



# THE ACCORD

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UAW AMALGAMATED LOCAL 2145 NEWSLETTER

August 2010

## ‘GimmeFIVE’ - The power we need to build a stronger UAW

UAW active and retired members aren't the kind of people who sit on the sidelines: We get involved in issues, help out our neighbors and try to be where there is a need.

And today there definitely is need for members to place greater emphasis on winning social and economic justice. There is strength in numbers and we begin to win that justice when we all stand together.

How can you help? The UAW has launched a new member mobilization activism program called "GimmeFIVE." It is designed to recruit and engage members to organize, build power and win justice.

"A major challenge we have is to show the broader public that the union movement is a vital leader for economic change," said UAW President Bob King, who launched the program during the union's 35th Constitutional Convention. "We need to have members involved not only in their local union issues, but in some of the broad policy issues that impact the lives of families in our communities."

GimmeFIVE simply asks members to re-commit to the union by devoting five hours of volunteer time in the following areas: organizing, mobilizing, and political action. Members are also asked to recruit five members to do the same. Members who complete each segment will receive recognition buttons. But the real reward is a stronger union that has the power to win justice for working families, King said.

"Our hope is that the 'GimmeFIVE' program's national scope, use of new technology, and increased participation will generate renewed commitment for the work of our union," King said. "It will also broadcast our greater solidarity to the public."



***Joining GimmeFIVE is as simple as sending a text:***

- \* Enter (313) 288-9979 in the "To" field of your text.
- \* Enter your name and local union number in the message box.
- \* Press send. You will receive a confirmation text welcoming you to the program.

[www.gimmefiveuaw.org](http://www.gimmefiveuaw.org)

**\*\*\*Remember\*\*\***

Regular monthly membership meetings are held at 5:30pm every third Thursday of the month - Steketees building, 5th floor. Stop in to actively participate in your Union membership - You are our strength!



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## Union Rewind

### Two-Tier Wage Scale: What is it?

According to a Google search, a two-tier wage system is a “pay structure in which different pay scales are set for senior workers and for new workers. Found usually in firms with strong union presence”. The system seems to have become very popular in the early 1980’s and has only gained steam since.

This is the wage system we have been working under since the last union ratification.

There are two sides to this coin. How you see this picture depends on which side of the coin you are on. The positive impacts for a company with this system is that they will see an immediate reduction in their overall operating expenses since newer workers are hired at a lower pay scale and have fewer benefits than the more senior employees. The more senior employees, however, will not experience a change in their benefits. Also, a company with the two-tier wage system will be able to hire more employees and the union will see an advantage in this as they can increase their numbers.

In times of economic downturn, such as we are experiencing now, new hires will accept this offer as jobs are scarce and it is better to have a job at lower wages and benefits than no job at all. Obviously, this is a lucrative endeavor for the company.

Over time, this type of wage system will permanently lower wages for the entire company since senior workers at the higher wage scale will eventually retire or may leave the company for other reasons. This will then negate all the years of hard work a union has put into a company for better wages and working conditions. This system can also cause newer workers at lower wages and benefits to become dissatisfied and cause higher turnover among its newer members. The

company will then have to spend more to train new employees due to the higher turnover rate among its newer employees.

One of the most basic principles of unions is to ensure “equal pay for equal work”. This does not happen in a two-tier wage system. Two people working side by side in a company could be doing the same job, but now one is compensated at a much lower rate in terms of a lower pay scale and benefit package.

It is inevitable that the newer union members will become dissatisfied as time goes on. The benefits gained by the senior workers over many years of negotiation will eventually be lost as they retire or leave the company. The pay scale and benefit package of the employees at the lower end of the two-tier wage system will then become the norm.

Is there something you would like to know about your union, or unions in general? Let us know! Send us your subject request to our email: [accordnews@yahoo.com](mailto:accordnews@yahoo.com). and put “Rewind” in the subject line

## Scholarship Winner Takes On Nation Health Care Reform

Destiny Todd, daughter of DBCBSM’s own Tamika Foster, wowed this year’s UAW Terry Lint Memorial Scholarship judges, winning the \$500 prize.



Ms. Todd’s essay titled “How Would National Healthcare Make Life Better for All Americans and How Would It Help Union Workers?” points to the increased equality of services provided with the removal of pre-existing condition consideration. Also touched upon is the topic of how the coverage is “modeled on services currently received by members of Congress...”.

The scholarship award, originally created in 1989 in partnership with Grand Rapids Community College, has helped Kent County Local Union members financially with their GRCC studies. Following the death of Terry Lint, a UAW Brother from Local 1231, the scholarship was renamed by the UAW International Union.

Up until 2001 the scholarship was funded by a small percentage of Strike Fund rebates, but now enjoys the status of being self-supporting.

# Guest Articles

## Living and Learning - Turning Groans to Grins “Black Lake-style”

*(This article provided by Tamika Foster following her attendance of the Family Scholarship Program at Black Lake)*

“I don’t want to go to school!” “Vacation is supposed to be fun.” “I don’t want to go to classes for my summer vacation!” Those were the words my children chanted all month before our trip to Onaway, Michigan. Our family had been selected to attend the Family Scholarship Program this summer. The program was one week long, beginning on Sunday and concluding on Friday. This is the one time of the year when children are permitted to the Walter & May Reuther UAW Education Center, commonly known as Black Lake.

The entire family (union member, spouse, and children ages 3– 18) participated in workshops and programs during the week. All children were housed with their parents. However, there were separate supervised programs for all participants during the day. The daily schedule began at 8:45 a.m. and concluded at 4:00 p.m.

The children were grouped together by ages 3–7, 8–11, and 12–15. Each age group attended daily workshops. However, the 16 to 18-year-olds participated in the adult program. The children were provided the same information as the adults.

It was such an awesome experience to watch my children go from “ugh” to “awww” in a matter of 1 day. Sunday is the day you arrive and register for your workshops and obtain your housing information. Thursday is the final day of workshops and presentations of what was learned during the week. We started our day off with breakfast together. Once done eating, the younger children were escorted to class by either me or my husband to be checked in. We would see each other again at lunch and then at the end of the classes. The children had a week full of events such as the beach, swimming pool, gym, golf lessons, karaoke, pool, ping pong, and family activities we all could participate in. After dinner, the

routine for our family was either the swimming pool or basketball. My children looked forward to each day we were there. By the end of the week, my children did not want to leave.



There was so much history on the premises. There was the mural which had been dedicated to the Center. There are pictures of all the UAW Presidents, except for the newly elected one. There are all type of awards and memorabilia. The facility’s natural scenic beauty was so tranquil. Deer were just outside of our room in the morning. A chipmunk was even inside of the walkway (by accident) one day.

I wanted to let members know about this life-changing event that you are eligible for if you are a UAW member in good standing for one year and have never attended the Scholarship Program. In addition, you must be willing to contribute your time by using your own vacation and/or personal time for the week. You can either be an active member or laid off.

The Union pays all lodging, food, and costs for the entire program. Your expenses would be group photographs, telephone calls, purchases at the Center’s gift store, bookstore, or the Inn. You will be required to pay a \$50 reservation fee, refundable to you as long as you attend all workshops. I encourage you to take advantage of the program.

In Solidarity,  
Tamika Foster

## On Your Behalf - 35th Constitutional Convention of the UAW

*(This article provided by Steve Archer following his attendance of the 35th Constitutional Convention)*



It was an honor to have been elected as a Delegate representing Local 2145 at the UAW’s 35th Constitutional Convention in Detroit which took place June 14th-17th. I am a proud UAW member, and having the opportunity to attend my first constitutional convention left me feeling even prouder to be part of the

UAW family.

There was a lot of business to attend to; so we got started very early Monday morning on June 14th with our UAW Region 1-D caucus meeting which took place at our hotel in Dearborn. We then headed for the COBO convention center in downtown Detroit for the general convention. Over the course of the next 4 days, we had a great deal of discussion on proposals brought to the general con-

vention by the Resolutions Committee. This discussion involved speakers from other Unions and organizations with close ties to the UAW. We voted on several of these resolutions as a general body of Delegates. The following is a list of most of the resolutions which were discussed and voted on during the convention:

- Rebuilding a More Just Economy
  - Poverty and Inequality
- Regulating the Financial System
  - International Trade Policy
  - Health Care Reform
  - Protecting our Pensions
  - Fair Labor Standards
  - Civil and Human Rights

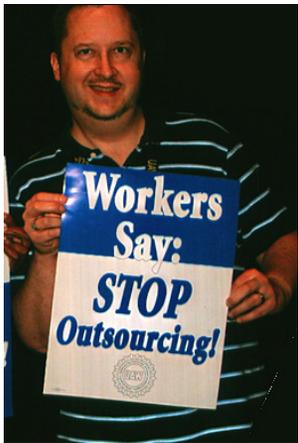
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## On Your Behalf...(continued from previous page)

- Organizing

Our Local's other elected Delegate-Sandy Smith had the honor of addressing all of the convention delegates in support of the resolution regarding Civil and Human Rights. Sandy did a fantastic job representing not only our Local, but all UAW members in so eloquently supporting our Union's long-standing commitment to civil and human rights. On the last day of the convention, a motion was made, supported and approved to accept all proposed resolutions as submitted. We voted on a few changes to our constitution; the most important of which involved the structure of our International Vice Presidents and the salaries of our Union's full-time staff members. We voted to elect our International Executive Board which included the election the UAW's new President-Bob King. The Delegates of Region 1-D also met separately to show unanimous support in a vote for our new Director-Gerald Kariem.

The highlight for me took place on the last day after the conclusion of the convention's general business. All convention delegates assembled for a march for jobs and justice which took place in Detroit's central financial district. This was an amazing display of unity, strength, determination and power in the face of current economic and political struggles faced by our members both currently and over the past several years.



*Thank you again for allowing me to represent our Local at this historic convention celebrating 75 years of Solidarity!*

Respectfully Submitted,  
**Stephen C. Archer-UAW Local 2145**  
Trustee and Steward

## Did You Know...

- *The UAW established the Public Review Board at its 16th Constitutional Convention in April 1957 to provide close public scrutiny of the UAW and to insure the best possible conduct of its affairs.*  
*(Source: Kheel Center for Labor-Management Documentation and Archives, Cornell University Library)*
- *May 1987 marked the UAW Constitutional Convention where the last seven UAW officials who worked with Walter Reuther stepped down. For those of you not familiar, Walter Reuther was the former union president who is largely responsible for shaping the UAW into what it is today.*  
*(Source: Ann Job Woolley, Associated Press, 1983)*

## President's Corner

*This issue:*

### **Internet Usage**

The following is from a letter sent out to our Local back in 2004. Today, as the use of online media increases, it has become more important than ever to keep in mind as you go through your work day.

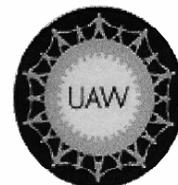
Dear Brothers and Sisters

I'm writing this as an urgent appeal to all of our members to watch e-mail and internet usage. The company has the ability to pull any and all electronic submission either sent or received as well as internet usage history. Given this ability, we all need to act responsibly when utilizing company e-mail and internet capabilities for personal use, and this should never be done on company time. Inappropriate use or abuse of these capabilities is taken very seriously by BCBSM, and could result in employee termination. The Prudence Humphrey Learning Center is available, and provides access to these tools for appropriate personal use on your own time.

We will always do everything we can to represent our membership in a fair and equitable manner with BCBSM management. This includes reserving the right to grieve what we consider to be unfair or unjust disciplinary action taken against one of our UAW members. Our hope is that we can avoid having to take these steps at all.

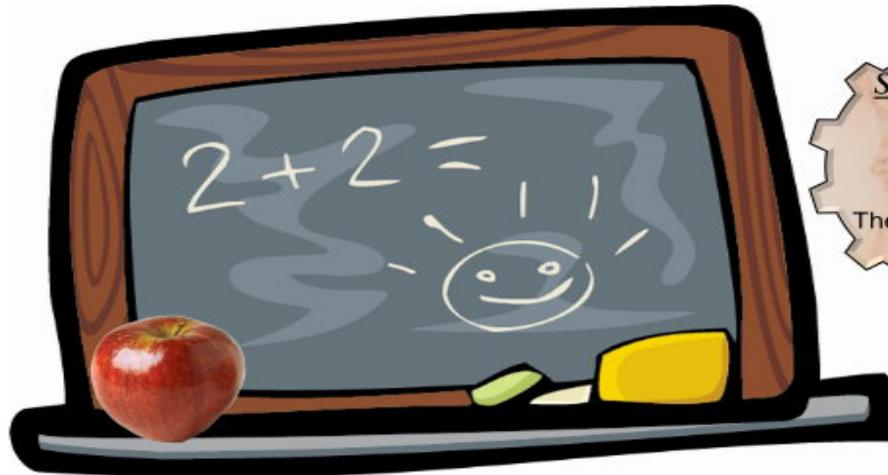
If you have further questions regarding this issue, please see your assigned Steward or Alternate Steward. Thank you.

Yours in Solidarity,  
Janice Hilliard  
President, UAW Local 2145



# Back to School Supply Drive

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REMEMBER getting ALL THOSE  
GREAT SUPPLIES before  
SCHOOL each year?

Some kids won't...

Please consider donating to the Baxter  
Community Center Back to School Supply Drive.

Items needed include: Markers, crayons,  
pencils, erasers, notepads, scissors, glue,  
Kleenex, rulers, hand sanitizer, tape, folders  
and backpacks.

You need not buy all of this, but any contribution  
to the above list would give a child the confidence  
to start the year out right!

*Please drop items in bins by the elevators*

**Comments...Suggestions...Story Ideas? Contact Us!**

**We are looking for newsworthy articles!**

If you have something you would like to see in *The Accord*, send it to us at:

**[AccordNews@yahoo.com](mailto:AccordNews@yahoo.com)**

(If it looks a little different than last issue, it is..."technical difficulties" you might say...)

All articles are subject to approval, review, and editing. Articles must be submitted to the email address above.

*No handwritten articles will be accepted.*