"The strength of our Union is forged from within."
— *Jerry Sullivan*

The Award Winning

UAW LOCAL 600 FACTS

VOL. 68 - NO. 2

MARCH, 2006

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newsBRIEFS

STATE OF UNION WAY OFF MARK FOR WORKERS

President Bush's State of the Union address Jan. 31 ignored the realities of everyday life of working people: soaring health care costs, stagnant wages and income, erosion of retirement security, trade policies that send good jobs overseas, and poorly enforced workplace safety rules, workers who saw the address said. The nation's health care system is out of control and it won't get better as long as the Bush administration continues to cater to the wishes of the big drug companies and other big corporations, said Jane McGovern, an uninsured interpreter in Hastings, Minn. "We need universal health care coverage in this country, not stale ideas and savings account schemes" such as those Bush proposed, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said. Max Sanders, an unemployed teacher in Euclid, Ohio, said he "had hoped the president would say he is bringing good-paying jobs to Ohio and the rest of the country. But instead he talked about tax cuts to create jobs." The President ignored a fact that's understood "by virtually every working American: The playing field is anything but level," Sweeney said. "And the President's refusal to take action against currency manipulation by China or submit trade agreements with guarantees for core workers' rights has only made it more unbalanced." Bob Butero, a national field representative for the Mine Workers who lives in Wheat Ridge, CO, said the speech convinced him more than ever that working families must vote their interests in November and regain control of Congress and the statehouses.

BUSH HEALTH PLAN'S NO CURE

So-called Health Savings Accounts (HAS's), President Bush's answer to the health care crisis, will cost consumers more money and provide less health care, according to health experts. Bush pushed the idea of individual accounts in his Jan. 31 State of the Union address. The accounts require huge out-of-pocket payments because of high deductibles, as much as $10,000 for family coverage. Health experts said HAS's would encourage employers to abandon current heath plans and shift health care costs to workers or state and federal programs such as Medicaid. HAS's also would raise premiums for workers who remain in good, comprehensive health care plans, they said. For an in-depth look at HAS's, visit www.aflcio.org/issues/healthcare/hsa.cfm.

NEW JOBS PAY LESS THAN LOST JOBS

President Bush has been touting the jobs created since the end of the recession. But two new reports show those jobs pay significantly less than the more than 2 million mainly manufacturing jobs that were lost during the same period. The federal Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reported Jan. 31 that wages and benefits paid to civilian workers rose last year by the slowest rate in nine years. Employee compensation was up 3.1 percent in 2005, less than the rate of inflation. When inflation is factored in, overall compensation fell by 0.3 percent, the first time there has been a decline

Continued on Page 2

MORE THAN EVER - SUPPORT FRIENDS OF LABOR!

WHERE DID THAT PENSION COME FROM? WHERE'S IT GOING?

Pensions date back to the start of the 20th century, but paid retirement was not widespread in America until the end of World War II. Anxious to rebuild a stable workforce for the transition into a peacetime economy. Congress provided tax incentives to employers who set up pension funds.

Big corporations with large workforces dominated the U.S. economy - in auto, steel manufacturing, utilities, energy, and transportation. Business, government, and unions cooperated in the middle part of the 20th Century to build up benefit packages - adding pensions and health care to wages - as a way to compensate workers without stoking inflation.

In the 1950's, Taft Hartley plans - multi-employer pensions - brought smaller companies in on the action, too. By setting up jointly-administered pension and health and welfare funds workers could carry retirement benefits from one employer to another within the same industry.

The overwhelming majority of pension programs at the time were of the defined benefit variety and employers found it easy to divert money that would have otherwise been put into wages to build up pension plans. In fact, most bargaining agreements indicated one way or another that the employer was earmarking "deferred" wages into the benefits programs. The implication - the workers and their union "owned" the pensions. That concept worked as long as business and profits expanded.

When in the 1960's and '70's some employers were lavishing extravagant benefits on executives or a favored few, Congress enacted restrictions on pension funds under the Employee Retirement Income Security Act, or ERISA.

More restrictions would come in the 1980's after employers began to treat retirement plans as corporate assets that could be leveraged to pay for acquisitions, mergers, and other transactions unrelated to the welfare of employee participants in retirement funds.

It was around this same time that employer controlled retirement plans took another tack - the substitution of defined contribution plans for defined benefit plans. In the two decades that followed, more than half of the nation's defined benefit plans would disappear. Coverage would shrink from more than 43 percent of the workforce to less than 20 percent today.

UNIONS FIGHT PENSION FREE-FALL

The new *Change to Win* labor federation is calling on unions to "think outside the box" in leading an effort to solve the crisis in retirement security among U.S. workers. In a speech before the Rainbow/PUSH Wall Street Project – just after International Business Machines (IBM) announced it will freeze its pension plan in 2008 - *Change to Win* President Anna Burger outlined "basic principles" for a new retirement security system:

- "It should cover everybody who works;
- "It should provide an adequate income for retirement – such as 70 percent of pre-retirement income – and this income must be guaranteed against market fluctuations, inflation, and increased life expectancy;
- "It should require all employers to contribute to their workers retirement, but it should also ensure that those contributions are predictable and stable;
- "It should be simple – easy to understand and to communicate;
- "It should be portable from the first day of work, and follow the worker from one employer to the next;
- "It should pool investments to minimize administrative costs, ensure diversification, reduce risk for individual participants, and increase returns through professional asset management;
- "Finally, the governance of this new system should be transparent and accountable to the participants. Participants, or their representatives, should have the right to elect fiduciaries who decide on benefit, administrative, and investment policies, select service providers, and monitor investment performance."

IBM's January announcement was a significant blow to its own 125,000 U.S. workers, but also reverberated throughout American workplaces and the media. The company said its workers' pensions will lock in place in 2008, and accrual of benefits will stop. It said it will boost contributions to its 401(k) plans.

Continued on Page 3



FRANK MALONE
Guide



D. C. FORD
Sergeant-at-Arms



DENISE KREGOSKI
Trustee



WALTER "REGGIE" MILLS
Trustee



ROSA FLOYD
Trustee

News Briefs Continued

since 1996. The findings backed up a new study showing the new jobs created paid on average $9,000 less per year than the more than 2 million jobs they replaced. The report, The Role of Metro Areas in the U.S. Economy, prepared for the U.S. Conference of Mayors, said the 10 sectors of the economy that lost the most jobs by the end of 2003 paid an average of $43,629, while the 10 sectors with the largest job increases paid an average $34,378, a 21 percent difference.

BUSH MINE SAFETY APPOINTEE SAYS LAWS ADEQUATE

Despite the deaths of 18 coal miners since the first of the year, the Bush administration's choice to run the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), Richard Stickler - a former mining company executive at a subsidiary of Massey Energy in West Virginia - declined to endorse strong new safety laws, such as those recently passed in West Virginia. Stickler told a U.S. Senate confirmation hearing Jan. 31 he believes the nation's mine safety laws are adequate. West Virginia Gov. Joe Manchin (D) requested on Feb. 1 that mine operators hold pre-shift safety reviews before beginning production. Mine Workers' safety committees at UMWA mines, where collective bargaining agreements give them a wide range of rights to ensure miner safety, are conducting thorough inspections. State and federal inspectors also are inspecting all West Virginia mines. Seventeen of the 18 deaths this year have occurred at nonunion mines. "We must take all steps necessary to look at the condition of the coal mines right now, so as to identify any potential problems and act on them before they cause an accident that could add to this tragic toll," said UMWA President Cecil Roberts. For more information, visit www.aflcio.org/issues/safety/ns02022006.cfm.

REPORT: REAL JOBLESS RATE HIGHER

The real unemployment rate could be as much as 1.4 percentage points higher than the official rate of 4.7 percent, according to a new report by the nonpartisan Center for Economic and Policy Research. That means there are nearly 3 million fewer people working than the official numbers show, the report said. The report, Missing Inaction: Evidence of Undercounting of Non-Workers in the Current Population Survey (CPS), said the CPS, a monthly survey by the U.S. Census Bureau for the Labor Department, overstates the employment rate by 1.4 percentage points and by as much as 8 percentage points for black males. To read the report, see www.cepr.net/publications/undercounting_cps_2006_01.pdf.

STOP MORE BAD TRADE DEALS

The Bush administration is poised to send more flawed trade deals up to Capitol Hill in the coming months. The administration has signed an agreement with Peru and is working to close a deal with Ecuador and Colombia in the near future. This Andean Free Trade Agreement (AFTA) would be even worse than the Central American Free Trade Agreement in some ways, said global justice activists. AFTA, like the other trade deals negotiated by the Bush administration, protects the rights and profits of multinational corporations, while eroding protection for the environment and workers' rights, even in Colombia, where union leaders are killed at a rate of more than one a week, according to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. To tell your members of Congress to stop these deals, visit www.democracyinaction.org/dia/organizations/CTC/campaign.jsp?campaign_KEY=2232. Meanwhile, the administration on Jan. 19 signed the Oman Free Trade Agreement, which mirrors other Bush agreements by not protecting the rights of workers, including the freedom to join a union. Last June, the AFL-CIO filed a petition with the Bush administration to remove Oman as one of the countries receiving special trade benefits under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) because of Oman's egregiously bad record on respecting internationally recognized workers' rights, especially the rights to organize a union and bargain collectively. Trade negotiations also are under way with Thailand, Panama, the United Arab Emirates and the Southern African Customs Union. For more information on AFTA, visit www.aflcio.org/issues/jobseconomy/globaleconomy/battle/, and on Oman, visit www.aflcio.org/issues/jobseconomy/globaleconomy/battle/oman.cfm.

BOEHNER FLUNKS OUTS

Newly elected House Majority Leader John Boehner (R-Ohio) failed every chance to vote for working families on 13 vital issues in 2005, according to an AFL-CIO review of Boehner's record. Boehner voted against raising the federal minimum wage and against protecting the pensions of 120,000 United Airlines workers. Boehner also voted against a resolution urging President George W. Bush to rescind his executive order dropping prevailing wages for construction workers hired to rebuild the Gulf Coast after the tragedy of Hurricane Katrina. He voted to give Wal-Mart a sweetheart deal that would weaken wage and hour protections - after the retail giant violated child labor laws - and supported a trade agreement that would send U.S. jobs overseas and worsen conditions for workers. Boehner's complete report card, prepared as part of the AFL-CIO's Who's On OUR Side? initiative to let working families know where their members of Congress stand on key issues, is available at www.aflcio.org/issues/legislativealert/upload/reportcard_OH_rep_boehner.pdf. Boehner was elected to replace disgraced former Majority Leader Tom DeLay (R-Texas), who had to resign the seat after being indicted on conspiracy and corruption charges in Texas.

FOREIGN AIRLINE OWNERSHIP PLAN FLAWED

The Bush administration's proposal to allow foreign interests to control U.S. airlines is "a flawed change in aviation policy and a snub to lawmakers on both sides of the aisle," said Ed Wytkind, president of the AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department, in comments submitted to the U.S. Department of Transportation. He cited bipartisan legislation in Congress to prevent the Bush administration's proposed new ownership rule from being finalized. "Clearly the White House is trying to circumvent the role of Congress," he said. The new rule would harm national security and jeopardize collective bargaining as airlines seek out the lowest wage and benefit workforce to fill critical positions, he said. Also it could accelerate the outsourcing of U.S. aircraft repair to poorly supervised overseas facilities and encourage more airlines to contract out flight attendant positions to workers overseas, as some U.S. carriers have explored.

RIGHT TO WORK FOR LESS BATTLES LOOM

Kentucky working families are mobilizing to defeat right-to-work-for-less legislation for the fourth time in four legislative sessions. The proposed legislation (H.B. 38) is backed by Gov. Ernie Fletcher (R), anti-worker state legislators and Big Business. They claim the legislation prevents workers who don't want to join a union from being forced to do so. But under federal law, no one can be required to join a union. The bill would ban employers and employees from agreeing that nonmembers should pay their share of the costs of representing them and negotiating on their behalf. Workers in states with so-called right to work laws have a consistently lower quality of life than those in other states — lower wages, higher poverty, less access to health care - according to data from the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Census Bureau. Working families and their unions also are gearing up to fight right to work for less battles in Indiana, Missouri, and New Hampshire. For more information, visit www.aflcio.org/issues/legislativealert/stateissues/ns01122006.cfm.

'GUEST WORKER PLAN UNDERMINES WAGES, RIGHTS'

President Bush's proposed temporary guest worker program would undermine wages and labor protections for all workers, AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said. It sends a message to immigrant workers that although "their hard work is essential to the prosperity of our nation, they deserve no better than a perennial second-class status," said Sweeney. "Immigrant workers need a real path to legalization and a method of addressing America's future needs for outside labor that guarantees all workers full rights and a voice on the job."

UAW CHIEF CALLS FOR STRONG ACTIONS TO HELP WORKERS

U.S. workers must form new political alliances and build a better legislative agenda to strengthen the nation's manufacturing base and help working people, UAW President Ron Gettelfinger said. Speaking at the opening of the UAW's Feb. 5 – 8 legislative conference in Washington, D.C., Gettelfinger told the 1,600 delegates and activists, "We have to find ways to reach out to those who do not agree with us as well as those who have given up on participating in politics. We cannot just talk to ourselves - the stakes are too high." He also called for a universal health care system, measures to fight unfair trade practices, support for incentives to make ethanol more widely available and tax credits for gasoline-electric hybrid vehicles. Democratic Sens. Hillary Rodham Clinton (N.Y.) and Evan Bayh (Ind.) spoke to the conference along with Democratic National Committee Chairman Howard Dean.

'FRIENDS WITH LOW WAGES'

Check out a great new video about how Wal-Mart treats its workers, "Friends with Low Wages." The Flash video on the American Rights at Work website parodies Garth Brooks' popular song, "Friends in Low Places." Brooks recently signed an exclusive distribution deal with Wal-Mart and was featured in the retail giant's holiday ad campaigns.

- All News Briefs Courtesy of the AFL-CIO

UAW LOCAL 600 FINANCIAL REPORT DAVID RUSSELL, FINANCIAL SECRETARY

DECEMBER 31, 2005

DUES INCOME	$586,147.85
DUES REBATE	114,237.25
MEMBERSHIP COUNT 11,185	
PAYABLE TO THE INTERNATIONAL	
PER CAPITA TAX 62% OF DUES INCOME	363,411.67
NATIONAL FORD COUNCIL	3,579.20
SUB 3 3,512 MEMBERS	70.24
RETIRED MEMBERS COUNCIL	118.85
FORD NURSES	1.38
CAP COUNCIL-REGION 1A	8,792.22
CAP COUNCIL-MICHIGAN	8,792.22
DECEMBER BANK BALANCES	
GENERAL FUND	845,460.95
INVESTMENT 600 RETIREES CHAPTER	142,478.35
RETIREES CHAPTER SAVINGS ACCT	38,020.76
LOCAL 600 INVESTMENTS	969,981.80
COMMITTED FUNDS	
EDUCATION FUND	259,726.67
RECREATION FUND	(-43,245.94)
ORIENTATION FUND	15,352.95

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UNIONS FIGHT PENSION FREE-FALL

Continued from Page 1

Those plans are considered less stable than the traditional "defined benefit" pensions negotiated in many union contracts – and generally provide a less predictable retirement income.

A company spokesman said the decision was "all about cost-competitiveness, so that we could continue to be the financially viable company that we are." But days later, IBM announced its profits grew by 13 percent in last year's fourth quarter.

IBM's pension move "fuels a devastating trend of large, profitable employers choosing to retreat from their commitments to workers," said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. "IBM's healthy profits make their actions especially difficult to stomach – especially for IBM workers with many years of service who have been relying on their retirement to be there. If working people can't count on good jobs and a secure retirement, what can they count on?"

- UCS News Service

Low Cost Income Tax Service To All Members and Retirees

UAW Local 600 is pleased to announce that we have again retained Zoia & Associates to sponsor the 2006 Income Tax Preparation Service from February through April 2006. This is the 55th year that the Local has offered this service to its members. This year, again, the tax service will be also made available to members' family, friends; & relatives.

FEBRUARY 7 – APRIL 13, 2006
Tuesdays & Wednesdays:
9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m.
Thursdays: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

LOCAL DOORS WILL OPEN AT 8:30 A.M.

The Tax Staff has improved services this year:
- Drop off services available daily
- Computerized tax preparation
- Direct deposit
- Less waiting
- We can prepare any tax return
- Low rates
- Year round tax service available
- Electronic Filing

Important Tax Considerations for this Service:
- If you qualify for UAW–Ford Legal Services plan, a W-2 was issued to you.
- Since no Social Security tax is deducted, ALL RETIREES MUST FILE A 2004 TAX RETURN, regardless of income level.

Please bring the following with you:
- All Tax Data relative to preparing your return
- W-2's, 1099-R's, Interest and Dividends
- Social Security numbers & date of birth of all dependents
- Property Tax Statements if claiming a property tax credit
- Copy of your 2004 return if it was done elsewhere.

DROP OFF SERVICE AVAILABLE!

If you don't have the time to wait for your tax return, simply fill out the short questionnaire available at Local 600, and leave your information with the tax staff of Zoia & Associates. Your return will be ready for pickup in one week.

DROP OFF SERVICE = NO WAITING!

(This is the most convenient way to get your taxes done!)

NUMBERS WILL NOT BE GIVEN OUT UNTIL 8:30 A.M.!

For more information, call (313) 842-5350 Ext. 255
(After February 7, 2006)

LOCAL 600
2006 BASIC TAX PREPARATION FEES

$60.00 for UAW Members	
$45.00 for Retirees	
$40.00 Students of Members or Retirees	
Basic 1040 Preparation Include:	
Form 1040 or 1040A	
Schedule A	
Schedule B (up to 5 entries)	
Michigan 1040	
MI-1040CR-Property Tax Credit	
City of Detroit Return	
Additional Fees (Federal):	
Schedule B -	
Charges for each entry over 5	$ 3.00
Schedule C - Per Business	$30.00
Schedule D - Up to 5 entries	$30.00
Schedule D -	
Charge for each entry over 5	$ 3.00
Schedule E - Per Property	
With depreciation	$30.00
Without depreciation	$25.00
W-2's, 1099R's, any combination	
(charge for each over 5)	$ 3.00
Any Federal Form not listed	$25.00
Additional Fees (State & City):	
Any additional Michigan Form not listed above	$25.00
Extra City of Detroit Schedules	$20.00
Charge per ¼ of an hour, when an unusual amount of time is spent organizing client's paperwork	$25.00

2006 LATINA/O WORKERS LEADERSHIP INSTITUTE

APRIL 6 - 9, 2006
Marriott at Eagle Crest Hotel, Ypsilanti, Michigan

Conference coordinator:
Julio Cesar Guerrero, MSW, MA;
Consultant to UM Labor Studies Center

Conference co-coordinators:
Julie Alvarado-Zuzga, UAW Local 400;
Rudy Reyes, UAW Local 602

WORKSHOPS

(Participants attend one workshop; however, we ask you to list a 2nd choice in case your 1st choice is unavailable)

01. YOUTH & UNIONS
Cost $60 per student; each family's additional child is at a discounted rate of $30 each. If you are interested in purchasing Saturday evening dinner tickets, add $30 per ticket per student.
1 A. AGES 8-12
1 B. AGES 13-18

02. BASIC UNION SKILLS

03. MY VOTE, MY JOB: ELECTORAL POLITICS & UNEMPLOYMENT

04. LA ONDA LATINA: PRIDE IN OUR CULTURE

05. RE/BUILDING OUR UNIONS: ACTIVISM FROM THE BOTTOM UP

06. MOBILIZING FOR BETTER WORKING CONDITIONS

07. PARLIAMEINTARY PROCEDURE

08. WORKERS' RIGHTS

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Limited scholarships available!
Call Bonnie at 734.764.0493

REGISTRATION INFORMATION

Registration cost is $450.00. Registration and full payment should reach us by Wednesday, March 22, 2006. Tuition assistance programs (Ford, GM, Delphi, etc.) do not cover meals, so apply for $400 tuition; the $50 meal payment is mandatory for all participants. Call 734.764.5515 to pay with Visa, MasterCard, and Discover debit/credit cards.

TIME AND DATES: Check-in is Thursday, April 6, from 5:00 to 7:00 p.m. The program starts promptly at 7:00 p.m. Thursday and ends at 12 noon Sunday, April 17 after graduation. Friday and Saturday sessions run from approximately 8:30 am - 5:00 pm with special evening events. Thursday & Friday evening meals are on your own.

PLACE: All workshops and general sessions are held at the Marriott Hotel, Ypsilanti, Michigan.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS: $99.00 per night + tax single/double. We have reserved a limited number of rooms at the Marriott. You must confirm and pay for your own reservations. Call 734.487.2000 and mention the Latina/o Workers Leadership Institute to ensure the group rate.

CANCELLATION/REFUND: Last date to withdraw for refund is Wednesday March 22, 2006.

GOLF SCRAMBLE/MIXER

Thursday April 6, 2006 at 9:00 am.
PLACE: Pine View Golf Course, Ypsilanti, MI
COST: $85 person, includes 18 holes, a cart, snack at the turn and dinner.
DEADLINE: Non-refundable pre-payment for golf scramble must be received by March 24.
CALL: Theresa at 517.605.6455.

Is It Unpatriotic To Not Buy American Cars?

Continued from front cover

If American companies can't remain successful and shoulder the burden of health care for their workers, the rest of us will likely pick up the tab in the form of higher taxes through expanded entitlement programs, which are already growing at a rate of 8% a year.

The 84% of all federal spending of our tax dollars already goes towards the "big three" untouchables: interest on the national debt, national defense (including homeland security), and entitlements such as Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security. So much for conservatives who wish for smaller government. Generally speaking, few of us want to invite more government intrusion into our lives. But a significantly smaller government these days would result in benefit cuts that would ultimately affect all of us. The days of those who want tax cuts because it means more money in their pockets and means benefit cuts only for someone else are over.

So what's your reason for not buying American cars and trucks? I've heard (and disproved) them all, but I'll list a few of the more popular ones here.

1. Quality. According to the latest *J.D. Power & Associates Long-term Dependability Survey*, Lincoln, Buick, and Cadillac all made the top five for 2005. Lexus was number one and number two was mysteriously not reported by the CNN story highlighting the survey. What's even better (if you are a fan of American automakers) is that the average dependability of all GM and Ford models combined was greater than the average dependability for all the Japanese models combined.

2. Too much emphasis on "gas guzzlers." The hypocrisy in this statement is rampant since most people who make it are ardent supporters of the "free market." The trouble for these hypocrites is that a major free market principle is the law of supply and demand. According to *Seattle Times* columnist Shaunti Feldhahn, consumer demand for big, bad SUV's has doubled in the last 15 years. So much for the argument that American car companies aren't building what consumers want to buy. Just like American companies have been scrambling to satisfy the one percent of car buyers who want hybrids, Japanese car makers have been scrambling to catch up to Ford and GM by offering bigger and badder behemoths (at even worse gas mileage ratings than American SUV's). GM has more models with over 30 mpg highway (2006 EPA estimates) than any other auto maker. Last month I revealed that my 1996 Lincoln Town Car now has over 160,000 miles with no signs of letting up. What I didn't mention is that my car has averaged 24 mpg since September 2001, which is a result of combined mostly highway driving during the week and mostly city driving on weekends. Not bad for a big luxury car.

3. Foreign car companies will pick up the slack. This argument implies that the hiring of American workers by foreign companies would never take place if there weren't layoffs by American companies first. Even if you view foreign investment as a good thing - which it isn't - foreign companies will still invest in America even if we support American companies so they can actually retain our own workers. This argument is almost as bad as the one that implies we need to destroy American manufacturing jobs in general so we can move American workers into high-tech jobs. Why not let the college graduates strapped with tens of thousands of dollars in student loans and other debts take these jobs, and protect American workers in the jobs they choose to have now?

4. American companies can do better. Better at what? What will it take for more American people to root for the home team again? Do you only root for your hometown sports team when they are winning, or do you root for them even when they are down - no matter what? Let's see. American companies GM and Ford have won numerous quality awards, they have more domestic plants, employ more American workers, support more retirees along with their dependants and families, pay better wages than the non-union foreign-owned plants, have a higher percentage of domestic parts in their automobiles, pay more taxes to the U.S. Treasury, give more to charities for the benefit of this country, and donate more in the wake of disasters like 9-11. Need I go on?

5. GM and Ford need to make cars Americans want to buy. I saved this one for last since it the most ridiculous statement of all. General Motors has the highest market share of any automobile company. To say the company that currently sells more cars and trucks to more people than any other company in the industry - even if that market share is falling - is truly ridiculous. Yes, I know Toyota is gaining on GM and may overtake them this year (in worldwide market share - not U.S. market share - where GM has roughly twice the market share of Toyota) and GM used to command around 50% of the domestic market. But let's be reasonable, shall we? What company in any industry in today's super-competitive economy can command 50% of their market? Not even Coke or Pepsi can do that. Which reminds me - Pepsi recently passed Coke to take the top spot in the beverage wars. Is Coke number two now because they aren't making beverages Americans want to drink? I haven't heard that one yet. Only in America, and only in the automobile industry, could number two be declared a loser brand. And only if it's GM, not Toyota.

The struggle for GM and Ford to regain much needed and much deserved traction has increasingly become a media war. And it's not just a media war as I reported in my September 2005 article titled *Media Bias Against American Automakers* <file://themonthlytuneup090105.htm>. The bias towards foreign automakers has extended from journalists and other newsmakers to everyday Americans with vendettas against their home-team companies in the form of letters to the editor and blogs on the Internet. The *Wall Street Journal* recently ran a story titled *"Are Rumors Hurting Sales"* reporting on a Los Angeles resident who started a Web log called *"GM Can Do Better."* It's not that this individual has not heard the reports of numerous quality awards bestowed upon American automakers. It's that he's skeptical the reports are true.

So there you have it. Foreign car lovers will believe it if Toyota wins an award. But if General Motors' Chevy Impala is documented to have fewer customer complaints than the Toyota Camry, foreign car lovers will grasp at different false reasons to justify their foreign purchases. But the facts are in, and their arguments no longer hold water. I'd almost be willing to bet these American car bashers haven't test-driven an American car in years. Right now it doesn't matter that GM has 82 major plants in America and Ford has 35. What matters is that Toyota, Honda, and Nissan have eight plants each. It doesn't matter that Toyota and Honda average 65% to 75% domestic parts in their U.S. built cars, while GM and Ford average 80% to 85%. If these percentages ever reverse, then it will matter to foreign car lovers. Facts simply don't matter to them when they don't happen to be in their favor. To them, as *Business Week* reported December 12, 2005, "the economy is unstoppable as the…Indianapolis Colts" and foreign purchases have no national negative effect. If you watched the Super Bowl, you probably noticed that the Indianapolis Colts weren't playing.

I'm sure that this article will not sit well with those who automatically receive it as part of their free *"Buy American Mention of the Week"* subscription and advocate the demise of GM and Ford. And I'm also sure I'll receive many "unsubscribe" requests as a result. But I don't really care. I don't like writing for people I don't like any more than I like giving speeches to groups I don't like. These articles are not designed to make anyone feel less of an American for their past foreign purchases, but rather they aim to persuade American consumers to make the right purchases in the future.

Those who do agree with the facts and the opinions I have presented, I urge you to forward or distribute my auto industry articles to fellow Americans that need to see them. Simply visit http://overthehillcarpeople.com/themonthlytuneup.htm <file://themonthlytuneup.htm> to see the auto industry articles I've written since May 2005. I'm not sure how much time GM and Ford have left to turn things around given the obstacles they must overcome that have been put there for bogus and unpatriotic reasons. And remember, the next time someone accuses you of questioning their patriotism because of their foreign car, tell them that if it's not unpatriotic to destroy the American middle class, then it's not unpatriotic to buy foreign cars!"

by Roger Simmermaker, Author
How Americans Can Buy American
www.howtobuyamerican.com

Editor's note: Thanks to Bill Ruber, Transportation Unit President for forwarding this article to us.

EMPLOYERS MAKE THEIR OWN MESS

By Jim Hightower

If you create a mess, you then don't get to complain about there being a mess.

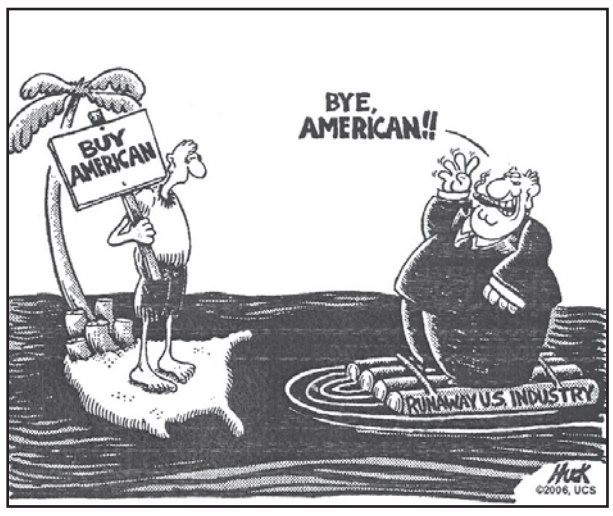
Apparently, the National Association of Manufacturers (NAM) missed this lesson in kindergarten – probably too busy bullying other kids. The NAM recently issued a report deploring the widening gap between the number of highly-skilled workers in America and the industry's need for such workers. Eighty-one percent of manufacturers report a moderate to severe shortage of technically-skilled workers, wails the NAM.

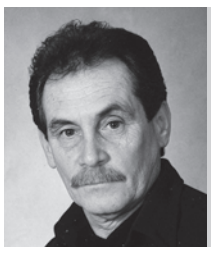
Hello, NAM…might you have had a big hand in this mess? Let's talk taxes, for example. The NAM has been a prominent proponent and lobbyist behind George W's massive tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy. One result of this is that funding for job training and other educational programs have been slashed, also, at a time they should've been dramatically increased. Also, notice that when member corporations of NAM build or expand factories, they routinely demand that local school districts exempt them from the property taxes that fund technical education.

And who is it that has been leading the change to bust labor unions? Why it's been the NAM and its members doing this! Yes, they gain a lower-wage, more compliant workforce by ousting unions – but they lose something important to them and to our country: a partner in job training. It receives very little notice in the establishment media, but a chief advantage offered by unions are highly-skilled workers who not only go through the unions' top-notch apprentice programs, but also are constantly updating their skills through ongoing union training sessions.

To say that America lacks a deep pool of skilled workers is to blame workers for a mess that those in power – including the NAM – have made. Rather than whine, the NAM should press congress and the states to launch a crash program, full-funded, to create a nationwide system of training academies that will tap into that pool of talent that now is stuck in dead-end jobs at McDonald's or Wal-Mart, giving them the skills to move up.

- UCS News Service





MAINTENANCE & CONSTRUCTION UNIT

Tony Trupiano, President

WORKING TO SECURE OUR FUTURE

With all the negativity we have been hearing from the news media and the closing of plants by Ford Motor Co., there remains great potential for the Rouge Plant and our Unit. It's within the mind-set of Bill Ford to rebuild the Rouge as a heritage to his great grandfather. Therefore, as workers at the Ford Rouge Center, we are on more solid ground than many of our brothers and sisters at other locations.

However, nothing is guaranteed. We must, as a Unit and as a Site, do everything possible to solidify the future for ourselves, and for those that will follow. These are our jobs, and we must fight to keep them!

Your Committee, the Local leadership, and myself, are doing everything possible to bring more products to the Rouge. I am asking for your help, each and every one in the M & C Unit, to join in and make our plant the location the Company will saturate with new processes. I need your input and help to ensure that downtime and project schedules are kept to a minimum, and our quality is the best it can be.

There will not be enough market share to continue operating three Truck plants. We are working diligently to assure that the DTP will become the lead plant for the future. With this being accomplished, the DSP, DEFTP, DDMP, and our Construction and Maintenance organizations will thrive.

Most thought Wixom and Atlanta would never go down, yet it is happening. We must stop and think what it would be like if we were in their shoes. Our foreign competitors are taking our jobs and putting them in their plants.

Let us all join together and ensure that this does not continue.

WE MUST FIGHT TO KEEP WORK IN OUR PLANTS!

RETIREMENT PARTY

The date for our Retirement Party is May 10. I expect that past retirees will attend in record numbers. Plan on setting that date aside for a great time.

CONDOLENCES

On behalf of the Maintenance & Construction Unit Committee, both elected and appointed, we extend our deepest sympathies to Ron McNew, Tinsmith, DEP, on the loss of his mother-in-law; to Joe Drum, Carpenter, 8061, on the loss of his father; Dave Olsen, Sub 10, on the loss of his father; to Chris Crump, Committeeman and Millwright, DTP, on the loss of his father; to Mike Sorenson, Millwright, DEFTP, on the loss of his father; to Paul Yount, Welder, DDMP, on the loss of his uncle.



DEARBORN ENGINE & FUEL TANK PLANT

Wilfred Littleton, President

LET'S CHANGE RATHER THAN DIE

We've heard Mr. Fields give us the ultimatum "change or die." Well it's not time to die. With all of the energy that exists at the DEFTP, we refuse to die. As our future unfolds we will continue to let everyone know that the fight in us to survive is as strong as ever. The legacy that has been left in our hands will not fall to lost dreams.

Our I-4 future is bright as ever, the second shift is up and running in Machining and Assembly, and our flex lines in the Fuel Tank have already taken off to new heights. We are poised for the next generation of diesel engines.

The change is already happening here at the DEFTP Let's start with our ability to get to harbor hours to make an engine. But, our goal is to get less than one harbor hour.

Our safety record is getting stronger, and our attendance record is going in the right direction. With all of our dedication, our attendance record will be the model for the auto industry. These and more, are the things that have open notoriety for our plant.

Again, I would like to give a shout out to one of our own, Mr. Lewis Cole, your efforts and dedication will never be forgotten.

RETIREES

A partial list of the past retirees. God Bless You, we miss you.

Larry Helton	*Willie Owens*
Samuel Smith	*Donald Brown*
John Hawks	*Johnny Davis*
Judy Lockhart	*Tyrone Harper*
Barbara Sarappa	*Joseph Pressley*

CONDOLENCES

James Dawkins
Milton Jackson
Erma Elliott

QUOTE

"There are no shortcuts to any place worth going."



DO BUY LIST

Get ready for Spring - stockpile your union-made garden supplies and quality tools for those Spring projects.

Plan now for those Spring time chores -
Get your tools from a Union source -

Power, hand, and Garden Tools; Building Supplies: Made by members of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers (BB), the International Association of Machinists, USW or the United Auto Workers (UAW). Look for these brand names at your hardware store. Since many of these companies produce in the U.S. and elsewhere, check for a "Made-in-the-USA" label as well.

TOOLS

Automatic Wrenches: Edgerton Forge (IBB)
Batteries (flashlight): Ray-O-Vac Heavy Duty, D, and AA, Packaged Alkaline Batteries (UAW)
Clips, Screws, Nuts & Bolts: Service Supply (UAW)
Cutting Tools: Ohio Metal Working Products (IBB)
Garden Tools, Pitchforks: Union Tools (Sears, Agway, Razorback), (IBB)
General Tools: Armstong, Klein Tools, Snap-on tools (IBB)
Ladders: Versa (UAW)
Ladders, Wood, Attic, Step: Kentucky Ladder Warner Corp. (UAW)
Paint: Seagrave Coatings, Plextone Multi-Color (UAW)
Paint Scrapers, Wallpaper Cutters: Crescent Mfg (UAW)
Pilers, Hooks: Klein Tools Inc. (IBB)
Post Hole Diggers: AZL Resource (IBB)
Rakes & Shovels: Ames (UAW)
Rotary Tools: Rotor Tool (UAW)
Shears, Scissors: Clauss Cutlery (UAW)
Socket Wrenches, Screwdrivers: Apex Cooper Industries (UAW)
Soldering Irons: American Beauty by Am. Electric Heater Corp. (UAW)
Striking Tools, Crow Bars: Warwood (IBB)
Tape: American Tape Co.,
Tape Masking, Double-Faced: Diaper, Electric (UAW)
Welding Wire, Welding Rods: ESAB-Brand Names: L-Tec. – Dual Shield (UAW) Fabricated Wires: Spool-Arc, Arc Alloy (UAW)
Wet/Dry Vacuums: Craftsman (Sears), Ridgid (Home Depot) (IBB)
Wire Brushes, Cup Brushes, Wrenches, Pipe, Vices, Pipe Cutters, Threading Tools: Osborn Mfg (Brand names include Black & Decker, Compo Industries, United Abrasives, KD Tools (UAW), Pherd (UAW&USW)
Wrenches, Pipe, Vices, Pipe Cutters, Threading Tools : Reed Mfg (UAW)

PLUMBING AND MISC. PRODUCTS

Bathroom Fans, Cabinets, Central Vacuum Systems, Food Blenders: Nutone (UAW)
Faucets: American Brands Corp. (IBB), Central Brass (UAW), Chicago Faucet (IBB), Globe Vale (brand name - Gerber) (UAW), Guaranteed Specialties (UAW)

Continued on Page 6



TOOL & DIE UNIT

Jeff Laver, President

OIL COMPANY RIP-OFFS!

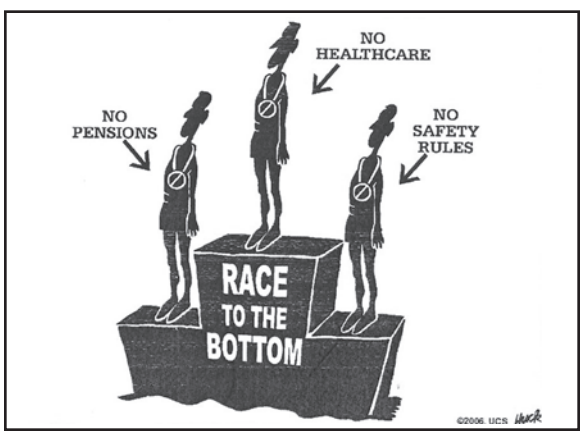
The big oil companies once again reap in astronomical profits off of the American consumer. While they sit back and count their billions of dollars profit, the middle and lower income class of Americans struggle to make ends meet and watch their standard of living decrease. George W. and his administration buddies have no intention of investigating for price gouging, or pursuing research for alternative fuels. Why should he? He's fattening his own pocket with them. It doesn't take any time at all for the price at the pump to jump when the price of crude goes up on the market, but it takes a long time for it to fall when the prices are down. I wonder why that is? The gas that is at your neighborhood station has already been refined from crude that was purchased when it was more than likely at a lower price. But, that gas in the holding tank rises in price as the crude on the market rises. Supply and demand is a major factor that we all understand. So why don't we build more refineries? That's probably too simple of a solution to alleviate the demand. We need to be leaders in the search for alternative fuels, in order to become less dependent on foreign oil.

MEDICARE CRISIS

Another crisis facing the people of this country is the restructuring of Medicare for our seniors. Talk about mass confusion. President Bush has the elderly so confused about which plan to enroll in to make sure that their medications are covered, that they will need more medication to ease the anxiety! Even their children had to go with them in most cases to go through the explanations and help them understand which choice was best for them. There have been so many problems with the new system that pharmacists have distributed medications without getting paid, just so those people who need them don't run out while they wait for corrections to be made to the system. This is another good reason for a National Health Care program.

UPCOMING EVENTS

On a lighter note, I would like to remind all the Tool & Die Unit active and retired members of some upcoming events this year. The Tool & Die Unit golf outing is tentatively scheduled for May 13, 2006 at Gateway Golf Course and will be limited to 25 teams. Also, the Tool & Die Unit picnic is scheduled for June 3, 2006 at Warrendale Park.



DEARBORN DIVERSIFIED MANUCATURING PLANT

Reggie Osborne, President

HONORING THE LEGACY OF MRS. ELIZABETH (LIZ) JACKSON



Elizabeth Jackson's 1st Ford I.D. Card

Elizabeth Jackson, a native Detroiter, by way of Auburn, Alabama, has had what many would call a wonderful life. Liz, as she prefers to be called, has served her union well, being the first African-American woman appointed to the UAW International Staff. Liz was hired in March, 1943 in the Aluminum Foundry, which was part of Local 600. Liz later transferred to the Highland Park plant in 1944, returning back to the Rouge in 1947. She spent the next 19 years in the Dearborn Assembly plant before being called to serve as an International Rep. by then-Vice President of the National Ford Department, Ken Bannon, in August of 1966.

Liz got involved early in Union activities where she served as a General Council Delegate for 16 years, chair of the Education Committee, and Liz also acted as Chair of the Ad Hoc Committee to Elect a women to the UAW International Executive Board, all at Local 600.

But it didn't stop there. Liz was very active in her community, serving wherever she felt that she was needed, and could be of some help. Liz is a former Vice-President of the Michigan Black Caucus, Vice President of the Trade Union Leadership Council known as the famous TULC, just to name a few. While serving as an International Rep, Liz had an abundance of responsibility as servicing Rep, serving such plants as the Wixom Assembly, Michigan Truck, Wayne Assembly, Dearborn Engine, Dearborn Iron Foundry, Michigan Casting, and the Specialty Foundry.

If you are wondering were the slogan came from, "A women's place is in her Union," well, you can look at Liz, a woman of small stature, but one that made her voice heard by taking advantage of the 1st amendment in every Union meeting, along with some of their fellow sisters making their point that a woman should be recognized.

This was just the beginning. History was still in the making when Liz had the opportunity to sit in the National Negotiations between the UAW and the Ford Motor Company in 1967. Mrs. Elizabeth "Liz" Jackson has open the door for many African-American women, and women in general, by standing strong in what she believed in. There was no quit in Liz. She was, and still is, a fighter. That's why it gives great pleasure to honor such a great women.

It's always been said that behind every man stands a great women. Well, I would like to acknowledge the man that stood alongside Liz during all her endeavors, supporting her every step of the way, her late husband and friend of 63 years, A.W. "Pete" Jackson. Pete was a Trade Unionist out of General Motors.



Doug Brothers, Frame Plant President, Elizabeth Jackson, and Buddy Battle III



RETIREES CORNER

I would like to wish all of our retired Brothers and Sisters and spouses, a happy belated New Year. Just as a reminder, you will be receiving some mail regarding the latest information about your benefits. Please read all your mail. If you don't understand something please contact the Benefits Office at the Local. Wishing all of you well, I look forward to seeing you at the next Retirees meeting on March 26, 2006.

UAW Local 600 Presents
4th ANNUAL SPIRIT OF KING COMMUNITY AWARD DINNER
April 8, 2006

5:00p.m.- Social Hour
6:00p.m.- Dinner
8:00p.m.- Program
at
UAW Local 600
10550 Dix
Dearborn, MI 48120

RECIPIENT OF THE SPIRIT OF KING AWARD
Ms. Maryann Mahaffey

HOSTED BY Local 600 Women's Committee
Attire: Business Attire
Free Admission

YOU MUST RSVP BY APRIL 1, 2006
ONLY 500 SEATS AVAILABLE
RSVP: Brenda Gamble, 313-842-2978

DO BUY LIST

Continued from page 5

PLUMBING AND MISC. PRODUCTS
Faucets, Tubs, Plumbing Fixtures, Toilets: Kohler (UAW). Royal Brass (IBB)
Garage Doors: Americano, Independence, Pioneer, Freedom, Liberty, Therm-O-Air (IBB), Taylor Building Product (UAW)
Generators: Kohler, Onan (UAW)
Sinks (aluminum): Advance Pressure Casting Corp., Kohler and Polar (UAW)
Water Heaters: Bradford-White, Jetglas (UAW)

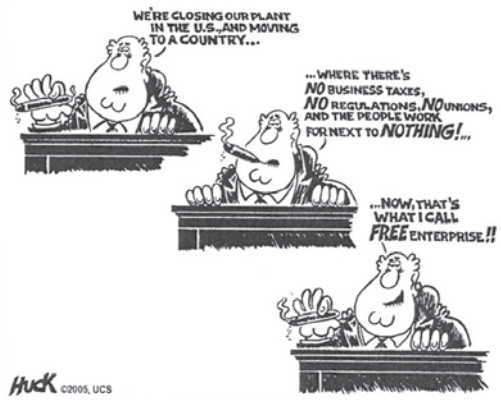
SPORTING GOODS
Boats, Pontoon: Riviera Cruiser by LML Corp (UAW), Weere Pontoon Boats (IAM)
Boat Covers: Charles Rice (UAW)
Boat Parts, Water Pumps, Impellers, Bilge Pumps, Macerators, Pool Motors, Pool Pumps: ITT Jabsco (UAW)
Boat Ropes: Dare Products
Clay Pigeons: Remington (UAW)
Fishing Net: FNT (UAW)
Handguns & Rifles: Colt (UAW), Remington (IAM), Winchester (IAM)
Hockey Sticks: Hillerich & Bradsby (UAW)
Marine Hardware, Horse Hardware: North & Judd (UAW)
Pool Lights, Pumps, Heaters Pool Motors: Hydrotech (Purex) (UAW), ITT Jabsco (UAW)
Tennis Nets, Volleyball Nets: Backstop Netting FNT (UAW)

ROSES RAISED BY A FARMWORKERS CREW, ARE NOT ONLY RED THEY'RE UNION-MADE, TOO!

These companies employ members of the United Farm workers of America to nurture and grow their products:

Armstrong
L.E. Cooke, Co.
Jackson and Perkins (J&P)
Meilland Star Roses

Roses can be purchased through the www.ufw.org website.



AFL-CIO NATIONAL BOYCOTTS

ENTERTAINMENT & RECREATION
BIG LEAGUE THEATRICALS ROAD COMPANY
Performing "Miss Saigon"
Actors' Equity Assn./American Federation of Musicians

ECHOSTAR DISH NETWORK
SATELLITE TELEVISION SERVICE
Communications Workers of America

TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL
ADAM'S MARK HOTEL
Hotel in Buffalo, New York
International Union of Operating Engineers

OTHERS
R.J. REYNOLDS TOBACCO CO.
Cigarettes: Best Value, Camel, Century, Doral, Eclipse, Magna, Monarch, More, Now, Salem, Sterling, Vantage, and Winston; Plus all Moonlight Tobacco products
Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers & Grain Millers International Union



SEVERSTAL STEEL

Bill Sutherland, President

CONSOLIDATION, CONSOLIDATION, CONSOLIDATION!

We have all seen the picture of the big fish eating the little fish, and the bigger fish eating the big fish, and on, and on it goes. Now, change that image from fish to steel companies, and you will have a pretty good idea of the changes that are taking place in the world's steel industry. Just as Rouge Steel was bought by Severstal, almost every independent steel company in the world has been gobbled up by the bigger conglomerates. Now the biggest fish are after each other. London based steel producer Mittal, is making a play to take over Arcelor, the second largest steel producer in the world. If this happens, and most analysts believe it will, Mittal will have an annual steelmaking capacity of 122 million tons, close to three times greater than its closest competitor.

I know a lot of this may make us nervous, but it might not be as bad as it seems. Many reporters of the steel industry believe that as these giants consolidate and foreign companies invest in the North American market, the amount of steel being imported will decrease. The thought is that these companies will not want to import finished products that will reduce pricing here. They may still bring in slabs and semi-finished steel to run in their North American holdings, as Severstal is doing, to increase their output but would not do anything to step on their own toes. While buying steel producers increases each company's capacity, they also get whatever iron ore mines and coke ovens the acquired companies owned, and this allows them some control over the price of raw materials, which helps the bottom line.

CONSOLIDATION

Although consolidation looks good from the company's side, it could create problems for labor unions. As multinational firms create the possibility of shifting production from one region to the next, they weaken the local union's ability to use labor-actions to achieve leverage during bargaining sessions. If this trend continues, organized labor will need to form strong alliances with labor unions around the world as a means of leveling the playing field.

IMPORTS

On the subject of imports, the House of Representatives voted recently to appeal the Byrd Amendment, which takes the money from fines levied on foreign companies who dump goods on our shores and gives it to the American companies who have been injured by said dumping, instead of giving it to the treasury department. To the displeasure of the White House and the World Trade Organization, the Senate stood up and voted 72 to 19 to uphold the amendment. The WTO and The European Union claim that the amendment is the same as subsidizing the U.S. steel industry. I say people who live in glass houses should not throw stones.

CONDOLENCES

On behalf of the entire Steel Unit, I would like to send our sincere condolences to the families of our departed active members and retirees, and also to those who have lost a family member. Active: Bill Rewey, Welder, Blast furnace. Retirees: Elmer Harmala, Con/Cast Maint. retired 1990; Alexander Marchyok, Blast Furnace Maint. retired 1990; Howard Perkins, Cold Mill Annealing, retired 1992; Alfonso Sindici, Cold Mill Maint. retired 1993; George Ropert, Slab Mill Pipe-Fitter, retired 1993; Clyde Cobb Jr., Cold Mill Shipping, retired 1999; Robert "Robby" Robinson, BOF, Bricklayer, retired 2003; Lavaughn Grouce, Cold Mill Cleaner, retired 2004; Cedric Colman, Cold Mill Crane Operator, retired 2004; Bill Nabozny, Welder J-9 Tin Shop, retired 2004.

May the souls of those who have gone before us rest in peace.

DEARBORN TRUCK PLANT

Joe Winfield, President

UNCERTAIN FUTURE

To our brothers and sisters working and retired, we hope that you enjoyed your February Black History month.

Inside the Rouge Complex, the Company has banned all products driven in the gate except the Ford family of cars as of February 1, 2006. After the Jan. 23rd announcement of plant closings, there have been many questions not answered. We have seen in the papers, offers of buyouts, transfers, and school tuition offers etc. They have not come to the Dearborn Truck Plant as of yet, but our members are anticipating hearing about these offers here.

The company is watching to see what happens when the San Antonio Toyota Truck Plant launches their latest model. This plant is capable of producing 200,000 trucks per year.

WORK SCHEDULE AND ATTENDANCE

We are currently scheduled for forty hours until the summer shutdown. The Company has stepped up their attendance policy on employees they say have chronic attendance. We will continue to represent and write grievances for our people. But, a word to the wise, please come to work and be on time. Do not give them an excuse to come after you.

SUPPORT V-CAP

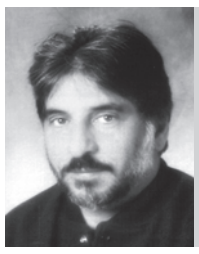
It is very important to give as much as you can to the V-CAP program because we need to elect people that support unions and the labor movement. We know that certain elected government officials would like to make our state a right-to-work state, which would help to take away our hard earn rights as union workers.

INCOME TAX SERVICE

Taxes will be filled out once again at Local 600 starting February 7, 2006 until April 13, 2006. The hours are Tuesdays and Wednesdays 9:00a.m. To 6:00p.m., and Thursdays 9:00a.m. until 3:00p.m. If you have any questions regarding taxes, please contact the Local at 313-842-5350, Ext. 255.

2007 IS A CONTRACT YEAR

Remember next year will be contract time so this will make for some interesting times. The Company, for what it's worth, has somewhat announced it cannot afford the present contractual obligations.



PARTS DEPOTS

Frank Fabrizio, President

NECESSARY CHANGES

The UAW membership, by 51%, ratified the revisions for benefits. While no one wants to "lose" anything, the changes were necessary and the membership agreed. As everyone knows, Mark Fields announced the Way Forward plan, which included a number of plant closures. The problem with the Ford Motor Company, as I see it, is that the products that Ford Motor Company, has in dealerships do not excite or entice people to our products. The Mustang is going great and this is the type of vehicle that the public wants and buys. We need more styling upgrades in the other vehicles that we make.

UNIT UPDATE

At NPDC and DHVC, there are currently 26 persons on inverse lay-off. The inbound and outbound volumes have dropped dramatically at both locations. Hopefully, these trends will reverse as we look to gain back our market share. At WPAC, the Company will be doing a one week shut-down in July. It will be either the first or second week of July.

THE WAY BACKWARD

A "new" management team has been put in place at NPDC. This "team" is more concerned about chairs, newspapers, cafeteria hours, than service to our customers. Our error rates, lines per man hour, and over-all quality, are the best in the FCSD. Please tell the membership that the FCSD division has a plan, please tell us that you have a plan other than chairs, newspapers, and cafeteria hours. The UAW members have worked hard to get where we are at, and for this "new team" to come in and destroy our hard work and dedication is unconscionable.

THE SUPERBOWL

The City of Detroit received great reviews for the handling of the Super Bowl. With the game being held at Ford Field, this should have translated into a positive image for the Ford products that the UAW builds. Mark Fields visited the Detroit HVC to see how we ship to the dealers throughout the network. This is the first time that a Vice-President has visited a facility within the FCSD.

CONDOLENCES

To those who have lost loved ones, the entire Committee extends their condolences. May God comfort you during your time of sadness.

UNION MEMBERSHIP UP IN 2005

New figures by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) show that the percentage of union members among U.S. workers held steady at 12.5 percent in 2005, but the total number increased by 213,000, reversing a trend of decline in recent years.

The BLS figures show that nearly 15.7 million workers were union members last year. Among ethnic groups, Black workers were the most likely to be members and men were more likely than women - though the 2.2 percent gap in membership rates between the genders has narrowed considerably since 1983, when the gap was 10 percent. Public sector workers had a union membership rate (36.5) more than four times that of private-sector employees.

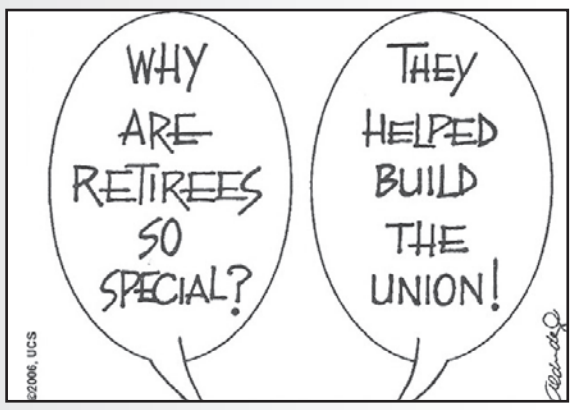
Among public workers, local government employees like teachers, police, and fire fighters had the highest membership rate, at 41.9 percent. In the private sector, workers in transportation and utilities had the highest rate, at 24 percent.

AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said the news is heartening, and he called attention to the growing "union advantage."

"Union workers earned nearly 30 percent more than workers without a union last year, and the difference was even greater among Hispanic union workers, who made a whopping 50 percent more than Hispanic non-union workers," Sweeney said.

While conditions for American workers remain bleak, Sweeney said, "in a political climate that's hostile to workers' rights, these numbers illustrate the extraordinary will of workers to gain a voice on the job despite enormous obstacles."

- UCS News Service





Retired Workers Chapter

Albert Stevenson, President

THE DEATH OF CORETTA SCOTT KING

Local 600 Retirees Chapter joins with people around the world in extending our deepest sympathy to the family of Coretta Scott King, who passed away on Monday, January 30, 2006. Mrs. King never dropped the baton of leadership after the tragic death of her husband, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. She kept Dr. King's nonviolent principles alive by founding the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center for Nonviolent Social Change in 1969 in Atlanta, Georgia. We will miss her quiet, courageous activism and strength, but her legacy and contributions to human rights and social change will last forever.

We encourage all of our retirees to honor and remember her as one of the most graceful and influential civil rights leader of our times.

PROPOSED CHANGES IN UAW-FORD RETIREE HEALTH CARE PROGRAM

You have received, or should have received in the mail, a letter from UAW President, Ron Gettlefinger and Vice President Gerald Bantom, in charge of UAW-Ford, outlining the proposed changes in our health care plan.

Under the new program, retiree health care benefits would be provided by two separate plans.

Modified Ford-Sponsored Plan: Ford will continue to sponsor a retiree health care plan and bear the full cost of that plan. However, this modified plan will require a monthly contribution as well as deductibles, co-payments on the full range of medical and hospitalization services. The changes are summarized on 2 Tables, in the letter that was mailed out to you.

Independent VEBA Trust Plan: To offset or mitigate a large portion of the costs that would otherwise have to be paid by retirees under the modified plan, the UAW negotiated an Independent VEBA Trust that will provide additional funding for retiree health care benefits. The Independent VEBA Trust plan will pick up a large portion of the retiree health care costs that will not be covered by the modified Ford-sponsored plan.

Responsibility for the dental plan will also be transferred without change from Ford sponsorship to the Independent VEBA Trust.

While it is important to understand how each plan – the modified Ford sponsored plan and the Independent VEBA Trust plan will work on is own, the key point is these two plans will work together to provide retirees with health care benefits at a far lower cost than the modified Ford–sponsored plan would provide on its own. Overall, the two plans acting together offer the full range of benefits and coverage as before.

We know that all of this can be very puzzling to our retirees, so we have invited someone from the UAW-Ford Department to come out to our March 26th meeting to fully explain the new agreement to us, and to answer any questions or concerns we may have.

Once again, this will be our first meeting of the year, Sunday, March 26, 2006 at 10:00a.m.. Coffee and doughnuts will be provided.

HEALTHY HEART AWARENESS

At our March meeting we will also have a presentation on heart awareness classes, being offered by Idea Consultants.

The Healthy Heart Awareness class has been designed to help educate workers and retirees about heart disease and stroke, the first and third cause of disability and death in the United States. The information covered includes:

- Heart anatomy and function
- Heart disease and stroke risk factors and development
- Cholesterol and blood pressure concepts
- Heart disease and stroke and treatment information

Healthy Heart Awareness consists on one class before and one class following the screening. The screening is included at no extra charge. Cost: $470.00, will be paid by our UAW-negotiated, Education Tuition Assistance Program funds.

Under the Retiree Education Tuition Assistance Program, we have a $1,500 yearly commitment for education classes we may want to take.

NEW RETIREES

We congratulate all or our new retirees, and invite them to come join our Retirees' Chapter and remain active in our Union. We would encourage you to sign our $2.00 voluntary dues check-off card and become a part of our Chapter. Once you join, you will be given a Local 600 Retirees pin, a pocket calendar with all our meeting dates marked in red, and you will also be given a Retirees Chapter membership ID card. The Retiree Chapter office is open Monday through Friday, from 9:00a.m. – 3:00p.m.

UAW LOCAL 600 FACTS
10550 Dix Avenue
Dearborn, MI 48120

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UAW LOCAL 600 - "A HISTORY TO BE PROUD OF, A TRADITION TO CARRY ON."

Representing the members of...

ArvinMeritor
Associated Spring
Bridgewater Interiors
Brownstown Parts Redistribution Center
Dearborn Diversified Manufacturing Plant
Dearborn Engine & Fuel Tank Plant
Dearborn Stamping Plant / Truck Body
Dearborn Truck Plant
DE-STA-CO
DE-STA-Co Canton
Ford Medical Services Unit
Maintenance & Construction Unit - Ford
Milan Plastics Plant
Parts Depots Unit
Plastech
Ryder Integrated Logistics
SeverStal North America
SeverStal Fire Fighters
SeverStal Salaried Lab
St. Claire
The Industrial Athlete
TNT/Commercial
TNT Sequencing
Tool & Die Unit
Transportation Unit
Visteon Medical Services Unit

Health Care Units

ARC Services of Macomb
Express Scripts
Health Alliance Plan - Clerical
Health Alliance Plan - Labor
Health Alliance Plan - Marketing
Henry Ford Health Services - RN Unit
Henry Ford Health Services - SMTC Unit
Heritage Optical
Medilodge Nursing
Midwest Health Center
Midwestern Dental Centers
Midwestern Vision Center
National Foot Care
New Directions

Is It Unpatriotic To Not Buy American Cars?



Jerry Sullivan
President

"As I sat in an Orlando studio on January 24th waiting to be interviewed on Fox News' *Hannity and Colmes* for the first time, that seemed to be the question I was going to be asked to answer if the introductory comments were any indication. In the studio in New York was Malcolm Bricklin, founder and CEO of Visionary Vehicles, who plans on importing cars from China by 2007. Ford had just announced plans to lay off 30,000 workers, and since even Mr. Bricklin (to his credit) says he doesn't want to see so many Americans join the ranks of the unemployed, it was a good question to ask. But the show started with asking Mr. Bricklin a different question and by the time the cameras pointed to me, I was given a different question as well, so I never really got to answer it.

But, as I continue to think about it since that interview, the answer I would have given to Sean Hannity is the same as my answer today: If it's unpatriotic to destroy the American middle class, then it's unpatriotic to not buy American cars. As a country, we're drowning in a sea of red ink, and as consumers (those who really should know better, anyway) we're drowning is a sea of "what's in it for me." Since President Bush has all but ruled out any government help for either Ford or GM saying they have to make a product that is "relevant" (did you know Mr. Bush himself owns a Ford pickup truck?) it's up to the American consumer to realize that a bankruptcy for Ford or GM or both is definitely not in the national interest. Not only would hundreds of thousands of workers lose their jobs, but about 450,000 retirees would be de-funded. These retirees on fixed incomes would see smaller pensions and reduced medical benefits. The workers that remained would see massive cuts in benefits as well. Big deal, you say? At least American companies still offer their workers pensions. According to a recent article in The Tennessean, Nissan North America new hires won't be able to count on a company pension when they retire. And if you work for Nissan and didn't happen to reach the age of 65 by the end of last year, you won't be participating in the company-sponsored medical plan either.

Continued on page 4

INCOME TAX INFO ON PAGE 3