

# FIRST LOCAL NEWS

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

July 2020



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

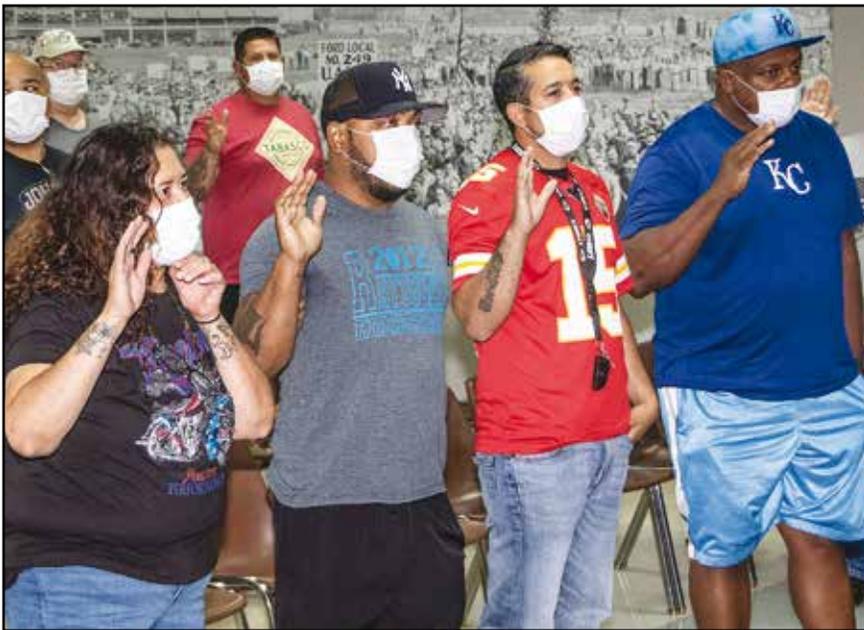


Non-Profit  
U.S. Postage  
**PAID**  
Jefferson City, MO  
Permit No. 303

Local 249 members participated in a Juneteenth standdown at 8:46 a.m. for 8 minutes and 46 seconds on June 19 to celebrate the emancipation of Blacks from slavery in the U.S. and to protest the police murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis. Photo by Don Lehman.



Daniel Campbell and Josh Shull, right, won Local 249's 6th Annual Wayne Pace Bass Tournament. Blake Proffit and Greg Proffit, left, placed second. The event is sponsored by the union Recreation Committee.



New members were sworn in at the June 19 membership meeting, the first since the Coronavirus pandemic shut down KCAP. Photo by Don Lehman.



Camalee Hefty, Adam Frost and William Dinwiddie were awarded the Local 249 James "Frog" Moran Solidarity Award from the Education Committee at the June 19 membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

## First Local News

Published monthly with combined issues in December-January and June-July by UAW Local 249. Free to members and retirees of UAW Local 249. The views expressed are not necessarily those of the UAW or Local 249. Member of the Local Union Communication Association (LUCA).

Editor Pat Hayes

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

Kelly Loveall 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

Visit Local 249 on the web at [www.local249.org](http://www.local249.org)

Like Local 249 on Facebook [www.facebook.com/local249](http://www.facebook.com/local249)

Follow us on Twitter @UAWLocal249



# The Picket Line

## Gary Jones admits stealing from UAW

**F**ormer United Auto Workers President Gary Jones pleaded guilty to helping steal more than \$1 million from rank-and-file workers as part of a racketeering scheme as U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider demanded the union reform itself or face a possible government takeover.

Jones, 63, faces up to five years in federal prison, but prosecutors have agreed to recommend a sentence of up to 57 months in prison because he is cooperating with an ongoing corruption investigation. During a brief tenure leading one of the nation's largest and most powerful unions, and despite touting himself as a reform-minded president, Jones' criminal conduct has helped push the UAW to the brink of federal takeover. — *Detroit News*

## UAW training center reforms

**S**tructural changes to the United Auto Workers' training centers jointly operated with Detroit's three automakers, coupled with new U.S. Labor Department rules, could subject the embattled organizations to greater reporting requirements and the highest levels of scrutiny, according to officials.

Labor contracts ratified last year with the automakers dissolve the corporate nonprofit training centers, creating two trusts each in their places. The new structures, according to officials, will subject the funds designated for training blue-collar workers to more federal oversight, annual audits, greater transparency and stricter administrative standards that could help prevent future scandals.

The structural changes follow a number of reforms implemented to address corruption within the organizations, including the elimination of training center credit cards, stricter asset and monetary rules, budget reviews, multi-vendor bids for contracts and bans on charitable gifts.

The training centers have been at the center of a five-year federal corruption investigation into the union for the misappropriation of funds to bribe UAW officials... — *Detroit News*

## Working people respond to the killing of George Floyd with nationwide protests

**W**hat happened to George Floyd, what happened to Ahmaud Arbery, what happened to far too many unarmed people of color has happened for centuries, says Rich Trumka, president of the AFL-CIO. The difference is now we have cell phones. It's there for all of us to see. And we can't turn our heads and look away because we feel uncomfortable.

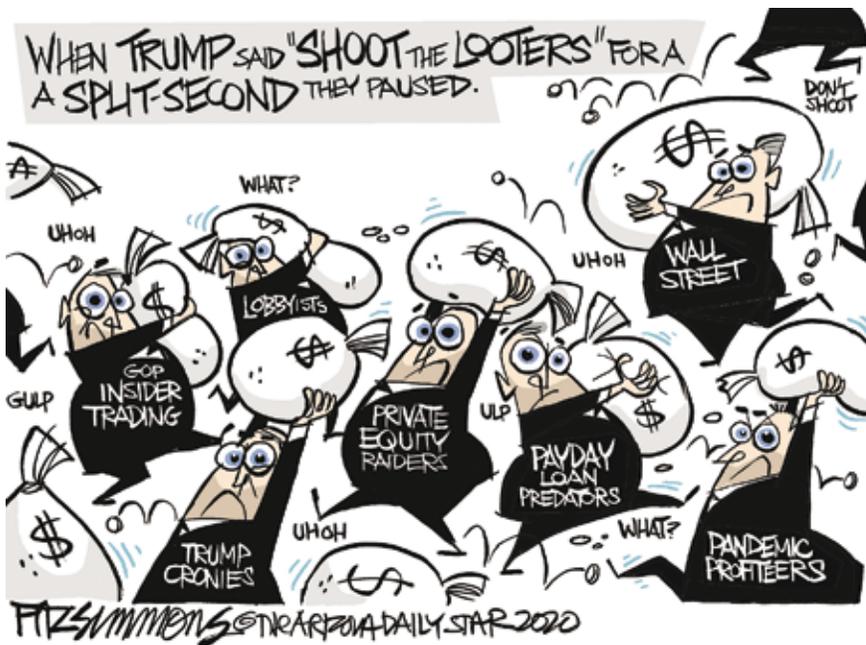
Racism plays an insidious role in the daily lives of all working people of color. This is a labor issue because it is a workplace issue. It is a community issue, and unions are the community. We must and will continue to fight for reforms in policing and to address issues of racial and economic inequality.

We categorically reject those on the fringes who are engaging in violence and destroying property. Attacks like the one on the AFL-CIO headquarters are senseless, disgraceful and only play into the hands of those who have oppressed workers of color for generations and detract from the peaceful, passionate protesters who are rightly bringing issues of racism to the forefront. — *AFL-CIO*

## UAW supports HEROES Act

**T**he International Union, UAW announced support for the House-passed Health and Economic Recovery Omnibus Emergency Solutions (HEROES) Act and urged the Senate to approve this important piece of economic recovery legislation as soon as possible.

The HEROES Act takes important steps for the nation as communities battle the public health and economic crisis stemming from the tragic COVID-19 pandemic. — *UAW*



# An American tragedy

By Rory Gamble

**I want to send a message to the family of George Floyd. I cannot begin to imagine what you are going through in these hours after your son's tragic and needless death. As a father and grandfather, I want to personally extend my most heartfelt sympathy to your family.**

Sadly, he is one of many African Americans who have been the victim of racial profiling and brutality in this country. We have all seen the headlines. I say this with great sorrow and not to vilify our brave men and women in blue.

We represent many police officers and they are truly untold heroes who go to work every day to keep all of us safe. They have bravely been on the front lines of this pandemic, as they are always on the front lines when our nation is in need. But in this case, things

went terribly wrong, and we must look at this issue as a nation. No matter how painful, we cannot not turn away.

Now I'm going to speak very plainly here. I am an African American man also from an urban center and you may think that this is why I am speaking out. But I am speaking as an American, as a union tradesman, and I am speaking to us all.

These are unprecedented times for us all. What we need now is not hard heartedness. Not division. Not looking at our differences but looking at who we are and what we value as Americans. And we are ALL Americans. We are this nation and our differences should be our strength, not our weakness. Not our tragedies.

This pandemic, terrible as it is, has in my opinion, shown us that we are in this together and we must rely on one another if we are going to navigate in this worldwide crisis. This is a scary time, and fear and prejudice are our enemies. We must not allow these human failings to prevail.

When I look at the terrible, tragic circumstances of Mr. Floyd's last minutes, begging for his life, I know that we as a nation failed this young man. This must not be our course as Americans. This must not be our story. And this cannot be the future of our

nation.

George Floyd's death is an American tragedy in a time of extreme pain and uncertainty. The color of our skin cannot — and must not — divide us. If this young man's untimely and terrible death teaches us anything, I hope it is that we need to all see each other as Americans. Each and every one of us — Americans.

And as Americans, I think we need to serve warning that we are watching out for the safety of our fellow Americans and will do what is necessary to keep each other safe. And we will hold those accountable, regardless of who they are, if they put any of us in peril.

We have a word for it at the UAW: SOLIDARITY.

The color of our skin cannot — and must not — divide us.

# If we are still marching, how far have we come?

**“The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.”**

**— Martin Luther King Jr.**

**By Ray Curry, UAW Secretary-Treasurer**

**The citizens of this country are in the midst of a battle that we have been fighting for a very long time. A battle of racial inequality, systemic abuse, and injustice. It is time to win this battle once and for all.**

Across the nation over the past weeks, protesters are saying they have had enough. They are weary of the ongoing struggle for equality and equity, of the battle against systemic injustice, and the fear of being a person of color in America. The horrific, needless death of George Floyd on May 25 at the hands of four police officers in Minneapolis is tragically all too familiar. And we are seeing our nation cry out in pain. It is the pain of generations of inequality and the pain of a nation divided.

It is shocking that in 2020, mothers in African American and minority communities still have to worry about the safety of their sons and daughters when simply going off to the store, going out for a jog and or being stopped at a traffic light.

This must end.

George Floyd is sadly one of many, many African Americans who have been the victim of racial profiling and brutality. The larger tragedy of our society is that this criminal activity did not start with Mr. Floyd. Or with Breona Taylor or Tony McDade, who

also lost their lives in the past month for similar reasons. Nor did it start with Eric Garner, killed in 2014 due to a police strangle hold — or Rodney King’s brutal beating in 1991. The names and stories stretch back generations and are part of the ongoing racial disparity and injustice that permeates our system. A product of 400 years of oppression, prejudice and fear.

How many stories like George Floyd’s must we hear? How many lives cut tragically, brutally short?

At the UAW, we have been fighting for generations against systemic racism. Think back to August 28, 1968, when more than 200,000 demonstrators took part in the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in the nation’s capital. Two men participating in that march — Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and UAW President Walter Reuther — were dedicated to breaking the color lines and fighting for equality in wages, opportunities, housing, healthcare and fair societal treatment.

The 1968 March on Washington succeeded in getting those in power to sit up and take action. It was success-

ful in pressuring the administration to initiate a strong federal civil rights bill in Congress. It was a time that gave Americans — especially minorities — hope. But how far have we come since then if we still are marching, if we are still protesting?

Not nearly far enough.

It is time for this country to transform from the ways of the past. To turn our backs on the prejudices, fear and hate of our past. To vote in local and federal elections for leaders that will represent men and women of this country and no longer their self-interest.

I truly worry if we cannot do this, this wound will continue to tear our nation apart.

In today’s marches across the country, we are seeing history repeating itself. Again, our community members are joining together, young people especially, and taking up the cause to demand change. And the UAW, with its long history of supporting and fighting for civil and human rights, is right beside them.

It is not just police brutality that affects the African American community. Because of socioeconomic and environmental factors — many due to continued disparity in opportunities — when COVID-19 struck this country

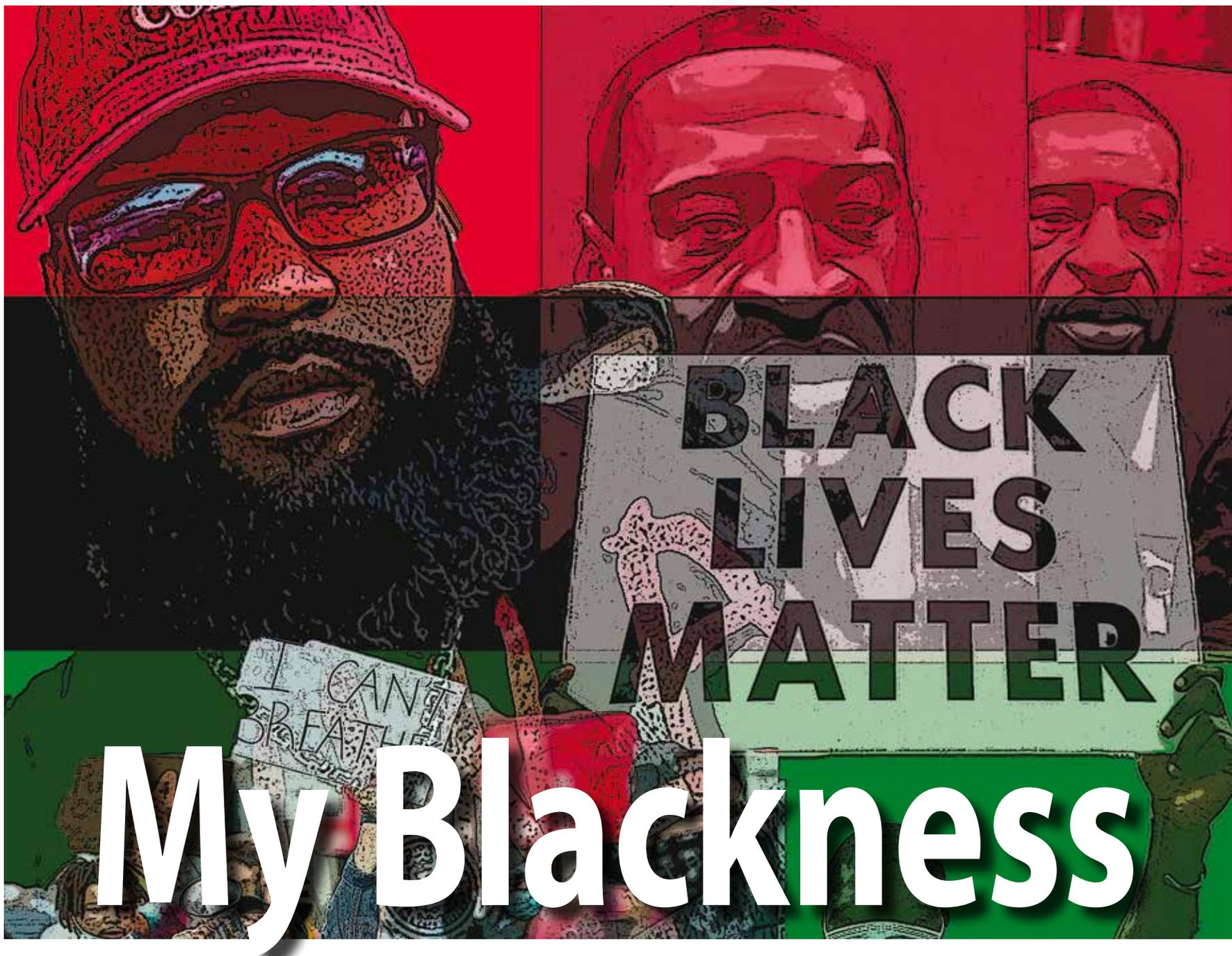
it hit people of color especially hard.

Currently, the UAW is working with Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer’s office serving on the Michigan Coronavirus Task Force on Racial Disparities. The task force will act in an advisory capacity to the Governor and study the causes of racial disparities in the impact of COVID-19 and recommend actions to immediately address such disparities and the historical and systemic inequities that underlie them.

But we cannot just talk about it. We must DO something about it. Just like we saw civil rights legislation that came out of the demonstrations in the past, this tragedy and these demonstrations and clashes will need to result in legislation and reforms passed. PASSED and ENFORCED.

And while I do not want to vilify all men and women in blue — we cannot not turn away from the horror of George Floyd’s death. An American citizen begging for his life on an American city street for 8 minutes and 46 seconds.

This is not an on-the-sidelines hurt for me. I am an African American man born in raised in the south and now living in an urban center, but I am speaking here as an American, as a union member, and I am speaking to all of us.



# My Blackness

*By Wymann Simpson*

**I'm going to start this off with saying I'm not apologetic about the skin I'm in. For some this may be hard to read. But just imagine living within it daily. I embrace my race, culture and the fire that rages inside of me to keep fighting within a society that continually perpetuates hate for those like me.**

Since as far back as I can remember I have dealt with unfair judgement from others just because of being a black man. From clutched purses, followed in stores, more time for crimes without proper evidence, resistance purchasing a house, fear from cops when pulled over, looked at as inferior when you're the better man for the position. It's like we're being told that since we're not enslaving you, you should be happy with what you got.

Most who know me personally, know I'm a father, a brother, a son, a uncle and a man that will do all he can to help an absolute stranger. It's always been about less words, more

actions with me. Seeing the downward spiral of current events and still seeing people not open their eyes and not care is truly hurtful to say the least.

Cops are to protect and serve but it seems like more of a hired gun in the eyes of my people. Every time I'm pulled over, I'm wondering is this my last moments here. The fear of my people has come with unwarranted criticism. We fought from being treated lower than the dirt you walk on and still viewed as three-fifths a man.

My ancestors being ripped away from our original land to be enslaved, tortured and raped among many other things. And even with all that, it's the burning question: why are we the ones

being feared, when it's not us that started this fight. I guess it's like with many other things when you wrong a man you have to expect some form of resistance and or retaliation. My people learned that from those that enslaved us. If fighting isn't one of the steps in a process to the solution, why is there war?

The many Black Lives Matters protests are just the beginning for us all. Reform of systematic oppression has to be depleted for there to be equality. When slavery ended, it only ended because a strategic system was set in place to still hold us back, like we haven't endured enough. It's been going on so long that those that aren't affected by it don't see it or turn a blind eye to it due to us not complaining anymore and learning to live within the system not built for us but against us.

But when I see a man that looks like me being murdered in the street

by a cop, the one that is there to "protect and serve" by putting a knee in his neck that isn't resisting for almost nine minutes and killing him.

My heart is ignited with rage, fear and pain when a human can't understand what the issue is. The issue is you. You're the issue for not understanding that we have a right to live just like any other race. Imagine that being your father, your son, your brother and tell me you'll still have the same standoffish demeanor you're showing us today.

I'm a threat because of how I look?

It's been 57 years since "I Have A Dream" was spoken by Martin Luther King and we are still waiting to be judged by the content of our character and not the color of our skin. This isn't the dream. We're living the nightmare. Last I checked, when it's too much to endure you wake up fighting. And this is what waking up looks like. I'm Black, I'm resilient and I'm unapologetic.



Clayton Gregg C-Crew CBT Inspector in 86 donned his protective gear face mask while working on the CAL line. Coming back to work has been quite a challenge not knowing what to expect the first day. Photo by Don Lehman.

# Working in a Coronavirus world

By Gwen Starkey

**While most of us were in lock-down, isolating at home over the past few months, we are now wondering what a post Coronavirus world might look like. There's a lot unknown about how the world will transform after we get the novel Coronavirus under control, but it is extremely unlikely that things will just go back to exactly the way they were before. Our workplaces are likely to change, and with it, so must we.**

Temperature scanning, daily questionnaires, wearing a mask, hand washing, social distancing, and a cleaner work area were just a few of the changes we encountered as we returned to work at the Kansas City Assembly Plant in late May. And while those issues are important, what is also important is our emotional health.

"Wow, I can't believe what a little virus has done to the world, it has

brought us to our knees," Charles Christopher, a Toolmaker Apprentice in Stamping on the 3rd shift said. "I thought the 911 crisis was bad, but the Coronavirus superseded this because of the enormous impact on our society, our economy, and the death toll numbers around the world."

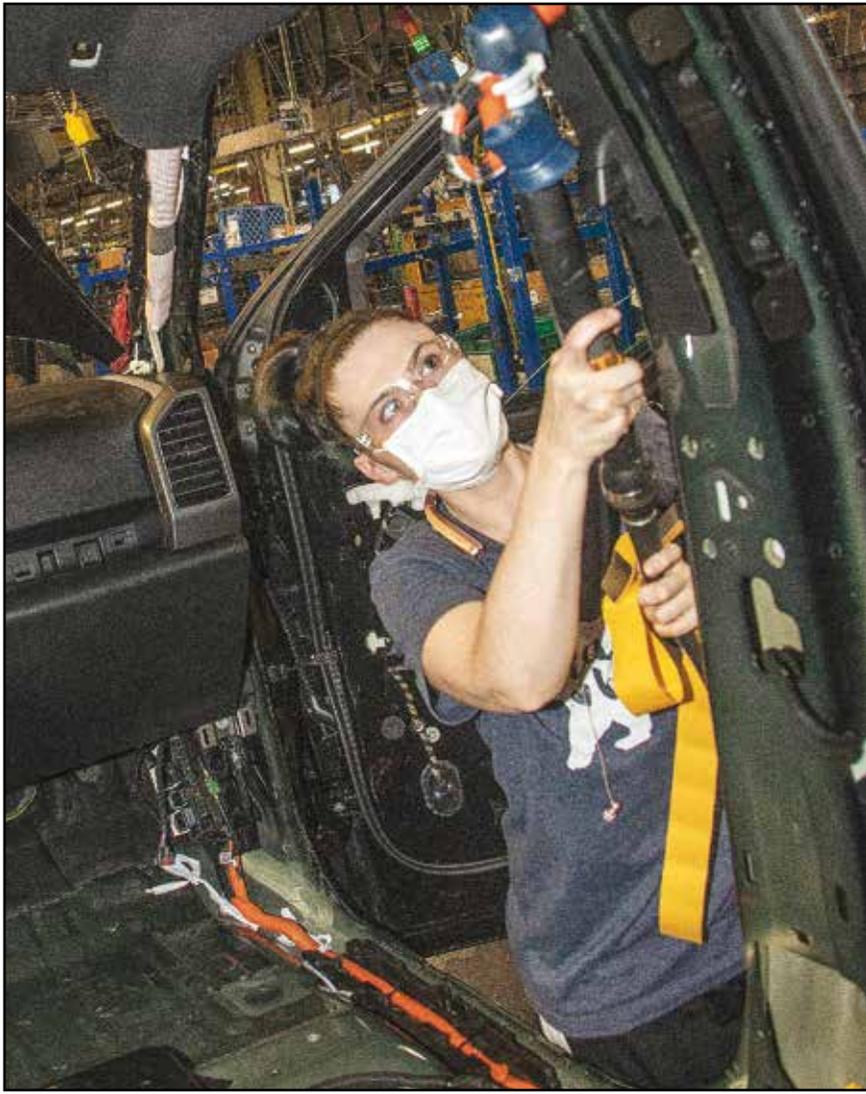
With that being said, Christopher is glad to have a job to come back to. "I am glad to be back at work," Chris-

topher said. "I love working here and being back has brought a sense of normalcy. It's the new normal and it's here to stay for the immediate future, and a little beyond. I don't like wearing the masks, although they filter out much of the dirty air that I've been breathing for the last 27 years so in that respect it's a positive move for everyone. And, if it keeps me and my fellow co-workers safe, I am willing to contribute and do my part at Ford. Certainly, our lives are worth the little inconvenience and social distancing, we have to respect that."

Coming back to work has been a challenge for others. "Returning to work was a little rough not knowing what to expect the first day," Clayton

Gregg, C-Crew CBT Inspector in 86, said. "You need to plan accordingly with the new safety procedures because it takes longer to enter the plant and there are no microwaves or refrigerators for employee lunches." He also notes that protocols seem to change frequently and feels unsafe with the process taken when an employee tests positive on the line. "I feel like the company seems to be trying to keep the facts of the positive cases secret," Gregg says.

"They need to inform us of positive cases in the plant and where they are so workers can be knowledgeable and act accordingly." He doesn't believe 30 minutes is enough time to thoroughly clean and sanitize an infected area and it puts everyone at risk. "I know that



Anna Yozel works in Truck Trim wearing her protective gear. Photo by Don Lehman.



Sherri Smith unloads her tug while wearing her PPE. Photo by Don Lehman.

means more down time," he says, "but when you have this many employees touching the same product, there needs to be something done to make sure our workplace and coworkers are safe."

Gregg had a health scare on his 3rd day back to work becoming ill on the line. Thinking it was a COVID-19 exposure he was ushered out of the plant and straight to Liberty Hospital where oddly enough they have an express COVID-19 testing area set up especially for Ford workers. Turns out he tested negative for COVID-19 and was suffering from dehydration and heat exhaustion. Oh, it's just heat exhaustion, here's a Gatorade now back to work.

What does Ford expect from its workforce who have been laid off for nearly three months only to return to work with a balls-to-the-walls attitude during the heat of the summer with the mandatory requirement of wearing a hot face mask. It's no wonder hundreds of employees have opted out under the CARES Act.

"Returning to work has brought somehow closer the realities of the pandemic," Edmundo Balcacer, B-Crew paint repair in Truck Paint said. "Before

I would just go out to get groceries once a week, taking all necessary precautions but always knowing that if I kept the protocols in check, it would be basically just a one short lived moment for exposure. Now is an everyday and prolonged chance for it to happen. I'm not fearful for me, but for my wife since we still don't have her on the company insurance due to her immigration status."

"Now I must put my trust in my coworkers and Ford to do what's needed to keep us safe. Not an easy thing to do when past experiences had shown me that the company does not always have your best interest in hand," Balcacer also speaks of the feelings of seclusion at the plant. "One of the many effects of returning to work has been the change in the dynamics of socialization inside the working area adding through social distancing an unavoidable feeling of isolation," he said. "I just hope it doesn't become the norm after all this is over."

He also notes that he doesn't feel all that secure returning to work since there's already several cases of COVID-19 and that "Ford has provided enough evidence of their unwillingness to follow to the letter their original

offerings of protocols." He would also like to see motion activated soap and towel dispensers in the plant.

"Things looked much cleaner in my area," UAW Local 249 Recording Secretary Shirley Mata said. Mata, who works in Truck Paint as a block sander on B-Crew received a mask when entering the plant but was not given any other instructions upon returning to work. She did not get a kit with hand sanitizer or extra masks.

"The mask was hard to wear," she said, "and itchy after hours of use because of the sweat." Her glasses steamed up right away making work much more difficult. "It's a new normal," she says, and "Ford needs to work with the union to get feed back to make things better and more comfortable for the workers. With the summer heat ahead of us and no air conditioning, I can't imagine this mask in the paint dept. at 100 plus degrees."

"I was a little anxious about coming back to work, not knowing if they really had a handle on the Coronavirus thing here in Kansas City, let alone at KCAP," Colleen Taylor, an Electrician Apprentice in Truck Paint said. As an apprentice, Taylor is required to have so many shop hours to complete the

program, so she was ready to get back to work. "I've learned over the last 26 years that Ford isn't going to take care of my health and safety," Taylor said. "If I waited for Ford to hand out water and Gatorade each time it got hot in the plant, I would have been dead by now. For that reason, I have always brought in my own drinks. I have the same mentality with this Coronavirus thing. I can't trust that KCAP management will verify that the cleaning has occurred so each day when I get to my area, I take the time to spray down my work area and tools and disinfect them with alcohol. I wash my hands 900 times a day too. I will continue to do so if that's what it takes to go home safe and keep me and my family healthy."

What we strive to have at the KCAP is friendships, camaraderie and solidarity with our brothers and sisters on the line and we wonder now how all this is possible at a 6-foot distance and everyone afraid of coming down with this virus. An elbow bump or a foot knock is the new handshake, and hugs, well, they are out of the question. Although our perspectives are different, how we handle this says much about our tenacity. We are UAW Local 249, we will get through this.



After working for years to get labor friendly candidates elected to make a difference in the state of Missouri, UAW Local 249 Community Action Program (CAP) Committee members David Winkler, top row left to right, Jay Bosler, Travis Hagewood, bottom row, Amy Minich, Shirley Mata and Camalee Hefty, decided to run as delegates to the state and national democratic conventions. Photo by Don Lehman.

# MO Democrats hold virtual state convention

By Gwen Starkey

**The Missouri Democratic Party held its 2020 Democratic State Convention virtually, a first for the oldest Democratic Party west of the Mississippi. The online convention kicked off on June 13 with a live digital event, and voting occurred online and by mail-in balloting through June 19.**

"This is an unprecedented time in our state's history and as such, we're taking unprecedented measures to ensure the health and safety of Missourians," Missouri Democratic Party Executive Director Lauren Gepford said. "Leadership requires innovative and proactive planning, and our team is proving that despite COVID-19, Democrats are ready to organize however we can. While some restrictions on large events may have been lifted, we believe holding an in-person event that would see thousands of Democrats from across Missouri would be reckless and irresponsible. Missourians have lost much already, and we're doing what we can to ensure that nobody has to choose between their health and participating in our democratic systems."

"Being a part of this process has

allowed us to see another side of involvement in our election process," Shirley Mata, Chairperson of the CAP Committee and UAW Local 249 Recording Secretary said. "It is exciting to have a voice in our process of choosing a presidential candidate." Mata found out June 19 that she was selected as an At-Large-Alternate and would be attending the National Democratic Convention.

"I'm honored to be a 2020 state delegate," CAP Committee member Camalee Hefty said. "I wanted to be a voice for labor in America. Our forefathers designed a system that protects the American worker, makes the laws that govern the people, and that speaks the will of the people through the voting process. For the system to work, the people must participate. For me, voting is one of the most impor-

tant ways to get your voice heard and also it's my civic duty. It's my mission to vet, endorse and elect politicians that protect the American worker."

CAP Committee member Amy Minich was excited to be a participant in the convention process. "I ran to have a seat at the table for union representation," she said. "To have our voices heard is more important now than ever. I wanted to be a part of shaping our future."

"I didn't think I would make it all the way, and that is ok I am not disappointed," said David Winkler CAP Committee member. "But I know I can vote for young people who will go further and carry my opinion."

"I was very honored to have been chosen to be a state delegate for the fifth congressional district," CAP Committee member Travis Hagewood said. "This was my first time ever running for such a position, and I missed a very important deadline to submit resolutions. I had a couple of resolutions I wanted to submit to help bring the Democrat party back to the working

middle class, those forgotten voters, but I still have the opportunity to vote on other resolutions that were submitted. Throughout this process I've truly learned a lot and four years from now, when I run again, I will know to already have my resolutions in place before I am even nominated. It is important that workers have a seat at these tables and our voices are heard. Change can't happen from the seat of your couch. If you want change, then it's important to work for it, get activated, get motivated, and most of all vote."

"I ran as a delegate because I wanted union people to have a voice as to who the state of Missouri was going to nominate as the presidential candidate," said CAP Committee member Jay Bosler. All UAW Local 249 candidates made it through the first round of voting.

After all is said and done, 78 selected delegates will be sent to the Democratic National Convention held in Milwaukee Wisconsin on August 17, where they will help choose the party's presidential nominee.

# Transit, F-150 in high demand

By Jim Fisher

In June KCAP has been in an all-out effort to refill dealership supply shortages caused by the production being halted from March 18 through May 18. On June 1, the Transit night shift was returned back to work, and on June 8, the Truck Side C-Crew returned to work. This put KCAP back to all five shifts of operations like they were before the COVID-19 shutdown. The Transit system will remain on a 5 x 11 schedule. We expect more additional Saturdays for Transit System, however those dates have not been announced yet. The Truck System will remain on a 3-Crew pattern. With dealerships supplies low on F-Series we can expect the third quarter of this year to have several super production days scheduled on Truck side.

Ford is no different than any other auto manufacture right now. Everyone in the business is behind on production and trying to catch back up. In Ford's cause however, the Kansas City Assembly Plant is their highest priority. With the bestselling truck on the market, and with more companies depending on delivery of our Transit van, demand is at its highest level ever. With the financial shape of the auto manufacturing business the success of KCAP is critical for Ford's recovery coming out of COVID-19.

While we all have been affected by COVID-19 there have been other improvements taking place inside the plant during the month of June. Per the new Local 249 contract all of the Big Foot Systems have been cleaned and new filters have been installed, the Q-52 entrance has been expanded from one door to four doors and a new outside smoking shack has been set up. In addition, three other smoking shacks have been completed. There are also 16 more picnic tables on order. As for the Local contract itself we have it completed in book form. It's currently being proofread by the International Union and Labor Affairs. Once we have their buy off it will be ready for the printer. I wanted this completed by now, but everything has been delayed due to the attention COVID-19 has caused. During the month of June we completed converting five more of our temporary workers to full time, in-progression workers.

It was announced on June 1, that the vacation shutdown period for Kansas City Assembly Plant will be the weeks of October 12 and 19 for both the Transit and Truck Systems.

In June we created an e-mail (COVIDINFO@LOCAL249.ORG) and an online form at bit.ly/KCAPCOVID19Concerns. Then we added additional reps to purely focus on COVID-19 inside the plant. Thanks to these reps Local 249 has responded and closed out to date over 120 concerns sent to us from

the membership. While I am proud of the work that has been done from the Local 249 team, I still find it unacceptable that management will not follow the playbook. Things like management walking the workstations and confirming with the operators that their workstation has been cleaned or having management verify the bathrooms are clean.

How COVID-19 is dealt with inside the plant continues to change. The International Union and Ford still meet daily on the "Playbook" set in place.



Local 249 Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher reported on the steps the union is taking to protect members from COVID-19 at the June membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

While we do not like everything inside the playbook, this local will do all it can

to force the company to follow its own guidelines. Currently we have several Health and Safety grievances at the International level over processes not being followed.

We still get several questions about the masks being mandatory inside the plant. As we have stated before only Ford will make the decision when masks are not required. The reality of COVID-19 is that the virus is not slowing down. The cases in the Kansas City area remain as high as they have been since this started, and states now like Florida, Texas, and Arizona are seeing cases increase at a record pace. The questions remain on the affects of wearing a mask in a unairconditioned plant and Midwest humidity. We have locally been successful in getting the company to hand out cooling wraps and are working with management to provide additional water. However, we feel more can be done. The reality is the Midwest has not reached the true hot months of summer yet. If you experience or witness any member struggling with the heat or show signs of heat stress/stroke immediately seek medical attention inside plant medical.

Finally, I would like to thank our members. Since returning to work you have shown exactly why you're the best workforce in all of the automotive business. These jobs are hard enough under normal times. You have had to deal with extreme conditions and changes like we have never seen before. I know there are more challenges ahead of us this year, but we will get through this. We are Local 249.

**HEAT STRESS SINGLE POINT LESSON for WORKERS**  
UAW-FORD NJCRS

**IT'S ABOUT PREVENTION**

**REHYDRATE REGULARLY**

- Weigh yourself before and after your work day. Weight loss at the end of the day may signal dehydration.
- Eat healthy! You get additional water from fruits and vegetables.

**HEAT STRESS PREVENTION TIPS**

- Work at a steady pace. Try to avoid over-exertion.
- Be alert to any danger signs of heat stress and get immediate relief!
- Take breaks in a cool area.

**GUIDELINES & INFORMATION TO REDUCE THE RISK OF HEAT ILLNESS**

**REDUCE EXPOSURE**

- Increase cool air velocity.
- Reduce humidity.
- If possible, rotate between hot & cool jobs.

**WEAR PROPER CLOTHING**

- When it is hot & moist, wear light, comfortable, light-colored cotton clothing.
- Avoid layers of clothing when wearing coveralls.

**ACCLIMATIZE**

- If you are on a new job or have been away for more than a week, take extra care to watch for symptoms of heat stress for 1-2 weeks while you get used to the heat.

**INCREASE WATER INTAKE**

- Develop the habit of drinking water frequently throughout the day.
- Do not depend on your thirst because it is a poor indicator of adequate fluid intake.
- Be aware that drinking large quantities of beverages containing high amounts of caffeine & sugar ("energy drinks") may cause dehydration & increase the risk of heat illness.

**WEIGH YOURSELF**

- Weigh yourself in dry clothes before & after work.
- If you are losing weight, you may not be drinking enough water.

**WATCH YOUR SALT INTAKE**

- An increase in salt intake is not usually recommended because of the high salt content of the average American diet.
- If you have high blood pressure or heart trouble, check with your doctor before taking any salt.

**BE AWARE OF THESE CONDITIONS**

The following may make it more difficult to tolerate heat stress:

- Overweight
- Heart trouble
- Uncontrolled high blood pressure
- Kidney & liver disease
- Uncontrolled diabetes
- Skin rash over large area
- Prior heat stroke
- Convulsions, epilepsy or seizure
- Alcohol or drug intake
- Fever from any cause
- Medications such as water pills (diuretics), anti-depressants and anxiety medication, allergy medications (antihistamines), or any other medications.

These conditions do not mean you cannot work in hot environments. You should be medically evaluated and instructed in safe work practices if you have any of these conditions & work in a heat-stressful environment.

Good nutrition, good physical condition and sufficient sleep are important to reduce the risk of heat-induced illness.

**STAY HYDRATED**

During moderate activity in moderately hot conditions, workers should drink about:

**1 cup every 15 to 20 Minutes.**

**NIOSH**

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends that for moderate conditions, each worker should drink 1 cup of water every 15 to 20 minutes.

- Workers should be reminded to drink water frequently before becoming thirsty in order to maintain good hydration.
- While some workers may prefer the taste of sports drinks, often these types of drinks are not necessary for electrolyte replacement.
- Workers that eat regular meals and salt-containing snacks will usually be able to replace electrolytes lost during sweating.

# In times of trouble, where true strength lies

By Jason Starr

**W**e are truly living in hard times. The troubles keep coming at us, left, right and center. We get knocked down by one, and before we can get our feet under us, the next one puts us on the ground again. Sometimes it feels like we'll never get up and get back to normal again.

There's the pandemic. As I write this, new cases across the U.S. are up 40%. Part of that, of course, is due to increased testing, but a good portion is the result of the failure to follow the advice of scientific and medical experts on social distancing and wearing masks in public.

Seven states now report the highest number of Coronavirus hospitalizations since pandemic began.

Missouri reported 434 new Coronavirus cases on June 23. To date, the state has reported 18,577 cases and 966 deaths. According to Kansas City Health Department Director Dr. Rex Archer, cases climbed 9% over the last seven days.

Kansas reports 12,465 cases of COVID-19 and 259 deaths.

The pandemic, once confined to large urban areas is now spreading through the south and west. Joplin, Mo. is now one of the nation's hot spots.

Ford made a big show of the safety precautions they'd put in place to protect us from Coronavirus when we were ordered back to work, but the truth is, we have to fight them every day to force them to do what they promised.

Our elected officials have failed us completely. President Trump refuses to set an example by wearing a mask in public. He touted an unproven drug that made outcomes among the sickest patients worse.

Pondered whether ingesting bleach could be a cure. This week he told a Tulsa rally that he'd ordered a slow-down of testing because it made his numbers look bad.

Missouri Gov. Mike Parson, who's done next to nothing to stop the spread of the virus, rejects responsibility for the 19% increase in cases, saying, "I don't feel guilty."

The Republican-dominated legislature squandered an opportunity to address the crisis in May but found itself able to approve a bill legalizing brass knuckles.

More than 36 million Americans have lost their jobs since the pandemic began driving unemployment to levels not seen since the Great Depression.

Economists predict a prolonged economic downturn. Many businesses are not expected to survive, yet Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Republican, has delayed a second stimulus package to aid laid off workers and revive the economy.

Local 249 members are back at work at the Kansas City Assembly Plant, but our future is uncertain. If the economy doesn't recover quickly, that will affect sales. If sales decline — which seems likely — that could lead to a loss of jobs.

The senseless killing of George Floyd by Minneapolis police revealed for many the truth about systemic racism



Local 249 President Jason Starr urged members to hold Ford to its word about cleaning and sanitation at the plant at the June membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

ism and policing in our country.

While what we've learned is new to many, it's not new to people of color.

It is past time that systemic racism was addressed in our country. We must live up to the promise of the Declaration of Independence that, "All men are created equal."

As with the other crises we're living through right now, our president, governor and the Republican-dominated Senate and Missouri legislature have demonstrated that they are not up to the job.

Just as Dorothy pulled back the curtain to reveal the true nature of the all-powerful Oz, the crises facing our nation have shown how unwilling

nearly all Republicans — and too many Democrats — are to face up to the real problems we face and deal with them.

Our strength is our union, but even in our own ranks, we need to learn that our power comes not from the leadership, but from the ranks.

My parents taught me that if you want something done right, you have to do it yourself. That is true today.

In order to fix the many problems in our plant, our city, state and nation we need members to step forward.

We need to take a stand when our work areas aren't cleaned between shifts. We need to march for justice and vote for candidates that solve problems instead of creating them.

## 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 and Retiree's Executive Board Representative will be held in the following manner:

Election will be held in the following manner:

Beginning at 5:00 a.m. on Thursday, August 20, 2020 and will close at 5:00 a.m. Friday, August 21, 2020.

(24 continuous hours)

Beginning at 5:00 a.m. on Saturday, August 22, 2020 and will close at 5:00 a.m. on Sunday, August 23, 2020.

(24 continuous hours)

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

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.

**Parts Depot- HVC** - Thursday, August 20, 2020 from 11:00 a.m. – 7:00 p.m. (8 continuous hours). Voting held in cafeteria.

### 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, August 27, 2020 until 5:00 a.m. Friday, August 28, 2020, and 5:00 a.m. Saturday, August 29, to 5:00 a.m. on Sunday, August 30, 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, August 27 or Saturday,

August 29, 2020.

### 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

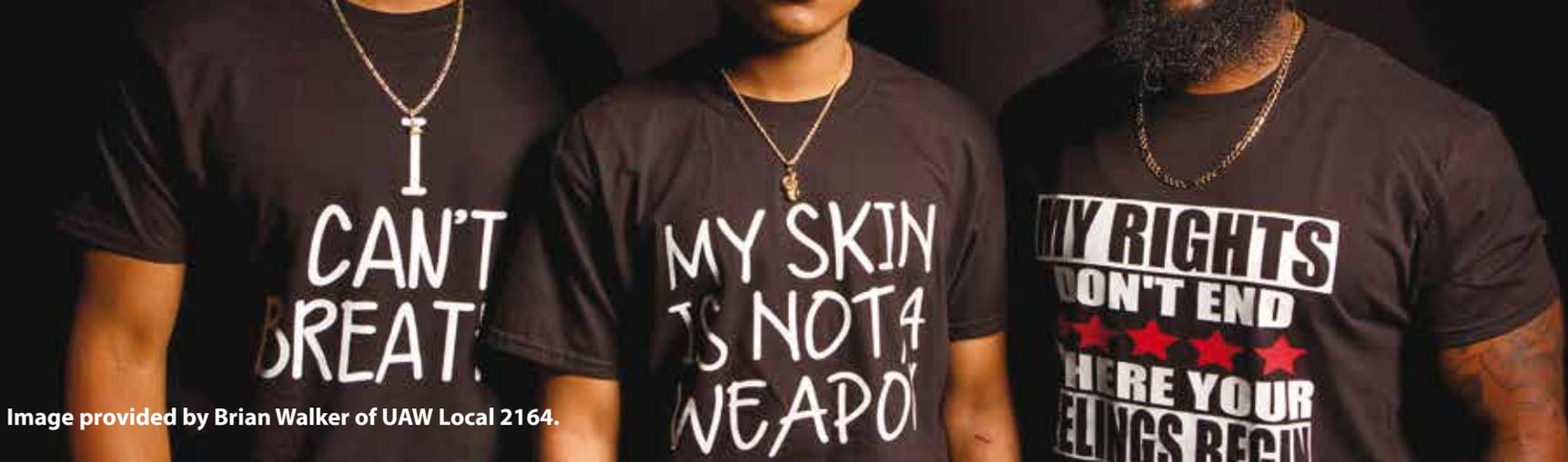


Image provided by Brian Walker of UAW Local 2164.

# Black voices matter

By Chrissy Kline

**Normally there would be a catchy or heartfelt quote here, something to draw you in and make you want to read what lay ahead. This time, this article, the format is going to be a little bit different. In the wake of the killing of George Floyd, I felt a need to do my part, to be part of the solution instead of the problem.**

One of the first things I did was to reach out to friends, both here in Kansas City and abroad, to make sure they were okay and that I was available if they needed to talk. The more these conversations happened, the more it weighed on my heart. I decided that one way that I could help would be to use the unfortunate platform of privilege I have been given to elevate Black voices in labor, both here in our local and in others across the country.

Difficult conversations were had, which were uncomfortable to listen to, but helped me to better understand the hurt, anger, sadness, and frustration underneath it all. Some individuals were open to talk but have asked to remain anonymous and others have opened up about very personal stories.

The intent of sharing these is not to promote a division between us as people, but to help bring a deeper understanding of how our Black brothers and sisters experience life differently. Then, and only then, can we begin to understand this division and heal those rifts together, just as the civil rights and labor movements attempted to do once before.

The first conversation I had was with Wymann Simpson, UAW Local 249 Member and Co-Chair of the Motorcycle Committee after reading his piece called "My Blackness." When asked what his union brothers and sisters could do, his response was both simple and heartfelt.

"I wish they just would acknowledge that it's happening. Most try to make it seem like it's not an issue or try to say well it happens to us too. Which is true but not at the staggering numbers that it happens to black people in America. We're hunted down in our own country and that's hard for people to hear so they deny it," he shared. This was a truth I and many I spoke with experienced in many

conversations over the last month.

When attempting to shine light on realities experienced by minorities on a daily basis, many individuals either expressed anger at feeling they were being attacked or shame and feeling guilty for being a member of the majority. These feelings of anger and shame led several to respond defensively, making it more difficult to absorb the true messages being shared.

As for what needs to happen on a broader scope, nearly everyone interviewed shared Simpson's sentiments that a change in our nation's leaders is required first and foremost. "People are needed that are actually for the people and equal rights and against oppression of black and brown Americans," he stated. Sade Ott, Chair of the UAW Local 249 Civil & Human Rights Committee wholeheartedly agreed.

"We need to make sure we aren't reelecting people that don't have our best interests at heart, people that don't bring anything to the table," Ott said. A local example of the kind of people we need to elect is Mark Ellebracht, who saw a need in the community with the Garrison Cultural Center's need for funds and reached out to local labor unions to try and fill that need.

"This is what we need. We need real action instead of opportunistic photo ops. We need bills on police reform and reeducation to help prevent future atrocities from happening. It is high time we hold our local and state officials responsible and accountable, not only for their actions but for their lack of action too." Ott shared that she feels that real change is possible.

"This is the first point in my life where I have actually seen the country and the world more united than ever to try to help make change," she shared. Where some choose to focus on division, others choose to focus on the solidarity amongst the cities across the country and the world

participating in protests for change.

That solidarity can also be seen on the shop floors, according to one source, who wished to remain anonymous. They shared that being part of a union shop has helped them to experience life differently than others because seniority divides us, not race. "I see white brothers and sisters helping out us black brothers and sisters on the floor all the time. Whether it's giving advice, helping with their problems or something job related." We just need to keep building upon our relationships with each other while we build the best truck in the country.

Those relationships are one of the many foundations for change, laying the groundwork that can make some of the more difficult conversations easier to have. Ott said when having these talks try not to get offended at what someone is saying. It may not apply to you.

"Please don't get angry when we talk about white privilege. We are not saying that you have not had to work hard in life, or that things have been easy for you. What we are saying is our lives are different and in many ways more difficult because of the skin we are in. We are taught don't come off angry, be passive as you can. Don't be yourself." All of this is to bring you home safe. Dark skin is treated differently, even amongst black and brown people, the darker you are the more your life is affected by your skin. This is what we mean by white privilege, not that you have never been poor, struggled or experienced difficulties.

Ott shared a time as an Uber driver, where she experienced what would have been a normal traffic stop for many, but for the first time she felt the police were not there to protect and serve her. She was picking up her fare when an officer approached, shouting and yelling obscenities at her, telling her he was taking her to jail for parking where she shouldn't.

When she attempted to take pictures to prove her innocence later, he seemed to lose all control and it was not until he noticed two white passengers in the back seat that he chose to let her go with no

repercussions. Ott, mother to a young boy, said she has never been afraid for her life before, but that night she was afraid her son might grow up without a mother. "These experiences are real, and I think that sometimes people think we exaggerate or that we make things up. But this was one of the first times that it really hit me how differently that traffic stop could have gone. People need to know this happens and that it is not okay" Ott said.

Simpson echoed those sentiments sharing that you can learn a great deal about the BLM movement by "asking black people that are willing to talk to those that are willing to truly listen." While it is an emotional labor that not all can undertake, many would love an opportunity to communicate and be really heard. This is what being brothers and sisters means.

What can we do to help promote unity, justice and understanding? "People just need to listen. Take your own opinion out and just actively listen to what people have to say. Everyone wants to be heard. We as human beings need to try to understand each other better. Many tragedies that have occurred could have just been a conversation instead," said Ott.

The fact that many recent tragedies could have been prevented by open and honest discussions is what makes this dialogue so important. This article came to fruition to open talks in a constructive manner instead of the hateful ways seen on social media at times. Both sides want to be heard, but internal bias gets in the way, drowning out what matters.

This time it is important to take a step back and let black voices be truly heard. Listen with your hearts and not your ears. Not ready to talk? Pick up a book, research politicians you intend to support, watch one of the many documentaries available, do something, anything to start making the change. 'I know we all have no solution, but it's about steps and processes," Simpson said.

Let's take those steps together Local 249, start a conversation with your friends, family or even within yourselves today.



Missourians rally for Medicaid expansion at the state capitol in Jefferson City. Photo by Sarah Starnes.

# Medicaid expansion will help essential workers

By Pat Hayes

**E**ssential workers have been in the news since the Coronavirus pandemic shut down the economy and put millions of us out of work. Many of these workers are stuck in low paying jobs with few benefits, yet we've learned, the past few months, just how important they are to our welfare.

The sudden realization that these formerly unsung workers are critical to the well being of us all has been shown by spontaneous demonstrations of gratitude for these frontline workers.

This August 4, Missourians can do more than applaud essential workers for their heroism. We can do something real to help them. Medicaid expansion is on the ballot. Voting yes on Amendment 2 will extend healthcare coverage to nearly 300,000 frontline workers who don't have employer-provided health insurance.

These workers, child care workers, home health aides, hair stylists, farm workers, food servers, cooks, bartenders and retail salespeople are often stuck in low-wage jobs, many have no benefits or are forced to work part time.

Under existing Missouri law, these workers earn a little too much to qualify for Medicaid, but not enough to afford to purchase insurance on their own. The current eligibility rules disqualify any adult between 19 and 64 who earns more than \$17,236 a year.

Expanding Medicare in Missouri will allow them to see a doctor when they're sick. That's especially important in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Surely, the workers who've risked their health to keep the economy running and the country fed during the pandemic have earned the right to health care coverage of their own.

There are other important reasons to vote yes on Amendment 2 on August 4.

Since 2014, 14 Missouri hospitals including eight rural hospitals have closed around the state due to the failure of the Republican-dominated state legislature to pass Medicaid expansion.

Across the nation, 120 rural health-care facilities have closed since 2010 according to the Chartis Center for Rural Health. The rural health care crisis accelerated in 2019 which was the worst year for rural hospitals with 19 closures.

The states where most of these closures occurred have something in common. They're among the 17 that refuse to expand Medicaid.

Missouri is among the states with the highest percentage of rural hospitals identified as 'most vulnerable' by the Chartis Center analysis.

Rural populations tend to be older, less healthy and less affluent than urban counterparts. Medicaid expansion will provide health-care coverage for individuals in rural communities.

Expanding Medicaid will bring an

additional \$2 billion in federal aid to the state. With Medicaid expanded, rural hospitals will be finally be reimbursed for the care they provide to previously uninsured low-income patients.

"The new federal dollars would support approximately 16,400 new jobs across all sectors of Missouri's economy, a 0.43 percent increase over the number of current jobs in the state," according to a study by Families USA.

Medicaid expansion can even help boost state revenue, according to Families USA. "More jobs in the state mean that more people are employed, and it can also lead to higher family incomes. Both can increase state income tax revenue."

"I'm proud of the job our members did to put Medicaid expansion on the ballot," says Jason Starr, president of UAW Local 249, "but, the most important reason to vote yes on Amendment 2 on August 4, is because it's the right thing to do. Health care is a right."