

# Rank And File The UAW Local 3047 NEWSLETTER

February, 2024



## 2024 VCAP Convention

As much of the country was hoping for relief from the seemingly never ending winter storms of mid-January 2024, six representatives of the United Automotive Aerospace and Agricultural Implement Workers of America (UAW) Local 3047 braved the cutting winds blowing in off the Potomac River to bring the voice of the Local Union in Elizabethtown to the halls of the Federal Government. The diverse delegation was attending the UAW's Voluntary Community Action Program Convention of 2024. The three day convention saw gifted speakers sharing concerns and inspiration to people of all backgrounds from across the United States. Top elected UAW officials and Congressional representatives standing side by side with everyday people in the hopes of bettering the country for working class Americans, and the airing of grievances to officials representing constituencies across the Commonwealth and beyond.<sup>1</sup>

The Voluntary Community Action Program, or VCAP, is the non-partisan political arm of the UAW whose goals range from educating members about pro-labor policy objectives to promoting pro-worker political candidates for office.<sup>2</sup> As an independent and voluntary committee, no financial contributions by the UAW are actual dues dollars, but rather individual contributions that members donate with the intention of going to the committee's political action committee (PAC) in adherence with campaign finance laws.<sup>3</sup> Candidates seeking a UAW endorsement must have a voting record that reflects supporting the labor movement in its fight for the betterment of working people regardless of political party affiliation. Over the years, candidates from the Democratic Party, the Republican Party, and Independents have all earned endorsements from the UAW.

<sup>1</sup>Top Left: Region 8 Assistant Director George Palmer and Local 3047 Delegate and Recording Secretary Randy Whelan laughing amongst discussions about aspirations for the future of VCAP. Photo by Tyler Mills

Top Right: Region 8 Assistant Director George Palmer leading a chant with Director Tim Smith and the Region 8 delegation in a show of support for members of the entire convention. Photo by Tyler Mills

<sup>2</sup><https://uaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/PUB-CAP13-What-Were-Fighting-For-REVISED-COVER-ONLY-07312018-APPROVED-08062018.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> <https://uaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/PUB-C2015-What-is-V-CAP-REVISED-COVER-07312018-APPROVED-PR08062018.pdf>



<sup>4</sup> Every morning, the delegation would gather together to hear from speakers of a diverse range of backgrounds. From prominent union leaders, to pro-labor House and Senate Representatives, to discuss a variety of issues concerning working class Americans. Members and politicians came together to find solutions to the questions of a just transition to electric vehicles, retirement security, climate change initiatives, all in a collective effort to ensure a bright future for UAW members and their families for years to come.

With the economy moving towards a greener future, many questions are raised for workers. The health and safety of the air we breathe, to the water we drink and dramatic weather events, the very planet we call home is changing. In hopes of mitigating the damage, world leaders are moving towards new forms of energy production and transportation that will have an effect on auto workers forever. The UAW leadership is planting its flag in this arena to get ahead of the transition to electric vehicles to guarantee that green jobs equal good, union jobs for members with quality of life, and the ability to retire with dignity, being top of mind.

Following the enlightening discussions, members of Local Unions from across the country would make their way to meet with elected representatives in the House and Senate. Members from Local 3047 Renard Duvall, Becky Staley, Bonnie Milliner, Robert Shockency, Randy Whelan, and Tyler Mills were one of the delegations set to meet with Congressman James Comer of Kentucky's 1st Congressional District and Chairman of the House Committee on Oversight and Accountability. Congressman Comer was unable to attend the meeting personally due to taking a sick day, and so the 3047 delegates discussed the issues facing Kentucky's working class with a legislative aide.

On Tuesday, it was back to the Hill. Members of the team met with the Kentucky Alliance for Retired Americans State President, Kirk Gillenwaters, and sat down for a meeting with Senator Rand Paul and members of his staff. During the meeting, there were many discussions on the future of Social Security, protections for union organizing, women's healthcare, and the transition to electric vehicles. Both the UAW delegates and the Senator's staff were able to sit and engage in open, civil dialog that resulted in a productive meeting where the voices of UAW members and those that they represent were heard at the highest levels of government.

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<sup>4</sup> Photo: President Sara Nelson of the AFA-CWA giving an impassioned speech to members of the CAP delegation. Photo by Tyler Mills



<sup>5</sup> On the final day of the convention, a guest speaker stepped up behind the podium and delivered a speech speaking of labor solidarity and the power of Unions to build up the working class to the middle class. President of the United States, Joe Biden, was introduced by UAW President Shawn Fein by granting the official UAW endorsement to the “most labor friendly president in US history.”

<sup>6</sup> After many long days, thousands of steps added to fitbits and apple watches, hundreds of photographs taken and lost, and hours of in-depth discussions on complex issues facing the country, I took home one conclusion from the convention; people have always disagreed on the best way to solve

problems. Problems that may seem small and insignificant to some, or massively consequential to others. Our differences in the human experience shape how we view the world in infinitely complicated ways that can make nuanced conversation and understanding difficult. Yet despite that, when a group of people with different ideas come together with open minds and honest intentions, even difficult situations become manageable. Everyone has different strengths and resources that can be monumentally invaluable in any given situation.

With that idea in place, during a contentious Presidential election year, perhaps it is time to put the party politics aside. A majority of Americans are more likely to be closer to agreement on issues than our national political actors would have us believe. Open discourse of ideas, respect of people, and a sense of duty to our union siblings. These are the qualities that break down barriers, and build movements that can create real change for the benefit of all people. Get registered to vote. Take care to listen. And let’s build a better world.

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<sup>5</sup>Top: Left to right Bonnie Milliner, Becky Staley, Legislative Director John Maniscalco, Senator Rand Paul, Tyler Mills, Robert Shockency. Photo by Kirk Gillenwaters

<sup>6</sup>Bottom: President Shawn Fein and President Joe Biden celebrating UAW endorsement. Photo by Tyler Mills

# The Strike Vote is Done! Now What?



## What happens now that the strike vote is over?

For the last several weeks, members of the bargaining committee team have been pouring over member surveys putting together a comprehensive list of demands that will be the starting point of negotiations this month. At the beginning of negotiations, the bargaining committee will begin by presenting the list to the company where talks will start. Throughout the bargaining process, pertinent information will be presented to the membership at designated meetings to go over highlights and open the floor for membership discussion.

It is important to remember that the bargaining committee at this plant is our executive board members. This means that union office hours will be limited to 1st shift hours. During this time, stay vigilant of management behavior as our current contract will still be in effect until May 1st, 2024. Stay in contact with your union stewards and official communications from the bargaining committee during this process.

Solidarity is our power. Collective bargaining is our voice. Voting is our duty. Let us get our own record contract.

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<sup>7</sup> <https://uaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/AllisonTA-495x400.png>

# February 2024 Calendar

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

# In Honor of Black History Month

## African American History and Labor

The labor movement of the United States would not exist as we know it without the unparalleled contributions of our Black brothers and sisters who stood against the harshest adversity. One of the pillars of the Auto Workers is to be your brother's keeper, these labor leaders were the living embodiment of this virtue.

In 1835, Isaac Myers was born to free parents in Baltimore, Maryland. Not allowed to attend public school, Myers learned to read and write from his minister, eventually becoming involved in the caulking trade for the shipyards of Maryland. During his life, he served as president of the Colored Caulkers Trade Union Society of Baltimore in 1868. Using this position within the Union, Myers reached out to other labor leaders to found the National Labor Union. With the NLU, Myers was able to lay the bedrock for interunion cooperation in the future before his death in 1891.



Philip Randolph, born 1889, a titan of the Civil Rights movement, organized the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters in 1925. This was the first Black Union chartered by the American Federation of Labor. In his honor, a Black Trade Union dedicated to racial and economic justice, the Philip Randolph institute, was founded by Bayard Ruston and served as first executive director in 1965.

In the world of baseball, following the political activism and sports legacies of Paul Robeson and Jackie Robinson, Curt Flood affected the major leagues in a different way. Back in the early seventies, players were prevented from having agency in the teams that they played for. Subjected to the whims of management, and traded away after a 12 year stint with the Cardinals, despite being the best center in the league, Flood challenged the Major League Baseball Reserve Clause in 1975. This case made it all the way to the Supreme Court, and despite the fight over precedent, Flood sacrificed his time in the Majors to expand labor rights for all professional athletes. Once the case was won, Flood went to play for the Washington Senators for only thirteen games before retiring permanently in 1973. This hard fought Supreme Court win allows players of all professional sports to have free agency.

During the period of Civil Rights in America, we saw a huge surge in organizing efforts from the Black community. Mary McLeod Bethune, founding president of the National Council for Negro Women, and advisor to President Franklin D. Roosevelt became the first woman president of the American Teachers Union. Velma Hopkins, spurred by the death of a coworker in 1943, organized a walkout of the RJ Reynolds Tobacco Company. This walkout galvanized ten thousand people to picket and is an inspiration to Black North Carolinians. Dorothy Lee Bolden, founded the National Domestic Workers Union of America in 1968, further pushing Black workers to continue the fight for a fairer world.



In recent history, after his illegal termination for organizing an Amazon warehouse, Christian Smalls, widely regarded as the new face of today's labor movement, did not take his firing laying down. Instead, Smalls fought for his job back, organized a Staten Island Amazon warehouse and founded the Amazon Labor Union. Smalls is now the standard bearer for labor advocacy in America. His work for so-called essential workers during the Covid-19 pandemic was influential across the country.<sup>8</sup>

The fight for Civil Rights and Labor Rights have gone hand and hand since the beginning. Legendary UAW President Walter Reuther and Civil Rights Leader Martin Luther King Jr. spent much of their careers working together to create the vision they each had for America because they were so intertwined. The fight sure isn't over yet, but with the new invigoration the labor movement has, taking a minute to look back on the victories of the past, can lead to further progress in the fight for equality. This article was brought to you by UAW Local 3047 Chaplaincy Committee.<sup>9</sup>



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<sup>8</sup> Christian Smalls <https://www.motherjones.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/Christian-Smalls.jpg?w=990>

<sup>9</sup> Walter Reuther and Martin Luther King Jr. <https://uawregion8.net/Activist-HOF/photos/Reuther-MLK.jpg>

# Committee Highlight

## An Interview With Women’s Committee Co-Chair: Becky Staley



The Women’s Committee is on a mission to encourage the women of Local 3047 to become the most active and productive members of the Union. We want to "educate the women of the Local Union of labor’s position on local, state and national laws regarding women’s issues," said Becky Staley, co-chair of the women’s committee at Local 3047. Working at Metalsa for the last thirteen years, Becky is no stranger to the unique challenges that women face in a factory environment.<sup>10</sup>

One of the founding members of the latest iteration of the Women’s Committee, Becky with the committee Chair and undisputed best friend Bonnie Milliner, have been a driving force within the Local Union promoting engagement in not only their committee, but also the entire membership. “The Women’s Committee tries to share all information regarding UAW, [national] politics, and local news specifically about issues affecting women.” Becky continued, “We try to uplift our fellow women and

help them find the confidence to be the best person they can be, as well as listen to their concerns on issues that we can try to fix in our working and home environments, as well as on a national level.”<sup>11</sup>

When asked about her favorite memory of being in the committee, Becky shared a story with me. “This one is a hard one... there are a lot of great memories I have made within the women’s committee, but I will say my favorite take away from my time in the committee comes from our experiences in conferences. The Women’s Committee conference at the Walter and Mae Reuther training center was one of the most educational conferences I had been to up to that point. Behind that are the CLUW conference in November 2023 in Minneapolis and the CAP Conference in January 2024 in DC. Being surrounded by such powerful women who not only want to see you succeed, but also are open to showing you the way and giving much needed advice has inspired me to make changes in my own life to be more of that kind of woman for the women I interact with daily. It changed my entire perspective on how I was living my life and what



<sup>10</sup> Becky Staley Portrait. Photo by Becky Staley

<sup>11</sup> Becky Staley at Women’s Committee Event. Photo By Becky Staley

I could be doing to be the best version of myself. Not just for me, but for all the women (and men) who are struggling just to find someone willing to uplift and enlighten them. One of my favorite influences is a woman I met at my very first conference. Her name is Pauline Mims and the very first time I heard her speak, she taught me the importance of standing for what you believe in, even if, at times, you must stand alone. I carry that with me to this day, and I will never forget that lesson that she taught me.”

Inside of the plant, the Women’s Committee is one of the most organized and active committees we have. Constantly trying to hold events for the membership and their families to enjoy, they are hosting a Valentine’s Party on February 17th, at the union hall from 5pm to 8pm, for a \$10.00 entry fee to cover food. They will also be collecting donations for the American Heart Association’s Go Red for Women initiative, an AHA movement to end heart disease and strokes in women.

These talented women don’t stop there, though. “The Committee also supports the Coalition for Labor Union Women (CLUW), the Community Action Program (CAP), Empty Bowls, Toys for Tots, Breast Cancer Awareness, and Suicide Prevention.” Building a coalition of women and men within a committee to bring everyone together in support of our Union sisters. For more information regarding the Women’s Committee or to join the ever growing roster, please copy the link below, or scan the QR code to become a member.



INTERESTED IN JOINING A  
COMMITTEE?  
~OR~  
WANT MORE INFORMATION ABOUT  
A COMMITTEE?



[HTTPS://BIT.LY/LOCAL3047COMMITTEE](https://bit.ly/local3047committee)

# Union Basics: The Workweek

By: Tyler Mills

In the seemingly ever evolving post-Covid pandemic world we find ourselves in today, the movement pushing for a major shift in the workweek organization is gaining traction. The wave of enthusiasm to change the workweek from 40 hours over five days, to 32 hours over four days, has been building over the last several years as the latest generations wish for more personal time at home than in the workplace. Maryland lawmakers are currently introducing legislation that will pilot a program encouraging companies to implement the new work-life balance initiative.<sup>12</sup> But where did the idea of a shorter workweek come from?

The fight over shorter working hours has been a struggle for working class people since the dawn of the Industrial Revolution. In 1810, Robert Owen demanded a ten hour workday as opposed to the twelve to sixteen hour days that workers were typically expected to work. He coined the slogan: “Eight hours’ labor, eight hours’ recreation, eight hours’ rest.”<sup>13</sup> As the labor movement began gaining strength in factories across the world, workers began to rise up and demand better working conditions.

The Industrial Revolution to World War Two was a time where child labor and sixteen hours a day, six days a week was common practice. Injuries were a daily occurrence. With people falling asleep while operating dangerous machines, deaths in factories were common where people worked until they fell dead on the floor. The constant push for corporate profits was coming at the expense of the workers' very lives. Hundreds of thousands of workers organized to fight this grave injustice. Labor organizations began exploding with people clamoring to join their Local Union to help protect their brothers and sisters on the line, as well as their own livelihoods.

On September 3rd, 1916, Congress passed the Adamson Act, a federal law establishing the eight-hour workday for interstate rail workers, which the Supreme Court constitutionalized in 1917. Then nine years later, in 1926, after incredible pressure from auto workers, the Ford Motor Company adopted a five-day, 40 hour work week schedule. A big win, not only for autoworkers, but for the entire working class. On the back of this astounding victory, an amendment to a 1938 law called the Fair Labor Standards Act, on October 24th, 1940, the 40 hour work week was adopted by Congress at a national level.<sup>14</sup>

The purpose of the labor movement, and unions specifically, is to use our own collective power to enforce change to better each and every member's lives, especially the time they are able to spend at home with their families. As with every attempt at labor reform, it is always a struggle, full of sacrifice and hard work. There was a time where the 40 hour week seemed impossible, right now many people see the 32 hour week as impossible, but if working people stand strong together, on the backs of our retired brothers and sisters, anything is possible.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://www.businessinsider.com/history-of-the-40-hour-workweek-2015-10>

<sup>13</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eight-hour\\_day](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eight-hour_day)

<sup>14</sup> <https://www.businessinsider.com/history-of-the-40-hour-workweek-2015-10>

## **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.