

FIRST LOCAL NEWS

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Local 249 Charlie Suffridge Scholarship Contest winner Sophia Zorich accepted the \$5,000 first prize at the August membership meeting with her father Bret Zorich. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249 Chaplaincy Committee members Arthur Egans, from the back, Melissa Paavola, Eric Coffman, David Hanley, Matt Gaynor, Juan Ramos and Darryl Stewart help members with spiritual advice. Photo by Don Lehman.



Terrae Porter, center, was presented with the James "Frog" Moran Solidarity Award at the August membership meeting for his heroism in saving a family whose home was destroyed in an explosion. Photo by Don Lehman.



Representatives of the North Kansas City School District receive a donation from the Local 249 August 22. Shown here at the presentation are NKC staff members Temmy Henderson, Brian Mercer, Dan Ciemens, Jan Lewis and Athena Graham accepting the check from Kim Rowland, Dana Davidson and Sadie Bass. Photo by Don Lehman.

First Local News

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UAW Local 249

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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.

UAW-Ford Joint Programs

Apprentice Training

Cortez Bradley 816-459-2060

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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

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Statehouse redistricting begins with partisan fight

By District 15 Representative Maggie Nurrenbern

In a stark example of what could have been avoided had a nonpartisan redistricting process approved, but later rescinded, by Missouri voters remained in place, a House redistricting commission evenly split between Democrats and Republicans deadlocked for nearly eight hours on Aug. 10 over which party should wield the chairman's gavel as the process for drawing new statehouse districts gets underway.

Republican commissioners insisted one of their members should be chair since a Republican is governor. Democrats said a fairer method would be to determine the chairmanship by a coin flip. The state constitutional provisions creating the commissions don't specify how the chair and other leadership posts should be chosen.

After deadlocking all day on a series of 10-10 votes, the commission finally agreed to elect Republican Jerry Hunter of St. Louis as chair, with Democrats Keena Smith of St. Louis and Mark Schaeperkotter of Owensville respectively being chosen and vice-chair and secretary. The parties also agreed that Hunter and Smith would share authority.

For decades, commissions consisting of equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans had first crack at drawing new state House and Senate districts every 10 years. However, those commissions typically deadlocked, kicking the job to a separate commission of six state appellate judges.

In an effort to minimize partisanship in the redistricting process, Missouri voters ratified a constitutional amendment in 2018 that granted the responsibility for drawing new legislative districts to a nonpartisan state demographer. The measure passed

with 62 percent of voters in support, and the new system was supposed to be used for the first time this year.

However, Republican lawmakers, fearing the new system would loosen their legislative dominance, placed a second constitutional amendment on the 2020 ballot to largely repeal the 2018 changes. Voters narrowly ratified it with 51 percent in support.

While the House commission spent hours sparring, the Senate commission quickly elected its leadership, choosing Republican attorney Mark Ellinger of Jefferson City as chair; Democrat Susan Montee, a former state auditor, as vice-chair; and Democrat Nicole Greer as secretary.

The redistricting process won't begin in earnest until after the U.S. Census Bureau provides the precinct-level data needed to draw new maps, which currently is expected to occur in September. The House and Senate commissions each have scheduled six meetings around the state in October and November to take public testimony.

Representative Maggie Nurrenbern, a Democrat, represents Clay County (District 15) in the Missouri House of Representatives. She was elected to her first two-year term in November 2020.

Labor News From the World Wide Web

The Picket Line

MO Voting Laws Hamper Access to Ballot Box

A new report finds Missouri lags behind many other states in voting access.

The Campaign Legal Center graded states on whether they have 10 key voting practices, from no-excuse absentee voting to online tracking of mail-in ballots and ballot drop boxes. Missouri received a score of four out of 10.

Denise Lieberman, director of the nonpartisan Missouri Voter Protection Coalition, said Missouri has some of the more restrictive photo ID requirements to vote, does not have any early voting and requires one of six excuses for people to vote by mail.

Along with the more than a dozen voting bills introduced in Missouri this year, across the country state legislatures have pushed more than 400 bills to restrict people's right to vote. Lieberman says many of them disproportionately impact voters of color, young voters, seniors, voters with disabilities and low-wage workers. — *KCRU*

Dozens protest racism, working conditions at Kansas City Veterans Administration

Around three dozen VA workers from across Missouri and Kansas, including Kansas City, Poplar Bluff, Leavenworth and St. Louis, showed up to protest working conditions and racism. They were joined by U.S. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver II. Cleaver, whose father and two uncles are veterans.

Cleaver said the VA has created and sustained a discriminatory culture. "I don't believe that all the people that are in positions of administration are bigoted," he said. "But something is going on if 78%, based on a survey that was taken by the employees, believe that there is a serious cultural problem as it relates to race. Something needs to stop and something needs to begin."

For several years, lawsuits have been filed against the Kansas City VA alleging racial discrimination and racist incidents against Black workers. More than 50 Black current and former employees in Kansas City have come forward since last year saying they have experienced racial discrimination while working at the hospital.

"We've found numerous, probably hundreds, of (Equal Employment Opportunity) cases because employees have faced discrimination, whether it was against their disability, whether it was against their race, and management does the same thing: They downplay the situation," said Keena Smith, a legislative political organizer for the American Federation of Government Employees. "Their management covers for each other all of the time and we're just tired." — *Kansas City Star*

UAW on election of Liz Shuler as first woman AFL-CIO president

"In Liz Shuler, the working families of the AFL-CIO have a President who understands the need to grow organized labor, focus resources on protecting America's working families and America's middle class, and a strong voice for free fair collective bargaining for all workers.

The UAW, having championed diversity in union leadership throughout its history, is especially proud of the historic election of President Shuler breaking the glass ceiling by becoming the first female AFL-CIO President and also the First African American AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer in Fred Redmond, international Vice President of the United Steelworkers (USW).

We know that President Shuler will build on the strong platform created by the late Richard Trumka and guide working families through a changing economy and a public that increasingly identifies sympathetically with organized labor in the United States.

UAW members and their families are committed to working with President Shuler in this transition and to continuing unabated our strong commitment to moving our nation's middle class and working families forward." — *UAW*



AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka passed away on August 5, 2021, at the age of 72.

Richard L. Trumka (1949 - 2021)

The labor movement, the AFL-CIO and the nation lost a legend. Rich devoted his life to working people, from his early days as president of the United Mine Workers of America to his unparalleled leadership as the voice of America's labor movement.

He was a relentless champion of workers' rights, workplace safety, worker-centered trade, democracy and so much more. He was also a devoted father, grandfather, husband, brother, coach, colleague and friend. Rich was loved and beloved.

The 56 unions and 12.5 million members of the AFL-CIO mourn the passing of our fearless leader and commit to honoring his legacy with action. Standing on Rich's shoulders, we will pour everything we have into building an economy, society and democracy that lifts up every working family and community.

Richard Louis Trumka dedicated his entire life to making sure every institution he touched—the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), the AFL-CIO, the U.S. government and the world community—served working people and the public interest, comforted the afflicted and afflicted the comfortable.

In that sense Trumka's legacy above all was his fight for democracy, from the UMWA of his youth to the AFL-CIO to the United States in 2020 to the world that he influenced through the global labor movement. Every day of his career, Trumka fought for the right of working people to be heard everywhere it mattered—and the people he remembered were those who suffered in that cause—his friend the Colombian mine worker assassinated as he rode a bus to work, the miners he worked side by side with who gave life and breath to power our communities, the nurses, grocery workers, meatpackers, hotel workers, taxi drivers, steelworkers and auto-workers whose picket lines he joined and whose stories he heard through a lifetime of leading their fights.

But the fight he fought was about something more than the particular demands of any given organizing drive

or bargaining session—it was always about democracy—about the only question that really mattered—who gets a say in what happens? It must be said that Trumka in 2020 was prepared to lead working people into battle to defend our democracy—and his leadership in 2020, together with the courage of union members, helped make sure that the votes were counted, the result was honored and democracy was saved.

And Trumka was devoted to dignity at work. He passionately cared about what happened to people when they clocked in, when they picked up the tools and put on a helmet. From his chairmanship of the mine safety committee in Nemaquin, Pennsylvania, to his fight for a COVID-19 workplace safety standard, his first question to anyone about any decision was always, "Will workers be safe?" His second question was, "Will workers be treated fairly and with dignity?" And his third question was, "Who will get the wealth workers create?" For Richard Trumka the labor movement was first, second

and third about what happens to us when we go to work.

He saw the faces of the men who had worked by his side and had died in the mines until the end of his life. And yet he asked union members to go to Puerto Rico in 2017 and risk their lives to help our brothers, sisters and friends who were abandoned by the federal government. And they went.

Trumka leaves a lifelong legacy of understanding the labor movement as both a thing in itself—a place of solidarity—and as the most singular, powerful tool for economic justice. He believed the labor movement must be heard on the core direction of the economy. As president of the Mine Workers, he helped found the Economic Policy Institute, and as president of the AFL-CIO, he was an insistent voice in the ears of presidents of both parties and Federal Reserve chairs of all stripes, demanding economic policy that benefited working people—full employment, rising wages, economic security and, most of all, bargaining power.



Local 249's Charlie Suffridge Scholarship Contest winners Brady Lisee and Sophia Zorich were announced at the August membership meeting. Lisee won the \$2,500 second prize and Zorich won the \$5,000 first prize. Photo by Don Lehman.

Scholarship contest winners announced

By Pat Hayes

The \$5,000 first place award in Local 249's annual Charlie Suffridge Scholarship Contest was won by Sophia Zorich for her essay on the National Labor Relations Act. She is the daughter of UAW member Bret Zorich.

The \$2,500 second place award went to Brady Lisee, the son of Mike Lisee. Haden Long took the \$1,500 third place prize. He is the son of UAW member Frank Long. Micah Trevino's essay won the \$1,000 fourth place prize. He is the son of Michael Trevino.

"The history of American labor is rarely taught in public schools," said Gary Thomas, chair of Local 249's Education Committee.

"Our essay contest is an effort to redress this shortcoming. With union membership declining and the middle class shrinking, we think it's critical for

young people to learn the history of the union movement which we think is the key to reversing the trend toward declining wages and job insecurity," he said.

"We also hope that helping students who enter the contest will help UAW parents cope with the rising cost of a college or trade school education," said Thomas.

The contest is open to the dependents of UAW Local 249 members in good standing who are juniors or seniors in high school during the year they enter the contest.

Contestants must be planning to attend a college, university or trade school the following school year after

graduation. They must not be winners of a previous contest.

The annual contest is sponsored by Local 249's Education Committee. It is named after Charlie Suffridge, an outstanding union educator and Education Committee Chair who proposed the contest. Suffridge pioneered many local education initiatives that focused on educating new members and the wider community about labor issues.

UAW Education Committees are responsible for building the power of the movement through educating and training members of their local union.

"Members of the committee identify the training needs of their local union membership and, with their leadership's approval, provide classes, materials, and information based on those needs," said Local 249 Education Committee Chair Gary Thomas.

The UAW provides training in effective education to new members of the committee to help them fulfill their role in the union.

Workshops are also available on a variety of subjects including labor history, multicultural awareness and globalization. A wide variety of printed material is also available through the International.

"One of the biggest jobs of the Education Committee is to reach out to new members," said Local 249 President Jason Starr. "A membership that knows its history is a strong membership that can't be pushed around by the company."

The committee also sponsors the James "Frog" Moran Solidarity award presented at each month's membership meeting to members who demonstrate outstanding solidarity.



The Wagner Act and the rise of worker power

By Sophia Zorich

This article is excerpted from the winning essay in the Local 249 Charlie Suffridge Scholarship Contest.

In 1934 Senator Robert Wagner proposed the National Labor Relations Act, also commonly known as the Wagner Act. This bill was not officially passed until 1935 when it gained approval from the Senate, House of Representatives, and was signed by President Roosevelt.

The NLRA bill gave employees the right to self-organization, to bargain collectively through representatives of their choosing, and to receive other mutual aid and protection. It also established the National Labor Relations Board, which gave employees union representation and helped put a stop to unfair labor practices.

The National Labor Relations Act came in response to several key events that occurred during the late 1920s and the early 1930s and was one of the most important steps forward for the labor community.

In 1886, the American Federation of Labor was founded by Samuel Gompers. The AFL was an association of labor unions that worked on securing higher wages, better working conditions, and shorter work weeks for their members. By the end of World War I, the AFL's membership had grown to 5 million.

Although the AFL had a promising start, it faced many obstacles. Most employers were strongly anti-union. When workers showed any support or interest in forming or joining labor unions, employers had them fired. Additionally, these workers were often "blacklisted", which meant other companies agreed not to hire them. Employers also required workers to sign "yellow dog" contracts. These agreements prohibited employees

from joining labor unions.

To make matters worse, most labor unions were formed to protect the rights of skilled workers and failed to unionize the mass production industries of steel, textiles, mining, and automobiles.

In addition to the hardships labor unions already faced, the Great Depression added more difficulties. When the stock market crashed in 1929, not only did investors lose billions of dollars, but unemployment reached an all-time high in the United States. Unemployment in manufacturing climbed to one in three workers by 1932. For those with jobs, their hours and wages were majorly reduced. Membership in the AFL dropped to less than 3 million by 1933.

At the end of the Great Depression, the future of labor unions seemed dire. However, the extreme hardships people suffered caused many Americans to feel more supportive of labor unions and their cause.

The progression of labor unions started to improve in 1932. One of the first pro-labor laws passed by Congress was the Norris-La Guardia Act. This act limited the power of federal courts by preventing them from enforcing "yellow dog" contracts and restricting them from issuing injunctions against strikes.

More positive changes occurred following the inauguration of President

Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1933. Although the new president often exhibited neutral views toward labor unions, his administration provided unprecedented support of unions goals. In fact, within the first few months of Roosevelt holding office, his administration oversaw the passage of the National Industrial Recovery Act, which was part of the New Deal for labor.

When Congress passed the National Industrial Recovery Act, it included the important Section 7(a) provision. This stated that "employees shall have the right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing".

In order to execute its provisions, NIRA established economic planning agencies, including the National Recovery Administration. The NRA tried to facilitate collaboration between labor unions and employers. By enforcing Section 7(a) of the NIRA, administrators worked to help establish an agreement regarding fair labor practices, including standards for fair competition and minimum wages, reduced working hours, and better working conditions.

Businesses set up "company unions" in order to give the appearance of compliance with Section 7(a). These unions did not fully benefit workers because they were under the employers' control. Unfortunately, NIRA did not include ways for administrators to enforce its provisions, so employers often only complied with the requirements when it benefited them.

Due to this lack of enforcement of the NIRA, large companies still had free rein to use unethical methods of interrogation, discipline, firing, and

blacklisting against their workers.

These practices angered workers, causing them to join existing labor unions and led to increased conflict between companies and workers. In 1934 and 1935 there was a major increase of work stoppages, including general citywide strikes and factory takeovers. There was so much violence involving unions, police, and anti-union employers during this time period that many Americans began to fear widespread NIRA revolution. The NRA had not brought peace to the workplace and was finally declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court in 1935.

In response to the unrest and dissatisfaction with the NRA, President Roosevelt created the National Labor Board and appointed Senator Robert Wagner as chair. Wagner was known for supporting labor union causes and was instrumental in the inclusion of Section 7(a) of NIRA.

Prior to the Wagner Act the rights of laborers went mostly unprotected in the United States. Many former attempts at creating pro-labor laws had been made, but it took this piece of legislation to more fully safeguard workers' rights. The provisions of the NLRA made it possible for today's unions to secure for their members safer working conditions, better pay, improved benefits, and reasonable work hours. It helped establish a framework in which unions were on more equal footing with large companies. In fact, the Wagner Act helped transform America into a country where labor unions finally had the power and platform to influence the nation's politics and economy for the betterment of workers everywhere.



Local 249 President Jason Starr, left, and Human and Civil Rights Chair Sade Ott lead a delegation of Local 249 members to present a \$25,000 donation to the African American Legacy Memorial in Liberty from the UAW Region 4 Midwest States CAP.

CAP donates to African American Memorial

By Cecelia Davis

Juneteenth's true meaning is a celebration of freedom and unity amongst the diverse cultures of African Americans. It is not meant to be celebrated only in June, but in essence, every day. This year UAW Local 249 and UAW Region 4 Midwest States CAP have come together to help memorialize and celebrate the essence of that holiday by donating \$25,000 to the Clay County African American Legacy.

Juneteenth is a day of celebration that originated in Galveston, Texas, that is now celebrated yearly on June 19th.

On January 1, 1863 President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation freeing enslaved African Americans. Since the war was still at large between the states, it wasn't until the leader of the confederate army surrendered in 1865. Andrew Johnson, the president at the time, then positioned Major General Gordon Granger of the union army in command of Texas who then declared the freedom of all enslaved African Americans.

Liberty, Missouri takes this holiday to heart since they were the first to launch the Juneteenth celebration held in a suburban city, in the greater Kansas City metroplex.

Samuel C. Houston's was one of the first African American families who settled in Liberty in which he took up his studies from an all-black school named the Garrison School. With hard work and dedication in his studies, he later became a powerful voice and leader for African Americans. He went from being em-

ployed as director of custodial services for the Liberty Public schools, owning his own custodial business, to becoming the chair of the First Baptist church Deacon Board and had then served as the deacon for 50 years.

On June 17th, 1989, Samuel was the first African American city councilman in Missouri who organized volunteers in the community to host the first Juneteenth celebration in Clay County.

Over many years, you could participate in Liberty's Juneteenth celebration in the Kansas City Shoal Creek golf clubhouse and at Saint Luke's African Methodist Episcopal Church. It was most fitting to also host the celebration at the Historic Garrison District, at Ruth Moore Park, or the Garrison School Cultural Center (Samuel's former school).

The Juneteenth National Independence Day act was signed by President Joe Biden making Juneteenth a federal holiday. Making it the first federal holiday since Martin Luther King Day.

As part of the 2021 Bicentennial Celebration for Missouri's statehood and the 21st Juneteenth celebration

for the city of Liberty, the Clay County African American Legacy Inc., partnered with the city of Liberty to dedicate two historical markers in honor of Ruth Moore, who was the active chairman of the 1954 Liberty Parks & Recreation Board, and Samuel Houston. The Legacy memorial will be a three-phase project located in Ruth Moore Park and a Sankofa Bird sculpture at Garrison School Cultural Center.

UAW Local 249's President Jason Starr partnered with Region 4 Midwest States CAP to help bring these memorials to life with a total donation of \$25,000 to be used for the projects.

The memorial in Liberty, Missouri, will include fifteen bollards to mark the perimeter of the six-acre burial ground where the remains of more than seven hundred African Americans were buried in segregated sections of Fairview and New Hope cemeteries. Day laborers, war veterans, children, people who were enslaved and many others were all buried within those acres. Most in unmarked graves.

The memorial will include a walkway through time, to reflect on the strong and powerful spirits of the African Americans that once lived there. Along the pathway you will be embraced with stories, poems, and spiritual or creative works that expressed the strong will of the black essences. At the end of the path, you will be greeted

with more than seven hundred names engraved into granite to pay respect to the existence of the honorable African Americans who helped to build Liberty to what it is today.

"The purpose of the African American Legacy Memorial in Fairview Cemetery is to honor and respect the Black lives who are buried in the hallowed ground of this sacred space, and to celebrate the Bicentennial of Missouri's statehood. We are rewriting the history books with this memorial that will help bring about reconciliation among our residents. Whether among those who were enslaved or free, the African Americans buried in unmarked graves of Fairview and New Hope are a testimony to a community of resilient people with character and principles who make significant contributions to Liberty and Clay County," said Dr. Cecelia Robinson.

Dr. Cecelia Robinson who is the Garrison School's Historian and Gallery Curator, has reached out to our Local 249 Civil Rights Committee to seek funding to help in the next remarkable Juneteenth celebration. This program will not only help with the legacy memorial but it will also include two bronze historical markers, a community concert, speaker, funding to cover the updating and publishing of 1,000 public relations/tourism brochures that feature the African American Historical sites of Liberty and the Brochure for Garrison School.



The Conservation and Recreation Committee provides a variety of opportunities that fall into two categories: recreation, which includes leisure time activities, and conservation, which includes environmental concerns.

UAW Conservation And Recreation Committee

By Cecelia Davis

Every committee comes into existence due to a specific need. The conservation and Recreation Committee is not exempt from this fact.

The origins of this committee came a long way from where history used to be. It used to only cater to one kind of people and due to the diversity of individuals working within our union, a change was needed. That change started with ten pins and a bowling ball.

Bowling is one of the largest and best-organized sports in the world, which is perfect to create solidarity after a hard day's work. It was about mid-1940's when the sport had peaked in popularity and even still provides relaxation to many of our members today.

The recreation committee started with the simple game of bowling within the union's ranks, but with a twist. They offered this activity for everyone! The UAW's strong participation in desegregating bowling alleys is an important piece of our union history. It provided equal rights for all, not only within the workplace, but in

recreation as well.

Walter Reuther, the UAW President in 1946, put the union at the forefront of the national movement to desegregate bowling alleys across the nation. He believed that while our union was working hard to desegregate the workplace, that mission was being undermined because of discrimination in society and he could not accept that.

Reuther gave Olga Madar, the director of the UAW Recreation Department, who later became the union's first female vice president, the task of eliminating racial bias in organized bowling. With such great emphasis on changing history, our union established the UAW International Bowling Championships with the recreation committee and held the very first one in January 1948 at Herbert Fenton's Dexter Recreation Center.

With the given history of the com-

mittee, not only is it a committee to provide solidarity within our union but we can make actual change within the world, as history has proven. Whether it's volunteering to clean up a park together or playing a simple game of bowling, fun is for everyone, and Chairman Jerrod Ballard intends on continuing that.

Jerrod has been the Chairman of the committee for 15 to 16 years. He has planned engaging events that requires what we do best, teamwork. He's a very active man, even during a pandemic. Due to Covid, this committee has taken a drastic hit in participation.

Although fear has taken the spots of players; that has not stopped the committee in having hopes to interact with one another. "Life is too short," said Jerrod. "You can't let fear control you. You don't want to punch your own ticket before it's due. Do what you can."

Stress is a normal human reaction that happens to everyone. You are destined to experience it sometime within your work adventure. It's

natural. To overcome this stress, you may want to engage in an activity or possibly tackle any environmental concerns that you may stumble upon on the way to work.

The conservation and recreation committee could be the perfect committee to commit to. It's a strong, family quality group that rejoices in organized events that are certain to leave you with a smile on your face. If the recreation part doesn't spark your interest, the conservation side might. It emphasizes making sure that all citizens have access to clean air, clean water, and parks.

The Conservation and Recreation Committee's focus is not limited to your neighborhood or state but also national and global issues that affect us all.

Our union has stuck to the commitment of spreading joy through fun activities for every individual. This committee has planned float trips, corn-hole tournaments, hunting trips, sporting events, softball games, and team sport competitions.

Parts issues hamper Truck production at KCAP

By Jim Fisher

The month of August has been challenging to say the least. The Transit System has seen a full production schedule, while the Truck System has been down for two weeks due to parts shortages. For a short time, it appeared that KCAP was getting past the parts issues, but unfortunately they seem to have become a problem again. We are fortunate to produce two very high demand vehicles for the company and remain a high priority for parts. I expect now that we could see scheduling adjustments remain for the next couple of months.

As our skilled trades members have been aware the company was considering a rotational schedule for our Truck Department skilled trades members. We were very aware that this schedule was not popular with our members. Everyone needs to remember that KCAP is a unique assembly plant. KCAP is the largest square footage assembly plant in the world and runs two separate assembly lines. While a National Contract does allow for a rotational schedule the reality is this would leave several departments without skilled trades coverage unless hundreds more skilled trades members were added.

What I hope everyone saw was that when issues are addressed with both the Union and the company sitting down and having serious conversations, that issues can be resolved. Through these meetings an improved plan for preventive maintenance was developed, and a schedule that gives our facility the best coverage. I want to thank all our skilled trades members for their patience while these meetings were taking place. I know there were a lot more questions than answers while we were meeting, but you all know sometimes these issues take a lot of meetings before a resolution is reached.

I also want to personally thank Scott Pyle, our skilled trades bargaining representative, and our skilled trades district committeemen for their professionalism during these talks. The result has helped our plant going into the future.

On August 26th the official announcement was made that to address some of the manpower issues inside the plant, 150 TFT members were converted to In-Progression Status. To date Local 249 has had a total 344 TFT members convert to In-Progression status this year.

On a final note, I want to talk about the plant going forward. KCAP is currently undergoing several significant upgrades to the facility. There are a lot of very positive things happening, not only for our members, but the com-

munity. Thousands of people's jobs are affected by the way this plant operates.

I know everyone has been through a lot over the past 18 months. No one could have ever imagined what our members have had to go through. We have seen the worst of a global pandemic and world parts shortages, our members have had to wear masks in 100-degree heat because Ford won't provide air conditioning, and we have seen a completed failure from a company that don't seem to know how to clean the plant. There are currently several issues we are working on getting the company to improve upon.

Our members continue to work through these issues and do a re-



Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher talks about parts shortages in the Truck System at the August membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

markable job every day. However, the absenteeism from our members must improve. We can't represent people who don't come to work. One of these days we will be past COVID, and parts shortages and things will return to

normal. The future of this plant remains very bright. However, as we look for additional expansion and growth in membership, we must not let plant absenteeism delay or cancel the positive strides we are making.

What Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will deliver for Missouri

President Biden and Vice President Harris support the Senate's passage of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, the largest long-term investment in our infrastructure and competitiveness in nearly a century. The need for action in Missouri is clear and recently released state-level data demonstrates that the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will deliver for Missouri.

For decades, infrastructure in Missouri has suffered from a systemic lack of investment. In fact, the American Society of Civil Engineers gave Missouri a C- grade on its infrastructure report card. The historic Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will make life better for millions of Missouri residents, create a generation of good-paying union jobs and economic growth, and position the United States to win the 21st century. Specifically, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will:

- Repair and rebuild our roads and bridges with a focus on climate change mitigation, resilience, equity, and safety for all users, including cyclists and pedestrians. In Missouri there are 2,190 bridges and over 7,576 miles of highway in poor condition. Since 2011, commute times have increased by 5.9% in Missouri and on average, each driver pays \$743 per year in costs due to driving on roads in need of repair.

Based on formula funding alone, Missouri would expect to receive \$6.5

billion for federal-aid highway apportioned programs and \$484 million for bridge replacement and repairs under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act over five years.

- Improve healthy, sustainable transportation options for millions of Americans. Missourians who take public transportation spend an extra 79.6% of their time commuting and non-White households are 10 times more likely to commute via public transportation. 32% of transit vehicles in the state are past useful life.

Based on formula funding alone, Missouri would expect to receive \$677 million over five years under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act to improve public transportation options across the state.

- Build a network of EV chargers to facilitate long-distance travel and provide convenient charging options. The U.S. market share of plug-in electric vehicle (EV) sales is only one-third the size of the Chinese EV market. The

President believes that must change. The bill invests \$7.5 billion to build out the first-ever national network of EV chargers in the United States and is a critical element in the Biden-Harris Administration's plan to accelerate the adoption of EVs to address the climate crisis and support domestic manufacturing jobs. Under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Missouri would expect to receive \$99 million over five years to support the expansion of an EV charging network in the state.

- Help connect every American to reliable high-speed internet. Broadband internet is necessary for Americans to do their jobs, to participate equally in school learning, health care, and to stay connected. Yet 15% of Missouri households do not have an internet subscription, and 5% of Missourians live in areas where, under the FCC's benchmark, there is no broadband infrastructure.

Under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Missouri will receive a minimum allocation of \$100 million to help provide broadband coverage across the state, including providing access to the at least 330,000 Missourians who currently lack it.

Playing defense just ain't going to cut it

By Jason Starr

I think all of us are looking forward to the Chiefs regular season. With the high-power offense that Andy Reid and Patrick Mahomes have brought to Kansas City we've already won our first Superbowl since Len Dawson led the team. True, we lost to Tampa last year, but the newly revamped offensive line promises to unleash Mahomes and the Chiefs to do what they do and take us back to the top this year.

Excited as I am about the upcoming season, when I think about our union, its members, and the working class as a whole, I can't help but remember the Chiefs of old. In those days, the Chiefs often got ahead on the scoreboard and would go into prevent defense and try to run out the clock. Time and again, our opponent would come from behind to score a touchdown or kick a field goal to go ahead just as the clock was ticking down in the fourth quarter.

If you think about it, that's what we — and I mean all of us — are doing now. Unions are playing prevent defense and we are losing.

Back in the day the UAW was on the offensive. We not only organized the auto industry from parts to assembly, we helped the teachers unions get their start. We backed Cesar Chavez and the Farm Workers in the battles to organize the fields. We were a driving force in the fight for civil rights working closely with Martin Luther King to organize the March on Washington.

When we played offense, we won. Wages went up. Working conditions

improved. Our members got health care and pensions.

And it wasn't just us. What the UAW won for its members became the standard for workers in all industries. When we fought for and won a wage increase, that wage increase was quickly adopted across the board.

Unfortunately, once those great victories were won, like the Chiefs of old, we started playing prevent defense. Instead of pushing forward, we tried to hold on to what we had.

The truth is, we've been playing prevent defense for nearly 50 years and the result has been disastrous. Wages in inflation adjusted terms have declined. Defined benefit pensions have been replaced with 401k plans. Retiree health care for members hired after 2008 has been lost. Solidarity among our members has been weakened by the introduction of tiers and temporary workers who make less, have fewer benefits and less protection on the job.

This is not just a problem for our union. Union membership in the U.S. has declined to the lowest levels since the 1930. The middle class — a



Jason Starr talks to members about what kind of union it will take to solve the problems faced by working people at the August membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

product of the great union victories of the past — is in decline. The workers at America's largest most powerful corporations now barely survive on low wages.

All of the blame for this does not rest on the shoulders of the unions. We are, all of us, the victims of a coordinated campaign to reverse the gains of the New Deal by billionaires, their corporations, think tanks and politicians.

In football terms, we've taken a hard hit. Now it's time to get up, shake ourselves off and get back on offense. In union terms going on offense means going back to the organizing model that won the great victories of the past.

It means rejecting the defensive service model that we've fallen into under the corporate onslaught of recent years.

What is the organizing model? It means relearning the lessons that won the great victories that brought the American Dream in reach of working people for the first time. It not only requires reorganizing the auto industry from parts to assembly, it also means reaching out to unorganized workers

in other industries. It means rebuilding the union power required to win by increasing our numbers, not just in auto, not just in manufacturing but across all industries, including service industries that now employ the largest share of workers

What about the service model of union organization? That model confuses members about what unions really are. They come to think of the movement — which requires the active involvement of all of us — as a just another service they pay for. Like their cable TV bill. The defeatist service model has led — and will continue to lead — to the erosion of wages, benefits and living standards for all workers.

And the bad news is, unlike a football game, the clock doesn't stop at the end of the fourth quarter. The game doesn't end. The erosion of our living standard won't stop until we stop it.

Things will get worse until we go back on offense. Unlike football, the labor union movement isn't a spectator sport. It requires the active participation of all of us to win.

NEED HELP?

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



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





Buffalo Stamping member Darwin Ost, left, receives a \$1,000 donation to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation from Local 249 representatives Joe Camper, Dean Freed and President Jason Starr August 22. Ost is riding across the country on his bicycle to raise funds for JDRF. Photo by Don Lehman.

Darwin Ost: Riding for a reason

By Erica Eckart

Darwin Ost, UAW 897 Health and Safety Representative at the Buffalo Stamping plant, set off on his own incredible journey cycling across the U.S to raise funds for diabetes on behalf of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. JDRF is the leading global organization funding research for Type 1 diabetes.

Ost, 46, started in Buffalo and has since ridden his bicycle more than 2,400 miles to visit other Ford plants in Cleveland, Louisville, Chicago, Kansas City, Dearborn headquarters and his final stop being the Oakville Assembly plant in Canada before heading back to Buffalo.

Ost usually takes part in raising funds through their annual JDRF golf tournament but because of Covid they haven't been able to have that event in two years. "He's always wanted to do something special," said Mary Ost, Darwin's wife.

"He's always liked riding, and Ford has always worked with JDRF to raise funds and awareness through the tournaments and so when those were cancelled he figured out a way to raise those funds himself." His goal is to try and meet the volume of donations that are usually acquired through the

tournaments. Ost has managed to raise over \$13,000 in donations so far. Local 249 was able to contribute \$1,000 towards his goal of \$50,000.

"His motto is that it's impossible to not be happy on a bike," said his daughter. "I'm tired but it's been really fun!"

Darwin's wife and 15-year-old daughter travel behind Ost as he rides. He has stops planned out every 20 or so miles.

He travels over 80 miles a day on his bike. He made a book for his wife with detailed directions, planned stops for things like food, gas and campgrounds to park their camper overnight. When asked if he trained for this, Ost stated "I jumped in with both feet, 6 years ago I said I can do this and I started riding my bike to work about 11 to 12 miles a day on an old heavy bike."

He now travels on a 22-speed bike

that has all the functions for long distance travel. His bike is equipped with shock resistant handlebars to help with rugged terrains and gravel, 28-inch tires that are thin for less rolling resistance, a high-tech GPS device that not only provides directions but also informs him of his heart rate, monitors elevations and climb ratios and many other neat functions to assist with his travels.

He discussed animal encounters while traveling through Kentucky he said he saw deer, a peacock, bison, eagles and was even chased by a couple of dogs that he felt were just excited to have something to run with. He traveled through Missouri mostly on the interstate and got to ride along the Missouri river.

"Missouri is nice" he said, "I'm in love with the state, it's beautiful". When asked why he rides, he had this to say: "Our world grows smaller every single day. We can get from one side of the earth to another in hours, not weeks or days. We can land on the moon, plan trips to Mars, and see far beyond that. We have technology that lets my

children learn from the safety of our home. Technology that sequences a genome, but we can't fix diabetes...YET!

My best friend's father had to have part of his foot amputated because of diabetes. Type One diabetes affects more than 1.7 million Americans. Well how about we turn Type One into Type None. I ride for JDRF to help make that happen and it's why I want to go EPICALLY BIG! The world is small, and we are in this fight together.

All of us play a role. I can help my fellow man, I can work to improve society, I can fight to bring about change, or I can sit on the sidelines and complain about it. I am choosing to get into the fight, it's the right thing to do.

I ride so that others may have a better life with better treatments. I ride so that I can help JDRF put Type One behind us and take on the challenges of tomorrow. I ride for those who can't. Thank you Mr. Ost for being an honorary advocate for change. If anyone is interested in making a donation please follow this link <http://ow.ly/hoTR50FSXzK>.



Local 249 members traveled to Topeka, Kansas July 23 to show solidarity with striking Frito-Lay workers who were fighting for a living wage and an end to suicide shifts where workers are only off the clock for eight hours before having to come back in.

Topeka Frito-Lay workers win victory

By Erica Eckart

A 20-day strike by 600 Frito-Lay workers, Local 218 in Topeka, Kansas has come to an end after workers negotiated a wage increase, a day off every week, and the end of what workers call suicide shifts, where employees get only an 8-hour break in between shifts. The Workers at the plant are responsible for making, packing and shipping nearly every Frito-Lay snack brand. The Local stood together and rejected a proposal made in early July which offered a 2 percent wage increase but did not address the mandated overtime. Some workers were working 12 hour shifts 7 days in a row on a mandatory schedule.

"The Striking workers of Local 218 have shown the world that Union working people can stand up against the largest food companies in the world and claim victory for themselves, their families and their communities" says Anthony Shelton, the international president of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers International Union (BCTGM).

According to a statement from Local 218 Frito-Lay workers, the Topeka plant will now see a 4 percent wage increase to employees in all job classifications over the two-year contract and at least one day off every week along with the end of those "suicide shifts" which the company calls "squeeze shifts". There was an overwhelming show of support from many locals around the Kansas City and Kansas areas. Local 696 Teamsters of Topeka Kansas, Local 101 (international Union

of Operating Engineers), local 1290 The Laborers Union of Kansas City, Kansas, Local 226 Electrical Workers of Topeka (IBEW), Local 304 (also IBEW Topeka, KS), Local 441 Plumbers and Pipefitters, and of course our very own UAW Local 249 Joined by a few of our brothers from Local 31 (GM).

"It's amazing to see so many Locals come out and come together to support the striking workers of Local 218," says Camalee Hefty, member of Local 249's CAP Committee.

"Solidarity is on the rise! The benefits of having unions in America go far beyond the workplace."

The strike's conclusion and the workers' increased wages and time off comes amidst a broader labor reckoning. The contract also comes as President Joe Biden seeks to strengthen the power of labor unions in the country. In April he formed a task force to help

bolster union membership and worker organizing.

"PepsiCo, Which owns Frito-Lay, Has 23 different brands that earn 1 Billion dollars annually" says Gary Thomas, Chair of the education committee. "They hire thousands of minimum wage workers under brands like KFC and Taco Bell and drive down the wages of Americans every day".

"One of the biggest aspects of the strike is not even monetary. Says Shirley Mata, Chair of the CAP committee. It's the ability to spend time with family and not have to work 84 hour work weeks. What's the purpose of going to work for 84 hours a week if you go home to children who don't know you or a spouse that doesn't know who you are anymore because all you do is come home long enough to eat, shower and sleep? I want my kids to understand what we do for them but I also want to make sure they know what an appropriate work/life balance is."

The Frito-Lay strike appeared to be a popular trend on twitter with comments like "I stand with Frito-Lay workers on their strikes. Not buying either brand of products for the time being. Hopefully others join in and push for change!" Other commenters expressed their solidarity in the same manner by also vowing to not buy Pepsi products

or Frito-Lay snacks.

Robert Reich, Professor, American economist, and former secretary of state tweeted "Nothing says break up monopolies like this never-ending list of PepsiCo products to avoid during the Frito-Lay strike".

The company had called the union's claims "grossly exaggerated" and said that Union leadership was "out of touch" with workers' concerns. After being forced to go back to the drawing board to come up with a better offer, the company changed their tune and released a statement contradicting themselves and their previous actions towards their workers stating "We believe our approach to resolve this strike demonstrates how we listen to our employees, and when concerns are raised, they are taken seriously and addressed".

About two-thirds of the 850 workers at the Topeka factory joined the walkout that began July 5th and ended on July 23rd. Congratulations to our brothers and sisters who stood their ground and held the line to receive better working conditions and a well-earned, better pay scale. Thank you to the Group of Local 249 members who drove an hour and a half just to stand in solidarity with our union brothers and sisters of Local 218.