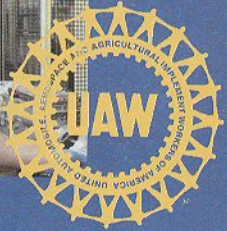


# SOLIDARITY

SPECIAL NEW MEMBER ISSUE



# UNION & PROUD!



# Carrying on the UAW's legacy

**O**n behalf of the UAW's International Executive Board, we extend our warmest welcome to our union's new members. We encourage you to become an active and informed member in your local union and region. It is important that you attend your local union's membership meetings and Community Action Program (CAP) meetings. We urge you to participate in the activities and programs of the local union's standing committees, such as volunteering to register voters or helping out with a community service project.

The UAW is a democratic union, and that means the members don't belong to the union, the union belongs to the members.

The cornerstone of our democracy is the UAW Constitution, which is the highest law in our union. It sets forth the rights, guarantees and responsibilities of UAW members. Every four years, elected delegates from our nearly 900 local unions convene at a Constitutional Convention where issues are democratically debated and decided.

The values and vision of the UAW for social and economic justice for all people have also defined who we are as a union. We are committed to fighting for workers' rights here at home as well as worldwide. That's why we

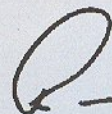
lobby to raise the minimum wage in the United States while working to end child labor in underdeveloped countries. The ongoing fight for fair-trade agreements to include provisions for workers' rights here and abroad is of key importance to our union.

You now are part of a union with a rich and colorful history. As you'll read in these pages, the UAW was built by ordinary working people who accomplished the extraordinary because they believed deeply in the dignity of work and the dignity of workers. As a union we were able to achieve what none of us could do alone. And just as it was true more than 70 years ago, it remains true today: Our unity is our power.

As a new generation of workers, it is your turn to carry on our union's legacy of democracy and solidarity. As we move forward, let us remember it is not enough just to carry a union card in our wallets or purses; we must carry union in our hearts.



Solidarity forever,

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Gettelfinger'.

Ron Gettelfinger



# Welcome TO THE UAW



**C**ongratulations! You are now a proud member of the UAW.

Some of you have just gone through an organizing campaign. Others were hired into an already organized shop. Either way the union's goals are the same – respect and dignity on the job, and economic and social justice for all.

The UAW is one of the largest, most effective and democratic unions in North America. We are proud of our record at the bargaining table. UAW contracts have set the standard for labor agreements in industry after industry, and in every sector of the economy.

UAW-represented workplaces range from multinational corporations, small

manufacturers and state and local governments to colleges and universities, hospitals and private non-profit organizations.

We make automobiles and their parts, tractors and bulldozers, airplanes and rocket engines, shopping carts and beer. We teach university courses, care for preschoolers, nurse the sick, counsel troubled families, design





vehicles and write for newspapers and magazines.

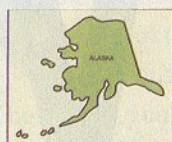
Since our founding in 1935 the UAW has also been a force for social and economic progress for all working people. Our union's mission and vision has always been about more than financial

gain – although negotiating good wages, safe working conditions and decent benefits are some of our most important achievements.

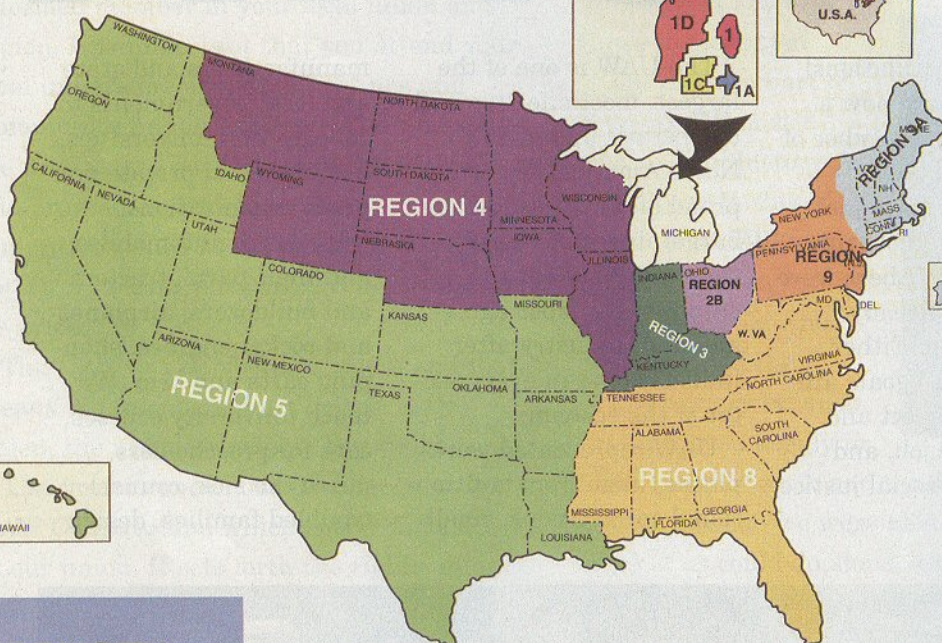
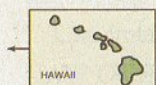
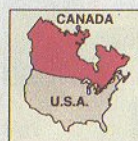
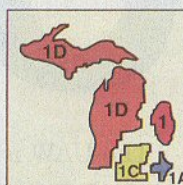
As time passes and social and economic realities change, the UAW has used innovative

approaches to bargain contracts that live up to the standards that our members deserve.

It is through our solidarity that the union has achieved so much. And solidarity will always be our power as we continue fighting for workers' rights.



## UAW REGIONAL MAP



Geographically the UAW comprises 11 regions. Elected delegates from each region vote for their director, who is a member of the union's International Executive Board.

The 10 states with the largest number of active UAW members are Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, New York, Missouri, California, Wisconsin, Kentucky and Iowa.

## STRENGTH IN NUMBERS

The UAW represents more than 580,000 active workers and about 563,000 retirees in the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico. UAW membership comes from nearly 900 local unions and about 1,500 employers.

*A lot of time people ask, 'What do we have to do with the UAW?' The UAW is the leader for academic student employees. It represents more ASEs than any union in the country. The UAW gets top contracts and has a tradition that stands up for the rights of workers in the most democratic and most effective way possible.*

**Xochi Lopez, Local 4123, California State University**





# This is *your* union

## Local union delegates set UAW policy

**T**he UAW Constitutional Convention, held every four years, is the highest policy-making body of our union.

Its authority comes from you and every other UAW member. Local union members elect delegates to the Constitutional Convention, and any union member in good standing is eligible to run for delegate.

The convention delegates then elect the UAW International president, secretary-treasurer, vice presidents and trustees. Regional directors are elected at the Constitutional Convention by the delegates of their regions in separate regional meetings.

Convention delegates are the only ones who have the authority to:

- Amend the UAW Constitution by majority vote.
- Debate and adopt resolutions

stating the UAW's positions on social and economic issues.

- Define the powers of the International officers.
- Set the salaries of International officers and regional directors.
- Establish appeal procedures.
- Set election rules.

The International Executive Board is responsible for carrying out the programs and policies approved by the Constitutional Convention delegates and running the day-to-day operations of the International Union.

The International Executive Board consists of International officers – president, secretary-treasurer and vice presidents – and the regional directors. All are elected to four-year terms by the delegates to the Constitutional Convention.

The president is responsible for

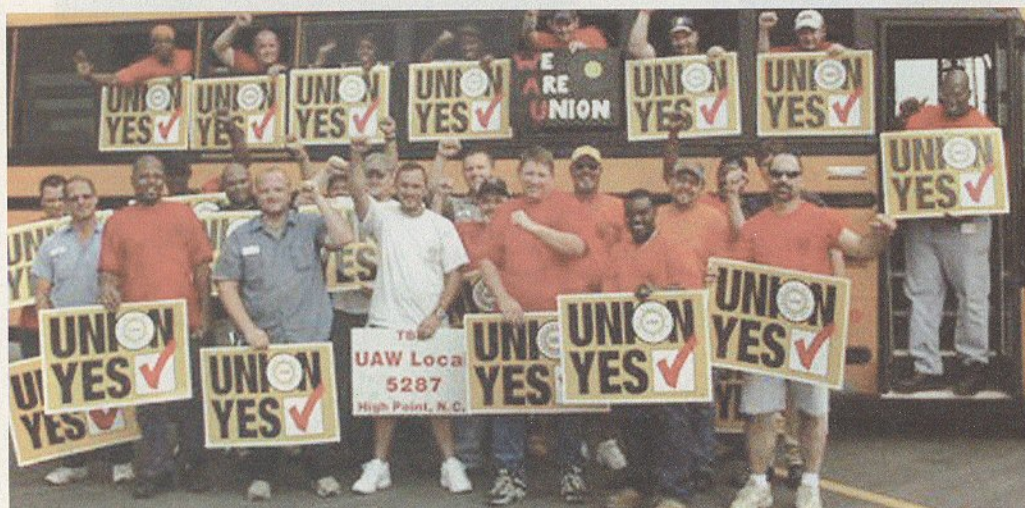
performing such duties as are necessary to protect and advance the interests of the UAW membership, assigning duties to International officers and representatives, and directing the work of the union in accordance with the UAW Constitution. The president reports to the International Executive Board every three months.

The secretary-treasurer is responsible for maintaining the International Union's funds, conducting audits and ensuring that the financial affairs of the union comply with the UAW Constitution and state and federal laws. An annual statement of the International Union's finances is published in *Solidarity* magazine.

The UAW International headquarters is Solidarity House, 8000 E. Jefferson Ave., Detroit, MI 48214.



# Locals on the front line



## Contract is the key

The collective-bargaining process gives workers power in decisions that affect our everyday lives on the job as well as the economic security of our families. Collective bargaining has been called the art of the possible – and the UAW, more than any other union, has pushed the boundaries of what is possible in collective bargaining.

Almost all the gains UAW members have won over the years came at the bargaining table. The bargaining committee (sometimes called the top committee or shop committee) is usually the first to go into action after a new

local or unit is organized. Local union members elect their local union bargaining committee.

Collective-bargaining goals are set democratically by unit members at the local and by elected delegates to the Collective Bargaining Convention. Contracts cover issues like wages, benefits, working conditions, grievance procedures, seniority, union representation, work hours, vacation and holidays. It is the cornerstone of the workers' relationship with the company.

All tentative agreements must be voted on by secret ballot by the members. Ratification requires a majority of those casting votes.

*In the union workplace you're guaranteed fair treatment, guaranteed better benefits, guaranteed seniority – seniority will prevent favoritism. ... I'm proud to be a member of the UAW. That's one of the best things that ever happened to me in my life. I look forward to doing as much as I can.*

**Russell Rushing, Local 2297, Plastech Engineered Products, Shreveport, La.**

Every day your local union stands on the front lines fighting for your rights at your workplace. The most important day-to-day work of the UAW takes place at the local union. That includes handling grievances, solving health and safety problems, bargaining local contracts, grassroots political action and more.

Like any democratic organization, your local union can be only as effective as you make it through participation in your local union's elections, membership meetings, standing committees and other activities.

There are so many ways to participate, from organizing a charity event to playing on the softball team. You can take a class on union history or help plan the annual picnic.

As a UAW member, you have the right to run for elected leadership positions in your local union, elect your union leaders and vote on local union actions, on contracts and – if necessary – on strike actions.

The UAW Constitution guarantees you and every UAW member the right to participate fully in running your union. It's up to you to exercise your rights.





*The UAW is not about just its members; it's about helping everybody. That's what this country is all about. We encourage new members to get involved in the local. The more people who are with us, the easier it is to get what we need.*

**Rich Bly, president, Local 424,  
American Axle, Buffalo, N.Y.**

## Reaching beyond the workplace

Unions are made up of caring people. Whether it is helping out a neighbor in need, disaster relief or charitable giving, UAW members stand ready to serve in their communities.

Community Services is a local union

standing committee called for by the UAW Constitution. The union is part of the community, and active community service strengthens that connection. Local union members

have volunteered for services from Meals on Wheels to Habitat for Humanity; they have contributed to United Way and the Red Cross; they have held fund-raising events like golf outings, pancake breakfasts and Christmas parties. From adopting a highway to adopting a family there is no limit to the ways local unions can reach out beyond the workplace – a great way to build union power and solidarity.

That's the real mettle of our union, stepping forward to help others, not just ourselves.

