



R4: ACTION NOW

ISSUE 2

FEBRUARY 2024



THIS ISSUE

Black History Month

If They Don't Pay, We Won't Stay

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Belvidere is Back

Solidarity is Forever like Christmas

100 Years at Chicago Assembly

Master Lock Abandons Milwaukee

Protect Majority Rule

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

The story of Black History Month begins in Chicago, 1915. That summer Carter C. Woodson, the man behind Black History Month, joined thousands of African Americans from across the country to take part in a national celebration of the 50th anniversary of emancipation hosted by the state of Illinois at the Coliseum in Chicago.

Woodson had earned both his Master's and PhD at the University of Chicago three years prior, with many friends and colleagues in the city. He was so inspired by the event, before leaving the city, he helped found the Association for the Study of Negro Life and History (ASNLH) and a year later launched the *Journal of Negro History*.

Woodson introduced the first Negro History Week by press release in February 1926, encompassing the birthdays of two great Americans who shaped black history: Abraham Lincoln (2/12) and Frederick Douglas (2/14). The 1960s dramatically expanded Woodson's celebrations to an entire month, and by 1976 every U.S. President was endorsing the annual February theme. Woodson's ultimate goal was to make Black History a serious field of study, an effort that continues today.

IF THEY DON'T PAY, WE WON'T STAY

Local 710 out of Kansas City rang in 2024 by securing its newest collective bargaining agreement by an astonishing 96% membership vote. The journey to organize the Yanfeng facility was a long one, dating back to 2015. Local 710 President, Jeff Schweedler, has been involved in organizing in the Kansas City area from his first elected position to LU 710, adding four units to the local over his time in office. He credits the membership at Yanfeng for putting forth the work and staying focused on their goals in the 2023 organizing drive. Jeff says, "96% ratification of a first contract is unheard of and a remarkable accomplishment." Region 4 Servicing Rep, Jason Starr, credits the leadership at Local 710 with the heavy-lifting and the constant support of the local membership with their bargaining gains, stating, "the courage the membership showed throughout the organization drive and negotiations gave us a lot of power at the table in negotiations."

In June last year, Hafsa Sheikh-Hussein, elected Chair of the new Local 710 unit at Yanfeng, and Director Brandon Campbell were invited to the White House as part of the celebration of the Kansas City Chiefs 2023 Super Bowl win. They were able to speak with the President briefly, where he shared his lifelong relationship with the UAW and shook hands with Sister Sheikh-Hussein. Hafsa hired on as an operator at Yanfeng in 2020, working her way up to quality technician. As the first contract was coming together for her unit, she felt it was so important that the leadership represent the full plant across the diverse cultures employed on site. Hafsa immigrated to the U.S. as a toddler, tracing her ethnic origins to Somalia. The unique perspectives of a leader from two worlds motivated her to run for the unit's first Bargaining Chair. She says, "the most important gains in attaining their local union and first contract have been giving a voice to the membership and holding management of the plant accountable. Resolution is now a possibility instead of radio silence." Members bargained for the most respectable wage gains to date under their first CBA. Hafsa would like to give a shout out to her entire bargaining team for bringing the knowledge and support necessary from all four corners of the plant to the table: Gavin Graham, Mary Grady, and Raheem Burns. Congratulations and welcome to our UAW sisters and brothers at Local 710.

STRIKE SUPPORT IN REGION 4



HISTORICAL PRESERVATION AT UAW LOCAL 551

The UAW Stand Up Strike was the first strike that Local 551 of the Chicago Ford Assembly plant had experienced since 1976. In an effort to document the history of the strike, 551 local leadership took to YouTube in a new channel where they have showcased their solidarity on the picket line and look ahead to share future events and partnerships within their local. Their annual January bowling event celebrates the UAW's history of desegregating bowling lanes and can be found on the channel, as well as the upcoming March fashion show, which will feature talents from across their plant.

LU 551 President Chris Pena is looking forward to celebrating 100 years of the Chicago Assembly Plant this year. The South Side facility is Ford Motor Company's oldest continuously operated automobile manufacturing plant. Chris says, "551 members have as many as four generations of workers they can trace through the operations of the plant since it's opening in 1924. We are looking forward to another one hundred years ahead, producing quality automobiles for police, consumer, and luxury markets. We are very proud of our legacy on the South Side of Chicago." Stay tuned to the YouTube channel @Local551 for Centennial events throughout 2024.

UAW LOCAL 1391 STILL IN THE FIGHT

Our members at Local 1391 have been on strike since October 18th in East Dubuque, Illinois. President Doug Glab expresses his great appreciation for the support they have been shown locally from community members and regionally from UAW locals, as well as other Unions. Our striking members could use continued support through any food, water, and firewood donations. The [1391 Donor Box](#) is available for support from afar. Stopping by the line to visit has been very meaningful to the leadership at 1391.

BELVIDERE RAMPING UP FOR AUTO FUTURE



The December 2022 announcement to idle the Belvidere Stellantis plant was devastating for our members at UAW Local 1268. The Rockford area has suffered decades of deindustrialization and the remaining union jobs connected to the production of the Jeep Cherokee were some of the best paying jobs left in the community. However, in an unprecedented turn of events, the pressure of the 2023 UAW Stand Up Strike reversed the fate of Belvidere. Stellantis has now agreed to reopen the facility with commitments to production of a midsize truck by 2027, a parts distribution hub, and an electric vehicle battery plant. The Belvidere turnaround illustrates that a striking workforce does not necessarily force plants to close, as employers are want to profess. With enough bargaining power, employers can be compelled to rescind closures and expand a workforce vision into the future.

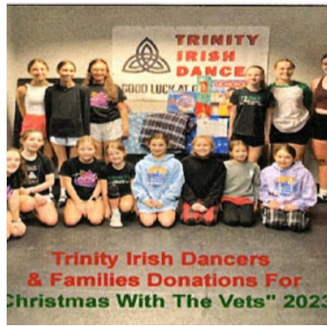
FOLLOW UAW LOCAL 551 ON YOUTUBE



Scan me!

SOLIDARITY IS FOREVER LIKE CHRISTMAS

Jeff "Doc" Dentice, UAW Local 9 retiree and founding member of the UAW Region 4 Veteran's Council, brought UAW veterans together once again in the 36th year of "Christmas with the Vets" at the Zablocki VA Medical Center in Milwaukee. Back in 1988 Doc found the Christmas atmosphere at the VA hospital very dispiriting, with veterans unable to travel to see family and missing out on the cheer of the holiday season. He was inspired to bring 15 local veterans together, throwing a small party with donations at the Center for Christmas. Since then the donation drive has grown to a nationwide effort with veterans across our states pulling off the event and live show. 100 volunteers contributed to the 2023 celebration, delivering \$23,000 in gifts and \$6,000 in debit cards to VA Reps for 2024 outings and events. Additionally, Doc has expanded the drive to include the Union Grove Vets Home Campus with contributions throughout the year.



2024 UAW NATIONAL CAP CONFERENCE



MN Senator Amy Klobuchar joined our delegates at the Region 4 Breakfast in Washington DC. Chair of MN CAP, Dan Manuel and Bob Killeen, Retiree Chair of MN Local 879, were able to share a table with the Senator and offer thanks for her support on the picket line at Local 125 in the Stand Up Strike. During her remarks at the breakfast, Klobuchar shared the importance of growing up in a Union household and how critical the 2024 election is to Labor and maintaining the power of Unions in representing working Americans.

WOMEN'S CALL TO ACTION



**Enough is enough.
WE deserve better.**

IN HONOR OF GENDER EQUALITY
SIGN THE PETITION AFFIRMING THE ERA BELOW




IN 2024, THE ONLY CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT WOMEN HAVE IS THE RIGHT TO VOTE. THE EQUAL RIGHTS AMENDMENT GIVES WOMEN EQUAL RIGHTS UNDER THE CONSTITUTION

GENDER EQUALITY 2024

UAW WOMEN'S DEPARTMENT

JOIN DOC AND THE VETS IN 2024

To join Doc and the Vets in the 2024 Drive and Celebration, visit [Christmas with the Vets website](#) to learn more about donations and drop-off locations. Donations are accepted during the Spring and Fall Veterans' Conferences at the Pat Greathouse Education Center.



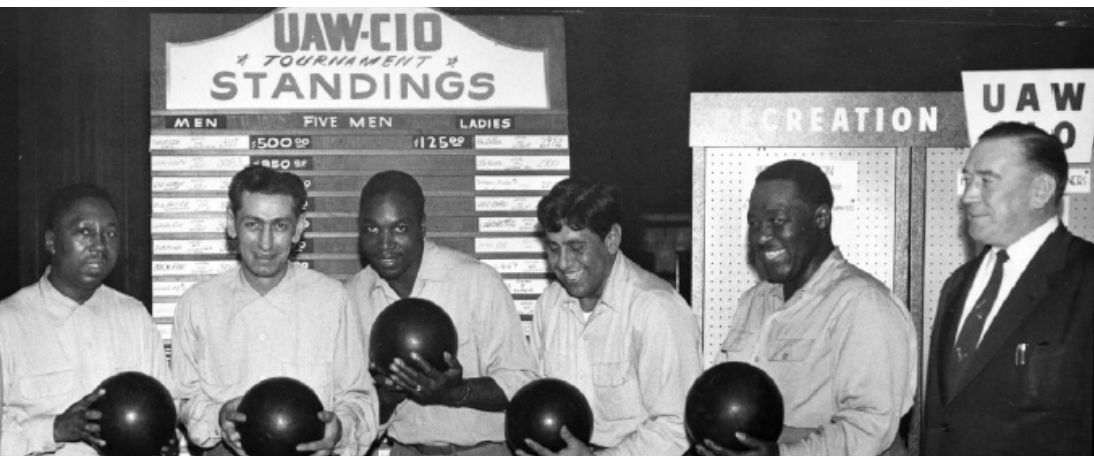
"Christmas With The Vets"
37th Annual
December 2024
Zablocki VA Medical Center
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

- Bringing The Holiday Spirit To Our Hospitalized Veterans

www.ChristmasWithTheVets.com



REGION 4 EVENTS: SPRING 2024



IN MARCH, OUR REGION 4 BOWLING TOURNAMENT CELEBRATES AND REMEMBERS THE UAW COMMITMENT TO DESEGREGATING BOWLING LANES NATIONWIDE THROUGHOUT THE 1940S

MARCH

- 23 4th Annual Bowling Tournament (Peru, IL)
- 25 - 28 Bargaining for Bargainers

APRIL

- 8 - 10 Standing Committee Conference
- 11 - 12 Women's Executive Board Meeting
- 16 - 18 Retiree Council Board Meeting
- 26 President's & Chairs Meeting
- 27 Spring Conference

MAY

- 8 - 10 Political Activist Training
- 16 - 19 Veteran's Spring Conference

MASTER LOCK CO. 1921-2024: PROFITS OVER PEOPLE FOR DECADES



Milwaukee immigrant Harry Soref's 1921 invention of the laminated steel padlock set Master Lock up to become a world leader in padlocks, combination locks and other security products throughout the 20th Century. Since then, the Master Lock facility on the north side of Milwaukee has remained an iconic part of American manufacturing for over 100 years. However, jobs have been off-shoring to Mexico and China for decades out of the Milwaukee plant, and the last 330 UAW members of Local 469 will also lose their jobs in March with the closing of this historical plant. Manufacturing remains Milwaukee's second largest employer and a critical part of the local economy. The 2022 profit reports of Master Lock indicate record-breaking revenue, lending further skepticism to any justifiable need for moving work out of the city. As recent as 2021, corporate leaders have been featured in Milwaukee publications boasting of the company's pride and commitment to Milwaukee, workers, and their preeminent role in the local economy. The March closing is a slap in the face to Milwaukee Labor, and a manufacturing story worth maintaining right where it began over a century ago.



AN EDUCATION CENTER FOR REGIONAL AND RACIAL SOLIDARITY

Many of our members and leadership know well the history of the Pat Greathouse Center and its early role in bringing members together across racial and regional divides. At a time when Whites, Blacks, and/or Hispanics were not meeting in the same halls, eating in the same restaurants, or staying in the same hotels, Pat Greathouse and Delegates of the 1949 Convention endorsed the formation of the Ottawa Union Center. For the first time members from locals across urban centers and the farm country of Iowa and Illinois would meet, learn, and come to know each other as union members. PGC will celebrate a 75th anniversary in September 2024.



UAW REGION 4

900 E CENTER ST.
OTTAWA, IL
61350



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CONFIRM YOUR VOTER REGISTRATION STATUS

- Visit [Can I Vote](#) and select "voter registration status".
- Choose your state. You will be taken to a page on your state's election website.
- Check to see if you are registered (30 days ahead of election for some states required).

CONTRIBUTE

This Newsletter is the voice of UAW Region 4. Local Leadership is encouraged to send in any stories that contribute positively to the welfare of Region 4 and our members. Reach out to your Servicing Representatives.

REGION 4 CAP TEAM

JOHN GEDNEY, IL
KELLI HARRISON, IA/MN/WI
DAN KANDBINDER, MO/KS/CO

PROTECT MAJORITY RULE

On Tuesday, January 30th, members of UAW Local 2250 joined advocates from across the state for the 2024 Voting Rights Lobby Day at the Missouri Capitol in Jefferson City. The rally responds to SJR 74, a bill headed to the Senate floor that is a combination of several similar bills introduced by Republican legislators to sabotage the initiative petition process in Missouri.

In 26 states including Missouri, a ballot initiative allows citizens to weigh in directly on a change to the state's constitution. The effort typically starts by collecting signatures to get a proposal on the ballot. The proposal can appear as an initiated state statute, constitutional amendment, or a veto referendum. SJR 74 would require all proposed measures to receive a majority of votes on the ballot statewide AND a majority of the votes cast in at least a majority of the state house districts, diminishing the power of a simple majority vote in the petition process.

Missourians have recently used their initiative petition process to raise the state's minimum wage to \$12/hr effective Jan 1, 2024, expand Medicaid in 2020, and overturn Right to Work in 2018. These are issues voters across party lines in Missouri have supported and voted for by simple majority on their ballots when their state legislature failed them in doing so. MO CAP Rep, Dan Kandbinder explains that "the GOP led bills in the Senate and House attacking the initiative petition process take away the last piece of power people have left in Missouri when politicians fail to act in their interests. Taking away the voice of the people is never the answer."

FOLLOW REGION 4

FACEBOOK



GET ORGANIZED!

It's important to grow our Union and connect others to our organizing resources!

UAW ORGANIZING

1-800-2GET-UAW

