

FIRST LOCAL NEWS

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

August 2020

How David Winkler got in some “good trouble” | p8

Monarchs of the diamond | p6

Every jail full by night | p5



Local 249 member David Winkler got himself in some “good trouble” when he came to work on Father’s Day. Find out more by reading the story on page 8. Photo by Don Lehman.

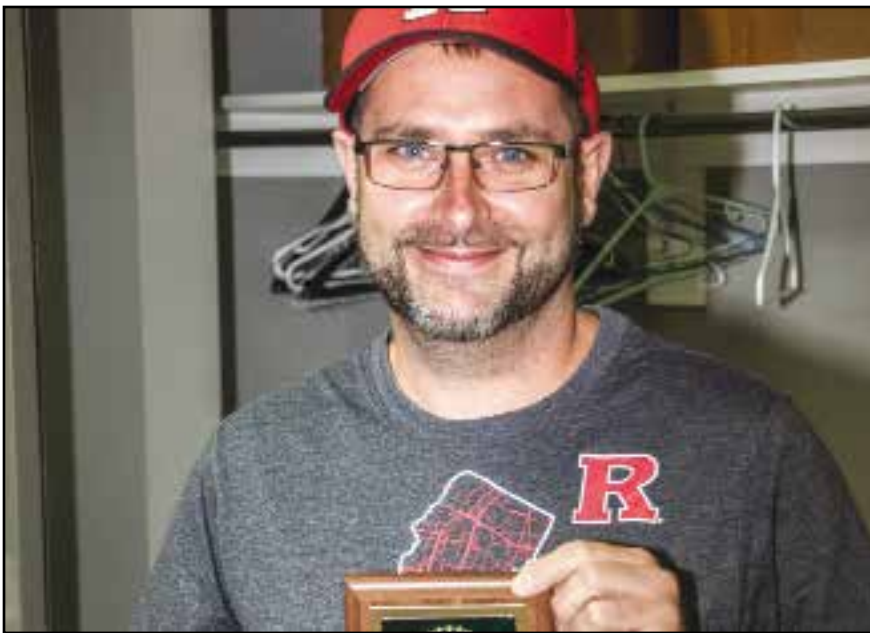
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8040 NE 69 Highway
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UAW Local 249 activists teamed up with IAFF Local 42 firefighters July 6 to work for Ashley Aune, who is running for Missouri House of Representatives in the Northland's House District 14. Aune opposes right to work. Photo by Shirley Mata.



David Winkler was given the James "Frog" Moran Solidarity Award by the Education Committee at the July 19 membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.



First place in Local 249's July 14 Truman Lake Bass Tournament was won by, right to left, Lloyd Christopher and Dog Derry. Andy Bissett and Todd Knaack took second, while Rob and Kadeen Hocket came in third. The Big Bass of the tournament was reeled in by Dylan Ferguson.

First Local News

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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.

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www.fordvehicleprograms.com

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The Picket Line

U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider and UAW President Rory Gamble meet to discuss reform of the UAW

U.S. Attorney Matthew Schneider and UAW President Rory Gamble jointly announce that they had a productive and helpful first meeting to begin negotiations to further the cause of reform in the United Auto Workers union. U.S. Attorney Schneider welcomed the opportunity to sit down with the UAW's President in order to work together toward improving the union for all its members. President Gamble appreciated the chance to meet with the Department of Justice so as to further his efforts at reforming the organization and to ensure integrity in the union's leadership.

During the meeting, President Gamble and representatives of the UAW set forth in detail the reform measures that President Gamble and the International Executive Board have put in place for the union. President Gamble and U.S. Attorney Schneider also discussed the importance of democracy for the selection of the UAW's leadership. The parties addressed the concept of an independent monitor who could provide further assurance to the membership of concrete changes to the union so as to reduce the possibility of a reoccurrence of corruption. In addition, they are considering whether third party oversight on any future agreement would be helpful. The parties agreed that there are a number of reform options that are on the table and that will be the subject of further negotiations when the parties meet again to consider them in further detail within the coming weeks.

"The Justice Department seeks genuine and sincere reform of the UAW so as to provide the best possible representation for its members," said United States Attorney Matthew Schneider. "I look forward to working toward a mutually agreeable resolution that will protect the interests of the UAW's members and their families."

"Today's discussion was productive and both the U.S. Attorney and I have the same goal for the UAW International Union. As we turn the page to a stronger, better and cleaner union, we continue to make critical decisions that will protect the sacred dues money of our members. I look forward to continued discussions in the near future that advance toward closing one dark chapter and opening new brighter chapters for members of the UAW," stated President Rory Gamble. — *UAW*

Update from Rory Gamble on UAW reforms

When I accepted the office of the presidency, I pledged to keep you updated on all of our reforms and progress on restoring our member's trust in leadership. As you know, we have instituted a comprehensive reforms agenda and top-to-bottom review of our operations and financial house.

One of the many reforms we promised to our membership was to work very hard to return any dues dollars that were inappropriately spent. I am very pleased to report today that upon discovering, through our independent review process, that former president Dennis Williams had received travel expenses that were not appropriate, those funds have been returned to the membership. Williams has reimbursed the UAW for \$55,000 in travel expenses. These monies will go back to the membership, where they belong.

Additionally, we are finalizing the sale of Cabin 4, which has been the topic of much discussion and concern. Monies from the sale will come back to the UAW, as promised. When that is finalized, I will report back to you.

As I said from day 1, we are committed to recovering any and all dues funds that have been misappropriately spent. I hope this sends a strong message to all UAW leadership that you are stewards of sacred dues dollars and we will do whatever is necessary to protect that oath of office.

Tomorrow, I will meet with the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan regarding what I hope to be constructive discussion toward the closure of a dark chapter in UAW history. I go into this meeting confident that we will bring this chapter to a close soon and continue to restore your faith in our leadership and our role as the defenders of working men and women. — *UAW*



UAW appoints external ethics officer

UAW

The UAW has appointed Wilma Liebman, a distinguished public servant and expert in labor policy, as its external ethics officer. Ms. Liebman served as the Chairman of the National Labor Relations Board under President Barack Obama from 2009 to 2011, having previously been appointed to the NLRB by both Presidents Bill Clinton and George W. Bush from 1997 until 2009. In her role as the external ethics officer, Liebman will oversee the Ethics Ombudsman's investigations, hold hearings at her discretion, and issue reports and recommendations of her findings and recommended corrective action to the appropriate UAW officials whenever warranted.

The establishment of an Ethics Ombudsman office to receive, review and investigate ethics complaints and allegations, and report to the external Ethics Officer. The UAW has appointed Exiger LLC, a highly experienced and reputable compliance and investigations firm, currently to serve in the role of the UAW's Ethics Ombudsman with responsibility to review and investigate allegations of ethical or financial misconduct received through the Ethics Hotline.

The UAW is committed to maintaining an ethical, transparent, and accountable environment.

To serve this purpose, the UAW provides an Ethics Hotline for UAW members, employees, and others who have had professional interactions with the Union to confidentially report unethical conduct by International UAW officials, staff, or employees, whenever other available channels of communication are impractical or not preferable under the circumstances.

The Ethics Hotline is open 24 hours-a-day, 7 days-a-week, via a toll-free phone number or web-based reporting service. The UAW is using an experienced outside firm to run the Ethics Hotline. The UAW will make every effort to maintain the confidentiality of individuals who use the Ethics Hotline. Any retaliation for good faith reports is strictly prohibited by the UAW and will not be tolerated.

To access the Ethics Hotline via the web, visit: www.lighthouse-services.com/uaw. To access the Ethics Hotline via the telephone, dial (866) 830-0006.

The introduction of the new ethics policy will enhance enforcement against those who have been found guilty of misusing funds and our commitment to seek recovery of all misused or misappropriated funds.

The UAW has banned all charitable contributions from UAW joint program centers, vendors, or employers to any charities run or controlled by UAW officials.

The UAW has also enacted accountability measures to the Joint Programs, including that purchases of promotional items using joint program funds have been permanently banned and all expenditures will be controlled, monitored, and regularly audited by independent public accounting firms.

The implementation of stringent monetary controls that increase oversight by the UAW Accounting Department over the finances of our union.

The UAW has also committed to actively obtaining rank-and-file input into future ethics policy through the creation of an Ethics Advisory Committee, which will include UAW members and individuals from the UAW's Public Review Board. Details of the Committee will be announced in the second quarter of 2020.



Unions support workers during crisis

By UAW President Rory Gamble

The COVID-19 pandemic has sent our world into a public health and economic tailspin. As of May, the national unemployment rate was at 13.3%, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In Michigan, it is a staggering 21.2% — worse than the Great Recession. The Washington Post reports that more than 100,000 businesses have closed permanently.

But more important, lives are at stake.

While a majority of employees in white-collar industries were able to move to much safer remote work environments, hundreds of thousands of “essential” and “frontline” workers — grocery store clerks, sanitation and transportation workers, medical professionals, and others — could not stay home even when the nation was on lockdown.

Health-wise, certain industries have been especially hard hit, including meatpacking plants, where the Coronavirus outbreaks continue to soar. The number of Coronavirus cases tied to meatpacking plants recently topped 20,400 infections across 216 plants in 33 states, the Midwest Center for Investigative Reporting found. At least 74 people have died.

Workers in Amazon’s delivery network — which has emerged as a vital service for millions of Americans stuck inside their homes — are also at risk. More than 5,000 Amazon workers have signed a petition asking for additional benefits, including hazard pay, and for

the company to shut down any facility where a worker tests positive so it can be properly cleaned.

And those are the individuals who still have a job.

This pandemic has shown just how critical it is to have a union to protect the rights, working conditions, safety and health of workers. With almost the flip of a switch, millions of hard working people across the country were suddenly without work, without health benefits, struggling economically — proud individuals who suddenly needed to file unemployment, miss mortgage payments and visit food banks to see their families through this crisis.

As with any union, the UAW’s foremost role is advocating for their members in the workplace. During this pandemic, it was abundantly clear that unionized workers are in a far better position than their nonunion counterparts. Take paid sick leave as an example. Currently 91% of unionized workers are guaranteed paid sick leave, compared to 73% of non-union workers, according to the Pew Research

Center. Low-wage industries, such as the service industry, have no paid leave at all. Among the lowest-earning tenth — those whose wages are \$10.80 an hour or less — just 31% have paid sick leave, according to Pew.

Health care insurance is another example. Many people without insurance during COVID-19 forgo hospitalization due to the fear of insurmountable costs. The Economic Policy Institute estimates that 12.7 million workers have likely lost employer-provided health insurance since the Coronavirus shock began. Union members are far less likely to have this concern.

UAW members are faring much better. During the pandemic, we had negotiated Supplemental Unemployment Benefit Plan (SUB) pay should the supplemental unemployment not be enough, ensured the health and safety of plants before our workers returned, and insisted on a modified workplace to follow safe distancing. And our members stayed insured. Our members had a contract to protect them. Without a contract, they would be struggling like the millions of non-union Americans are now.

So how do we help all workers?

Now, more than ever, Congress must put partisan politics aside and take strong and immediate action to fight the spread of the Coronavirus and

its severe economic impact. Strong and decisive measures are needed in order to create a pathway for a speedy, equitable and sustained economic recovery.

Currently under discussion in the Senate, the HEROES Act would lay the groundwork for us to rebound from this crisis. The HEROES Act can help in many ways. From ensuring laid-off workers keep their health insurance and get unemployment pay, to forcing OSHA to finally issue strong standards requiring all workplaces, to developing infection control plans, it makes the workplace secure again.

The HEROES Act also includes vital support for state and local governments that are on the front lines every day working to stop the spread of the virus while providing essential services we all rely on.

In short, HB 6800 gives all workers protections currently benefiting our union brothers and sisters; benefits and protections clearly illustrating how crucial union support and workplace equity is in our world today.

Please join with UAW brothers and sisters, urging Congress to pass this important bill.

Please join us in ensuring the devastation to our citizens economic and personal health experienced during the COVID-19 crisis does not happen again.

Every jail full by night

Police violence is nothing new. It was used against UAW Local 249 in the '30s.

By Pat Hayes

Winter's chill was settling over Kansas City on Dec. 10, 1937, the day UAW Local 249 declared a strike at the Ford Motor Kansas City Assembly Plant on Winchester Ave. Union members had been out of work since Sept. 17 when the plant closed to retool for the annual model change. In October, Ford announced it was closing the plant for good and moving operations to Omaha. Then, in November, the company shifted gears again and announced it would reopen the plant.

That was bittersweet news for those autoworkers who remained loyal to Local 249. Ford bosses made clear that only those who quit the UAW and joined the company-dominated Blue Card Union would be hired back. As some workers began switching their allegiance to the Blue Card Union to hold onto their jobs, Ford bosses ruthlessly enforced the ban on Local 249 members. Anyone who showed up wearing a union button or who spoke to UAW members gathered in front of the union hall across the street was fired. No small thing in Depression-era Kansas City where unemployment was on the rise and nearly one in five workers nation-wide would soon be out of a job.

Early on, Local 249 leaders took comfort from the fact that Ford was having the devil's own time getting the production lines up and running. Local 249 had rented offices above a restaurant across the street from the plant. From those upstairs rooms union leaders could peer through the giant windows that lined the east side of the plant and keep tabs on what was happening inside. Unsurprisingly, with half the workforce locked out, including the most experienced high-seniority workers, things weren't going too well.

"Production on the chassis line was slow with the line at a standstill for long periods of time," Gene Minshall, a Local 249 steward captain at the time later recalled, "The company could not operate at this pace indefinitely, so another strategy was employed."

That strategy would lead to widespread violence, in what up to then had been a largely peaceful conflict, and a great deal of bitterness. "Bitterness between fellow workers," Minshall said looking back on those tumultuous

times, "between brothers, between fathers and sons." Whole families were divided into hostile factions.

Profits were paramount to Ford. Human need was just so much collateral damage. Resumption of production, no matter the cost to the workers, their families and the Kansas City community as a whole was ruthlessly pursued in the weeks and months that followed.

"A large quantity of the blackjacks and "knucks" were manufactured in the plant," according to testimony before the National Labor Relations Board which was looking into violations of labor law by Ford in Kansas City. "The blackjacks consisted of foot-long strips of air and water hose filled at one end with lead or a large bolt. The "knucks" were made up of solder lead bent in an oval-shape suitable for grasping."

Even as Ford was manufacturing weapons in the plant to be used against UAW members, it was complaining loudly in public about the failure of the police to protect the plant. Despite assurances from his own police officers that there had been little violence or property damage in connection with the labor dispute between Ford and the UAW, City Manager H.F. McElroy went to Detroit to personally assure Henry Ford and his head of internal security, Harry Bennett, that police protection would be forthcoming.

Before McElroy's trip to Dearborn, the Kansas City police had remained largely neutral. For the most part the law was enforced evenhandedly outside the plant with strikers and strike-breakers getting equal treatment. That was as it should be, after all, the National Labor Relations Act signed into law by Franklin Roosevelt in 1935, gave workers the right to organize, engage

in collective bargaining and to strike.

However, when McElroy returned from meeting with Ford and Bennett in Detroit any notion of police neutrality evaporated like summer rain on a hot sidewalk. Henry Ford and his Kansas City bosses, Joseph Bush, H.C. Doss and John Gillespie, stood above the law.

The day the strike was declared, Friday, Dec. 10, around a dozen Local 249 members walked the picket line outside the Winchester Ave. plant. Shortly after the pickets arrived, according to testimony given at subsequent NLRB hearings, Captain Reddish of the Kansas City Police Department came into the union hall to advise Local 249 leaders that if they weren't removed, the pickets would be arrested. Local 249 President Baron De Louis protested that the UAW had declared a strike and was legally entitled to picket the plant. Reddish replied that he didn't recognize that a strike existed.

As soon as he left the union hall Reddish had the pickets arrested. The UAW responded by sending more pickets who were also arrested. As the day wore on, the union kept sending more pickets and the police kept arresting them. By the end of the day, 40 pickets had been thrown in jail.

That's when police threats against the union escalated. Capt. Reddish, joined this time by Lieutenant Bates, advised union leaders that if they sent more pickets, they weren't going to arrest them, "they were going to beat their heads in."

That company officials and police were in collusion was confirmed by a statement issued by Ford plant manager H.C. Doss that appeared in the Kansas City Star. The Ford statement to the press was eerily similar to what Capt. Reddish said to union leaders just days before – they didn't recognize the strike.

"Our workmen are contented and want to work," Doss told the Star. "None of them has complained about anything." Doss charged that outsiders were responsible for disturbances outside the plant. Merely because somebody "not even employed by us"

had declared a strike, he said, it did not follow that a strike was in progress, according to the *Star*.

Despite the threats, picketing outside the plant resumed the following Monday. Again the union sent groups of pickets to the plant and again they were arrested by the police. By the end of the day, police had arrested approximately 300 pickets. Capt. Reddish then escalated his threats. If union members and their wives "did not keep their children off the picket line he was going to take them away from them and send them to reformatories or orphan homes."

On Dec. 15, the streets outside the Winchester Ave. plant were covered with ice. The weather was cold, but the action outside the plant was hot. Throughout the day, the union sent groups of pickets to march outside the plant entrances. As soon as they set foot on the sidewalk outside the plant police arrested them and took them to the Sheffield Station where they were booked for disturbing the peace and held overnight. With the men in jail, women and children began to take their place on the picket line.

Twenty-two women and eight children, some carrying signs that said, "Ford is not our master" were taken into custody as soon as they crossed the icy street to take their places in front of the plant. They were replaced by a group of 26, many of whom had already been arrested earlier in the day. They were arrested, too. No sooner were they carted off by police than 21 more took their place. And so it went throughout the day.

Despite all evidence to the contrary, Police Director Otto Higgins repeated the fiction that "no strike existed at the Ford plant" as his excuse for breaking the law and violating the Constitutional right of workers to peacefully assemble.

But Carl Stevens, a regional organizer for the UAW, set him straight and made a promise of his own.

We "have a legal right to picket," he said. And, he added, "We'll have every jail in Kansas City full by night."

100-Year Anniversary of Baseball's Negro Leagues Alfred "Slick" Surratt, the Kansas City Monarchs and UAW Local 249

MONARCHS OF THE DIAMOND

Alfred "Slick" Surratt joined the Negro League's Detroit Stars in 1944. He moved to Kansas City in 1947 where he played outfield for the Kansas City Monarchs until his retirement from the league in 1952. Surratt became a member of UAW Local 249 when began working at the Ford Motor Company's Assembly Plant that same year. He worked at KCAP as a skilled tradesman for 51 years.

By Pat Hayes

In 1949, when the Kansas City Monarchs came to Ypsilanti, Michigan to play an exhibition baseball game, Alfred "Slick" Surratt put down his tools at the Detroit auto plant where he was working and went to the game.

The well-managed Monarchs were widely considered to be the "New York Yankees" of the Negro Leagues, and Surratt's friend, Jesse Williams, was a shortstop with the team. Before the game, Williams introduced Surratt to the Monarchs' legendary player-manager, Buck O'Neil.

"Jesse tells me that you can hit the ball and you can catch the ball," O'Neil said.

"I think I can," replied Surratt.

O'Neil knew talent. He'd played in three Negro league East-West All-Star games. In 1946, he was a member of the Satchel Paige All-Star team that toured with Bob Feller's white Major League All-Stars and he would go on to sign Hall-of-Famers Ernie Banks and Lou Brock to major league contracts. O'Neil sent the scrappy, supremely confident Surratt into the outfield to

shag balls while the Monarchs took batting practice. As Surratt ran down fly balls in the outfield, O'Neil saw that he could catch the ball, but could he hit? O'Neil decided to find out by putting him in the lineup. That day, Surratt found himself starting in the outfield and batting in the leadoff position. He wouldn't have to wait long to back up his words with deeds.

"I could run, too," says Surratt, who worked for 51 years as a welder at the Ford Motor Kansas City Assembly Plant and member of UAW Local 249 after he retired from baseball.

Standing at the plate in his first at-bat, he decided on a chancy strategy to get on base and showcase his speed. He would lay down a bunt and then beat out the throw. Surratt's gamble paid off. Safe on first, trying to catch his breath, Surratt hazarded a glance at

O'Neil, who was coaching first base, to see what kind of impression he'd made.

"Brother," the old pro said to his newest Monarch, "I believe you can carry the mail."

Like millions of other young men growing up in America, Slick Surratt loved baseball and dreamed of playing pro ball. More than most, he had the talent to play the game at the highest level. When he was just 13 years old, he held his own on the men's teams his uncle organized in Danville, Arkansas. Later, while serving with an army engineering outfit in the Pacific during World War II, he robbed the New York Yankee hero Joe DiMaggio of an almost certain home run in an exhibition game by making a sensational catch at the fence.

Despite that talent, until Monarch shortstop Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier with the Brooklyn Dodgers in 1947, the dream of a career in the majors for young, Black men, such as Surratt, remained a dream deferred.

After the war, Surratt left home in Arkansas for a job with Chrysler in Detroit. Like thousands of other

Southern-born Blacks, Surratt was attracted by the Big Three's high wages and the dignity a union contract negotiated by the UAW afforded to men and women of all races. In Detroit, he worked, attended the Michigan School of Trade and played ball with the Nine Mile Road Tigers and the Detroit Stars.

"I didn't think anybody could outrun me," says Surratt. "I used to bet the guys I could steal second and not even slide." O'Neil knew his rookie's base-stealing antics would be a powerful distraction to opposing pitchers so he made him the Monarchs' regular leadoff batter. Surratt had a quick bat, too, and his .333 average put him in a position to make life tough for men throwing against the Monarchs.

At the end of his rookie year, Surratt got a chance to test his speed and bat against one of the greatest pitchers ever to play the game. Surratt faced the white, major league strikeout king, Bob "Rapid Robert" Feller. Feller won 20 or more games six times, struck out 2,581 batters during his career and pitched three no-hitters. His fastball was once

clocked traveling the 60 feet 6 inches to the plate at 145 feet per second.

Although he'd never faced the Cleveland Indian right-hander before, Surratt led off for the Monarchs in the first inning. He went to the plate, looked down the third-base line and got the sign to bunt. On the first pitch, Surratt squared around to face the pitch, but he couldn't get his bat Feller's blazing fast ball. Strike one.

Now he knew Feller could throw. Surratt looked down the third-base line for another sign, but didn't like what he saw. The bunt was still on. This time he managed to get his bat in front of Feller's heat, but the force of the pitch ripped the lumber from his hands. Surratt heard a loud thunk behind him and turned to see his bat bounce high off the press box. Then he heard his teammates erupt in laughter. Strike two.

The joke over, O'Neil finally gave his rookie the sign to swing away. When Feller delivered the third pitch, Surratt looped it over his head in into center for a base hit.

Exhibition games between Negro-league teams and white all-stars helped pave the way for the integration of the major leagues, Surratt believed. White players who lost to Negro-league teams learned to respect the playing ability of the Black players and they to techniques, such as the hook slide, pioneered in the Negro leagues, back to the majors with them.

While Surratt wholeheartedly supported the advancement of Black players into the major leagues, he retained fond memories of the Monarch's barnstorming days in the close-knit Black communities of the South. He stayed at the house of Martin Luther King Sr. when the team played in Atlanta and



Five members of UAW Local 249 who worked at the Kansas City Assembly Plant were players in the Negro Leagues: Clockwise from the top left, Alfred "Slick" Surratt, Connie Johnson, Jim "Lefty" Lamarque, Ulysses Hollimon and Herman "Doc" Horn. Photo by Pat Hayes.

attended Adam Clayton Powell's Harlem church when the team played in New York. He heard Jazz vibraphonist Lionel Hampton warm up the crowd before games. Most of all, he remembered the crowd of 40,000 and more that regularly packed the fields where the Monarchs played.

"I played because I loved to play," says Surratt. "It's a business now." The Monarchs paid a good wage, \$300 a month and \$3 a day when he played, but in those days there was no such thing as an injury. Ball players who were to hurt to play simply didn't get paid. Often, the team played three double-headers, in three different cities in a single day.

After leaving the Monarchs, Surratt took a job with the Ford Motor Co. in Kansas City. "I hired in on St. Valentine's Day in '52 planning on working until May," Surratt recalled. He ended up staying for 51 years.

Surratt was the first Black member of UAW Local 249 to work as a metal finisher. A welder by trade, he became the first Black skilled tradesperson in the plant, as well. Surratt helped other monarchs to get jobs at Ford when their playing days ended, most notably the pitching aces Connie Johnson and Lefty Lamarque, and outfielder Doc Horn. Ulysses Hollimon, a pitcher with the Birmingham Black Barons, also worked at the plant.

Surratt helped to found the Negro Leagues Baseball Museum and was active in raising money to support its expansion. The museum, located in the historic 18th and Vine area of Kansas City, is the Cooperstown of the old Negro leagues.

When Surratt retired in 2002, he could still carry the mail. He died February 15, 2010.

Only the ball was white

The first recorded game between Black teams was played just months before Confederate guns fired on Ft. Sumter, South Carolina. The Unknown Club of Weeksville and the Union Club of Williamsburg, both made up of former slaves, met in Brooklyn, New York, on September 28, 1860. The Unknowns walked away with the game 11-0.

After the war, dozens of African-Americans played on minor league teams. In 1884, Moses Fleetwood Walker became the first African-American to play on a major league team, the Toledo Blue Stockings of the American Association. But, in 1887, with Jim Crow segregation on the rise, white team representatives meeting in Buffalo, voted to stop new Black players from joining organized baseball.

After the color bar was enacted, the only place a Black professional could play was on one of the small number of all-Black independent teams. The Cuban Giants beat all-white, big league teams in Cincinnati and Indianapolis before losing a tough game to the National League champs in Detroit. Their success led to the formation of an officially recognized minor league for Black players, the National Colored Baseball League in 1887.

In 1920, Black baseball legend Rube Foster helped found the eight-team Negro National League, the first successful Black major league. The Eastern Col-

ored League followed in 1923. The Negro leagues, strapped for cash even in the best of times, faced insurmountable financial difficulties during the Depression and disbanded for a time. The Negro National League, mad up mostly of Eastern teams, rebounded quickly and in 1937 was joined by the Negro American League.

In the late '40s, the Negro leagues had their greatest success. Great Black players like home run slugger Josh Gibson, James "Cool Papa" Bell and pitcher Satchel Paige starred for top-notch teams such as the Birmingham Black Barons, the Homestead Grays and the Kansas City Monarchs.

After World War II, racial barriers began to come down. Black all-stars played post-season exhibition games in the United States and Winter League ball with white major leaguers in Cuba, Mexico and Venezuela. The fate of the Negro leagues was sealed when Jackie Robinson broke the major league color line and was name Rookie of the Year in 1947. White team owners followed the lead of Brooklyn Dodger owner Branch Rickey and started to sign Negro league stars in earnest.

By the mid-1950s even the best managed Negro league teams found it difficult to stay afloat. The league was dissolved after the 1963 season, although the Indianapolis Clowns continued to play into the early '70s.



Local 249 member David Winkler demanded that Ford follow its COVID-19 cleaning protocols June 20. Labor relations sent him home, but intervention by his committeeman and the Bargaining Committee got him paid and the disciplinary record removed from his personnel file. Photo by Don Lehman.

How David Winkler got in some “good trouble”

By Pat Hayes

When David Winkler reported to his job as a sequencer on C-Crew in the Truck System at the Ford Motor Kansas City Assembly Plant June 20, he couldn't believe his eyes. Somebody had spit sunflower shells all over his workstation.

When Ford restarted production after the COVID-19 shutdown it pledged to put people first by cleaning and disinfecting workstations before each shift. The sunflower shells were clear evidence that no cleaning had been done.

In fact, Winkler knew that no cleaning had been done in his work area for weeks. Day after day, the trash cans overflowed and the fans blew litter all over the area. The bathrooms were filthy. They smelled bad and trash littered the floors. It was obvious that Ford wasn't doing what it pledged to do to protect the health of its employees.

Winkler's five-year-old son, Ezra, has asthma and would be at high risk if he was exposed to COVID-19. Two of Winkler's sisters are nurses who have first hand experience with the disease and understand its seriousness.

His father, Kurt, who works in the Transit System at KCAP, brought the family to Kansas City from New Jersey when the Edison plant closed. They

have many friends and relatives in that hard-hit state.

"We know about 30 people from back home who've had COVID-19 and three who passed," says Winkler.

He takes it seriously.

He took it so seriously that he stood up at the monthly UAW Local 249 membership meeting before reporting to work that day to ask what he should do about the problem.

"You know what to do," Local 249 President Jason Starr told him. "If your work area isn't clean call your supervisor and ask him to call cleanup. Ask him to get your committeeman and contact the plant's Coronavirus Taskforce."

And that's exactly what Winkler did that night when he saw the sunflower shells littering his work station.

Winkler's MPS was no help.

"I've got a line to run," he said, "I don't have time for this."

So Winkler waited for someone to clean his work area or provide cleaning products so he could do it himself.

He waited for two hours.

Eventually the starters and cables he sequences for the F-150 ran dry on the line.

Then he got some attention.

His MPS sent him to Labor Relations for a disciplinary hearing. On the way, he texted his alternate committeeman, Pat Baird, who was on for his committeeman, Leon Allen, who was serving on the the Coronavirus Taskforce.

Baird defended Winkler vigorously at the hearing pointing out that Ford's "Return to Work Playbook" called for workstations to be cleaned and disinfected before each shift to prevent spread of COVID-19.

Winkler pointed out that the Ford COVID-19 Survey taken by every employee before starting work each day asks everyone to "help us take precautionary measures to protect you and everyone in this facility"

None of that mattered. Labor Relations disciplined him by sending him home for the balance of the shift.

As he left Labor Relations, Winkler texted Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher and President Jason Starr to let them know what happened.

He quickly got a call from Fisher

telling him not to worry. The union would take care of it.

Being off on Father's Day wasn't so bad. Winkler celebrated with his wife, Amy Rose, his son Ezra and his three-year-old daughter Jersey. He even had a couple of beers.

It wasn't long before Labor Relations called to tell him that his disciplinary record had been cleared and asking him to come back to work.

In the end, he stayed home the rest of the night, got paid for it and his record was cleared.

The next day, a coworker told him that after he left, the company had five people from Team Solutions in the area cleaning up.

"It's uncomfortable sometimes to go downstairs," says Winkler. "But, if you don't take some risk there's no reward."

John Lewis, the congressman and civil rights icon who died July 17 urged people not to stay silent when they saw something wrong.

"Never, ever be afraid to make some noise and get in good trouble, necessary trouble," said Lewis.

That's what Winkler did. It made his work area safer for everyone, and it provides a model for each of us on how to fix problems at KCAP.

KCAP brings in 900 temporary workers

By Jim Fisher

Since returning from the COVID19 shutdown, KCAP has had a significant increase in absenteeism. About 840 members have been on leave from the CARES ACT since the plant returned back to work in May. In April 256 of our members retired as part of a separation package from the 2019 National Agreement. The plant has brought in approximately 900 temporary workers to cover those spots since May 18.

This shift in manpower has put extra strain on the plant. It's up to us to ensure we continue to build the highest quality products for our customers. Our reputation is on the line. We build trucks and vans to be tough and dependable because they are used as delivery vehicles, work trucks, and emergency vehicles used by fire and EMS departments all around the country.

The local agreement has a very clear process in the "Stop Button Procedure" which is found on page 133 and 134. It clearly states if you're unable to complete your task, the operator will use the "quality" button to signal a team leader or process coach. If there is no response within a three (3) unit margin, the operator shall use the stop button to stop the line until the process coach responds. The team leader is to use the stop button to stop the line (if needed) when repairs can be made in a reasonable amount of time in the zone. Supervision has the responsibility to ensure the program is properly administered without reprisal to any operator.

In addition to this, members are strongly encouraged to report any violations of our quality practices to the Local Quality Hotline at (816) 414-5588, or the Ford UAW National Quality Hotline at (866) 723-3937.

We have members working in several different departments each week, and there have many members reporting pay shortages. Make sure you're checking your DROTS daily and report any pay discrepancies as soon as possible.

Over the month of July our skilled trades added fencing that helped us reopen the Training Center, and they installed an additional six big fans in the main building.

The local leadership team has started walking the floor with the company HR Department.

The goal of these walks is to fix bathrooms, break rooms, and plant cleanliness. We still find it unacceptable that company HR has to be involved in getting the plant clean. Having bathrooms cleaned, functioning toilets and urinals, providing hot water with soap,

and working air conditioning in break rooms should be a basic task performed by supervisors in the area. If the HR department can see broken soap dispensers and dust on handrails, why can't your supervisor?

The company bragged about "deep cleaning" in the Return to Work Play Book, but obviously this has not been done.

The production schedules for both systems will remain very heavy for the month of August. The Transit System will remain on a 5x11 schedule with Super Production Saturdays scheduled for days shift on August 1, 8, 22, and 29. The Transit Night shift is scheduled for Saturday Production on August 8, 15, and 29.

The Truck System is also scheduled Super Production with A-Crew working on August 9, and 23. The B-Crew is scheduled for August 1, 15, and 29.

Currently, the plant is undergoing an additional expansion of 13,000 square feet next to Transit Chassis. More information will come on this later.



Local 249 Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher addressed quality issues related to absences due to COVID-19 at the July membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

The new 2019 Local Agreement is currently at the print shop. They will print a couple for us to review, and once approved they will go into production. We hope to have it ready to hand out to the membership soon.

For over a week we have had MO-DOT working on the drainage ditch next to the north lot. After a couple of heavy rainstorms, we are still seeing high water collecting by the turnstiles. The company has assured us there will be additional efforts to fix they lot. They also recognize there is an is-

sue with drainage. If there is another drainage issue, no one is expected to wade through high water to come into work.

On a final note, COVID-19 in the KC Metro area still continues to see numbers on the increase. We ask all members that if you're showing flu like symptoms don't report to work. You must mark "yes" to flu like symptoms on the daily survey, e-mail kchourly@ford.com, contact plant medical at 1 (816) 459-1237, and contact your personal doctor for additional instructions.



UAW on Biden plan for mobilizing talent and care giving

For working families, the ability to focus on work and productivity is often challenged by demands at home. Often at the bargaining table, issues of child care and elder care become key issues both for our members and their employers. Challenges at home can impact absenteeism, productivity and stress in the workplace. In the case of children, access to quality child care increases their learning at a crucial age and for the elderly increases the length and quality of their lives.

The Biden policy proposal focuses on filling crucial gaps in long-term services; expanding access to universal preschool for three and four-year-olds; building safe facilities and encouraging skilled childcare staffing; eliminating wait list for services for the elderly; focusing on keeping the elderly at home and in their communities; and increasing elder care staffing and training.

There is a cost at the workplace for some of the gaps in coverage and services that children and elderly experience. This is a common-sense plan that focuses on improving access to services and availability of services that in the long run helps economically at our worksites. It's a long-overdue overhaul of crucial gaps in the American safety net. — UAW

The battle is on, it's time to tell it like it is

By Jason Starr

When I was first elected president of Local 249, I was adamant that we would get away from using the labels: Democrat or Republican. I knew then, as I know now, that some of our members — good trade unionists — identify as Republican. I wanted to make candidate and policy recommendations to our members based on whether they were good for our union, its members and working people, not on the party they came from.

Members who remember the election brochure we mailed out before the 2018 election will recall that the words Democrat or Republican did not appear anywhere in the publication. We simply reported the votes taken or policy positions advocated by the candidates and let members make up their minds about whether or not they were good for working people like us.

I've learned a lot in the years since you first elected me president. And one of the things I've learned is that Republican Party elected officials and candidates — but not our Republican members — are determined to destroy the union movement in this country.

These politicians and the party they represent have attacked us at every opportunity. It's now time for all of us to recognize that fact.

Here are the most recent examples of what I'm talking about:

When GM went on strike last fall, not a single Republican politician or candidate came to our aid. In contrast, Democratic elected officials collected food for the strike pantry and joined us on the picket line.

Today, with many of our members struggling with unemployment and Cares Act issues due to the Coronavirus Pandemic we can't get anyone in Republican Gov. Mike Parson's office

to return our calls.

Fortunately, we have a good relationship with the two Democrats who represent the districts where KCAP is located — State Sen. Lauren Arthur and Rep. Mark Ellebracht.

They were very helpful earlier this month when Ford sent a letter to members announcing that it intends to dispute CARES Act claims for members with High-Risk underlying health conditions and lack of access to Child Care in an attempt to mandate members to return to work on July 20th.

This letter was triggered by Gov. Parson's declaration that the state is fully re-opened despite an ever-increasing number of COVID-19 cases in Missouri.

With the help of Lauren Arthur and Mark Ellebracht, we were able to back Ford off and protect our members from a premature return to work that might have endangered them and their families.

Local 249 members worked hard to elect both Lauren Arthur and Mark Ellebracht in the last election.

That's because we saw clearly how anti-union the Republican governor and Republican-dominated legislature had become.

The Republicans worked tirelessly to pass anti-union right-to-work leg-



Local 249 backed Lauren Arthur when she ran for State Senator for District 17, which includes Liberty, Kansas City (North), Gladstone, NKC, Pleasant Valley, in 2018. Today, Lauren Arthur is a key ally of UAW members. She's helping the union help members with Cares Act issues. Photo by Don Lehman.

islation in Missouri over many years. They did everything they could to stop Missourians from overturning right to work in the 2018 election.

Despite their opposition, Missouri voters overturned the Republican-sponsored right-to-work law by more than a two to one margin.

The Republican governor and Republican-dominated legislature also overturned increases in the minimum wage approved in St. Louis and Kansas City.

It took a citizen initiative and a vote to raise the minimum wage over Republican opposition.

Likewise, the successful Clean Missouri citizen initiative and vote to get dark money out of politics and create

fair elections passed by a wide margin in 2018 over Republican opposition.

Rather than accept voters wishes, Republicans have put "Dirty Missouri" on the November ballot to overturn the 2018 election result.

Republican politicians also refuse to expand Medicaid in the state. Voters will have a chance to tell Republicans that health care is a right by voting Yes on Amendment 2 August 4.

Local 249 will work hard in the coming months to elect more candidates like Lauren Arthur and Mark Ellebracht who represent the interests of working people like us. A lot is at stake. I urge all of you to vote August 4 and to join Local 249 CAP activists in the fight.

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

Trump budget cuts health care for seniors

Richard Fiesta
Alliance for Retired Americans

“President Trump has had four chances to deliver a budget that protects retirees and each time he has proposed brutal cuts. Each time he has failed to deliver. His FY 2021 budget proposes cutting hundreds of billions of dollars from Medicare, even more from Medicaid and \$70 billion from Social Security disability benefits. Together these cuts will strip health care and basic income from millions.

“These cuts are cruel and would hurt millions of older Americans. Retirees have paid for Medicare over a lifetime, and depend on these benefits to stay healthy. The average Medicare beneficiary is already paying more than \$5,000 in out of pocket health care costs per year while the average Social Security retirement benefit is just \$16,656 per year.

“Hundreds of thousands of seniors depend on Medicaid to pay for nursing homes and health care expenses. Nearly 2 in 3 nursing home residents receive care through Medicaid. Seniors can also get services through Medicaid such as home health care, mental health and therapy services, as well as durable medical equipment and some

dental services.

“If the President were serious about health care, he would fully fund Medicaid. He would take action to help seniors afford their prescription drugs, which would also strengthen Medicare’s future solvency. The solution is staring him in the face. H.R. 3, the Lower Drug Costs Now Act, has been passed by the House of Representatives but President Trump promised to veto it. This bill would limit out of pocket drug costs for seniors to \$2,000 per year and require the government to negotiate lower prices for 250 prescription drugs, including insulin. The bill would save so much money that coverage for current and future seniors



President Trump proposes cutting hundreds of billions of dollars from Medicare, even more from Medicaid and \$70 billion from Social Security disability benefits next year.

would be expanded to include hearing, dental and vision benefits.

“A president’s budget reflects their values. President Trump is raiding retirees’ earned benefits to pay for the tax cuts he passed for the wealthiest

Americans and profitable corporations. Every time he has had a chance to fight for older Americans he has not. Our 4.4 million members will work to make sure every senior understands the President’s record, not just his tweets.”

Sam’s story: A father’s plea for medicaid expansion

Sam is a father of two boys. His youngest, Trent, was born with congenital heart defects. Sam and his wife both work full time and have stable income. This has granted him access to health care he knows he would not otherwise have access to. As Sam states, “my family is working with the best of the best at the hospital. Its right down the street. I know not everyone has this access. Factors like where you are born and how much money your family has impacts everything, there is a ripple effect of privilege in your life before you are even born”. He goes on to say that because his wife received pre-natal care, they knew their son had heart problems and was sent to the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU). Soon after being admitted, Trent’s heart stopped beating and needed immediate care. Sam is certain his son would not have survived had they not had information about his heart before he was born.

Trent’s heart condition requires frequent hospital visits. During one extended stay, Sam met a family that did not receive pre-natal care. Their child had blue feet at five weeks old, received an ultrasound at six weeks old after an emergency helicopter transportation where they discovered the child had a heart chamber four times the size of the others. Sam feels strongly that every parent should have access to pre-natal care and sees the ways in which his son has a much higher chance of a high quality of life compared to this other child simply because of the socioeconomic status he was born into. Something Sam believes is unfair.

Despite his family’s privilege, Sam has had to argue with his insurance company to get his son’s medical procedures covered. Before one of Trent’s more recent surgeries, Sam was sent a notice from the hospital that the surgery was not pre authorized by their insurance and would not be covered. The hospital required a down payment of \$16,000 before proceeding with the surgery. The surgery cost \$80,000 in total and the insurance company eventually agreed to pay this amount before Sam had to find the money to cover this expense. Sam wonders what families without insurance and unable to pay large sums of money for care are supposed to do in instances like this.



He says the stress of this is not trivial. As he states, “I have high blood pressure and moments like this certainly don’t help but if I get sick I have a primary care doctor. I have someone to see and receive medicine or care if I need it. Not everyone has this, stress like this adds up and takes a toll on people”.

Sam is passionate about expanding health care for Missourians because he has witnessed first-hand the ways financial ability enhances or hinders people’s wellness and has a long term effect on their overall quality of life. When speaking to people in opposi-

tion of Medicaid expansion he finds the most common argument is, “why should we pay?” to which he responds, “we pay anyway. We (in the US) have a compassionate and highly effective health system if you have access to it. We, the tax payer, are going to continue paying for this imbalanced system if we don’t expand care”. Sam says his greatest hope is to see an “effective allocation of resources so people can make best decisions for their families. Not only is it the fair thing to do, it is financially beneficially for Missouri”. — *Missouri Health Care for All*



Local 249 CAP Committee activists met at the union hall July 8 to help get out the vote for Greg Razer who represents District 25 in Jackson County in the Missouri House of Representatives. Photo by Don Lehman.

This election day, refuse to be silent

By Gwen Starkey

As the 2020 Nov. election draws near, our nation heads into what may turn out to be a very tumultuous time for our country. Are you registered to vote? If not, why not. Your vote matters. On Nov. 3 we will not only elect a president, but all 435 seats in the House of Representatives and 33 seats in the Senate are up for grabs as well, not to mention the many changes coming to state and local governments. This year as we battle the Coronavirus, many economic and social issues, it is more important than ever to be informed on where candidates stand.

While it's important to research candidates that are on the ballot, we also need to be aware of other issues that affect Missourians as well. A priority issue is the Missouri Amendment 2, Medicaid Expansion Initiative. A yes vote supports Amendment 2 which would expand Medicaid eligibility in Missouri to adults that are 19 years old or older and younger than 65 whose income is 133% of the federal poverty level or below, which would effectively expand Medicaid to those with incomes at or below 138% of the federal poverty level under the Affordable Care Act.

In 2020, this amounted to an annual income of \$17,608 for an individual and \$36,156 for a household of four. Amendment 2 would require the Missouri Department of Social Services and the Missouri HealthNet Division to submit state Medicaid plan amendments by March 1, 2021, to the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to implement Medicaid expansion. It also would prohibit any additional restrictions or requirements for the expanded population to qualify

for Medicaid coverage than for other populations that qualify for Medicaid coverage; and would require the state to seek maximum federal funding of Medicaid expansion.

As the debates and commercials seemingly drag on, many seem to disconnect with the process, but like it or not, you're involved in politics. Your vote matters. "There's a direct relationship between the ballot box and the bread box, and what the union fights for and wins at the bargaining table can be taken away at the legislative halls," Walter Reuther said.

Gains won at the bargaining table or through sacrifice on the picket line can be wiped out by unwise actions of state or national legislatures and political leaders. While it may seem insubstantial in the big picture, the ability to vote is a gift. Many sacrifices were made to ensure the right to democracy and the right to vote. "Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter," Martin Luther King Jr. said.

With the primaries fast approaching, some may wonder, how will my

vote affect me? How important is my vote, what does my vote do for me? Does my vote matter? The answer lies in whom we elect.

Consider the most powerful position in the world, the president of the United States. The president appoints all federal judges, supreme court judges, National Labor Relations Board members, and cabinet members. Those positions control everything from workers compensation benefits set by Legislators, whom you elect, to the mattress contents regulations that are set by the Federal Bureau of Standards, which is controlled by Congress, whom you elect. Still think your vote doesn't matter? Think again, your vote matters. Even the approval and regulation of TV channels are made by the Federal Communications Commission and are all appointed by the President, whom you elect.

Your vote is not only important on the national level, local and state elections are just as significant. Your state and local elected officials can appoint commissions on zoning, planning, and building, all of which directly affect the amount of new business, construction work, and many other aspects of your neighborhood and community. Do you want more playgrounds? Ask the Park Commission appointed by the Mayor, whom you elect. Workers' compensation and unemployment benefits are set by the various state legislatures, whom you elect.

Approval and regulation of your wages and benefits are made by Civil Service Commissioners appointed by the Governor; whom you elect. Gas and electric rates are set by the Public Service Commission appointed by the Governor; whom you elect. State highway construction and repair is controlled by the Highway Commissioner, who is appointed by the Governor, whom you elect. Safety inspection under the Department of Labor is appointed by the Governor, whom you elect.

Union members need to consider where their priorities and interests lie, with the union that is looking after their physical and financial well-being, or another interest that may be part of a plan to divide working people for the purposes of winning elections. When working families stick together and vote together, we win. When workers are divided by so called wedge issues, our opponents win. Just remember, someone hired, by someone appointed, by someone you elected, affects you and your family daily.

The power of appointed and elected officials concerning your livelihood is much greater than most realize. All of them can change laws concerning your job and life just by the stroke of the pen without consulting Congress or being accountable to you, the voter. So, the next time you wonder, does my vote matter, think about the consequences of whom you elect. Yes, your vote matters.