for action is now.

2020 is a crucial election year and over 1,000 UAW members from across the country gathered in Washington D.C. on February 2 for a four-day National Community Action Program (CAP) Conference, Fighting for Tomorrow, Preparing Today, to discuss the union's legislative and political priorities for the coming year.

This year's conference focused on the freedom to form unions with the Protecting the Right to Organize Act (PRO Act) (H.R. 2474), the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act (H.R. 3463), strengthening the middle class by raising wages, health care, international trade, judicial nominations, manufacturing jobs, infrastructure, retirement security, immigration, civil and voting rights, and tax reform.

President Jason Starr, CAP Chairperson Shirley Mata, Financial Secretary Dana Davidson and members of the CAP Committee represented UAW Local 249 at this year's conference. They headed to Capitol Hill and met with several of our local and state leaders on issues that directly affect the working class.

Convention delegates focused on advancing pro-worker, pro-labor legislation with the PRO Act preparing to lobby with legislators before the upcoming House vote on Feb. 6. The PRO Act strengthens penalties against corporations that violate workers' rights, provides for mediation and arbitration of first contracts, eliminates right to work, prohibits captive audience meetings, and supports workers right to strike for basic workplace improvements. The House passed the PRO Act with 219 Democrats and 5 Republicans voting in favor. House passage of the PRO Act is a powerful statement of support for America's workers and we are thankful to the Members of Congress who stood up for the American people.

"It was refreshing after being to a couple of these conferences to really see people passionately and openly talk about unions," Jason Starr said. "The democratic party kind of lost that a little bit, and to see young passionate people get up and speak about how unions are the solution to many of the problems that the country faces, that

is the most positive thing I took away from it, that there was hope. I came home with a little more hope than I had when I left."

The passionate people that Starr refers to were the guest speakers that spoke over the course of the conference. One speaker, Ohio lawmaker U.S. Rep. Tim Ryan, moved the members saying this is our moment in time.

Coming from a strong union family Ryan spoke of his support of the labor movement. "My commitment to you, my support for labor and the labor movement is based on the fact that unions in the United States created the greatest middle class this world has ever seen, and I was a beneficiary of the labor movement," Ryan said. "When you look at the states, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin, you look at the industrial Midwest, we have got to get some of those voters back that went and voted for Trump. Ryan, whose district includes the now shuttered GM Lordstown Assembly Plant reminded delegates of the promise President Trump made to UAW members when he told them not to sell their homes because he guaranteed that the plant would stay open. We all know the outcome of that.

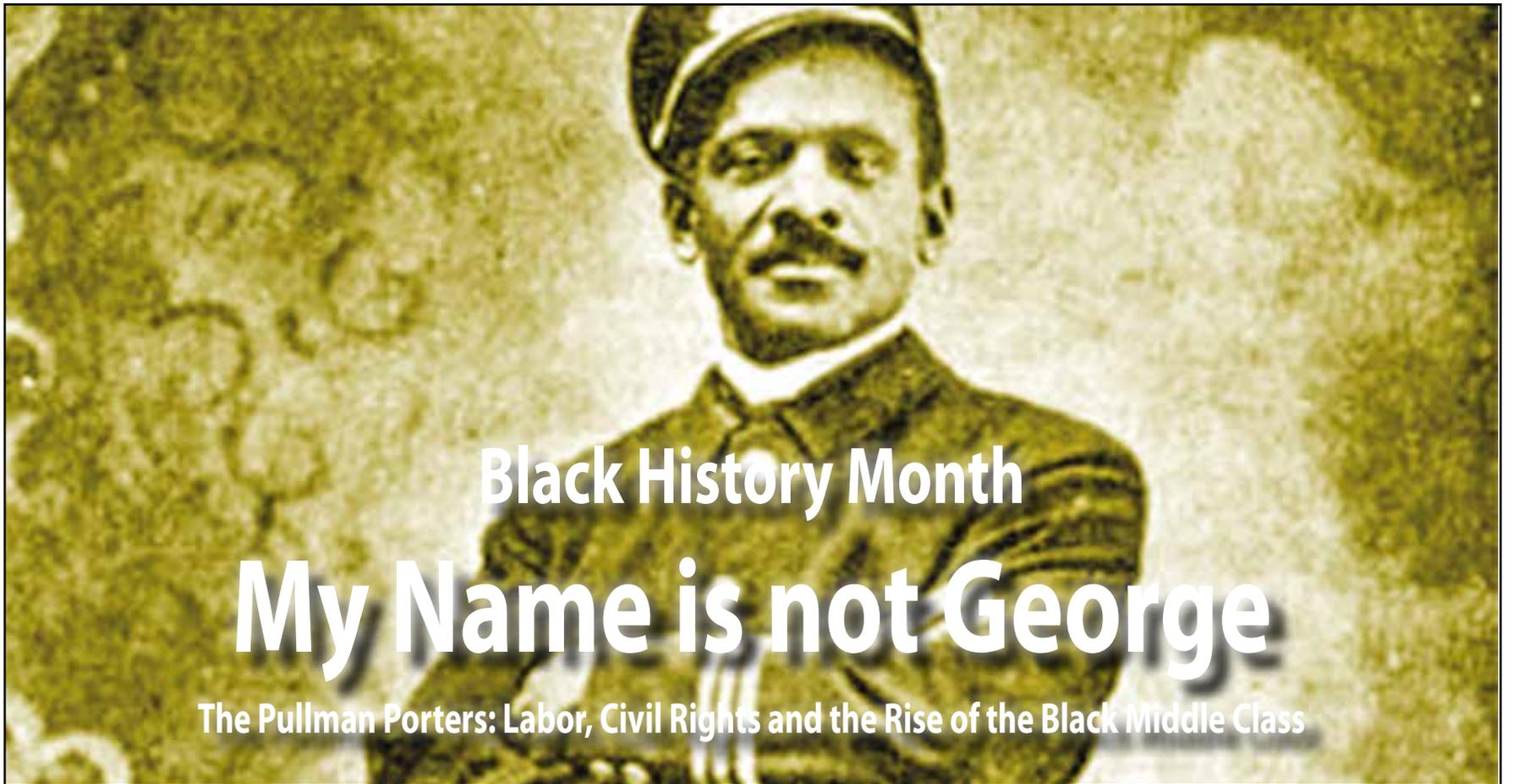
"Many people I've talked to that voted for Trump, now have doubts," Ryan said. "A lot of them were workers

at the GM factory at Lordstown. It's time in this country for us to remember not where unions are now but where we need the unions to be. That's why we are talking about the worker act and all these issues so that we can help expand the middle class in the United States. Then we can stop the race to the bottom, with trade agreements and the tax code."

Other speakers included House Speaker Nancy Pelosi who quoted Walter Reuther as saying, "We can make America the image of what it really stands for." Ohio Senator Sherrod Brown, Pennsylvania Congressman Conor Lamb, Iowa Congresswoman Abby Finkenauer, Michigan Congresswoman Debbie Dingell, Liz Watson, executive director of the Progressive Caucus Action Fund and Derrick Johnson, president and CEO of the NAACP also spoke. Johnson cautioned that some groups will use the tool of race to divide people during this election.

"The tool of race is targeted directly at the labor movement," Johnson said. "Don't allow the tools of race to cause us to turn on each other."

He noted that many other organizations depend on the UAW's involvement in democracy. "Stay strong. Stay together. Stay focused. If we stick with those stays, we can make democracy work for us all."



# Black History Month

## My Name is not George

The Pullman Porters: Labor, Civil Rights and the Rise of the Black Middle Class

*By Pat Hayes*

**In the years after the Civil War ended, the industrialist George Pullman invented and manufactured a sleeping car that revolutionized American rail travel. Pullman's new sleeping car made travel comfortable for the first time. He soon attached dining cars that served fine food and featured impeccable service to his "hotels on wheels." Marketed as an affordable luxury for the middle class, Pullman Palace cars were wildly popular from the 1860s until they were succeeded by auto and air travel in the 1950s.**

To serve the traveling public, Pullman hired former slaves to work as porters, cooks and waiters on his rail cars. Pullman, the largest private employer of African Americans at the time, paid his porters less than unionized white railroad workers requiring them to live mostly on tips. After a long day of hauling baggage, cleaning berths, shining shoes and serving food, Pullman's rule book allowed porters just three hours sleep on the first night of a trip and none after that.

Pullman also required Porters to answer to boy or George no matter what their name really was. This indignity, a holdover from slave days when servants were addressed not by their real name but the first name of their master, served as a festering reminder that America's founding declaration that all men are created equal remained largely unfulfilled despite the defeat of slavery.

The Pullman porters fought a long battle against the low wages, poor working conditions and racist treatment they endured. Denied membership in the segregated American Railway Workers Union, the porters still found ingenious ways to assert their dignity and fight back against racist treatment

from the Pullman company and its customers.

In the documentary, "Rise from the Rails: The Story of the Pullman Porter," Michael McGoings, the son of a dining car waiter, recalled that his father told a man who called him George that, "If you want someone to call George, you better go make a baby, because my name is not George."

McGoings' father was called in to be disciplined by his white Pullman bosses, but he had made his point and the company provided porters with name tags after that.

In 1925, denied recognition by the Pullman company, the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters asked A. Phillip Randolph, a socialist, labor organizer and editor of the influential African American newspaper, "The Messenger" to lead their union.

Randolph led a years-long campaign for recognition of the union. Pullman refused to recognize the union and mediation efforts through the United States Mediation Board and the Interstate Commerce Commission failed.

"It is the evil of the tip system which we want to do away with," Randolph told the New York Times. "It is not logical

as a system of remuneration for work done. Some cars contain few passengers, some many. It is altogether too dependent on luck."

Demanding a living wage instead of tips, a 240-hour work month, four to six hours sleep a night and union recognition, Randolph announced a nationwide strike in 1928. The strike was called off when the Pullman company threatened to hire 5,000 replacement workers to break the union. The failure of the strike led to a years-long decline in union membership and combativity.

The election of Franklin Roosevelt and passage of the National Labor Relation Act provided Randolph with new opportunities to win recognition for the Pullman porters. As a result, the union was finally certified as the exclusive collective bargaining agent of the Pullman porters in 1935. Randolph called it the "first victory of Negro workers over a great industrial corporation."

In 1941, with the war effort in full swing, Randolph sensed new opportunity to fight discrimination against African Americans. He called for a massive march on Washington to put pressure on Roosevelt to end discrimination in the war industries. The march was called off when Roosevelt issued executive order 8802 banning discrimination in defense plants.

Randolph used a similar tactic to successfully pressure Harry Truman to desegregate the U.S. military after the war.

Veterans of the battles fought by Randolph and the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters played key roles in

the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s. E.D. Nixon, a Pullman porter, worked with both Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King to organize the successful Montgomery Bus Boycott in 1955.

Thurgood Marshall, the son of a Pullman porter, successfully argued the landmark school desegregation case, Brown vs. Board of Education, before the Supreme Court. He later served as the first African American justice on the Supreme Court.

Randolph was a mentor to Bayard Rustin, a key organizer of the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, at which King delivered his legendary "I Have a Dream" speech on August 28, 1963.

Many of the children of Pullman Porters would go on to play central roles in the battles against segregation, including San Francisco Mayor Willie Brown, Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, journalist Ethel Payne and jazz pianist Oscar Peterson.

The battles fought by Pullman porters over many decades continue to provide inspiration and lessons for a new generation of activists in the labor and civil rights movements in the era of Donald Trump.

"The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice," said Martin Luther King who was convinced to lead the Montgomery Bus Boycott by E.D. Nixon, a veteran of the struggle for recognition of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. They knew change takes a long time, but, if we fight for it, it does happen.



UAW President Emeritus Owen Bieber, center, with anti-apartheid leader Nelson Mandela spoke before 49,000 people at Tiger Stadium in Detroit on June 28, 1990.

# UAW Pres. Emeritus Owen Bieber dead at 90

## UAW

**UAW President Emeritus, Owen F. Bieber, is dead at the age of 90. Bieber served from May 19, 1983 to June 15, 1995 as the union's seventh president. Bieber was elected UAW president in 1983 during the union's 27th Constitutional Convention in Dallas. He succeeded Douglas Fraser and served four consecutive terms.**

"Owen Bieber's death is a loss for our union and all working people. He was a man of incredible leadership. He was not afraid of tough battles or taking a stand on controversial issues," said UAW President Rory L. Gamble. "He was not only a devoted trade unionist but a social activist whose impact was felt around the world. Whether it was his support to end apartheid in South Africa or in Poland, Owen stood on the right side of history for the nation and the world."

Bieber, the son of Albert F. and Minnie (Schwartz) Bieber, was born in North Dorr, Mich. on Dec. 28, 1929. After graduating from Catholic grade school and high school in 1948.

He went to work at McInerney Spring and Wire Company in nearby Grand Rapids, the same auto supply plant where his father worked. In 1939 he co-founded UAW Local 687, the first UAW local in the Grand Rapids city limits.

His first job was bending by hand the thick border wire on car seats. A year later, at age 19, Bieber's co-workers elected him Local 687's shop steward. By 1955 he was elected to the local bargaining committee and

was involved in talks on local plant issues. In 1956 he was elected local president. Bieber, a devoted Democrat, also worked on behalf of Sen. John Kennedy's campaign for the U.S. presidency in 1960.

In 1972 Bieber was appointed director of UAW Region 1D, a position he held until 1980, when he was elected vice president. Bieber served as director of the union's General Motors (GM) Department, the union's largest department with more than 400,000 members.

He is credited with diversifying the UAW by inviting new members from areas outside of industrial sectors, including public and private employers. Active in the Democratic Party, he became a political force, advocating for working people on legislative issues and contributed to bringing President Bill Clinton into the White House.

He was vocal on legislation pertaining to national and international trade and the reformation of health care. On an international level, he led the first trade unionist delegation to visit China, meeting with Deng Xiaoping to acknowledge International Labor Day.

His presidency continued the union's legacy of supporting labor and civil rights movements and leaders across the globe, where the stakes were about more than higher wages.

One of those leaders was Lech Walesa, the shipyard electrician and member of the labor movement 'Solidarity' who rose to challenge Communism in Poland. Walesa received the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983 and was elected president of Poland in 1990.

During the 1980s and under Bieber's leadership, the union provided financial support to keep Solidarity afloat, paying for printing presses that were smuggled into Poland so the union could get its message out. The union increased its support after the Communist government tried to crush the movement by destroying its offices.

Bieber traveled to South Africa twice, including once in 1986 as a member of a State Department advisory committee under Secretary of State George Schultz. The committee recommended sanctions to pressure the South African government to replace apartheid with a nonracial, democratic system.

Bieber traveled separate from the others as the only union member of the group. He said he traveled apart so he could talk to people who might be suspicious of the group's motivations. One of his main goals was to check on labor activist Moses Mayekiso, a leader with the National Union of Metalworkers of

South Africa, who was imprisoned for leading a rent boycott. Mayekiso had been put in solitary confinement for nine months and charged with treason, which was punishable by death. Bieber and others raised the international profile of Mayekiso's case and the activist was eventually acquitted.

While in South Africa and at the request of a trio of Yale professors, Bieber captured more evidence of the real impact of apartheid when he smuggled images out of the country showing the scarred bodies of people in South Africa who had challenged the country's apartheid government.

Bieber and the UAW so passionately fought against the brutally discriminatory system in South Africa that when Nelson Mandela toured the United States after his release from prison in 1990, he insisted on celebrating with UAW Local 600. During that trip, Bieber stood at Mandela's side at a rally at Tiger Stadium in Detroit where the South African leader again thanked the UAW and the 49,000 people who had gathered at the stadium.

During his 2003 visit to Grand Rapids, Archbishop Desmond Tutu singled out Bieber for his years of calling attention to the horrors of apartheid. Bieber was arrested when he marched with Tutu at the South African embassy in Washington in 1986.

"We came asking for help, and you gave that help and accomplished this extraordinary thing," Tutu said.

# KCAP pushes full steam ahead

By Jim Fisher

**T**he Truck System will remain on a 3-crew pattern with Super Production scheduled at this time for Day Shift on March 8 and March 22. The B crew will have Super Production scheduled for March 14 and April 4. If there is still a need for additional production, the local union has asked for the Easter holiday period to be available for the possibility of voluntary overtime work.

The Transit System will remain on a 5-day pattern, with Super Production weekends showing through the end of March. There have been some questions as to the changes in the Transit schedule. At the time of this article, the Transit System is behind schedule by 756 vans.

This has mainly been due to a robot in Transit Body shop breaking down causing two shifts of production loss and from high absenteeism on the day of the Chiefs Super Bowl parade. The company is wanting all the lost production made up by the end of March.

If you read Appendix H of the National Contract, it covers how and when the company can make up lost production. Once the units are made up, we expect to go back to normal scheduling. As updates become available to the schedules, we will be sure to pass them on as soon as we get them.

The Transit System has also had a big change in upper management. Assistant Plant Manager Keisha Hanks and been reassigned to another plant, and Tony Thomas has replaced her as Assistant Plant Manager of the Transit System. Tony has previously worked

at Kentucky Truck Plant for the past 25 years.

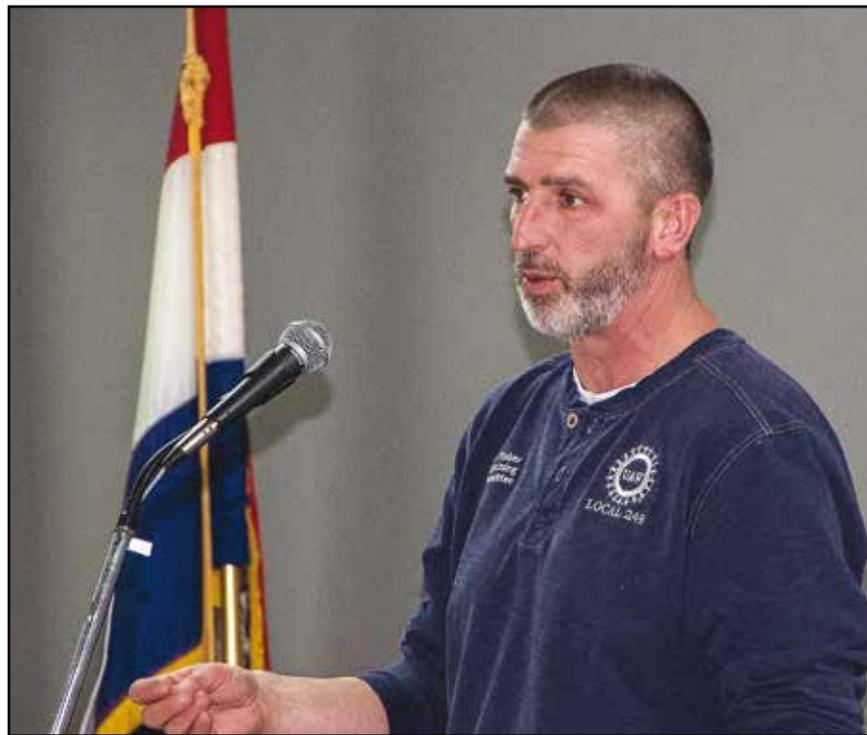
There will be changes coming to the cafeteria services here at the plant. Ford has notified American Food and Vending that later this year they will be changing companies.

American Food and Vending has decided to cancel serving food on the weekends and has threatened to reduce their hours Monday through Friday. To maintain some kind of food options for our members, we have been able to have Ford provide food trucks on the weekends. They have been parked outside of the executive parking garage.

Our members have spent thousands of dollars with American Food and Vending, as they also run the vending machines and pop machines throughout the plant.

To keep threatening to reduce hours and reduce services to our membership is ridiculous. We are working with the HR department here in the plant to come up with plans in the event that American Food and Vending continues to reduce services or until the new company is brought into the plant full time.

Every year as we come out of the



UAW Local 249 Bargaining Chairman Jim Fisher spoke about upcoming overtime scheduled for the plant. Photo by Don Lehman.

winter months, the plant's roadways and parking lots become full of potholes. Our UAW Skilled Trades have been out working on them and have filled most of the holes. Unfortunately, the patch doesn't hold well in cold weather very well.

Once we get into warmer weather, we will be back out monitoring them again for the longer lasting patch work. In addition, the union has written a Health and Safety grievance on the

Q-52 turnstile. Water has begun ponding in the walkway. We are working on getting this fixed as soon as possible.

The Kansas City Auto Show will be at Bartle Hall on March 4 – 8. All UAW/Ford members and one guest will be admitted for free on any of the event days. Members need to show their Ford Badge with picture ID at the exhibitor entrance escalator in the south end of the main entrance lobby 2300, behind the ticket sellers.



The Local 249 James "Frog" Moran Solidarity Award for February was received by Steven Proctor, left, joined by Jake Diggs from the Education Committee, during the monthly membership meeting. He was nominated by his coworkers for using his constitutional and contractual knowledge to fight management. Photo by Don Lehman.



UAW Local 249's Veterans Committee donated \$500 to veteran's volunteer services for when they come in for care and \$500 was donated in a joint effort with the UAW Local 249 Motorcycle Committee to Veterans volunteers for hospice services. Photo by Don Lehman.

# Building a stronger Local 249

By Jason Starr

**F**ord never gave us anything. If you doubt that, take a look at the pay and working conditions of Ford workers in Mexico where there is no union. Everything we've got – and I mean everything – is because we were big enough to take it.

That's why we're so focused on building a strong, unified union that can defend our members.

One focus of that work is the community service work we do. One key task of Local 249's Community Service Committee is getting help for members and their families in times of need. Another is helping members of the community in their time of need.

The gate collections for communities hit by tornados, the annual Thanksgiving Turkey Drive, Coats for Kids, the Women's Build for Habitat for Humanity, the many donations to the Veterans Community tiny houses project, and above all, our wheelchair ramp program are all designed to build strong ties between our union and the larger community where we live.

The critical importance of that community service work became clear during the General Motors strike last fall. All the community organizations we'd worked with in the past stepped forward to support us during the strike.

Two community groups in particular, Stand Up KC and KC Tenants joined the picket line on numerous occasions and brought other community members with them.

Another focus of Local 249's ef-

fort to defend our members is in the political arena.

Our union was at the forefront of the successful fights to defeat right to work, raise the minimum wage and pass the Clean Missouri ethics initiatives.

Our members were also the key factor in the election of pro-worker candidates Sen. Lauren Arthur and Mark Ellebracht to represent the districts that our plant is located in.

This political work paid important dividends during the General Motors strike when Democratic elected officials in both Kansas and Missouri collected items for the strike pantry. In addition over 40 Democratic elected officials joined the picket line at the GM Fairfax Plant.

The widespread support from community organizations and Democratic elected officials sent a strong signal to the media and the company that the strike wasn't isolated. It was bigger than just one company or one union.

Now, we have to build on that work. We have to deepen our ties to the community and we have to step up our work in the political arena.

Republicans in Jefferson City are working to overrule the voters on right to work. They are also trying to reverse the Clean Missouri initiative in order to



Local 249 President Jason Starr chairs the Feb. 16 membership meeting during the election for the union election committee. Photo by Don Lehman.

give themselves an unfair advantage in the next election.

To protect our members and stop Republicans from ignoring the will of Missouri voters we have to improve on the excellent work we did in the last election.

I know a lot of our members are

turned off by politics. I get it.

But if working people don't get involved and stay involved we will lose the gains we worked so hard to win.

That's why Local 249 will be launching a big campaign to make sure that all our members are registered to vote in time for the November election.

## New Dental Benefits

**Exciting News: The new Delta Care USA plan which includes the full coverage orthodontia up to the age of 19 and orthodontia for age 19 and over at a co-pay of \$1,995. A letter announcing this change will be mailed to UAW-Ford active members on February 17, 2020 with a detailed explanation of the required action that members will need to take to enroll. A special enrollment for this plan will be from March 2-13, 2020.**



## 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.

# Retirees celebrate Black History month

By Natalie Wood

**H**appy belated Valentine's Day to all. The February retirees meeting was great. It is Black History Month and Chairmen Mel Thompson reminded us of our little bit of Black History. This is the 100th year anniversary for the Kansas City Monarchs, a Negro Baseball League team, having started in 1920. We were blessed to have had one of the original players as a co-worker at the Kansas City Assembly Plant.

Alfred G. Surratt played for the Kansas City Monarchs and the Detroit Stars, another Negro League team.

Surratt was better known as "Slick" to those of us that had the pleasure of knowing him and heard first hand stories of the trials and tribulations of the Negro League Baseball players.

He began working at the Ford Motor Company plant in 1952. He later co-founded the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum in Kansas City in 1990.

He continued to work for Ford for 51 years, retiring as a welder in the skilled trades department.

Oh, the stories he would tell about his days as a baseball player. He sadly died on February 15, 2010 at the age of 87.

After learning more about our Black history here within the local, Chairman Mel Thompson held a moment of silence in the memory of Cecil Vaughn, from Local 710 who passed.

Cecil served as the area Council Representative.

Mel also reported that our defibrillator training could begin as soon as next month.

Mel introduced guest Kevin Corrigan and Glenn Johnson from Kelley & Ferraro Attorney Counselors at Law.

They spoke about the need for all employees to be screened for asbestos. Knowledge is power and you can be screened for asbestos in a matter of minutes.

Once this is done, a brief medical history is taken and you're done. Findings from your screenings will be sent back to you.

You can be compensated if asbestos is found. There is no cost to you for this screening. It's a win-win situation.

You can learn about what's going on inside of you and be compensated for it. This is another good reason to attend our retirees meetings.

Information is shared that can be beneficial to you, even unexpectedly. To reach out to Kelley & Ferraro call 216-575-0777 or 888-839-8479.

A representative from Hearing Health Associates was present at our



Retirees gather in fellowship as they celebrate Black History month during their monthly meeting on February 19. The retirees are excited to welcome to so many new faces in the coming months. Join us on March 18 for the next one. Photo by Don Lehman.

February meeting. Appointments can be set up at no cost to you to check your hearing. There are multiple locations to have the testing done. By calling 816-415-3233 you can get a date at the location nearest to you.

Remember, there is no cost to you for this service, so there is no reason to put your hearing health at risk.

Bill Parker our Service Officer reported 2 deaths in November: Lavonna Katon and Gary Timberlake.

December deaths reported were: Terry Johnson, William Henderson and James Sullivan.

January deaths reported were: Dona Dennett, Paul Johnson, Jay Lewis and Larry Robertson February deaths reported were: Sidney Silvey

Bill Parker reported there were 6 members slated to retire in January: Jeffrey Bertelsmann, Donna Crouch, Kelly Kennedy, John Pierce, Robert Reyes, Kenneth Roberts.

There were 24 members set to retire in February: Philip Akers, Garland Ashley, Kenneth Bennett, James Berkel, Troy Claypool, Karen Foxworthy, Gerald Gladney, Michael Gorski, Greg Horn, William Huttner, Misty Kirwan, Stephen Luzicka, Nicki Maysent, Bryan Mullen, Mark Myers, Jeffrey Newbanks, John Robertson, Robert Robinson, Ricky Sandefur, Bobbi Standeford, David Tipton, Michael Tucker, Phillip Wasmer, and Audraft Young.

Congratulations to them all and please feel free to come join us at the

next retirees meeting March 18 at Local 249.

There was one first time visitor to our Retirees meeting.

Welcome Glenn Lowe. We appreciate you joining us and we hope you continue to join us.

Susan Pena reported that there were 3 illnesses: Bill Savage, Eddie Thomas and Mary Sanders. Please keep them in your prayers and get well soon.

As always, Tanya Moore, our Blue Cross Blue Shield representative was present at our meeting.

She is our go to person for any issues with Blue Cross Blue Shield. We thank you Tanya Moore for all you do for our retirees.

Lori Marin, our Vice Chairman of Family Auxiliaries reported we had no wedding anniversaries for the month of February.

There were 6 members that had birthdays in the month of February, so we had them stand as we sang Happy Birthday to them.

At the end of the meeting we all joined one another for a meal in fellowship.

As reported last month there were 63 members at our January meeting.

The February meeting had 74 members present.

Let's see if our month of March can top last month's attendance. Grab a friend and come on out to our March 18 meeting. Bring a covered dish or dessert and join us. You'll be glad you did.



## In the March 10 Missouri Presidential Primary Election



Gary Thomas, Chair of the UAW Local 249 Education Committee pictured, worked with Terri Hall, Vinnie Sorrentino and Kelsey Pinzino, not pictured in conjunction with Jason Starr to teach classes on how to utilize your power as a member to protect yourself within the plant. Photo by Don Lehman.

# Participation equals power

By Chrissy Kline

**O**n January 27, 28 and 30 the UAW Local 249 Education Committee held classes at the union hall on topics pertaining to the power provided to the membership through their local and international agreements and the UAW constitution. Each class had 20 members who were selected on the basis of their role as leaders within the plant, their willingness to stand up for what they believe is right and being identified by their district committeeman as a good fit for the content of the class.

Classes provided an overview of the broader labor movement, the history of our local, the state of the auto industry and the true state of the UAW as it stands today.

The expectations of the average members are currently unattainable in the current political, social and economic climate.

The collective bargaining agreements we have obtained are a true reflection of our power.

The goal is to combat the lack of membership ownership and participation coming out of the 2015 contract and subsequently the more recent 2019 contract negotiations.

There was a great deal of anger and frustration that did not and has not translated to activism.

This lack of activism and involvement has led to misconceptions on the true power of the UAW, the collective bargaining process and any gains to be had in future contracts.

"The reality", President of UAW Local 249 Jason Starr stated, "is that no one person is to blame. We all share the exact same weighted responsibility. It is up to us to pick up our share of the weight instead of allowing others to carry our share."

Members who attended classes are charged with the task of selecting

the next group of participants to attend the educational sessions.

The discussion during the class revealed that the average member views their union membership as a service, rather than a responsibility.

Dues are not a subscription to a company that provides you with services on demand, they are an access fee to provide you the empowerment, the required resources, and the backing needed to achieve results on your own.

Conversations were had about how to use both the local agreement and the international contract as well as the constitution to combat any harassment (sexual, physical or mental) and negligence on the part of the company.

The hope is that members will take away that they are so much more than just a worker.

We can stand up for ourselves and we all have a responsibility to our union, our fellow members and our-

selves to do the right thing.

The classes themselves are expensive to conduct with several more already planned for future months.

However, the return on the investment is an educated, motivated and prepared membership for any challenges that lie ahead.

Participation equals power which equals the justice we deserve.

Gary Thomas, Chairman of the Education Committee, shared, "The classes are a testament to the commitment our executive board, President Jason Starr, Bargaining Chairman Jim Fisher, the district committee people, and the UAW Local 249 Education Committee have towards our membership.

"I came out of these classes with a renewed hope that by investing in our members, they will live up to the expectations we have for Local 249," Jason Starr said, "and do what they have always done when they work together: win."