

FIRST LOCAL NEWS

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

February 2022



**KCAP to convert 150
TFTs to full time | p9**

**Local 249's Martin
Luther King Day of
Action | p12**

**Local 249 Celebrates
85th Anniversary | p6**

**The dark art of
political deception | p10**

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

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



Local 249's Civil and Human Rights Committee activists joined Missouri State Senator Barbara Anne Washington and the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. ~ Mu Omega Chapter Monday in a day of service in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr Day by donating a Kansas City Assembly Plant built F-150 truck bed full of baby needs, non-perishable food, and personal hygiene products. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249's Recreation Committee sponsored a well-attended Cornhole Tournament at the union hall December 12. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249's Human and Civil Rights Committee celebrated Martin Luther King Day with a day of action that included a visit to Kansas City's Black Archives of Mid-America in Kansas City. Photo by Don Lehman.



Local 249 standing committees donated gifts, meals and other much needed assistance during the holidays. More than 25 families and over 70 children were touched by this program. Photo by Don Lehman.

First Local News

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

Editor Pat Hayes

Reporters Cecelia Davis, Erica Eckart, Chrissy Kline and Gwen Starkey
Photographer Don Lehman

UAW Local 249

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

Officers of Local 249

President Jason Starr
1st Vice President Tony Renfro
2nd Vice President Tom Carr
Recording Secretary Shirley Mata
Financial Secretary Dana Davidson
Treasurer Chrissy Kline
Trustees Ed Scaggs, Jeremy Fue, Sade Ott
Sergeant at Arms Leon Allen
Guide Gary Thomas
Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher
Bargaining Committee Steve Chorbak, Dean Freed and Don Picard
Skilled Trades Bargaining Committee Member Scott Pyle
Parts Depot Bargaining Chair Brandon Zarda
Nurse's Bargaining Chair Cathy Koogler
Team Solutions Bargaining Chair David Norris
Retiree Representative John Lowe

The Regular Membership Meeting of United Automobile Workers Amalgamated Local Union 249 is held on the third Sunday of each month at 2:00 p.m. in the local union hall, 8040 NE 69 Highway, Pleasant Valley, Mo. The Executive Board Meeting is held at 1:00 p.m. prior to the Regular Membership Meeting.

UAW-Ford Joint Programs

Apprentice Training

Cortez Bradley 816-459-2060

Benefits

Steve Hibbs, Derron Joyner and Jason Hartman 816-454-6333

Employee Involvement

Chad Troncin 816-459-1372
Darroyce Thornton 816-459-1490

Employee Support Services

Kenny Alexander 816-459-1226

Health and Safety

Ed Samborski 816-459-1210 • Terry Tharp 816-459-1407
Ulysses Bales 816-459-1605 • Joe Camper 816-459-5559
Dave Sambol 816-459-1223

Quality

Kelly Loveall and Jeff Wright 816-459-1232

Dealer Rep. Danny Mata

Job Sourcing and Production Standards

Jim Ryan and Todd Wyse 816-459-1466

Helpful Numbers

Quality Hotline 1-866-723-3937

Employee Health Services 816-459-1226

National Employee Service Center 1-800-248-4444

Blue Care 816-395-2700

Blue Cross PPO 1-800-482-5146

Preferred Care Blue PPO 816-395-3193

Child Care Referrals 866-327-7952

UNICARE Life Insurance 1-800-843-8184

UNICARE Medical/Disability Leave Claims 1-877-475-9652

Delta Dental (Active) 844-223-8520

Delta Dental (Retired) 800-524-0149

United Concordia Dental Plan 1-800-937-6432

Ford A,X,& Z Plan 1-800-348-7709

www.fordvehicleprograms.com

UAW-Ford Legal Services 800-482-7700

UAW-Ford TESPHE 1-800-248-4444

Visit Local 249 on the web at www.local249.org

Like Local 249 on Facebook www.facebook.com/local249

Follow us on Twitter @UAWLocal249



The Picket Line

Missouri Supreme Court rules Republican attacks on workers unconstitutional

For years the union movement said Missouri Legislative attacks on public workers are unconstitutional and in 2021 the Courts agreed. In an overwhelming 5-2 decision the Supreme Court upheld the lower Court's ruling that House Bill 1413, known as Paycheck Deception, was unconstitutional and cannot be enacted. HB 1413 created unnecessary regulatory hurdles, like forcing members to opt-in annually to union membership, that existed solely for the purpose of making it difficult to join and operate a public-sector union.

In a second victory for state workers, a Circuit Court ruled a 2018 law restricting public employee bargaining rights unconstitutional and ordered Gov. Parson to resume bargaining with over 13,000 state employees covered by union bargained contracts. The decision was a major win for AFSCME, CWA, and SEIU who have been fighting to force the State to bargain with some of the lowest-paid state employees in the nation. — *Missouri AFL-CIO*

National Labor Relations Board now has pro-labor majority

President Biden has secured workers a Pro-Labor Majority on the NLRB with the nomination and confirmation of Union Attorney Gwynne Wilcox (formerly of SEIU), David Prouty (formerly of SEIU and UNITE HERE) and Board Chair Lauren McFerren. President Biden also took the appropriate step of firing the Boards anti-union General Council and replacing him with worker supporter Jennifer Abruzzo (formerly with CWA). While not a heavily covered story, these actions mean workers and unions will receive a fair shake in conflicts with bosses and corporations. — *Missouri AFL-CIO*

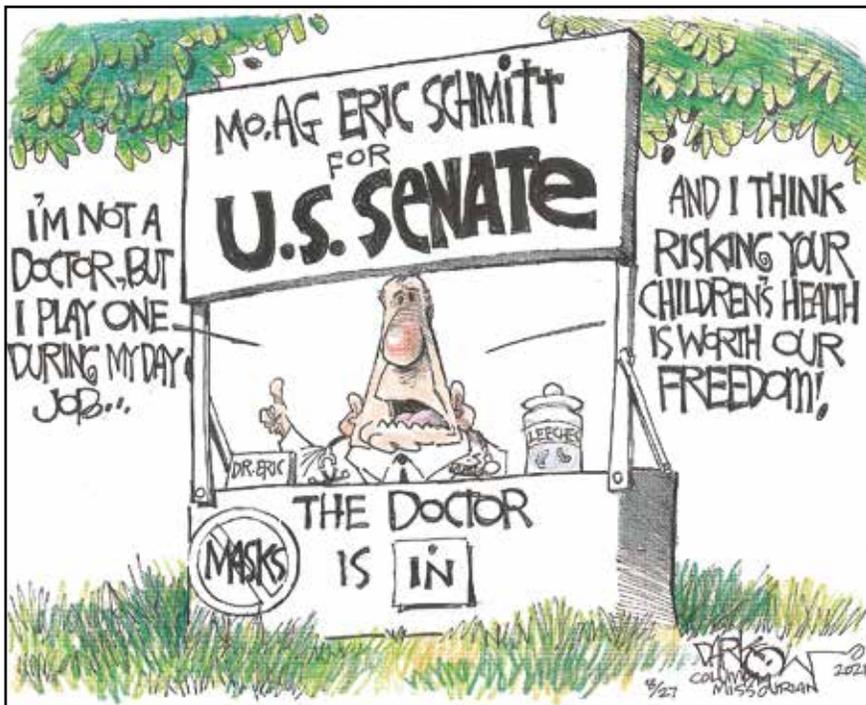
Despite progress voting rights in Missouri and Kansas are under threat

Martin Luther King Jr. spent years before his assassination working to expand access to the ballot box. Today, advocates and lawmakers say they are fighting many of the same fights. Rep. Emanuel Cleaver, a Democrat from Kansas City, recalled a recent conversation with King's eldest son. "He said, 'Mom and Dad would both turn over in their graves if they saw what was going on now,'" Cleaver said. In 2021 alone, Kansas legislators passed laws that limit who can send advanced voting ballot applications to voters, restrict assistance in returning a mail ballot, and impose stricter signature requirements for mail ballots. In Missouri, where early voting is not permitted and absentee voters must provide a reason why they can't vote in person. — *KCUR*

Missouri Republican proposes Texas-style ban on abortion

Rep. Mary Elizabeth Coleman, R-Arnold, who is running for a seat in the state Senate, wants to prohibit the termination of a pregnancy once cardiac activity is detected in an embryo, usually around six weeks and before some women even know they are pregnant.

Her proposal also bypasses state officials who typically enforce laws and deputizes private citizens to sue clinics, doctors and anyone else who facilitates an abortion after the cardiac cutoff. It also would attempt to further limit funding to the state's lone abortion provider, Planned Parenthood, which already has taken steps to assist Missouri women seeking abortions by opening a clinic across the Mississippi River from St. Louis in Illinois. — *St. Louis Post Dispatch*



Voting rights are worker's rights

By Pat Hayes

The true nature of Republican attacks on voting rights are finally becoming clear to anyone who is willing to see. Republicans claim the restrictions they are putting on the right to vote are designed to prevent fraud. Their arguments have never been particularly convincing, but many working people allowed themselves to be fooled because the restrictions put in place so far didn't seem to affect them personally.

If you were so inclined, it was easy to let yourself be convinced that restrictions on voting by other people — Blacks, Hispanics, women or college students — were nothing more than reasonable steps to preserve the integrity of our elections.

That's all changed now in Missouri where Republicans hold all state offices but one and supermajorities in both the House and Senate. Republicans are still smarting from the defeat of their treasured right to work law through a union led citizen initiative. And, high on the agenda when the 2022 session got under way in January were new restrictions petitioning and ballot initiatives. It took a while, but now they're coming after all of us now.

To sell the voter fraud lie, Republicans treated us to lurid tales of illegal immigrants swaying elections. The dead, we were told, were rising out of their graves to cast votes. Voting machine software from Argentina magically turned Republican votes into Democratic.

None of this, of course was true. Most of us knew from the beginning it wasn't true, but some of us — too many of us — went along because it didn't seem to affect us.

Bogus claims of widespread voter fraud, repeated endlessly on Fox News and other right wing outlets, by former President Donald Trump, Rudy Giuliani, Roger Stone, Sydney Powell and the My Pillow guy, Mike Lindell, blew up

in their faces when they were forced to backup their lies in court.

A federal judge has ruled Rudy Giuliani must face the \$1.3 billion defamation suit filed against him by the voting technology company he falsely accused of rigging the 2020 election to hurt his client Donald Trump,

Other suits, by election workers terrorized by Trump supporters, are working their way through the courts.

Fox News, One American News Network and Newsmax are now running like scalded dogs from the false claims they made about the election.

After Smartmatic, an electronic voting technology and services company, sent Fox News filed suit accusing the network of participating in a "disinformation campaign" against it, the network tucked its tail between its legs and aired a statement debunking the very claims its hosts and guests propagated.

The Associated Press spent months reviewing every possible voter fraud case in six battleground states disputed by former President Donald Trump, and they found "fewer than 475 — a number that would have made no difference in the 2020 presidential election."

Oh, and those dead people voting? turns out, the case we know about, Rosemarie Hartle, it turns out that the fraud was committed by Las Vegas businessman Donald Kirk Hartle, a registered Republican.

UAW honors vets with Wreaths across America

By Cecelia Davis

Blistering cold winds swept through the field of honor hill as members of UAW Local 249 stood tall with pride and gratitude while documenting such an honorable event called, "Wreaths across America."

On December 18, the Motorcycle Committee teamed up with our Veteran's Committee to celebrate an annual event to honor the fallen U.S. veterans. The chairpeople of these committees had contacted this organization to be a part of a beautiful wreath laying ceremony which originated in Arlington National Cemetery.

Wreaths across America was founded by Morrill Worcester and his wife Karen. Worcester owned a wreath company and on year they found themselves with a surplus of wreaths nearing the end of the holidays. Remembering back to a time he won a trip to our nation's capital as a young boy, the Arlington National Cemetery made a permanent impression on his young heart that he has carried with him as a successful adult. He realized that now as an adult, he had an opportunity to not only prevent waste in his business but to fulfill that childhood memory by honoring our country's veterans.

As plans were set, other organizations and individuals caught wind of such a righteous act, and they too were eager to be involved. This small admirable act for our fallen veterans went on quietly for many years until a beautiful picture of the perfectly shaped circular evergreen wreaths, with a crisp red bow – representing great

sacrifice – was lightly dusted with the fresh December snow, placed perfectly above one of the many headstones of our beloved veterans resting spot and become an internet sensation around the US. Not only does the wreath look beautiful, but each balsam bouquet wreath also symbolizes 10 special qualities that our veterans embody. First quality is their belief in a greater good, their love for each other, their strength, work ethic, and character.

Their honesty and integrity, their humility, selflessness, and modesty. Their ambitions and aspirations, their optimism for America, their concern for the future, their pride in their duties and lastly their hopes and dreams that didn't always come true but left them with no regrets. A lot of these qualities can be found not only in the veterans but within our very own Local 249 union members that we call family. The wreaths were specially placed on each headstone by a presenter who had served or is currently active, who then states the fallen soldier's name, gives a moment of silence, and then salutes the fellow service member. Wreath across America's main mission is to remember and honor our veterans and to teach the next generation to do the same.

"Wreaths across America is a display of love and respect every Decem-



Jay Bosler, left, and Aaron Followwill joined members of Local 249's Veterans and Motorcycle committees to honor veterans Dec. 18 by placing wreaths a local veteran's cemeteries.

ber," said Joshua Curtis, the chairperson for the Motorcycle committee. "Each December on National Wreaths Across America Day, our mission to Remember, Honor and Teach is carried out by coordinating wreath-laying ceremonies at Arlington National Cemetery, as well as at more than 2,500 additional locations in all 50 U.S. states, at sea and

abroad. I feel honored and humbled all at once. It's humbling to know these soldiers helped fight for the freedoms we have! It's also an honor to know we're showing respect and placing a wreath on their graves as well. Seeing many standing committees, the last few years show the community and others that their neighbors, friends, and others take pride in giving back to the community and their peers that came before them."

Although we have Memorial Day and Veterans Day to remember our fallen soldiers, we shall never forget such noble acts that they have come to sacrifice for our country all year long. No weather can stop such an incredible ceremony because our veterans never stopped for us.

"December 17, 2022, will be the next Wreaths across America, so please come out and stand with us and honor those on this special day. Extremely family friendly and humbling for all," added Joshua. If you would like to be included in this event that our union has been a part of for 5 years now, let a standing committee member know and join us next year!

"Remember our fallen U.S. veterans. Honor those who serve. Teach your children the value of freedom."

An advertisement for the Local 249 online store. It features five t-shirts: a black one with a deer and 'LOCAL 249', a dark blue one with 'SKILLED TRADE UAW', a green one with an American flag, a blue one with 'We the people in order to form a more perfect Union', and a black one with 'KCAD'. A QR code is in the top right, and the UAW logo is in the bottom right. The text at the bottom reads 'Local 249 online store https://uaw249.itemorder.com/shop/sale/'.



A Proud History of Firsts

Local 249 Celebrates 85th Anniversary

By Pat Hayes

Eighty-five years ago, on January 15, 1937, Local 249 became the first Ford local to be chartered by the UAW International. Winning a charter from the International wasn't easy. Company spies and goons from the Service Department, under orders from Henry Ford, were on the lookout for union activity. The penalty for workers who were caught talking union ranged from being fired on the spot to a savage beating.

At that time, the UAW was fresh off massive strikes at General Motors and Chrysler that brought union contracts to workers in the auto industry for the first time. Even so, the founders of Local 249 and union leaders at the International in Detroit knew that Ford would be much tougher, and more violent, to organize.

Everyone who signed a union card at the Ford Motor Kansas City Assembly Plant in January 1937, then located at 1025 Winchester Ave. along the west bank of the Blue River in the Sheffield District, understood they were making a long-term commitment that came with considerable risk.

Being fired for union activity in the depths of the Great Depression when one quarter of America's workforce was idle, and more than 15 million Americans were jobless and desperate was no small thing. Still, the appalling working conditions inside the plant seemed to many to be worth the risk.

Workers at the Winchester Ave. plant often worked 18 hours to earn 8 hours pay when breakdowns stopped production and they were forced to clock out and wait on benches outside the plant until the maintenance workers got the line running again. No matter what, the daily production goal set by Ford had to be made.

Bathroom breaks were not allowed. Often, workers wet their coveralls when they couldn't last until lunch or the end of the shift. But, as Gene Minshall, one of the founders of Local 249 recalled, no one much noticed because everyone's coveralls were soaked with sweat from the

harsh nature of the work.

Local 249's early organizers took elaborate precautions to avoid detection as they signed up new members, collected dues and elected stewards to represent each department in the plant. Even so, company officials soon developed a list of union members and laid plans to fire them all at the end of the shift on April 2, 1937.

As the men lined up to clock out that afternoon, Ford Service Dept. goons and managers began to pull union men out of line and fire them on the spot. They used the pretext that there was a cut in production, but Local 249 leaders understood what was up. They immediately pulled the fuses to the motors powering the assembly lines stopping production. They declared a sit-down strike, welded the gates to the plant shut and organized the strikers into committees, including a fire watch to prevent sabotage.

"Company officials were so flustered over our quick action," recalled Minshall, "they didn't know what really happened. They had never seen all their production lines shut down all at one time."

The sit-down strike – the first in Ford history – was on.

Henry Ford settled the strike and got the plant back into production, but he refused sign a written contract. While the agreement was only verbal in nature it was still a big victory for Local 249. All the union men got their jobs back. Everyone got a raise. An informal grievance procedure was established and a ventilation system installed.

Henry Ford harbored an impla-

cable hatred for unions. He no sooner made the agreement with Local 249 than he began laying plans to break it. During the annual summer shutdown to retool the plant for the next model year, Ford fortified the plant. He instructed local company officials to create a company union – the Blue Card Union – and when workers came back after the shutdown they were forced to renounce membership in the UAW and join the Blue Card Union.

More than half the workforce stayed loyal to the UAW and were locked out – another first for Local 249 – initiating a bitter strike, mass arrests and violent street battles. By December 1937, collusion between Ford, Kansas City officials and police convinced Local 249 leaders that the strike could not be won on the picket line alone. In another first for Local 249 they filed suit with the National Labor Relations Board over Ford's many violations of the National Labor Relations Act, which guaranteed the right to organize, negotiate contracts and strike. The law also banned company unions like the Blue Card Union.

The strike lasted three years and nine months. The NLRB hearings lasted 18 months. In the end, the board ordered Ford to reinstate 926 Local 249 members with back pay. After a strike at the Rouge Plant in Dearborn, Henry Ford was finally forced to sign his first union contract with the UAW on June 20, 1941.

While Local 249 has a history of firsts of which all members can be proud, our local continues to write a living history inspired by the courage of our founders.

Every day, we are at work to successfully defend the rights of our own members on the job. Our bargaining committee fights to move temporary workers to full time. To fix leap frog is-

ues for in progression members. We take on both the company and the state of Missouri to ensure our members get the unemployment benefits they're entitled to. We work to enforce safety on the job and the quality of the products we build. We were at the forefront of defending our fellow UAW members on the picket line at General Motors and John Deere.

The first to condemn corruption by officials in the leadership of the UAW International and Region 5, we are at the forefront of building a revitalized UAW that can win better contracts for our members and fight effectively to organize autoworkers everywhere – the key to winning higher wages and expanding benefits.

Our local also plays a leading role in defending worker rights. Local 249 members played a major role in defeating right to work in Missouri. We are building a stronger union movement – one that can take on successfully corporations, their politicians and the media – as leaders in the fight to organize the unorganized, tenants and low-wage workers.

The successful campaigns defend tenant rights and to raise the minimum wage in Kansas City and St. Louis, in which Local 249 members played a leading role, proves this is a winning strategy.

As leaders of the fight for social justice, our members are active in the fight to defend and extend voting rights in Missouri, Kansas and the nation as a whole.

We know it's a tall order, we know it won't come without commitment, hard work and an element of risk, but many Local 249 members believe our local isn't finished writing firsts into our history. We know that together we are strong and as long as we are together, the best is yet to come.

To honor King's legacy, defend voting rights

By Erica Eckart

With voting rights under attack in Missouri, Kansas and across the nation and right-wing politicians Tweeting tributes to Dr. King even as they vote to destroy his legacy and prevent teaching the history of the civil rights movement in our schools, now is the right time to truly honor all the towering figures in the fight for justice by enlisting in the movement to defend what has been won and truly extend freedom and equality to all.

It is said that those who don't know history are condemned to repeat it. That is why the opponents of democracy want to hide the history of the struggles for equal rights in this country.

What most people don't know is that the UAW led by President Walter Reuther, embraced the civil rights movement including key historical moments such as the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955. Reuther also marched beside Dr. Martin Luther King as he sought to make America a more just nation.

In 1963 the UAW gave Dr. King office space in its headquarters at the solidarity house in Detroit, this is where Dr. King penned his famous "I Have a Dream" speech.

Dr. King had a stalwart ally in Reuther who gave critical backing to the 1963 March on Washington for jobs and freedom, and was a huge supporter of King's civil rights tactics.

Reuther and the UAW walked proudly beside King and provided financial support including a time when a group of activists were arrested and the judge set an unreasonably high bail, the UAW posted bail for everyone and went on to continue the fight.

After King's assassination, Reuther and the UAW marched with Coretta Scott King in Memphis on April 8th, in support of the peaceful resolution of the city sanitation strike, and donated \$50,000, the largest check from any outside source.

In 1970, when Reuther and his wife were killed in a plane crash, Coretta eulogized Reuther saying "he was there in person when the storm clouds were thick".

Thanks to the efforts of those who fought diligently throughout the civil rights movement, President Johnson signed the voting rights act of 1965 into law.

Before then, African Americans faced voter suppression tactics such as poll taxes, literacy tests and other bureaucratic restrictions to deny them their right to vote.

Fast forward to today...

Today they are taking a subtle, but effective approach to voter suppression by redistricting and gerry-

mandering.

Gerrymandering is when a political group tries to change a voting district to create a result that helps them or hurts the group that is against them.

One of the people still in the fight against voter suppression is former house of representatives, Stacey Abrams.

Abrams is the first African American female Democratic nominee for Georgia's governorship. For Abrams, voting access is not about Democrats and Republicans, it's about inclusiveness.

"The process of voting should be non-partisan" said Abrams, "and it should be a patriotic belief that every eligible American citizen should have unimpeded access to the right to vote".

As you can see, the fight for civil

rights continues.

Politics have shared in the history of both the civil rights and Labor movements and continues to effect both today.

Walter Reuther once said that "there's a direct relationship between the ballot box and the bread box, and what the Union fights for at the bargaining table can be taken away in the legislative halls". That is why voting matters and that is why how you vote matters.

He spoke those words at the UAW convention in 1970. Today in 2022 we are still in the fight trying to protect labor and civil rights. Dr. King said, "We need leaders not in love with money,

but in love with Justice. Not in love with publicity but in love with humanity".

It is our RIGHT to vote, it is our RIGHT to be treated fairly in the workplace, it is our RIGHT to not be discriminated against based on the color of our skin yet we are still being politicized to the point where our fight is on going.

Hopefully the next time you go to vote, you will remember that as a UAW member this fight belongs to you as well. We have a duty to continue on the legacy.

"There is no power in the world that can stop the forward march of free men and women when they are joined in the solidarity. Of human brotherhood" -Walter Reuther



Voters should pick politicians, not the other way around

By State Sen. Lauren Arthur

Every ten years, following the federal census, legislative maps must be redrawn to reflect changes and movement in population to ensure equal representation. Typically, states get this population data well in advance of the next election to prepare the legislative maps. However, due to COVID-19, census data took longer to collect, process, and distribute to the states.

Despite approving a non-partisan redistricting plan in the 2018 elections, Missouri voters approved GOP-passed changes to the process in 2020. The 2018 plan, known as "Clean Missouri," would have had a non-partisan state demographer draw legislative districts for the General Assembly, with an emphasis on electoral competitiveness.

The 2020 plan returned the process to bipartisan citizen commissions. For state legislative maps, the House redistricting commission made some progress, but the Senate redistricting commission failed to find agreement. A panel of judges will take over the

process to finalize state legislative lines.

The task of redrawing congressional districts falls to the General Assembly. Missouri currently has a congressional delegation of six Republicans and two Democrats.

Despite complete control of the redistricting process, Republicans are divided over how to draw the maps, with competing concerns about the number of Republicans elected, the threat of court challenges, and the long-term political risks. Some Republicans want to gerrymander lines so that 7 Republicans and 1 Democrat represent the state, while others want to maintain the status quo.

To allow candidates enough time to file for the August 2nd primary, a supermajority vote in both chambers must approve the maps. Due to resignations and a death in the House GOP caucus, Republicans no longer have the votes in the House to pass maps that would heavily favor their party.

A special session would remove this barrier, but Governor Parson has refused to call for a special session. Additionally, he has not requested special elections to fill the vacancies in the House. Legislation in the House creating the congressional districts passed out of committee, with lengthy and intense debate expected next week.

While this all has enormous implications on control of the U.S. House of Representatives, the focus should remain on fair representation for Missourians. I support reforming our redistricting process to ensure people pick their politicians, not the other way around.



Members of Local 249's Womens Committee Maribel Cortez, front row, Sydne Donaldson, Erica Eckart, Robin Taylor, Kim Hicks, Dana Martin and Hillary Johnson. Middle row, Cecelia S. Davis, Santa-Don Picard and Cecelia Davis Back row left to right-Danielle Evans, Austin McFarland, Lynn Brown, Lena Wiley, Nicole D'Andrea, Porsche Thomas, Dominique Carter, Melody DeCoudres, Lamaesia Harris, Casey Martin, Alissa Foit and Stephanie Henderson put together another great Breakfast with Santa in December. Photo by Don Lehman.

Womens Committee hosts Breakfast with Santa

By Cecelia Davis

Holly, jolly, billows of fun. The Women's Committee threw a whimsical Christmas wonderland at this year's annual Breakfast with Santa. The sweet smell of maple syrup smothered over perfectly round fluffy pancakes, accompanied with a side of sausage and bacon, helped guide the way to the direction of fun. Not one mouth wasn't watering as soon as they walked through the doors.

The downstairs of the union hall was bustling with children's laughter and Christmas melodies as it was a nice temporarily transformed from the yeahs and nays of normal union business.

For the last few years, the Women's Committee had the honor of throwing this event to gather Local 249 union families in celebrating a joyous time of the year. Not only did they have the most delicious breakfast, but they had several arts and crafts for the kids to do after they enjoyed their meal.

Some of the many things to do were to write a letter to Santa, create reindeer food to help provide a snack for Santa's reindeers on Christmas Eve, or create your own ornament with glitter pens and glitter glue to later put on your Christmas tree at home. There was another station where the

child could create an ornament bulb where they can track how tall they were this year to reminisce on later in their life.

While the children were off creating masterpieces, the adults had the opportunity to divert their attention to a friendly auction that had multiple items to bid on. For instance, a beautiful UAW quilt was one of the many items that was provided. It had all the active union committee's signature logos, perfectly stitched within it. There was an original painting created by one of the union members, and even a spa day basket to name a few.

To add some fun within the twelve standing committees, there was some friendly competition to see who could make the most creative gingerbread house. Oh, how the imagination and creative brilliance came out. Like the true manufacturers that we are. Such

determination to identify and promote each committee was not mistaken as each gingerbread house had a unique identification to their home. As the spectators walked by, they were each given a ticket to vote for which gingerbread house that fascinated them the most. At the end of the event the Human and Civil Rights committee was the ultimate winner. Their gingerbread house was a gingerbread village. It even had its own Chiefs football gingerbread stadium. Such an impeccable job.

Finally, and most important, the breakfast wouldn't be complete if we didn't invite the big man in the red suit. Santa Claus. Families lined up as their children, with eyes as big as buttons, glimmered at Santa as they waited patiently in line to let Santa know that they have been a good child all year. Beautiful pictures with Santa and his elf were taken to document the magical moment.

"The Women's Committee hosts breakfast with Santa, to offer an opportunity to bring our membership's families together for the holidays," said Nicole D'Andrea, who is a current member on the Womens Committee.

"Although set up and prep can sometimes be stressful and overwhelming, the result is so heartwarming. To me, it adds a little extra Christmas magic to my holiday. I love seeing my union families together. It's an event that my son and I look forward to every year. This year was an absolute success, and we plan on the event getting bigger and better every year. The more relationships we can create with our membership and their families the better."

"I love how the Women Committee pulled together as a team," added Lynn Brown who is also on the Women's Committee, "I thought overall it was an exciting and successful experience." Breakfast with Santa was a great turnout.

It successfully invited everyone that enjoys the warm embrace of the holiday spirit. If you would like to volunteer for the next Breakfast with Santa, feel free to contact Robin Taylor, who is the Women's Committee chair or stop by the union hall for more details. This gathering was one to remember and we are excited to continue this genuine event next year.

KCAP to convert 150 TFTs to full time

By Jim Fisher

On Thursday January 27, it was officially announced that the Kansas City Assembly Plant would start the immediate conversion of an additional 150 TFT members to Full Time In-Progression status. All these converted members were done ahead of the National Contractual Language. Some of these members hired into KCAP as a temporary worker in the middle of June of 2021. This means they only held temporary status for about seven months. Over the past 13 months Local 249 has converted 784 TFT members to Full Time In-Progression status, and most of these conversions have been done ahead of their contractual obligation date.

I would like to thank UAW Vice President Chuck Browning and his staff for their full support while the local has worked hard to protect our TFT members. These early conversions have led to those members receiving instant pay raises, improved health care, and additional protection in the disciplinary process thanks to their early conversions.

The success of these conversions has truly had an immediate impact on these members and their families. The leadership team of Local 249 would like to congratulate these members for their hard work and dedication.

The plant production schedules remain uncertain due to the supply chain issues. These issues have been ongoing over the last several months and it appears they will remain hard to predict over the next several months. The semiconductor chip shortage has had a massive impact not, just in our plant, but the entire automotive industry.

The latest report from the U.S. Department of Commerce suggests that microchips will continue to affect the

automotive industry for at least 6 more months. At KCAP we remain fortunate that both the Transit Van and F-150's remain in high demand, and our plant remains a priority for Ford's production plans. Obviously, these supply issues will have impact on our production schedules, and we will get information out as fast as possible if schedule changes do occur.

During the holiday season our region, community, and plant were hit very hard by a greatly increased amount of coronavirus cases. This had a direct impact on our membership. Several members were placed out of the plant while recovering from the virus, and unfortunately our local lost some members due to the virus. As a local we are heartbroken by this news. We ask that all our members keep those affected in their thoughts and prayers.

During the week of January 10, our Local 249 Chaplaincy Committee was placed inside the plant to offer support to our members. Coronavirus has impacted all of us differently and continues to be part of our members



Local 249 Bargaining Chair Jim Fisher reported on changes to the production schedule at KCAP at the January membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

and community. I want to thank the Chaplaincy Committee for their professionalism in working with our members and providing guidance. Our ESSP Representative is still offering service for members wishing additional avenues for counseling. The ESSP Office can be reached at (816) 459-1226.

A couple of positive notes for our members, in 2021 the F-150 achieved the "Best Selling Truck" for the 45th straight year and the "Best Selling vehicle in America" for the 40th year in a row. Transit has been the best-selling

van since first introduced in 2015. The E-Transit will hit the market this year. Ford expects industry sales of full size all electric truck and vans in the commercial and government segments to be over 300,000 by 2030. Ford was the best-selling auto maker in the fourth quarter of 2021, and Ford began 2022 with 247,000 vehicles in stock, and the best position in the auto industry. As you can see things remain very bright for our future at KCAP. Let's all make sure we keep our plant heading in the right direction.

2022 Charlie Suffridge Scholarship Contest

Registration Deadline Friday, March 11 at 5:00 pm

First Prize \$5,000 • Second Prize \$2,500 • Third Prize \$1,500 • Fourth Prize \$1,000

Contestant must:

Be a junior or senior in high school during the 2020 – 2021 school year.

Be planning to attend a college, university or trade school the following school year after graduation.

Be a dependent of a member in good standing of Local Union 249.

NOT be a winner of last year's contest.

Contestant must turn in essay no later than the announced deadline.

Essay Topics

How were labor unions significant during the civil rights movement?

How has the pandemic highlighted the need for robust labor unions in sectors, once thought of as low skill, now deemed essential?

A code number will be assigned and a copy of registration sheet will be returned to you.

Registration forms will be available at the Union Hall Monday through Friday 8:00 am until 5:00 pm.

The dark art of political deception

By Jason Starr

Magicians achieve illusions through practiced deception, according to Penn and Teller. The comedy magic duo has been performing before large audiences since the 70s, so they know something about the art of illusion. Magic, they say, is a form of acting in which the artist presents one reality to the audience while hiding another reality—actions that only the magician is aware of.

While magicians practice deception to entertain us, some politicians employ the darker arts of magic to distract us while they push an agenda that hurts the working class.

In magic, a shiny object, such as a coin, is often displayed to the audience catching everyone's attention to distract from what the other hand is doing.

In politics, many shiny objects have distracted the attention of far too many in the working class in recent years. Each election cycle there seems to be a new one. Where right-wing politicians once provoked rage — and harvested votes — over Black Americans seeking the right to vote or women asking for the right to control their own bodies, we now see battles over masking and vaccines to prevent the spread of coronavirus or Critical Race Theory that is not even taught in any K-12 school in the nation.

Instead, let's ask why these politicians use the techniques of magic to present one — false — reality while concealing another.

The main objective is that "politicians want to get reelected, and anger is a powerful tool that they can use to make that happen," according to a new study by Carey Stapleton at Colorado University in Boulder and Ryan

Dawkins at the U.S. Air Force Academy.

But a deeper, and much darker, reason is that if voters knew the real policies these politicians intend to implement or whose interests they were working for, they could never be elected.

Here in Missouri, we are witnessing a particularly dangerous and damaging example of this sort of deception.

Our Attorney General, Eric Schmitt, has filed a suit against 45 public school districts across the state, including 12 in the Kansas City area, over policies that require masking to prevent the spread of coronavirus.

These suits come as at least 62 school districts have been forced to close due to the number of teachers, students and support staff who are ill or exposed to coronavirus.

Schmitt, whose children hypocritically attend private schools with strict masking and vaccine policies, has not filed suit against any private or charter schools to date.

Schmitt's lawsuits have been widely condemned as an abuse of power. They are hurting families — like ours — that must work to pay for housing and buy groceries while scrambling for childcare when schools close because common sense masking policies



Local 249 President Jason Starr took note of the 85th Anniversary of Local 249 at the January membership meeting. Photo by Don Lehman.

implemented by locally elected school boards aren't followed.

School districts are forced to defend these frivolous lawsuits diverting money that should rightfully go to providing quality education and programs to our children.

This comes at a time when Missouri ranks low when it comes to paying teachers, and lags far behind national averages. Teachers in Missouri make on average \$50,817, which ranks 45th in the country for teacher pay, according to 2019-2020 data from the National Education Association.

An audit by Missouri Auditor Nicole Galloway reveals Missouri provided about 32% of state aid to K-12 public schools in 2020 — ranking Missouri 49th in the nation. That means mainly local sources, like property taxes, are picking up the rest of the tab — or cutting some educational programs.

"Next fall, we aren't going to have any teachers," warns Jessica Piper, a teacher, rural farmer and public-school advocate who is the Democratic candidate for Missouri House District 1.

Schmitt and others distract us with talk of freedom and liberty to disguise the fact that they are working day and night to push their real agenda to privatize public schools. They attack teachers and teacher unions with phony talk of Critical Race Theory. Why? Because they hope we are stupid enough to fall for their tactics as they work to privatize our collective public institutions for the gain of their corporate masters.

Missouri House Candidate Jessica Piper is particularly concerned that the defunding of public schools — which is the point of all the attacks on Critical Race Theory — will hurt rural districts hardest because no one is placing a private or charter school in rural areas. Once rural schools close, teachers leave to find jobs and the small-town economy collapses. Next, the grocery stores and gas stations board their windows and people move away.

The only question this time is if we'll wake up to the stale old trick of outrage politics and see through the deception in time to save our schools and other public programs that we value in our communities.



Members of Local 249's Chaplaincy Committee, ESSP representatives and counselors were available in the cafeteria in January to help members in need of support. COVID has impacted all of us differently and continues to be a part of the lives of our families and our community.

BENEFITS NEWS

Open Enrollment for Optional Life Insurance and Optional Long Term Disability, April 18 - May 28, 2022

Open enrollment for Optional Life Insurance and Optional Long-Term Disability will be offered simultaneously from April 18th through May 28th, 2022.

Reproductive rights under attack in Missouri

By State Rep. Patty Lewis

For many women, the decision of when and if to become a parent is one of the biggest choices they make. There is no decision more personal. As a nurse and a woman, I believe health care decisions are personal, private decisions and should be left up to the individual and their health care provider. The ability to make that choice empowers families and individuals to have greater control over their life.

A woman and her family must make the decision that is right for them, and as such, abortion and reproductive freedom is a protected right under the United States Constitution. While some want to attack this right, all working people should fight to protect a woman's ability to make that choice for themselves and their families.

Safe, accessible abortion is an important option to have available if a woman or a family decides not to have a child once a woman has become pregnant. Women can choose to have abortions for a number of reasons: evidence of severe birth defects, an inability to properly care for another child (roughly 60 percent of women who have abortions are already mothers), economic hardship, being too young to be a parent, the list goes on.

One reason a woman or a family may not want to have a child is because they want to focus on their career first. As UAW members know firsthand, establishing yourself in a new trade or field and raising a new child are two tasks that require a substantial deal of time and effort. Providing access to abortion allows workers, especially women, the opportunity to direct their efforts to what they believe is the best course of action for them at the time.

Also, just because the option of abortion exists does not mean that option needs to be taken. Plenty of women and families choose to have children when they weigh the pros and cons of doing so at that particular moment in their lives. And more power to them! The important thing is that choice remains theirs to make.

Unfortunately, some politicians believe they should have the final say on what a woman does with her body. For decades, many on the far-right have demonized and stigmatized women who seek abortions, attacked providers who perform this vital, legal health care service and criticized elected officials who support a woman's constitutional right to have an abortion.

In 2019, these anti-abortion, anti-choice lawmakers in Missouri passed and signed into law one of the most dangerous bans on abortion in the nation at that time, House Bill 126 (HB

126). This draconian bill ticked every box in the anti-abortion playbook: it banned abortion before most people know they are pregnant, imprisoned doctors if they provided abortion services, and offered no exceptions for survivors of rape or incest. The small silver lining is that this unconstitutional bill has not yet truly gone into effect. It currently remains in the courts to determine its legality.

As we approach the upcoming legislative session, extremists in the Missouri legislature are at it again and have already pledged to introduce a bill based on Texas' controversial Senate Bill 8, which passed earlier this year. Texas' SB 8 bans abortion at 6 weeks of pregnancy and creates a legal right for "abortion bounty hunters" to sue anyone who "aids or abets" someone in accessing an abortion in violation of the law. This part of the law incentivizes private citizens to report any person they believe helped someone access abortion care with a \$10,000 bounty.

To put it plainly, Missouri Republicans want to use your tax dollars to give money to people who hunt down women, doctors, and their supporters for doing something they have every right to do under the U.S. Constitution. They are laser-focused and determined to have the ultimate say over a woman's decision that affects every part of her life and impacts her family, her career, and her own personal well-being.

Workers, especially union workers, should value a pro-choice approach



State Rep. Patty Lewis believes workers, especially union workers, value reproductive rights because it empowers the individual worker, and gives them a greater say in their own life.

to reproductive rights because that approach empowers the individual worker, and gives them a greater say in their own life than the alternative. If we really value improving the lives of those around us and giving individuals a greater say over their own future, we

ought to value access to abortion.

Representative Patty Lewis, a Democrat, represents Jackson County (District 25) in the Missouri House of Representatives. She was elected to her first two-year term in November 2020.

2022 Local 249 Fishing Calendar

Bass Tournament	March 20	Stockton Lake	Stockton Park RB Boat Ramp	7am - 3pm
Bass Tournament	June 5	Truman Lake	Long Shoal COE Ramp	5:30am - 2 pm
13th Annual Kendal Bailey Crappie	June 19	Truman Lake	Weigh in at Long Shoal Ramp	6am - 3pm
8th Annual Wayne Pace Memorial	July 24	Smithville Lake	Crows Creek	5:45am - 2 pm
Bass Tournament	Sept 25	Lake of the Ozarks	Drake Harbor	7am - 3pm
Bass Fall Brawl	October 2	Smithville Lake	Crows Creek	7am-2pm



Sade Ott, Cecelia S. Davis, Shirley Mata, Heather Vogan, Erica Eckart, Naoyanna Andrews, Dylan Thomas, Austin McFarland, Gary Thomas, Constance Anderson, Vanessa Clay and Maurice Ramsey, joined Missouri State Senator Barbara Anne Washington and the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. ~ Mu Omega Chapter Monday in a day of service in honor of Martin Luther King, Jr Day by donating a Kansas City Assembly Plant built F-150 truck bed full of baby needs, non-perishable food, and personal hygiene products.. Photo by Don Lehman.

Local 249's Martin Luther King Day of Action

By Cecelia Davis and Erica Eckart

Martin Luther King Day is one of many important holidays around America. It reflects on a man that not only made change in the segregation of whites and blacks but created a continuous movement that inspires many of us today. Every year, Local 249's Civil and Human Rights committee puts on a Martin Luther King Day celebration. This year was intended to be just as Epic with a special guest speaker Mayor Quinton Lucas. Unfortunately, we were unable to host the event due to circumstances related to Covid.

On January 17, the Civil and Human Rights Committee came up with the idea of having a Martin Luther King Day of Action. The committee had the opportunity to take a fascinating tour at the Kansas City Black History Museum located in the historic 18th and Vine district. It was the perfect day to learn about African American history and culture within our community.

There are so many Local 249 Kansas City natives that have families that help shape not only the union but also this beautiful city. The Kansas City Black History building holds documentation of amazing deeds, art, and history that many blacks have succeeded in doing.

After learning these great facts about our Kansas City black heritage, the Civil and Human Rights Committee decided that this year, we would partner up with Senator Barbera Ann Washington and her sorority sisters to

collect and deliver food and necessities to the community in honor of Martin Luther King. As per usual, Local 249 came through again. We were able to load up one of our Ford tough F-150 trucks and checked off every item that they requested on their list.

"Our local donated over \$1000 worth of toiletries, personal hygiene products, baby wipes, diapers, and non-perishable food items," said Sade Ott, chairperson of the Civil and Human Rights Committee.

"It's always a great feeling to give back to our community. Knowing that we can help provide to those that need it the most, is one of the most rewarding feelings," she said. Especially during a pandemic, when many families that have never imagined themselves in the position to need anything from anyone, can get some relief from events like this. The organizations in which our donations were collected for, were the

Avenue of Life and Total Man CDC. Both organizations are a huge asset to our communities, and both have accomplished so much for the advancement of those communities as well."

The members of the committee created their own assembly line to remove the goods from the truck in a timely manner symbolizing the strong power of solidarity through which we achieve from being members of Local 249.

"These are the hardest working givers I know..." tweeted Senator Barbara, "Thank you UAW Local 249 for always stepping up, stepping out & giving back. You are amazing & what a wonderful surprise."

Senator Washington and Local 249 have a great history of charity work partnerships. We are on the same page when it comes to giving back to our communities. We've teamed up for turkey drives, donation events and many other community action programs so in the future.

Senator Washington belongs to the Beta Omega chapter of the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority here in Kansas City. For over 100 years, they have remained true to the sororities mission of "service to all mankind." Just what our union strives to do daily. The sorority

was established at Howard university in 1908. Making the AKA's the oldest and largest African American sorority with 150,000 members and more than 900 chapters.

Just like the AKAs our union is an ever-growing family that continues to make history with the members and within our communities.

"I think the most impactful part of the event was not only being able to honor Dr. King's legacy but being able to do that with such a diverse group of individuals. As a member of this local, we get members from different backgrounds and cultures, and I really think that makes a difference when they see us giving back to our communities. To see a mosaic group of humans come together for a common cause is heart-warming within itself," said Ott.

As the day ended, they were able to come together and accomplish so much, not concerned about the color of our skin but how to embrace our differences and provide great quality the Local 249 way. If you find yourself wanting to learn more about what the Civil and Human Rights Committee does and would like to do events like this one, please contact the union hall or reach out to one of our standing committees directly.