

SOLIDARITY

Safest bet on The Strip

Local 3555 wins its first contract
and looks to help other Las Vegas
gaming workers



THE MAGAZINE FOR UAW MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES

Unions and the great outdoors go together

Join Union Sportsmen's Alliance and get in on the action

UAW active and retired members are the same as other Americans when it comes to enjoying the outdoors. We hunt and fish, go hiking, or simply enjoy the beauty that nature has provided. We want these opportunities preserved for future generations. It's especially important in states such as Michigan where there are so many outstanding outdoor opportunities – and an economy that in part depends on the dollars that these activities produce.

That's why the UAW recently joined with the AFL-CIO and 11 affiliate unions as a charter union of the Union Sportsmen's Alliance (USA). It's the only union-dedicated conservation

organization working to preserve our nation's outdoor heritage for future generations. All active and retired UAW members are invited to <http://unionsportsmen.org/take-action/join/> and sign up to receive a no-cost USA membership. You'll get access to USA's online magazine, national promotions and giveaways, as well as deals and discounts on many outdoor-related items and activities. Those who join can also apply for the hunting or fishing trip of a lifetime and appear on the USA's award-winning outdoor TV series, "Brotherhood Outdoors." UAW Local 838 member Aaron Heying

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in Iowa was recently chosen for a New Mexico bear hunt, which will air on Sportsman Channel in early 2016.

Members who join will also receive the satisfaction of knowing you can combine your passion for coming together to solve common problems, whether it's in the workplace or in the great outdoors. We're proud to support an organization that helps the hardworking men and women of the UAW enjoy the activities you are passionate about, while gaining an additional avenue to put your skills to work for conservation. We've already partnered with USA on a number of projects, including in Illinois, where UAW Local 145 members are building kiosks and pouring a grill pad at Starved Rock State Park as part



Rick Gripp, left, Jerry Hoegler, Jim Henry, Zach Roberts and Dan Kandlbinder represented UAW Local 31 at the USA's 2014 Kansas City Shoot.

of the USA's Work Boots on the Ground program.

Even though our union has a heavy presence in manufacturing, UAW President Walter Reuther believed outdoor activities and conservation were of great importance to our members. He was "green" long before it was popular. In 1965, he spoke to a conference of more than 1,000 union members from the United States and Canada, sportsmen, environmental groups, and civic associations about the importance and future of the environment. Reuther believed President Lyndon Johnson's vision of a "Great Society" would be incomplete without a clean and healthful environment. Two years later, the UAW International Executive Board created the Department of Conservation and Resource Development. Also in 1967, the UAW had purchased 1,000 heavily wooded acres along the shores of Black Lake in Onaway, Michigan. Reuther wanted this new education center to bring the outdoors in and let the landscape dictate its footprint on its environment. Reuther, a skilled craftsman and tool and die maker by trade, wanted the center to be a lesson on how to build without destroying nature. Three years later, the UAW would provide critical financial support for the first Earth Day celebration, just two weeks before Walter Reuther's tragic death.

Walter Reuther was all about building coalitions with diverse groups to solve common problems. It was his vision to include conservation and the great outdoors among the issues UAW members need to be concerned about. We're proud to continue that tradition and invite all UAW active and retired members to do the same by joining the Union Sportsmen's Alliance. See the information on pages 20-21 and find out how you can become a part of what this exceptional group is doing for those who love the outdoors and conserving our nation's rich natural resources and traditions.



Dennis P. Williams



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Cover photos by Vince Piscopo

Top photo by Denn Pietro



Why telling our STORY MATTERS

PRO-Member started eighteen months ago, and since then active and retired members from coast to coast have told their stories about the power of their union through videos and testimonials.

In its simplest form, PRO-Member is about telling the story of our union experience through the voices of members. Many have shared on video their “aha” moments of when they first understood what being in a union is all about. For some it happened as a child walking the picket line with a parent. Others got it when they felt collective action fighting back against the bitter taste of unfair treatment from management. The light bulb went off for some when they witnessed firsthand how the power of collective bargaining saved them from financial ruin through union-negotiated health benefits.

Why do these stories matter? Because they remind us what being union is all about. Only one thing separates union members from others: We use our legal right to sit at the bargaining table with our employers and demand that they negotiate in good faith the terms and conditions of our employment. What we do with that right is up to us. Outcomes are never guaranteed. But with solidarity and a willingness to take on an issue, members are accomplishing amazing things each day. PRO-Member documents those successes and failures, because they paint a picture about who we are as a union and why we all believe in the power of standing together.

These stories help us define ourselves in our own terms. They are a great way to help understand why we believe as we do.

PRO-Member is also about strategies and ideas to rebuild our union. Through the voices of new leaders like Local 31’s Jorge Rodriguez who found an innovative way to increase membership attendance at union meetings by bringing his entire bargaining committee to shift meetings at work to recap the membership meeting. Local 977’s Amber Johnson talks on video about how she was forever changed by one fellow union member listening to her and being willing to give a hand to help another member in need. Local 1326 member Leslie Hitchcock shares a story about solidarity in the ranks that emerged from the darkest hour at the bargaining table. The stories are as rich and varied as our union itself; and each piece contributes to the whole picture.

You can find these member stories on the [UAW International Facebook page](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#). You can also search for some of the PRO-Member content using [#PROUAW](#). In the coming months, a section on [uaw.org](#) will feature PRO-Member content in easily searchable form. And as always, you can reach out to us directly at feedback@uaw.org.

PRO-Member is about...
OUR VALUES



The story behind the Battle of the Overpass

FORD MOTOR COMPANY

On May 25, 1937, the Battle of the Overpass happened and was captured in photographs that change public sentiment about the UAW and union organizing.

**Ford Workers
UNIONISM NOT FORDISM**

*Now is the time to organize!
The Wagner Bill is behind you!
Now get behind yourselves!*

General Motors Workers, Chrysler Workers, Studebaker Workers have the higher wages and better working conditions. (1937)

Leaflet written by May Buzan, Walter's wife.

Over 700 union supporters — many of them women — passed out leaflets to Ford workers that day as part of an organizing drive.

Though the Battle of the Overpass was a turning point in the effort to organize Ford, it took four more years before the workers were organized. On April 1, 1941, Ford Rouge workers went on strike for 10 days, ending when the company agreed to abide by the results of an NLRB election.

The UAW organizers, supporters and workers were attacked almost immediately upon arriving at the Overpass by Ford Service Department, a private security force of almost 2000 men formed to combat union organizing. Press photographers were there to capture the moment.

PRO-Member is about ... OUR HISTORY

UAW Member

Doesn't Miss an Opportunity to Save Her Community

It's your money. It's your children's education. It's your job. It's your health care. They're your highways. It's your Social Security. It's your neighborhood. They're our children. It's our future.



Such a simple idea, but with surprising outcomes. "A lot of times people are afraid to talk about politics, but I am so glad I put that table up because there was a lot of misinformation about voting. Some even admitted that they don't like to vote because they think you have to pay to vote. I don't make them feel embarrassed, because whether you are young and a new voter or older and haven't registered, there is no time like the present," says Bush.

That's how Tiffany Bush, UAW member of Local 1781 Blue Care Network, looks at the world. "If you don't vote, you're putting control of your world into the hands of someone else. It's as simple as that, and I'm not comfortable letting someone else decide my fate."

But for Bush, her words didn't stop there. She translated her views into action. While holding a garage sale this past summer she set up a voter registration table. It was nothing more complicated than a table with pens and some forms. "I made it sure to ask everyone who stopped by whether they were registered. It was easy to have a conversation with them about what is going on in our state."

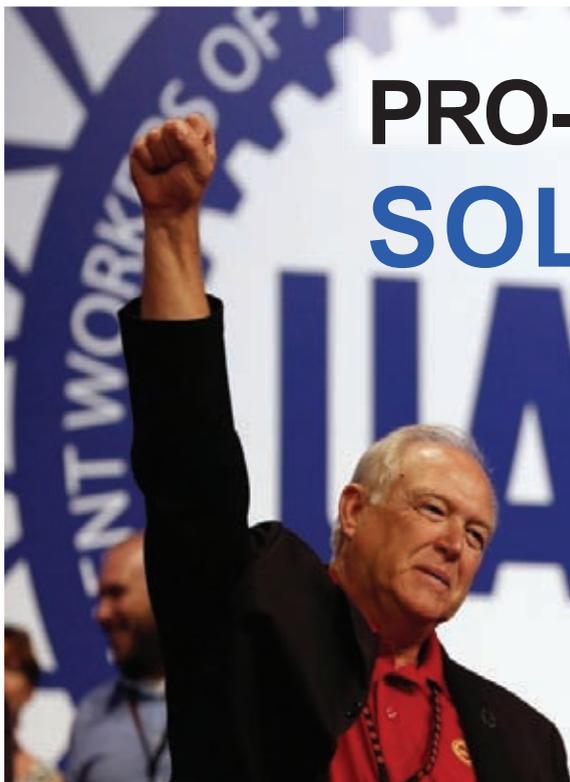
"After the election, I want to know I did everything in my power to have a positive influence on my community, including talking to neighbors and engaging people wherever I can, even tailgating at Detroit Lions football games. We are all in this as a community, and that is the only way we are going to get out of this."

PRO-Member is about ... INNOVATION

PRO-Member is about ... SOLIDARITY

"When I raise my fist, I'm talking about unity. I'm talking about solidarity. I'm talking about power together. So be proud, raise your fist!"

Dennis Williams, UAW President



First agreement ratified by 99 percent margin

UCONN graduate employees are ready for what's next

You know that you are on to something good as a local union when the original activists can take a step back and watch the newer folks, enthused with the passion for their new union, take charge and run with what was built.

That's the way it's going at the University of Connecticut. Cera Fisher, a graduate employee in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, was one of many activists who put in long hours at the bargaining table for more than a year. She's more than happy to take a step back and watch others pour their energy in to continue the success that the Graduate Employee Union-UAW Local 6950 has made for itself.

The newer activists were charged up by the contract that was won in April. Graduate employees at the UCONN overwhelmingly ratified a three-year agreement that makes significant improvements for members. It provides graduate

employees with a minimum 9.3 percent compound wage increase; improves health care without a premium increase; gives relief from the rising cost of student fees, and makes advances in other areas such as six paid weeks of maternity leave, a child care subsidy, an expedited grievance procedure and inclusion of gender identity as a protected category in the agreement's nondiscrimination article.

The health care improvements, which will now track those of other state employees, were a big reason for 99 percent of those voting approving the local's first contract.

"Everybody is thrilled because we're going to have health care that we can actually use," Fisher said.

The committee plowed through other issues critical to members. It won lactation stations for nursing mothers and reasonable access to all-gender restrooms. And graduate employees won

\$900 toward mandatory student fees.

"I can say that before this contract we had really been drowning in these student fees," said Casey Green, a member of the bargaining committee and former UCONN graduate in the History Department who recently left for a teaching position in Louisiana. "They have been going up five, six, seven percent a year. The relief we get in fees is money back in our

PHOTO BY JOSHUA GILBERT



When the administration was unwilling to schedule additional bargaining sessions, members of UAW Local 6950-GEU mobilized to make sure their voices were heard. The pace of bargaining picked up after that.

pockets.”

UCONN voluntarily recognized GEU-UAW in April 2014 after a majority of graduate employees indicated their desire for UAW representation. But the university’s positive stance on representation did not translate into a cakewalk at the bargaining table. The university at first only offered short and infrequent bargaining sessions last fall. Members applied pressure through direct actions such as a sit-in to get the administration to move closer to a settlement.

“The number of graduate employees who participated in actions and enthusiastically supported their bargaining committee certainly provided a boost to negotiators and sent a message

to the university,” said Julie Kushner, director of UAW Region 9A, which includes Connecticut. “It’s that level of solidarity that is necessary for GEU to build a strong local and win economic justice for their members. They are off to an excellent start.”

The process of building a stronger local has already begun. Fisher said a bylaws committee has been formed and was hard at work making sure all constituencies in the local were represented.

The UAW now represents more than 50,000 academic workers across the United States, including at the University of Massachusetts, New York University, the University of California and the University of Washington.

Vince Piscopo

Legal Aid employees in New York say yes to UAW

The 58 attorneys, social workers, secretaries, investigators, clericals, receptionist and librarians who work at the Westchester County (New York) Legal Aid Society face difficult issues such as substandard health insurance and pensions, arbitrary treatment, and management’s refusal to include the staff in decisions affecting their work.

That’s why they’re now hard at work on a first contract after voting earlier this year to join UAW Local 2325.

“We always knew that if we remained unified, focused and positive we would win our union, and I was so proud that my fellow workers proved us right,” said Christy Swatzell, unit chair and a key organizer in the six-month campaign.

The unit is positive and energetic, and determined to use the resources and power of the membership to achieve its goals, said Local 2325 President Debbie Wright.

“This new wall-to-wall unit, in an important legal aid office serving the poor, is an historic step forward for our local,

for the UAW, and particularly for the dedicated members and their clients,” Wright said. “We are confident it will lead to better working conditions and benefits for the members and better service for their clients.”

The members’ passion was expressed by Anna Maria DiBerardino Capuano: “In my 38 years of service, I always wanted to be a union member like other members of my family whose lives were so benefited by their unions,” Capuano said. “Now, as a UAW member, my dream has been fulfilled.”

*George Albro
UAW Local 2325*



Members of UAW Local 2325 at the Westchester County Legal Aid Society are now hard at work on a first contract.

Lear employees take message of dignity for working men and women to the CEO

Working women and men from around the country attended Lear's annual shareholder meeting May 14 at the company's headquarters in Southfield, Michigan, and spoke directly to Lear Corp. CEO Matthew J. Simoncini and the company's board of directors. Their plea? That Lear create good jobs and safe workplaces at its U.S. facilities.

The message was delivered just moments after a major protest with hundreds of autoworkers, UAW members, and community supporters demonstrated in front of the building with signs and calls for an end to low pay, unsafe working conditions, and retaliation facing workers at the \$17 billion company. Lear supplies Hyundai, Mercedes, BMW, and other major automakers.

"We want Lear and their stockholders to get the message loud and clear that employees want a voice and demand fair treatment," said UAW President Dennis Williams.

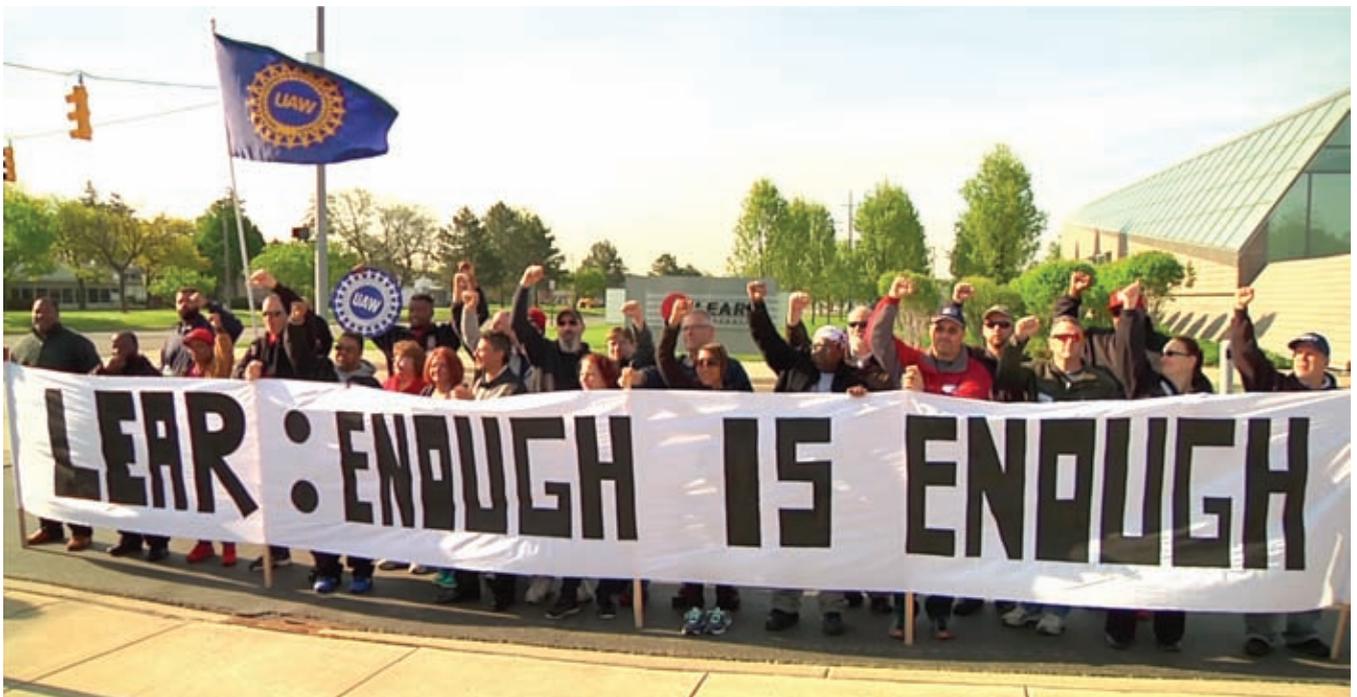
UAW Vice President Cindy Estrada said Lear must

stop its practice of putting working women and men at risk on the job with unsafe conditions and a threatening environment for those who speak up. "Lear needs to hear the voice of its working families," said Estrada. "The company needs to start treating those families with dignity."

The Lear workers who addressed the shareholder meeting were joined by former Detroit NAACP Executive Director Heaster Wheeler, and UAW Local 5960 member Jeff Brown from the Lear plant in Rochester Hills, Michigan. "We are here today to ask you, Lear's senior leadership, to consider a very important question — Why has Lear responded so aggressively to a set of reasonable proposals from your own employees? A safe workplace. A fair wage. Respectful treatment on the shop floor. A voice in the company's future. The majority of Lear's workers in the United States have achieved these sorts of gains, and Lear is enjoying record



Working men and women from around the nation demanded that Lear create safe workplaces at its U.S. facilities.



Lear stockholders were notified that the company must stop putting working men and women at risk with unsafe conditions and a threatening work environment for those who speak up.

profits,” Wheeler said. “Why don’t the other workers, who supply prosperous automakers such as Mercedes, BMW, and Hyundai, deserve the same?”

Nine-year Lear employee Letasha Irby traveled from the company’s plant in Selma, Alabama, to address company stockholders.

“I am proud to be one of the people working to form a union at our plant in Selma, Alabama. There’s no doubt that by now you know my story, and the story of my co-workers. We have done dangerous work at low pay for years,” Irby told the meeting.

“I am not here to debate whether the Selma plant is safe. I know what our doctors tell us. I see the medications my co-workers have to take to treat their asthma. I’ve read what OSHA has said, and researched how a safe, efficient foam plant is supposed to operate. No matter how much management tries to scare us, or mislead us, or play games with the facts, I’m confident the truth is on our side.

“I’m here to remind you of one thing. The workers in Selma are people, human beings, children of God. We are not pawns in some game. We are not trying to hurt the company. We are not troublemakers. We want to work. We want to earn a decent living. And at the end of our shift, we want to come home safe,” said Irby.

“I am a mother of two young children. I want to be healthy and well as they grow up. I don’t want to be a burden on them when I am older. I want to be able to give them the very best. In that way, I bet I’m a lot like all of you. We all want the best for our families,

and we’re all willing to do what it takes to get it. That’s why I’m still standing up, speaking out and coming together with my co-workers to call for better jobs at Lear in Selma, even after a year,” said Irby.

Lear employee Alfonza Richardson, who also traveled from Alabama to address the meeting, told shareholders employees want fair wages. “Our pay starts at just \$13.50 an hour. I’ve worked in the auto industry almost my whole life, that’s just a fraction of the pay that other workers, doing the same job as us, have been able to win through a union contract at Lear plants across the country. We’re making seat parts for luxury cars sold by Mercedes, but we’re getting paid barely more than we would make at Walmart ... and our jobs involve back-breaking work. Lear can afford to provide the good jobs that we deserve and that our communities need, and we’re going to continue standing together until the company listens.”

Lear employees from other parts of the country joined with their counterparts in Alabama to show solidarity at the rally. Local 5960’s Jeff Brown spoke at the meeting in support of his brothers and sisters at other Lear plants. “My co-workers at Lear – at my plant, in Hammond, Indiana, and here in Detroit – fought hard for what we won this past year. We’ve learned a lot about what’s happening at other Lear plants, too. It’s unacceptable. These workers are our sisters and brothers, too, and we plan to stand with them until they have what they deserve, too.”

Joan Silvi

Fighting for you and yours Union support is critical for a safe workplace

UAW Local 9 member Khelan Laster was working as a malt house operator at Malteurop in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, when he suffered an asthma attack on Sept. 29. He slipped into a coma and died five days later.

When Malteurop, which converts grains into malt for use in the brewing and distilling of many popular beers and whiskeys, switched its malt recipe from barley to wheat, the company failed to protect its employees from wheat dust exposure, which can cause breathing problems by sensitizing the respiratory system and lead to death. The dust would trigger the asthma attacks that eventually led to the death of the 37-year-old Laster, who left

behind a young son.

For someone to suffer fatal chemical exposures at work and not have a U.S. Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) investigation seems absurd, but it happens. Management may call OSHA and claim the employee died from medical conditions not related to work. OSHA may stop its investigation right there. But because the Malteurop unit of Local 9 had strong health and safety language and aggressively used its rights under its contract to seek an independent investigation through the International Health and Safety Department, enough evidence was established for

OSHA to come in, make use of the union investigation, perform its own investigation with UAW participation, and determine that Laster's death was a work-related fatality.

Without a union contract, Laster's death would likely have never been classified by OSHA as related to work.

The local requested help from the UAW International Health and Safety Department through Region 4 Director Ron McInroy. OSHA discovered that Laster had reported tightness in his chest during an annual physical. In May 2014, he collapsed and was treated for asthma at the plant. OSHA determined that the company doctor should have investigated what was causing the symptoms. For 300 years doctors have known about the fatal effects of inhaling wheat dust. A multinational corporation that handles wheat should have taken action to reduce exposure and protect Laster's health.

"The Obama administration has done a great job with the OSHA regional and national offices," UAW President Dennis Williams said. "Because of this relationship, we have continued to improve worker safety."

The union believes — because of the collaborative process between the local union and OSHA — the incident was thoroughly investigated. The union also is taking the proper steps to protect workers in the future, and will push for a robust safety program that identifies and eliminates hazards.



UAW Local 9's Khelan Laster developed asthma as a result of working around wheat dust. OSHA ruled that his death was work-related, which his employer is challenging.

What local unions should do:

- Identify jobs and substances that lead to breathing problems. These include welding, brazing and cutting metals, heated plastic, glues and paints that contain polyurethane (aka isocyanates), and machining fluids.
- Focus on eliminating dangerous chemicals and controlling processes with ventilation.
- Conduct symptom surveys of members. The UAW Health and Safety Department can direct you to surveys used by researchers to determine if there is a disease outbreak.
- If people at work have asthma these cases should be reported to management and recorded in the OSHA log every time the condition is aggravated at work and workers use inhalers.
- If more than one employee is hospitalized at a time for respiratory infections, possible outbreaks such as Legionnaires' Disease or hypersensitivity pneumonitis should be investigated.
- Contact SENSOR in Michigan for assistance investigating occupational asthma cases. You can call them toll free at (800) 446-7805. You can submit a report at ODREPORT@ht.msu.edu or on their website at www.oem.msu.edu/ReportForm.aspx.

“The OSHA people, I have to tell you, were really good because they asked the right questions,” said John Biniok, a member of the contract committee of the Local 9 unit at Malteurop.

Doctors from OSHA's Washington, D.C.-based Office of Occupational Medicine (OOM), “determined that, more likely than not, this employee's severe asthma attack and ultimate death was due to occupational asthma from his exposure to grain dust at Malteurop,” OSHA said in its letter.

“OOM notes that deficiencies in Malteurop's Respiratory Protection Program may have contributed to this employee's

death,” the letter states. “Grain dust exposure is a well-known cause of occupational asthma and other respiratory disorders.”

Without the union action, Laster's son's chances of getting workers' compensation from the state of Wisconsin are greatly reduced.

“We all know that money does not make up for parents,” said John Thanas, a control room operator at Malteurop who also is a member of the unit's contract committee. “You never think your parents are going to be gone. You think they are invincible.”

Thanas, who has more than 37 years of seniority, said Laster

was well liked in the plant.

“Khelan was a good guy,” he said. “We'd always talk sports and stuff. He was a big basketball fan.”

Biniok added that Laster was an employee with a lot of energy who worked his way up from sanitation to become an engineer, a position that some in the company were initially skeptical that he could handle.

“In my opinion he did a fantastic job and did a lot better than people expected,” Biniok said.

Unfortunately, it took Laster's death to bring about changes in how Malteurop protects its workers.

Vince Piscopo

UAW V-CAP: Investing in our future

The UAW cannot use union dues to directly support federal candidates and, in an ever-increasing number of states, any candidate for public office. Our only means of monetary support for many labor-friendly candidates is voluntary political contributions from UAW members to UAW V-CAP (our union's political action fund).

Members can contribute to V-CAP in multiple ways. Many of our contracts have “check off” which

allows for direct contribution to V-CAP through payroll deduction. Members and retirees can also give to V-CAP directly with a check. Either way, a modest contribution of \$10 a month comes to about 33 cents a day and allows our union to support candidates who support our values. Send to:

UAW National CAP Department
8000 E. Jefferson Ave.
Detroit, MI 48214

Black Lake: It's more than just an education center

Most UAW Members know about the UAW Walter and May Reuther Family Education Center in Onaway, Michigan, or Black Lake, as it is more commonly called.

Many have been there via the Family Scholarship Program. Maybe you went for training as a member of one of your local committees. When members leave the facility, most talk about what a jewel they own amid the natural beauty of Northern Michigan.

But did you ever stop to think what happens at the facility when there isn't a UAW conference going on? Sure, you probably knew that you can get lodging at the facility if you golf on the UAW's Rees Jones-designed, award-winning golf course. There's always a discount for active and retired members.

But there's so much more. Black Lake has been

rented for weddings, conferences unrelated to its primary function as an education facility for our union, and for many other occasions. And the facility, contrary to popular assumption, doesn't close down in the winter, no matter what the weather is like in Northern Michigan.

"We're open for business and when we're not hosting a UAW conference, there are countless other functions we can accommodate to make full use of this beautiful facility," said Nick Aune, the general manager of the center and golf course.

Earlier this year, the facility hosted a large wedding. An advertising executive often rents it as a retreat for his employees. The center is close to four trailheads for snowmobiles and has two cross-country skiing trails. Ice fishing is also available on Black Lake. The center is centrally located





It doesn't matter what season it is, there's always something going on in Northern Michigan and at Black Lake. Private events can be booked at the facility by visiting uawblacklake.com or calling (989) 733-8521.

PHOTOS BY JOHN DAVIS / UAW LOCAL 2195

within a one-hour drive of some of the state's most scenic tourist attractions, such as Mackinaw City with its ferries and forts, Tahquamenon Falls, the Soo Locks, Lake Superior and Sleeping Bear Dunes. You can shop at the trendy boutiques in Petoskey, Bay Harbor, and Harbor Springs on the gold coast of Northern Michigan. Want to try your luck? The Odawa Casino is a short drive away.

The center is available for conferences, retreats, reunions and family vacations – and includes an education building with 12 classrooms, a 350-seat lecture hall and a dining room with the capacity to serve up to 400 guests buffet style.

Accommodations include rustic rooms at the timeless “Old Lodge,” the secluded “Hilltop Chalets” and traditional hotel-style rooms. There are 228 sleeping rooms available, with the capacity to house 395 people depending on rooming accommodations. Black Lake also has a selection of condominiums and apartments.

“We like keeping the center open year-round because it helps us stay on our game,” Aune said. “A full facility is a happy facility.”

UAW-sponsored events will always take priority over private functions, of course. But the center is always willing to work with any group that will respect the property and the values that helped build it.

Thus far, those who have booked it, including UAW members hosting private functions and non-members there for weddings and conferences, leave impressed with the beauty of the grounds, the service at the facility and the amenities.

“We think marketing this beautiful facility to the general public not only helps it pay for itself, but introduces people to a side of the UAW that they wouldn't normally see. There's such a ‘wow!’ factor here that they leave with a positive impression of what we do and what we stand for,” said UAW President Dennis Williams.

For more information about planning an event at Black Lake, go to uawblacklake.com or call (989) 733-8521.

Vince Piscopo



As for drama, there was far more on the floor of the Flamingo casino than there was somewhere in the bowels of the oldest gaming house on the Las Vegas Strip. The hoots and hollers of winners, constant ding-ding-dings of the slot machines and anguished cries of the unlucky on the fabled casino's floor seemed at odds with the serious business that was being conducted all day and night in an employee breakroom on a windy and cool Friday in April.

The bargaining committee of UAW Local 3555, which represents table games dealers at Bugsy Siegel's old casino and at the adjacent Jimmy Buffet-inspired Margaritaville, was confident of its hard work over the previous 18 months. It knew it had negotiated a groundbreaking agreement. And it knew other dealers on The Strip would soon notice.

"Our contract will speak for itself," said Natasha Brown, a table games dealer and recording secretary of the local.

But it was now time for the rest of the 400 members of the local to speak. They filed into the dimly lit breakroom in small groups, or some by themselves. Most were ready to vote on whether to accept the tentative agreement their fellow union members put together. There

were a few questions that the committee succinctly answered for members, who would mark their ballot, stuff it into the box and then head to the seats and couches to give their aching feet a respite from standing so long at their tables. When all the ballots were counted, recounted, and recounted again, a 91 percent majority gave its stamp of approval on the five-year contract, the first for the UAW in Las Vegas. Congratulations were said all around late that evening, but there was no sense of history making. There was only the sense that their painstaking work of building a strong local – and expanding their efforts to represent other gaming workers on The Strip – was merely beginning.

No worries here. Local 3555 is up to the challenge.

"We are the face of the company. We are on the front lines," said Paul Bai, a member of the bargaining committee. "We are the first person that deals with the players, our customers. We should be respected and not ignored."

Dealers: Hands off our tokens

The UAW now represents more than 12,000 gaming employees in Connecticut, Florida, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Nevada, New Jersey, Ohio, and Rhode Island. Local 3555 members want to build

Safest bet on The Strip

Local 3555 wins first contract, looks to help other Las Vegas gaming workers



Local 3555 members at the Flamingo and Margaritaville casinos in Las Vegas were committed to winning language that protected their tips, or 'tokens' as casino employees call them.

momentum in Las Vegas so that other houses cannot undercut the tremendous gains they've made. They'll use this contract as a way of showing other Las Vegas gaming employees how the UAW can help other gaming workers win a bit of economic justice in a city mostly concerned with making a big score from someone else's pockets. Maybe the most important language that the committee negotiated was on tips, or tokens, as dealers call them. Tokens come voluntarily from guests who appreciate the service the dealers provide, especially if the player wins big. But even if players don't win, many will reward the dealer for a well-run game, for their attitude and for helping them have fun, even if their wallets are a little lighter for it. Gambling done right is entertainment. Getting rewarded for providing entertainment is what pays the bills for dealers. Tokens represent about 70 percent of a dealer's take-home pay.

Somewhere along the way, casino managers decided that supervisors should share in what the dealers have rightly earned, to the point where the management skim off the token pool became more than a nuisance: It was expensive and drastically reduced dealers' take-home pay. The contract they negotiated contains strong



Continued on page 17



The executive board of Local 3555 is sworn in. They began work on their bylaws and are ready to educate employees at other casinos on what they won in their first contract.

Our destiny is tied to density

Whether in auto, gaming or elsewhere, more is always merrier

So you've got a solid contract. You're doing better than the average Joe because you are a member of a union. Tough for Joe: He should have joined a union, right?

Well, yes, tough for Joe. And he obviously should join a union. But it could be tough for you as well if no one demonstrates to the millions of unorganized Joes and Janes out there the benefits of joining a union. Having density within an industry is critical to keeping wages and working standards up. And it affects union and nonunion workers.

It's something members of Local 3555 are beginning to understand as they move on from winning representation at the Flamingo/Margaritaville casino in 2014 and a groundbreaking contract

in April to helping to organize other houses on the Las Vegas Strip.

"It's very important for all people to organize in a union," said Paul Bai, a table games dealer at Flamingo who is also a member of the bargaining committee. "We become stronger. We are more powerful. We get the better benefits for all people no matter who you are."

If the UAW can organize other houses on The Strip and elsewhere in the gaming industry, it makes negotiating future gains easier. When the pay and benefits gap closes among all working people in an industry, an employer can't make the argument that it cannot compete against competitors because the labor costs will be similar.

Take the auto industry for example: Wage increases and

improved benefits at domestic automakers have become more difficult to negotiate because foreign transplants can oftentimes offer a lower price on a car in the same segment. Their labor costs are lower through using cheap, temporary employees with substandard benefits and no rights on the job. It's why the UAW focuses so much organizing attention on places like Volkswagen in Chattanooga, Tennessee; Mercedes in Vance, Alabama; Nissan in Canton, Mississippi, and elsewhere. It's why we partner with unions around the globe. Once these workers are organized and their wage and benefit levels come up, it will ease pressure on the Detroit automakers to seek concessions from our current members.

In Las Vegas, the discussion isn't about equalizing wages so much as it is about protecting

Continued from page 15

language against management's attempt to claim part of the toke pool.

"I'm proud of the fact that we now have protection on our tokes," Local 3555 President Neil Berson said. "Management can't just reach in and distribute tokes to people who didn't earn it. That toke money is mine and it stays with me."

For table dealer Mori Kam, it's a question of fairness.

"We work hard for those tips," said Kam, a member of the bargaining committee. "Those tips go directly to the dealers. It shouldn't be used to subsidize raises for management."

Better wages all around

Brown, the recording secretary, remembers talking with a more senior dealer whose pay had been frozen at minimum wage for 13 years. Wages

the tokes of all gaming workers. Disparity in how tokes are distributed could lead to negative changes in what was won at Flamingo/Margaritaville. It could also affect other contract gains. Without organizing a substantial number of dealers at other houses, Local 3555 could be without the power to resist, let alone fight for improvements. That's why these members are ready to roll up their sleeves and make sure all gaming workers in Las Vegas have a chance to succeed and share in the profits they help generate.

"There's strength in numbers. There's power in numbers," said table dealer Natasha Brown. "It was one of the arguments the company had: 'You are 200 dealers among thousands of dealers.' And we need to be thousands of dealers talking to the companies."

It's one reason why the local held an open house at its new union hall immediately after ratifying its contract. Local 3555 members wanted to meet with their colleagues at other houses to discuss common interests and how

they can make the workplace better for all gaming employees.

"In the next five years, I'd like to see 30,000 dealers organized in Las Vegas," said Brian Bay, chairman of the table games dealers' unit of the local.

Gary Jones, director of UAW Region 5, said he's excited by the determination by the local not to rest on its success.

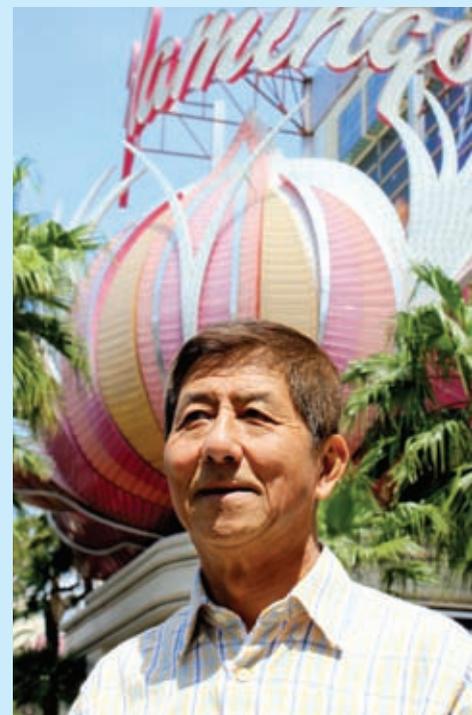
"This local has not only negotiated a groundbreaking contract, but its leadership fully understands that members cannot sit still or everything they've won can be taken away," Jones said. "They are determined to grow the UAW presence in Las Vegas to protect the historic gains they've made and also help other workers win economic justice. They know that by banding together with dealers from other houses, they can secure a decent standard of living for everyone. We look forward to growing with them and will help them in every way that we can."

at the Flamingo/Margaritaville had been stagnant for so long that gaming employees were effectively going backwards when inflation was factored in. In this contract, dealers won more than \$5,000 in wage improvements over the term of the five-year agreement. Part-time dealers, who have not seen an increase in their base rate other than state and federally mandated minimum wage increases, will be included in the base wage rate hikes.

"It makes you feel like the time you put in is worth it and you are investing in your future," Brown added. "I love dealing. I love being a dealer. I have a great time and I want to do this for the long term and I don't want to do it making minimum wage forever."

Finally, fairness in the workplace

Berson, a burly father of two whose passion for being a union member comes through in his voice, remembers one reason he got involved



Paul Bai, a table games dealer at the Flamingo and bargaining committee member, said it's important to organize to make their local union stronger and improve the working conditions for all Las Vegas gaming employees.

Safest bet on The Strip

in the organizing drive. A few years back there were some players doing some “shady things” at a table and management had approved it. The Nevada Gaming Commission did not. It investigated and cleared the dealers of wrongdoing, but the company fired the dealers anyway. Because they were “at-will” employees, they had no recourse. This contract, with its grievance and arbitration procedures, changes that.

“I am most proud of the fact that we have just cause for people being fired,” Berson said. “Now when they fire you, there actually has to be a reason. There has to be an investigation. You actually have to have done something wrong. They can’t fire you just to protect management.”

Decades of not having a say didn’t sit well with

bargaining committee member Joey Murphy, either. He had never been involved with a union, but his wife was a Communications Worker of America member who encouraged him to get involved so he would at least be informed. He would at least have a say when the bargaining committee took on issues like a fair bid process for open jobs, which was won in the contract.

“There’s a lot of favoritism in this business,” Murphy added.

Cynthia Najmulski, the chair of the slot attendants unit which signed a separate but similar contract two months earlier, said the recognition of seniority means she might actually see her daughter after sunset.

“I’ve been with the company 17 years,”

Najmulski said. “It means a lot to be able to get some recognition for how many years you’ve served at this place.”

“I am most proud of the fact that we have just cause for people being fired. Now when they fire you, there actually has to be a reason.”

Local 3555 President Neil Berson

A winning hand: Solidarity and determination

After the votes were counted, Brown, Brian Bay, chairman of the table games dealer’s unit, and others then placed them in a brown box and sealed it. Bargaining committee members then thanked representatives of UAW Region 5, which includes Nevada, and those from the UAW Gaming Department for their expertise and help in winning the contract. Bay, a 33-year veteran of the U.S. Air Force and the Air Force Reserves, was impressed with the help, but he had prior UAW experience while working in the aerospace sector, first for Boeing and later for McDonnell Douglas in California.

“I know I always had good contracts and they are going to look after the employees,” Bay said.

If they were impressed with how the UAW guided them through their



first negotiations, the feeling was mutual.

“The bargaining committee at the Flamingo/Margaritaville grasped the concept of solidarity early on and used it not only to organize, but to win exceptional gains,” said UAW President Dennis Williams, who directs the union’s Gaming Department. “We expect great things in Las Vegas for many years to come because of their determination to win a better life for themselves and their fellow UAW members in gaming.”

Gary Jones, director of UAW Region 5, said the members of Local 3555 have been well served by the people they elected to represent them.

“These dedicated union activists have proved themselves as tough negotiators with a contract that shows other Las Vegas gaming workers what is possible when a determined group of strong people fight together toward common goals,” Jones said. “This is a special group of new members. They have the passion that reminds all of us why we got involved in the union movement and pushes us to do more.”

Following the historic vote, some members of the bargaining committee headed out to a nearby off-strip casino for a quick celebratory drink. Brown slipped a \$20 bill into the video poker machine at the bar and ordered some water. Within minutes, she hit five of a kind on the Deuces Wild game. She cashed out, took care of her bartender with a nice tip, tucked the remainder in her purse and went on her way into the Las Vegas night.

It was a good omen.



Member's will to carry on lands him the hunting trip of a lifetime

UAW partners with Union Sportsmen's Alliance

Aaron Heying took his girlfriend Maelyn hunting because he wanted his bride-to-be to understand how amazing it was to be in a tree stand on a November afternoon. The Local 838 member in Waterloo, Iowa, also thought she ought to know in advance that this was where he would be on many November afternoons in years to come.

The John Deere Co. employee had been watching a really nice buck in the field to the south for a few nights and was waiting for it on that Fall 2010 day.

"We sat in the tree for three hours, heard some noises, and didn't see much movement," he recalled. "I was going to sit until dark. We heard the sound of a deer coming our way. I stood up to get my grunt call."

But as he reached into his bag, the straps on his tree stand broke, causing him to fall backwards 23 feet. The fall left him paralyzed, tore his pancreas and broke many bones.

But it could not break him.

Heying knew he would go back to work and someday resume his favorite outdoor activity. Thanks to his own determination, his union and Union Sportsmen's Alliance (USA), he's doing just that. His union fought hard to get him back into the plant at a job he could do. He recently won a once-in-a-lifetime trip to to hunt black bear in New Mexico, courtesy of USA.

The UAW recently became one of group's charter unions, and UAW members can receive a free USA membership by visiting the group's webpage or by filling out the card on Page 22 in this issue of Solidarity.

"Our partnership with the Union Sportsmen's Alliance gives our members the opportunity to join a first-rate outdoors organization free of charge," said UAW President Dennis Williams, who is a USA board member. "Our members hunt, fish and are involved in a wide range of conservation projects which makes this partnership a natural for the UAW."

Wherever your enthusiasm lies for outdoor activities, the USA is there to help with exclusive



Aaron Heying of Local 838 in Waterloo, Iowa, was recently chosen to hunt black bear in New Mexico. The hunt will air on the Sportsman Channel in 2016.

discounts on outdoor gear, the latest hunting and fishing news and tips, chances to win fantastic prizes and trips, the opportunity to participate in shooting events and conservation projects and a wide range of outdoor services.

"I have always wanted to go on a hunting trip but have never gotten the experience or the money to do so," Heying said in his application to win the hunting trip. "Now that I am in a wheelchair I told myself that I am going to make it happen some way or another."

It's going to happen and it will air on the Sportsman Channel early next year.

USA and the UAW have already partnered on a number of activities at the local and regional levels. USA supports the Region 4 Sportsman's Banquet, while the region participates in USA's Gun-A-Week calendar program. Local 1853 in Spring Hill, Tennessee, worked with USA to host a Sportsman's Appreciation Day for its members, and in Kansas, USA assisted Local 31 with its CAP fundraiser.

"The support of nearly one million active and retired union autoworkers will go a long way to further the USA's mission to unite the union community through conservation to preserve North

Continued on page 25

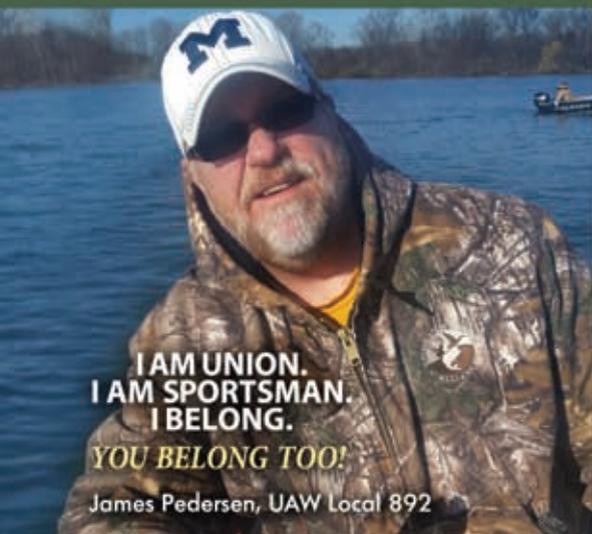
Join Fellow UAW Sportsmen as a Proud Member of the Union Sportsmen's Alliance



(L-R) Eric Sorenson & Jim Henry, UAW Local 31
USA's Kansas City Sporting Clays Shoot

USA & UAW Local 1853
Sportsmen's Appreciation Day

Active and retired UAW members are eligible for a no-cost USA membership!



**I AM UNION.
I AM SPORTSMAN.
I BELONG.
YOU BELONG TOO!**

James Pedersen, UAW Local 892

YOUR USA BENEFITS INCLUDE:

- Digital subscription to *Union Sportsmen's Journal*
- Access to Members-Only section of the USA website
- Money-saving discounts on outdoor gear and services
- Chances to win exceptional prizes and trips
- Monthly e-newsletter with special offers and tips
- Opportunity to participate in USA's Work Boots on the Ground conservation projects



JOIN TODAY - IT'S EASY AND IT'S FREE!

If you hunt, fish, shoot or simply appreciate spending time in the outdoors, you belong in the Union Sportsmen's Alliance. Because of the support we receive from the UAW as the USA's newest charter union, we are able to offer you a no-cost membership. And as a sportsman or sportswoman, this is a benefit you will truly enjoy!

**Join Online Today
UnionSportsmen.org**

To Activate Your FREE MEMBERSHIP, visit www.UnionSportsmen.org
Or call 877-872-2211 or mail the completed form to the address below.

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On the job and on message

Local union communicators receive training, honors

It's critical that our union's message reach members and the general public – especially in the next 18 months when so much bargaining in auto, heavy trucks, state government, agricultural implement and elsewhere will be underway.

Those charged with getting the UAW message out are a hard-working bunch. They produce your local union newspapers, websites, videos and social media, often with little help and sometimes on a shoestring budget. But they recognize the importance of their work to their local's success and our overall success as a union.

In June, the International recognized their hard work at the 2015 UAW Local Union Communications Conference at Black Lake in Onaway, Michigan.

The delegates received training in a number of communications formats. Delegates also learned more about PRO-Member which tells the story of the UAW through the voices and experiences of our members.

“Getting our message out is a top priority of the International Executive Board and our local union communicators play such a crucial role in doing that,” said UAW President Dennis Williams. “Because of their tireless dedication, our members are kept informed about what’s going on at the local, regional and national levels. The LUCA conference is a way to express our appreciation for their past efforts and provide training so that we improve our ability to inform and have a conversation with one another.”

At this year’s conference, the UAW honored LUCA communicators for work done in 2013 and 2014:

LUCA Contest First Place Winners

2014

(For work done in 2013)

General Excellence: Print

Newsletters under 1,500 circ.

Local 467, Saginaw, Michigan

Newsletters over 1,500 circ.

Local 571, Groton, Connecticut

Tabloid

Local 249, Pleasant Valley, Missouri

Best Website

Local 2322, Holyoke, Massachusetts

URL: <http://www.uaw2322.org>

Best YouTube Video

Local 685, Kokomo, Indiana

Video URL: <http://youtu.be/bVWANCqf69M?list=UURFmszVbkne65HcsmJJtMg>

Best Use of a Facebook Page

Local 6000, Lansing, Michigan

Facebook page name: UAW Local 6000: Michigan's State Employees

Best Use of a Twitter Account

Local 551, Chicago, Illinois

Twitter account name: @UAWLocal551

2015

(For work done in 2014)

General Excellence: Print

Newsletters under 1,500 circ.

Local 467, Saginaw, Michigan

Newsletters over 1,500 circ.

Local 685, Kokomo, Indiana

Tabloid

Local 249, Pleasant Valley, Missouri

Best Website

Local 1268, Belvidere, Illinois

URL: <http://www.uaw1268.org/>

Best YouTube Video

Local 685, Kokomo, Indiana

Video URL: <http://youtu.be/bVWANCqf69M?list=UURFmszVbkne65HcsmJJtMg>

Best Use of a Facebook Page

Local 2209, Roanoke, Indiana

Facebook page name: UAW Local 2209 Union Hall

Best Use of E-Blasts

Local 602, Lansing, Michigan

UNION SECURITY AGREEMENTS

Notice to Persons Covered by Union Security Agreements Regulated Under the National Labor Relations Act

The UAW, like other unions, spends the vast majority of its funds on collective-bargaining-related activity, as well as some amounts for political lobbying, community services, citizenship fund activities, international affairs, organizing, charitable donations, publications advancing the union's political positions, certain litigation and other matters. Under the Supreme Court decision in *CWA v. Beck*, nonunion members who pay money to the union under union security agreements may file objections to nonrepresentational-related expenditures of the money they pay under such agreements. (Such agreements, including those that the UAW is a party to, may be and are applied by the UAW only to require as a condition of employment that covered employees "tender the periodic dues and initiation fees uniformly required as a condition of acquiring or retaining membership" in the union. This means that at any time you may decline membership in the union and be a non-member agency-fee payer. In addition, if you do so, you are eligible to submit an objection to the UAW under *Beck* as described below.)

To comply with the *Beck* decision, the UAW honors objections by nonmembers of the union covered by National Labor Relations Act union security agreements who notify in writing the Agency Fee Payer Objection Administration-Private Sector, International Union, UAW, 8000 E. Jefferson Ave., Detroit, MI 48214 of their objection. Objections may be filed at any time but must be renewed each year. Objectors will be charged only for expenditures related to representational activities. All non-members who file such an objection will receive the UAW's Report of Expenditures Incurred in Providing Collective Bargaining Related Services for Fiscal Year 2014. This Report provides the basis for the amount which will be charged to Objectors for the period from Aug. 1, 2015, to July 31, 2016. The report arrives at this amount by an analysis of the UAW's 2014 expenditures which provides a detailed allocation of those expenditures between the **73.94** percent of such expenditures which are related to the UAW's representational activities, and from which the amount charged Objectors is derived, and the **26.06** percent of such expenditures which are not or may not be so related.

Any challenge by an Objector to the calculations in the Report or any challenge by an objector claiming the Report does not properly determine what portion of the UAW's expenditures were expended on matters unrelated to representational matters will be referred to an impartial decision maker appointed by the American Arbitration Association under its Rules for Impartial Determination of Union Fees. Such challenges by Objectors to the Report must be made in writing, and must be addressed to Agency Fee Payer Objection Administration-Private Sector, International Union, UAW, 8000 E. Jefferson Ave., Detroit, MI 48214. For arbitration this year, such challenges to the FY 2014 Report must be received by the UAW on or before Oct. 2, 2015, except for challenges by Objectors who have already received a FY 2014 report, who have been notified of the deadline applicable to them.

Solidarity online not for everyone

I realize you are saving money with the online issues but I do not carry a tablet with me or other data devices. I used to read the paper issue cover to cover and some articles twice in order to keep up with MY union. Ergo, I do not read the online issue at all. Should the paper one come back I will resume being a more informed reader.

Ronald Perno
UAW Local 774 retiree
Holly Springs, Georgia

Dear Brother Perno,

Thank you for your letter. We realize some members have had some difficulty getting the print version and apologize for that. Please see the back cover for information on how you can sign up to get the print version mailed to you.

Because we receive so many letters to Solidarity, we cannot print them all and reserve the right to edit for length. Please keep letters brief and include your name, address, daytime phone and local union number.

Send to:

UAW Solidarity Letters
8000 E. Jefferson Ave.
Detroit, MI 48214

or e-mail to:

uawsolidarity@uaw.net
Type "Letters" in the subject line.

UAW family members win 2015 Union Plus scholarships

Six UAW family members won Union Plus Scholarships, reflecting not only their work in the classroom, but their dedication to union values.

Union Plus recently awarded \$150,000 in scholarships to 106 students representing 36 unions. In the 24th year of the program, more than 5,000 applications were submitted by union members, their spouses and their dependent children in all 50 states, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands.

Mariah Wallace of Carman, Illinois, whose father, Tony, is a member of UAW Local 807 in nearby Burlington, Iowa, received a \$1,000 Union Plus Scholarship. A 2015 graduate of Eastern Illinois University with a degree in political science, Wallace also minored in English, history and pre-law. She will pursue a law degree at the University of Iowa College of Law this fall, and aspires to work for an international law firm or a state government.

"The determination and perseverance of my father, and other union members like him, has molded who I am as a person," she said. "They have taught me so much about the world, and inspired me to choose the career path I am on today."

This year's other UAW winners are:

- **Margaret Buchele of Toledo, Ohio.** Margaret, whose mother, Juliann Buchele, is a member of UAW Local 2213, has been awarded a \$500 scholarship.
- **Clayton Cooper of Canfield, Ohio.** Clayton, whose father, Carl Cooper, is a member of UAW Local 1112, has been awarded a \$3,000 scholarship.
- **Trinity Neve of Littleton, Colorado.** Trinity, whose father, Talmadge Neve, is a member of UAW Local 766, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Katherine Schrader of Cortland, Ohio.** Katherine, whose mother, Rachel Nader, is a member of UAW Local 2320, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.
- **Spenser Warren of Adrian, Michigan.** Spenser, whose mother, Julie Warren, is a member of UAW Local 6000, has been awarded a \$1,000 scholarship.

Union Plus Scholarship awards are granted to students attending a two-year college, four-year college, graduate school or a recognized technical or trade school. Since starting the program in 1991, Union Plus has awarded more than \$3.7 million in educational funding to more than 2,500 union members, spouses and dependent children. For more information, go to <http://www.unionplus.org/college-education-financing/scholarships>.

PRB a way for members to resolve disputes

The UAW Public Review Board (PRB) was established in 1957 as an additional way to safeguard members' rights and act as a watchdog over the union's moral and ethical practices. The board, which is funded by the UAW, acts independently on internal appeals and its decisions are final.

The UAW is believed to be the only U.S. union that allows an independent board such authority. As the final decision-maker on internal appeals, those who wish to bring a case before the PRB must first try to have their dispute resolved where it started; if the dispute is with a local, the member's appeal starts there. If with an international representative, the member appeals to the International Executive Board (IEB), which also hears appeals of unresolved local issues.

If the IEB denies the appeal, the member may then request the PRB review the case.

The PRB has internationally recognized experts in a variety of fields such as labor-management relations and law and ethics. It meets in person on appeals and also

via conference call on issues such as elections results, the proper withdrawal of grievances, or any other action by union officials or representatives.

Fifty-seven years after President Walter Reuther's vision for a more democratic union, the PRB still holds true to the values of fairness and integrity, PRB Co-chair Janice R. Bellace told delegates at June's 36th UAW Constitutional Convention. The board heard 64 appeals in the last four years, and in no instance has the union been found to have committed a serious ethical lapse, said Bellace, a professor of legal studies at The Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.

The PRB's website is uawpublicreviewboard.com. Single copies of the PRB's annual report are available upon request to UAW members at no charge from the UAW Purchasing Department at 8000 E. Jefferson Ave., Detroit, MI, 48214.

Member wins hunting trip

Continued from page 20

America's outdoor heritage," said USA Executive Director Fred Myers.

For Heying, who volunteers by fostering a service dog that will eventually go to an autistic child or veteran, going on the bear hunt is a reminder of how far he has come since that fateful November afternoon.

"There were a lot of trying times ahead for everyone - friends, family, nurses and my bride-to-be, MaeLyn," he recalled. "We are all still here and look for the positive things in life to get us through the bad ones."

Vince Piscopo

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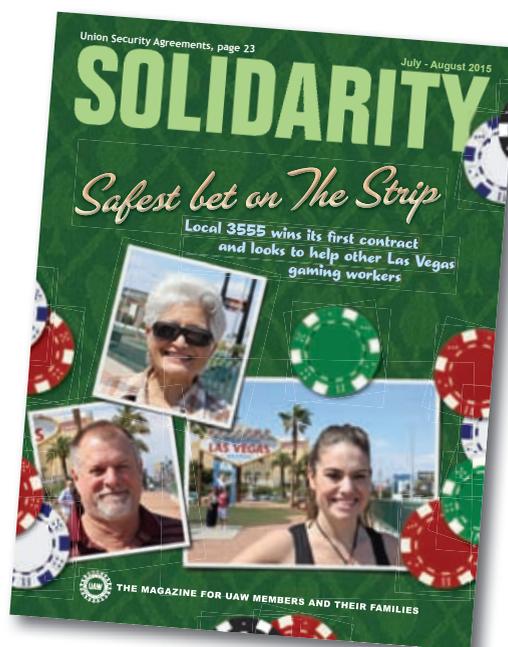


Learn more at UnionPlus.org

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