

# Rank And File The UAW Local 3047 NEWSLETTER



January, 2024

## Contract Bargaining To Begin Early

**Just announced, Local 3047 and Metalsa will begin collective bargaining in February as opposed to May as expected**

By: Tyler Mills

To the surprise of many at the start of the new year, Metalsa has approached the Local Union's Executive Board wanting to begin contract negotiations a whole three months early, as opposed to the traditional route of holding off closer to the collective bargaining agreement expiration deadline of May 1st. Following the big wins at the Big-Three negotiations as well as new economic development projects, such as Blue Oval, the membership at Local 3047 has an opportunity to reach a record contract to reflect the value that members create for not only Metalsa, but also Ford as we build one of the most important pieces of safety equipment in the F-150 truck.

For the membership of the floor, this unprecedented development did create some confusion, requiring some members to very quickly finish their contractual demand surveys to ensure their own voices would be heard at the bargaining table. As we walk into negotiations this February, with membership demands at the ready, the bargaining team will surely be in for a difficult negotiation, but with the Local memberships support, anything is possible.

Now what can individual members do to help support our bargaining team in negotiations? Begin by participating in the strike authorization vote that will be coming up to allow our bargaining team the full arsenal of tools for our negotiations. Next, get involved attending meetings and getting bargaining updates that will allow you to know where negotiations are at, and ensure that you let the bargaining team know your personal feelings on the state of negotiations. Inform the executive board or your Union Steward if you notice management making process or rule changes while in negotiations. Join a Standing Committee to help support brothers and sisters on the floor and the community at large not only throughout negotiations, but beyond. Save some money if you can and be prepared for a potential strike if the bargaining team determines that it is necessary to ensure a fair contract that reflects our value. We never want to strike, but we will be prepared if necessary. Finally, be loud, stand up with your brothers and sisters and let's win big.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Picture: provided by [www.uaw.org](http://www.uaw.org)

# What is a strike authorization vote?



## Is the vote going to bring us out on strike?

No, a strike authorization vote does not mean that we are going out on strike. Before negotiations begin between the bargaining committee and the company, the membership of a UAW local will be presented with a strike authorization vote. This is a vote by members in good standing to give the bargaining committee the ability to call a strike if they feel that it is necessary during negotiations in order to get a good contract.

This vote is incredibly important for the membership because it shows the company that we are taking these negotiations seriously, and that they had better do the same, lest we feel the need to use this incredibly powerful tool. The membership will be given due notice of the date and location of the vote which requires a two-thirds ( $\frac{2}{3}$ ) majority of voting members in good standing. Every member in good standing has the right to vote on this issue by secret ballot. So make sure you keep an eye out for the date the strike authorization vote will take place and get out to vote!<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Picture: UAW workers on strike in Michigan

# January 2024 Calendar

	1)	2)	3)	4)	5)	6)
7)	8)	9)	10) Local Union Meeting (Check Shift Time)	11)	12)	13)
14)	15)	16)	17)	18)	19)	20)
21)	22)	23)	24)	25)	26)	27)
28) Women's Committee Meeting 3:00 PM	29)	30)	31)			

# Stand-Up 2.0 Update

The historic forty day UAW Stand-Up strike was a massive continuation of the surging labor movement in the United States. As members held the line, all across the country, UAW members won a historic contract leading to wins like: double digit wage increases, temporary worker conversion, and the return of the Cost Of Living Adjustment or COLA in their contracts. The negotiating teams faced staunch opposition by management during these talks, the companies claiming that they need to remain competitive against the non-union companies. During a Facebook live event on December 11th, President Fein is quoted responding to this message, “Every time the Big-Three have tried to take something back or weaken our Union, it’s in the name of competition, pushing a race to the bottom, using the non-union auto workers as an excuse. The Big-Three say, “they can’t compete with non-union companies that keep wages and benefits low.” We’re gonna help them with that problem.” This call to action officially launched the Stand-Up 2.0 organizing drive at the thirteen non-union automakers in the United States.



While in the thick of negotiations and carrying on through ratification, non-union auto workers began reaching out to the UAW about launching organizing drives within their plants and signing union authorization cards as the fight for a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work began. The companies have tried their typical tactics of carrot and stick in preparation, originally offering raises for their workers in hopes of discouraging concerted Union activity. An example: last year, workers at Toyota received a \$0.25

raise, post UAW contract, the company immediately offered a 9% raise to its workers. When workers, who knew their legal right to engage in protected, concerted union activity, continued their organizing drives, the companies began resorting to typical, illegal union busting. At a Honda assembly plant in Greensburg Indiana, a worker named Josh Cupit, made pro-UAW stickers with his own time and money. As he began passing them out around the plant, a supervisor told Josh to remove the sticker from his uniform and stop handing them out to other team members. When Josh and his fellow team members refused, the company began to harass Josh with trumped up charges and write ups, and went so far as to move a supervisor work desk to an area where they could illegally spy on the workers. At Hyundai, they have begun forcing workers to attend captive audience meetings at the beginning of shift to promote their anti-union agenda. The UAW has filed unfair labor practice labor board charges against Honda, Hyundai, and other automakers for engaging in such union-busting tactics.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> SOURCE: <https://uaw.org/uaw-president-shawn-fain-addresses-non-union-autoworkers-urges-them-to-stand-up/>

PHOTO: Volkswagen Workers in Chattanooga, TN

<https://uaw.org/volkswagen-workers-faith-coalition-and-uaw-president-shawn-fain-to-visit-chattanooga-plant-to-demand-vw-stop-union-busting-union-files-new-federal-labor-charges-against-unlawful-vw-policies/>



The fight is just getting started to unionize the thirteen non-union automakers. President Fein, wearing a red UAW hoodie with a 'Delta-AFA Supporter' button, referencing the flight attendants organizing drive at Delta airlines, commented, "We're gonna raise the standard across the country, instead of lowering it." With this, Fein laid out the game plan for Stand-Up 2.0 with the 30-50-70 strategy. As the Union begins its organizing drive within a plant, with 30% of members signing union authorization cards, the drive will go public with the announcement of their own organizing committee, letting the world know that workers are ready to stand up. At 50% of members signing, President Fein, himself, will hold and attend a pro-union rally for workers of that facility. Finally at 70% of members signing, the International Union with the workers of the organizing plant will demand Local voluntary recognition, or a vote to officially recognize the new Local.

While getting recognition is a major win for organizing local unions, the second phase comes with getting a first contract. Fein has not gone into details on International's strategy on how they will work to obtain first contracts, but I am certainly expecting some exciting times to come soon. Be sure to check out UAW.org for more information.

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<sup>4</sup> PHOTO: Honda Assembly Plant Worker Josh Cupit interview on More Perfect Union  
<https://uaw.org/workers-at-honda-hyundai-and-vw-stand-up-to-management-intimidation-file-unfair-labor-practice-charges-2/>

# What's COLA?

## The Cost of Living Adjustment to Wages

One of the biggest wins in these negotiations for workers is the reinstatement of COLA, or a Cost Of Living Adjustment. Prior to the concessions made by UAW workers in 2007 and 2008, in order to keep the big automakers afloat, COLA was a typical addition to workers compensation in contracts. In 2021, when UAW members at John Deere went on strike, through their collective action, got the ball rolling again by re-negotiating COLA into their own collective bargaining agreement. Many people throughout the country said that COLA would never be brought back, but UAW workers at John Deere showed the country that through collective bargaining and striking, anything is possible. A COLA formula works in conjunction with rising inflation. As inflation begins to increase, in addition to normal hourly compensation, workers receive additional money to combat increased prices that come with market volatility. As inflation then begins to lower back down, so will the money that comes with COLA, however at no time can the amount go negative. Workers will always receive, at minimum, their base wages. With COLA back on the bargaining table, workers can continue to foster the working class, and put food on the table even when times get tough.<sup>5</sup>

## WHAT'S UP WITH COLA?

**NEW:** The new inflation figures just came in, and **our new COLA will be even higher than we expected.** When it kicks in, everyone will be getting 21 cents added into their base wage, in addition to our general wage increase, ratification bonus, and jumps in the wage rate due to temp conversions, ending of wage tiers, and the shortening of the progression!

### ? So how does COLA work?

COLA gets added into your base wage, based on a formula that increases with inflation. It can never go negative, and it adds up over time. COLA is added to every hour worked, including overtime.

### ? How much is COLA actually worth?

Under our conservative estimate, we expect COLA to add around \$8,800 to everyone's wages over the life of the agreement. It's already higher than we estimated. And those increases fold-in to your wages at the end of the contract. It's worth more than the bonuses on its own AND it adds to your lifetime earnings. A bonus is a one-time thing; COLA is forever.

### ? Does it affect our healthcare or any other provisions?

COLA doesn't affect your healthcare, your profit-sharing, your FMLA, or any other issue. We won back the language we lost in 2007, and even added a guaranteed fold-in.



<sup>5</sup> John Deere COLA information from [deere.com](http://deere.com)

# Committee Highlight

## An Interview With Community Service Committee Chair, Edwin Perez



“I’m quoting Walter Ruether, our fourth international president of [the] UAW, ‘There is no greater calling than to serve your fellow man. There is no greater contribution than to help the weak. There is no greater satisfaction than to have done it well.’” Edwin Perez quoted sharing the creed and honor of the Community Service Committee at Local 3047. Serving as chair of the committee for the last year and a half, Edwin has continued to foster a movement of service towards, not only the Union brothers and sisters at Local 3047, but the overarching community of Hardin County as a whole. “[This committee] supports St. Jude’s Children’s Hospital for Pediatric Cancer Research, as well as Toys for Tots, the United States Marine Corps Reserve organization that collects donated toys from the public so that underprivileged children can have a good Christmas,” he continued when asked about the different organizations that the committee works with to foster an idea of commonality. “The purpose

of the committee is to assist the community within and without Local 3047. We support food drives, soup kitchens, and foundations that feed the homeless. We also assist other local unions that are out on strike, as well as disaster relief assistance.” Edwin continued discussing members voluntary efforts, “we are also in charge of running the strike should our own local need to during negotiations.”

The team of the Community Service Committee is intimately involved throughout the local, with many members serving on several committees and engaged in all sorts of union activity. As one of the core standing committee’s, as per the UAW constitution, the Community Service Committee strives to bring people together through voluntary service, the desire to bring the wellbeing of all people to new heights is an essential tenet of all these members. Edwin shared, “my favorite part in being a member is the events. I am honored to participate in a committee that has such awesome members. Those guys and gals are rockstars and I really enjoy spending time and volunteering with them because they are family to me.” When asked about how to join this team, Edwin replied, “If any union member would like to get involved, then come join us at the union meetings at the hall, every second Wednesday of the month and get together with a committee member or executive board member. We also have some events coming up. March 24th, we will be hosting the second annual Spring Festival where union members can bring their children down to the union hall and meet the Easter Bunny, do arts and crafts, eat some food, and have a lot of fun. Maybe even get some candy!”

Edwin finished with, “What we would like our union brothers and sisters to know, is that we are open to hear your ideas. We are dedicated to helping the community, and this committee is just a small part of our local and our union. There are other committees, positions within the local like steward and bargaining committee positions. This is what makes our union the greatest union around. We all love what we do.” If you are interested in learning more about the Community Service Committee, or would like to join, please reach out to an executive board member or committee member for more information.

# Women's Committee

On November 9-12th in Minneapolis, Minnesota the Coalition of Labor Union Women, or CLUW, held their biennial convention. UAW Local 3047 members Bonnie Milliner and Becky Staley returned from representing the local at the convention with a new vision for equality for women in the workplace and advancement for leadership in labor. Started in 1974, the Coalition of Labor Union Women is “America’s only national organization for union women.”<sup>6</sup> The goal of CLUW, when initially formed was to “address the critical needs of millions of unorganized working women and make unions more responsive to the needs of all working women”<sup>7</sup> Today, CLUW has gone even further by providing scholarships to women for further education to advance as labor leaders, and continues to support working women throughout the country to ensure gender equality in the workplace and society at large. For more information on CLUW or to become a member, visit their website at [cluw.org](http://cluw.org).<sup>8</sup>



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<sup>6</sup> [https://www.cluw.org/index.cfm?zone=/unionactive/view\\_page.cfm&page=About20CLUW](https://www.cluw.org/index.cfm?zone=/unionactive/view_page.cfm&page=About20CLUW)

<sup>7</sup> [https://www.cluw.org/index.cfm?zone=/unionactive/view\\_article.cfm&HomeID=430444&page=About20CLUW](https://www.cluw.org/index.cfm?zone=/unionactive/view_article.cfm&HomeID=430444&page=About20CLUW)

<sup>8</sup> Picture: Local 3047 members Becky Staley and Bonnie Milliner at the 2023 CLUW conference



# Community Service Committee

It's that time again when the weather's getting colder, days are getting shorter, and community service committee chair, Edwin Perez, is rolling out the train for Toys For Tots! This is a charity organization run by the United States Marine Corps Reserves in conjunction with companies and institutions throughout the country. Metalsa and Local 3047 are continuing the tradition again this year in order to collect toys for underserved communities and underprivileged children. It is a wonderful sight to see that we can set aside our differences for the betterment of our community as a whole. Make sure to get your donations in while you can. You can find donation boxes outside of the Main Cafeteria and the Hydro Cafeteria.<sup>9</sup>



<sup>9</sup> Picture: Local 3047 Community Service Committee at a Toys for Tots event

# Union Basics: The Fight For Retirement Benefits

By: Tyler Mills

Retirement security has been a hard fought battle for the UAW since its inception in 1935. Prior to the labor movement gaining ground in the United States, workers were completely on their own for the hopes of retiring with dignity. Pensions and 401k plans did not exist, and with the title wave of losses brought by the Great Depression that started in 1929, millions of working class people lost everything they had. People who had spent their entire lives saving for the hopes of providing a quality life for their families, and the dreams of eventually being able to enjoy the fruits of their labor, were dashed in one fell swoop. There was no guarantee of being able to live their final years in peace, free of the requirement to work. Instead, workers needed to make a choice: go hungry, or be forced to work in deplorable conditions with little pay until they were no longer physically able, and were forced to be dependent on their children to care for them in their old age.

Throughout the 1920's and 1930's, unionist and workers party members pushed hard against the establishment of corporations that continued to put profit over the wellbeing of their workers. Men like Andrew Carnegie, John D. Rockefeller Jr., and Henry Ford, men of incredible capital and influence, saw the labor of the men and women working within their industries as a means to an end, a necessary cog in the industrial machine that led to their own entrepreneurial gains. These wealthy men, enriching themselves on the backs of working people, quickly grew out of hand leading to an intense struggle for power and control. The idea of a fair day's pay for a fair day's work, did not fit within the cultural norm, but workers had had enough. These working men and women dedicated the prime years of their lives to these corporations in the hopes of achieving the American dream at a distinct disadvantage to their wealthy counterparts.



Then in 1949, everything changed. To the surprise of everyone in the country, including the US House of Representatives, UAW members at Ford were able to secure a \$100 a month pension at age 65 after 30 years of service in addition to their social security benefits during collective bargaining negotiations. Twenty-four hours after the Ford Motor Company announced their signing of the contract, the US House of Representatives voted to raise social security benefits for all Americans. This momentous achievement is a clear and concise example of how union solidarity and working people, fighting for the betterment of society, can reach heights that even the most powerful people and institutions in the country cannot accomplish without direct incentive.<sup>10</sup>

Pensions quickly became the standard retirement plan for workers throughout the country. Unfortunately in the 1970's and 80's, the 401k savings plan began to gain traction with employers as a cheaper alternative to the fixed payouts of benefit pension plans. The main difference in the two retirement plans being how much the company contributes for the employee who's service they provide these companies for years of their lives. Luckily here at Local 3047, our collective bargaining agreement includes not only employer contributions to our 401k plan, but we also enjoy employer contributions to our Steelworkers Pension Plan. Pensions provide recompense for the years of service an employee provides to a company, whereas a 401k is essentially a savings account. We as UAW members should advocate for the return of benefit pension plans as the standard for working class people in the United States. Be sure to reach out to your government representatives and let them know that they need to support labor, pass the Protect the Right to Organize Act and fight for working people to be able to retire with the dignity that we all deserve. In the words of Eugene V. Debs, "Those who produce should have, but we know that those who produce the most - that is, those who work hardest, and at the most difficult and most menial tasks, have the least." Solidarity brothers and sisters, and I'll see you on the floor.<sup>111213</sup>



<sup>10</sup> <https://uaw.org/members/retirees/history/>

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.epi.org/publication/pro-act-problem-solution-chart/>

<sup>12</sup> PHOTO: <https://uaw.org/members/retirees/history/>

<sup>13</sup> PHOTO:

[https://media.cnn.com/api/v1/images/stellar/prod/230915122942-02-gm-sit-down-strike-flint-mi-1937-file-restricted.jpg?c=16x9&q=h\\_720,w\\_1280,c\\_fill](https://media.cnn.com/api/v1/images/stellar/prod/230915122942-02-gm-sit-down-strike-flint-mi-1937-file-restricted.jpg?c=16x9&q=h_720,w_1280,c_fill)

## Editorial Policy

At The International Union, United Automobile, Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) Local 3047 Newsletter, we wish to present a quality publication to build member solidarity, inform, and educate members of the goings-on within the Local Union, as well as throughout the world. In order to accomplish this goal, the media team and Local Executive Board reserve the right to edit and publish articles and photographs as we see fit in order to maintain journalistic integrity as well as adhere to the IUAW communication standards found in the UAW Constitution.

### **Content, Submissions, and Approval**

Within each issue of the Local 3047 Newsletter, we wish to present you with a variety of information that is relevant to you as a Union member. Standing committee updates and meeting times, as well as meeting times for Local meetings and elections will be included throughout the publication. A member spotlight, highlighting a current or former member of the Local will bring a sense of solidarity to the membership as we put faces to the membership. Union Basics as well as updates from the International and Region 8 will be included to keep members informed on the larger happenings within our Union. Relevant updates on the labor movement as a whole will also be shared to ensure that the membership is aware of situations that will affect our day to day lives at a national scale.

Should you wish to have an article or photograph included in the newsletter, be sure to adhere to IUAW communication standards for publication. All submissions should be factually accurate, abide by the UAW Constitution and are subject to final fact checking and review standards. The publication reserves the right of all submissions, be it written or photographic, to use any and all artwork or article submissions to be used and distributed at the discretion of the media team. Any and all reproduction of material shall receive prior approval, including but not limited to, individual interviews and photographs of individuals in order to protect member privacy. Any home addresses, phone numbers, or emails are not to be published at any time. The media team and Local Executive Board will have full right to edit, and decide on any final submissions included within each issue.

### **Frequency and Distribution**

The Local 3047 Newsletter will be a monthly, primarily online publication, unless approval from both the Local Executive Board, and Local Membership authorize use of funds to provide a hard copy available within Local Union facilities.