



United Auto Workers LOCAL 598 EYE OPENER



Home of the Original
Fisher 2 Sit-Downers

VOLUME 43 ISSUE 12

www.uawlocal598.org

DECEMBER 2024

Our Wishes for a Peaceful New Year!
Have a *safe and happy*
holiday season

**THE OFFICERS,
EXECUTIVE BOARD,
BARGAINING
COMMITTEES AND
OFFICE STAFF**

would like to
thank the entire
membership for
your generosity,
participation and
support of Local
598 in 2024.

**IT HAS BEEN
OUR HONOR TO
REPRESENT YOU**



(Not included in picture: Tasha Wynne, JaShanti Walker, Sr. and Janet Woodson)



Reps
from Old
Newsboys
stopped by the Hall to
pick up our
donation of
\$28,350.04.





598 Members Busy With December Activities

"As your President, I am incredibly blessed and proud to uphold the cherished traditions of UAW Local 598."

STEPHANIE RILEY

from the PRESIDENT'S DESK

As I write this, the busy Christmas season is in full swing. We recently celebrated a magical Christmas membership meeting, complete with toys, stunning decorations, and some very special guests.

Sheriff Swanson lifted everyone's spirits with his infectious Christmas cheer, and Judge Beagle delighted us with his annual Local 598 Christmas poem. Meanwhile, the UAW Local 598 elves were hard at work preparing for our Snapshots with Santa event, ensuring everything was perfect for St. Nick's arrival. Teams of dedicated UAW Local 598 members are also collaborating on the Old Newsboys drive, spreading joy by helping to provide for hundreds of area children.

The MOST group is getting everything ready for our Holiday Food Basket give away. Also, in just a few days, our Veterans Committee will honor those who served by participating in a Laying of the Wreaths Ceremony at Great Lakes National Cemetery. And, to top it all off, our Retiree Chapter is eagerly planning a delicious Christmas dinner, complete with all the traditional fixings, while collecting personal items for human trafficking survivors.

As your President, I am incredibly blessed and proud to uphold the cherished traditions of UAW Local 598. This season,

I want to extend my deepest gratitude to each and every member for their contributions – not only during the holidays, but throughout the entire year.

The toy donations from our membership were nothing short of overwhelming. I'd like to give special recognition to Miles Owens, Steve Welewski, and Ted Kaloydis for their tireless efforts. Every week, they gathered toys from every department and met me at the North Gate to transport the enormous haul to the hall. A special thank you also goes to Ron Williams, who met me at Meijer and loaded up all the toys to deliver back to Local 598. Todd Bieber went above and beyond by assembling all the bikes, and Mike Spannegel, along with his wife, generously donated their time and their 28-foot trailer to deliver the toys to *Toys for Tots*.

Our Recreation Committee – Britta Rusaw, Alyssa Rebrovich, Aubrie Main, Peggy Bond, and Stephanie Branscum – dedicated countless hours to decorating the hall and preparing for the Snapshots with Santa event. And after our Local Union meeting, we had many volunteers step up to load and unload the trailer of toys for *Toys for Tots*.

Witnessing this extraordinary solidarity and spirit of giving was truly emotional. I am so grateful to each member who helped make this season such a success. Together, we continue to demonstrate the true meaning of solidarity and generosity. I want to take this opportunity to wish all of you a blessed, relaxing, and magical holiday season. I look forward to seeing and working with you all in the new year!



President Riley

WE LOADED UP THE TRUCK AND DELIVERED IT TO TOYS FOR TOTS!



Even the littlest hands helped to make sure other children have toys under the tree.

Sheriff Swanson brought his usual excitement when visiting our December meeting.



THESE GUYS DELIVERED THE TOYS FROM THE PLANT EACH DAY.



Our newly appointed Recreation Committee did a wonderful job for our Snapshots with Santa Event.

More Children Will Have Toys Thanks To This Membership

"We were able to donate \$15,000 to Toys for Tots from popcorn sales. I would like to thank all the people who were involved."



ERIC WELTER

SHOP CHAIRMAN

Shop Committee Reps Nick and Joe dealt with the weekly Toys for Tots popcorn sales donations issues. They had to keep getting supplies and clean the popcorn machine each week. We raised \$15,000! I would like to thank the volunteers who ran the machine each week. It's a lot of work and very busy.

I would also like to recognize Body Shop SQAC employees Kristy, Dawn and Laura, who sell the popcorn in the Body Shop. Most of all, I would like to thank the membership for purchasing popcorn. Your efforts are the only reason hundreds of needy children will have toys for Christmas this year. God Bless you all.

During National Negotiations, we discussed the difficulty that our members have reading their pay stubs. As a result, I have been a part of a group working to improve them. Anytime you are working with GM on something, there are always restrictions on what you can do, so we didn't get everything we wanted but it's a great start.

The COLA line will now include the amount of the COLA, which is currently at \$.66.

On our checks, we have fewer abbreviations with more word

descriptions, and pay corrections are easier to understand on the check. There is also a list of abbreviations on Socrates for those that were not able to be changed into words. This new check view will begin January 3rd. The company is planning a rollout.

I strongly believe that our membership can have financial success and freedom, and that is a primary goal of mine as your Chairman. For a few years, I have been discussing this with anyone and everyone, and I finally got a GM executive to listen. I have been working with a GM group that is planning this education process. We are going to focus on the magic of compound interest and the results in long-term investment. We are going to educate members on the types of funds and those limits an employee can deposit. We are also trying to redo the Fidelity site, so it's easier to navigate. I want to connect employees with resources to determine investment decisions. I believe this will provide security and comfort to our members by knowing they are working towards financial success.

Family is the most important thing in this difficult world.

Please enjoy your family and be safe during your UAW-negotiated Christmas break.



Our Joint Leadership Team presented a check for \$15,000 to Vicky Muckenthaler, Genesee County Toys for Tots Coordinator. Funds were raised through weekly popcorn sales. Thank you to all who contributed.

December 4, 2024

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WE REACHED AN AGREEMENT!



by Mark Leineke, District Committeeperson, Beacon O&M

A Tentative Agreement was reached on November 13, 2024, and a successful ratification of a Letter of Agreement took place on November 14, 2024, on-site at GM Flint Truck Assembly Plant in the Stationary Engineer Control Room.

Our Union negotiating/ bargaining team consisted of Region 1D Representative Scott Henry, UAW Local 598 President Stephanie Riley, and District Committeeperson Mark Leineke.

Being a man of faith, I first and foremost give all credit to God for letting things all come together as they did. I want to express a great big load of gratitude to my bargaining team and to *you*, the entire Membership as a whole, for your continuous support. From my heart to yours. Thank you!

Let's all try and remind one another frequently...
SOLIDARITY REALLY DOES MATTER!



District Committeeperson Mark Leineke announces the deal.

FRED MYERS SCHOLARSHIP BOWLING TOURNAMENT

REGISTER NOW!

JAN 18TH 2025

TEAM ENTRY \$225 WITH PRIZE MONEY

RICHFIELD BOWL
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SCAN ME

Fred Myers Scholarship Bowling Tournament Entry Form

Name (Bowler #1)	USBC#	23-24 Avg.
Address		Phone
Name (Bowler #2)	USBC#	23-24 Avg.
Address		Phone
Name (Bowler #3)	USBC#	23-24 Avg.
Address		Phone
Name (Bowler #4)	USBC#	23-24 Avg.
Address		Phone

Please send entry forms to **CHRIS RIDLEY**.
Please make checks payable to:
FRED MYERS SCHOLARSHIP FUND
12371 Lansing Rd., Durand, MI 48429

Dinner to follow at:
UAW LOCAL 651
3518 Longway Blvd.
Flint, MI 48506

**T
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1. Only USBC certified bowlers are eligible to compete.
2. Use your highest certified average based on 21 games or more from the 2023-2024 yearbook. If current average is 15 pins higher, with at least 21 games, as of January 13, 2025, current average will be used. If no average has been established as of January 15, 2025, you will use 175 as an entering average an assigned handicap will be used.
3. Handicap is figured on 90% difference between your average and 225.
4. Prize fees will be returned 100% in prizes. Prizes will be awarded on a basis of at least one (1) prize for each ten (10) entries.
5. Tournament management reserves the right to correct any averages and adjust final tournament standings accordingly.
6. USBC Rule 319c & e – Bowlers may be re-rated under these rules.
7. USBC Rules 319d – Does not apply.
8. USBC Rules 329 – The decision of the tournament committee shall be final, unless a written appeal is filed within 72 hours.
9. Bowler must be at least 18 years old or have form signed by parent.

2025 Will Be One to Watch

"This is a critical point in our labor movement. We need to find a way to bond together and stand up for what we have been working on for years."



CHAD FABBRO

FINANCIAL SECRETARY

Just like that, another year is practically in the books, and now we anticipate what 2025 will look like. There are a lot of exciting things going on in the world, so it will be interesting to see how it will change in the next few years.

I have a feeling that labor laws will get even tighter and will not be in our favor. We will have to find common ground and work harder than we ever have before to make things work. This is a critical point in our labor movement. We need to find a way to bond together and stand up for what we have been working on for years. So, I challenge you to stand together, as tough times may be headed our way.

Local 598 just wrapped up the Old Newsboys campaign and, as always, our generous membership was amazing. In five days, we raised over \$28,000 for the Old Newsboys of Genesee County! That donation speaks volumes to the people in our community and I am so proud of this membership.

May God bless each one of you and your families during this holiday season, and may God bless the UAW as we move forward.

ANNOUNCEMENTS...

The Local 598 Union Hall **WILL BE CLOSED**

for the Holiday break and will reopen at 8:30 a.m. on January 8, 2025.

Due to the **MLK Holiday**, the **JANUARY MEMBERSHIP MEETING** will be held on **Sunday, January 26th @ 2:00 p.m.**

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VICE-PRESIDENTS: CHUCK BROWNING • MIKE BOOTH • RICH BOYER

December 3, 2024

Greetings:

RE: In'l Union Strike and Defense Fund Report – September

The following is a summary of Strike Fund Income and Expenditures for the month of September 2024.

NET WORTH AUGUST 31, 2024	\$761,101,778.69
INCOME FOR SEPTEMBER 2024	
Dues Per Capita Taxes	6,516,507.43
DISBURSEMENTS FOR SEPTEMBER 2024	<u>3,651,767.44</u>
NET WORTH, SEPTEMBER 31, 2024	\$763,966,518.68

During the month of September, there were five strikes.

Fraternally,

Margaret Mock
Secretary-Treasurer, International Union, UAW

United Auto Workers

LOCAL 598 EYE OPENER

Home of the Original Fisher 2 Sit-Downers

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<p><i>President</i> Stephanie Riley</p> <p><i>Vice President</i>..... John Jackson III</p> <p><i>Recording Secretary</i>..... D'Andre Jackson</p> <p><i>Financial Secretary</i>..... Chad Fabbro</p> <p><i>Guide</i>..... Twanna Q. Coleman</p> <p><i>Trustee</i> Melissa Bowen</p> <p><i>Trustee</i> Corissa Carter</p> <p><i>Trustee</i> David V. Garcia</p> <p><i>Sergeant-at-Arms</i>..... Randy Frost</p> <p><i>Retiree Chapter Chair</i>..... Janet Woodson</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SHOP COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN Eric Welter</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SHOP COMMITTEE-AT-LARGE Nick Dekalita, Joe Dontje</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SHOP COMMITTEE (DISTRICT) Shane Herriman, Sean Meachem</p>	<p>DISTRICT COMMITTEE / ALTERNATES</p> <p>Ben Dunlop / Alex Perry</p> <p>Sean Meachem / Chad Boyce</p> <p>Shane Herriman / Bo Browning</p> <p style="padding-left: 20px;">/ Stan Cherwinski</p> <p>Brian Shick / JoAnna Batson-Escamilla</p> <p>Dana Waider / Joe Berriman</p> <p>Bryan Ventrone / Stan Dulaney</p> <p>Jon Galant / Wendy Ignash</p> <p>DeWayne Tippit / Mike Bukovchik</p> <p>Aaron McAlister / Jim Hazell</p> <p>Jeremy Switzer / Antonio Dee Pritchett</p> <p>Kevin Smiley / Marcus Hunt</p> <p>Bob Scott / Maurice Purches</p> <p>William McIntosh / Jaccob Kohn</p> <p>Mike Kocsis / Shane Balcer</p>
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ARAMARK BARGAINING COMMITTEE – DISTRICT COMMITTEE
JaShanti Walker, Sr. and Orlandis McNeal Alternate Edward Menzel

BEACON O&M BARGAINING COMMITTEE
District Committeeperson Mark Leineke.....Alternate Mike Harrell

M.P.S. BARGAINING COMMITTEE – DISTRICT COMMITTEE
Tasha Wynne.....Alternate Kristine Momany
John WinelandAlternate Damon Harrison

ADAPT REPRESENTATIVE Rick Hager

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HEALTH & SAFETY REPRESENTATIVES..... Mike Dankert, Doug Culhane

WORK & FAMILY REPRESENTATIVES..... Cheryl Dawson, George Washington

EYE OPENER EDITOR.....Debi Kirchner

POLICY OF THE EYE OPENER

TO OUR READERS: The *EYE OPENER* is the voice of our Local and International Union. This is our vehicle for bringing to you, on a regular basis, the views and actions of the leaders you elected, so you can evaluate them. Through the paper, we explain Union policies and show how your dues are spent. The paper is also the voice of the members. We welcome articles from UAW members and stories about members. While we welcome your contributions, we ask that they be constructive. At no time will the editorial staff tolerate any defamatory remarks regarding any person or persons. We reserve the right to reply to those who seem to reflect a misunderstanding of the Union and its policies and to edit any article for clarity and length.

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Mr. & Mrs. Claus

brought the magic to Local 598...

Photos courtesy of Debi Kirchner and Britta Rusaw





and for a few hours
everyone believed





Christmas Memories And Hope For The Future

by Melissa Bowen, Chair
Women's Committee

In the wee hours of Christmas morning, with only the TV and twinkling Christmas tree lights illuminating the dark room, I revisit the holiday movie that revitalizes me with a hope for the new year. As the iconic line of "Look Daddy, teacher says, 'every time a bell rings, an angel gets his wings'." and the final credits roll, I dry my eyes and shut off the tree lights.

Some of you may be too young to remember in the 1980s and '90s, during the holidays, every television channel seemed to play "It's a Wonderful Life." It was similar to how "Elf", "A Christmas Story," and "Home Alone" play on a loop through the season now.

If you have not had the pleasure, the basic premise of the movie is on Christmas Eve night, and a good, hard-working man, named George Bailey, is about to commit suicide. He is facing a scandal involving lost money because he's trying to cover for his aging uncle, who lost their business' bank deposit. A guardian angel, named Clarence, is

shown George's life story and then sent down to earth to save him.

In conversation, George wishes he was never born, giving way to a Christmas Carol-esque peek into a life that never was. Disturbed by the scenes, George realizes that although things seem grim at the time, he really has lived a wonderful life. *Spoiler alert:* upon returning home, a joyous Christmas miracle occurs. The entire town had heard of the potential scandal and raised more money than needed to cover the misplaced bank deposit. A Christmas party erupts, and guests give the Bailey family money and gifts.

When I was a kid, my family would visit relatives for the holiday. The children would be ushered to the living room. While playing with our cousins, we would watch George Bailey's Christmas crisis and miracle. While I did not comprehend a lot of the adult themes of the movie, it became tradition to watch it multiple times every year.

It wasn't until I was able to understand and relate to the scenes in the movie, that I switched to the once-a-year, on

Christmas Eve night viewing. In the darkness, with just the Christmas lights on, I am reminded that sometimes the good guy succeeds, despite the odds. Being a person of integrity will enable the building of a community of friends that hold the same values and care about one another.

I feel fortunate to be a member of Local 598, because it has allowed me to surround myself with a supportive, funny, and thoughtful group of friends. I'm so thankful for every Union sister and brother who has attended events, purchased shirts, and supported our UAW Local 598 Women's Committee.

As we head into the new year, if you are looking for a moving, optimistic reminder that life doesn't always suck (haha), join me in watching "It's a Wonderful Life" this holiday season. Sometimes, we could all use the reminder of the handwritten note in a copy of *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*... "Remember, George: No man is a failure who has friends."

In Solidarity, with Wishes of a Happy and Healthy New Year!



Local 598 Women's Committee

Christmas Party

Unemployment Reform Raises Weekly Benefits

Michigan workers and the UAW celebrated a landmark victory as the state legislature approved a significant reform to the Unemployment Insurance system.

Under the new legislation, weekly benefits will increase by 70%, rising from \$362 to \$614. This long-overdue change provides essential relief for workers and brings Michigan closer to aligning with the rest of the Great Lakes region.

“For too long, corporations and the wealthy have rigged the rules in their favor, leaving the working class behind,” said UAW President Shawn Fain. “This reform is a positive shift toward leveling the playing field and ensuring that all workers have the support they need to navigate tough times. UAW members demanded action, and Michigan lawmakers stepped up and showed us whose side they’re on.”

Michigan’s unemployment system has been one of the most restrictive in the nation, leaving too many workers behind during times of economic hardship. Yesterday’s reform begins to address these inequities, but much more needs to be done to ensure all workers are treated fairly and with dignity.

This victory comes in the final days of Michigan’s Democratic trifecta, after intense advocacy from the UAW and labor allies who called on legislators to choose between standing with the working class or doing the bidding of corporations and big donors.

On December 4, the UAW laid out its policy positions for the session and urged legislators to pass bills taking action on living wages, health care, retirement with dignity, time with our families, fighting against corporate greed and corporate influence over our politics, and standing united against divide and conquer politics.

Following the passage of the unemployment insurance legislation, the UAW pushed lawmakers to keep the momentum going and pass additional measures that protect workers’ rights and strengthen communities across the state.

“Make no mistake, Michigan legislators still need to show up for the entire working class. There are still critical issues to address in this lame duck session, including workers’ compensation reform and restoring local control over labor standards. The UAW is watching the clock and will continue to hold our leaders accountable,” said Fain.

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*Offer valid toward the purchase of two Beltone Serene™ hearing instruments. \$500 off a single instrument.
**Amazon Gift Card value \$20, must complete screening to receive card. See store for details. Beltone 2024™

Congratulations!

TO ALL OF OUR RECENT RETIREES.

Recent Retirees (no photo available)

- Ralph Thompson
- Emmanuel Cole



If you are retiring soon, stop by the Benefits Office or Union Hall to get your picture taken for an upcoming issue of the EYE OPENER.



Have a Happy Holiday

"It has been good to see more retirees coming out to the meetings this year."

JANET WOODSON



RETIRED WORKERS CHAIR

It's been an eventful year for Local 598 retirees. We were able to go on several trips as a group and shared some wonderful food and fellowship at our monthly meetings.

Thank you for all the donations (photo at left) to Harbor Lights, an organization that supports people who have been trafficked. We will make sure they get over to Grand Rapids after the first of the year.

Plans are being made to attend the Detroit Auto Show. We will have the finalized plan at our January 12th meeting.

Good Food Good People *and a* Good Time



Our December meeting and dinner was a fun way to end 2024.

Photos courtesy of Debi Kirchner





CLASSIFIED ADS

Classified ads must be submitted monthly and will be run on a first-come, first-serve basis.

Limited to ads/services submitted in a Local 598 member's name only.

for sale

ESTATE SALE ITEMS

8 hp snow blower, like new, best offer. GM Rally wheels for Corvette, all kinds.

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miscellaneous

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813 Main St., Daytona Beach, FL
UAW Sister owner and operator.

Call 586-322-3464

or write: P.O. Box 263086
Daytona Beach, FL 32126
Feline Friendly Gift Shop.



Chester Youmans
Bruce Gardner
Robert E. Murphy
Roy Phillips

Allen Seales

Jerry Feher

Robert Ayers

Wayne Stafford

Frank Bock

Henry Doan IV

Harold Nicholson

Mary-Ann Gish-Moore

Our UAW Local 598 family extend their deepest sympathy to the family and friends of the above listed deceased members.



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Small enough to care.*

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New option to read the Local 598 EYE OPENER

LOCAL **598 EYE OPENER**
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Home of the Original
Fisher 2 Sit-Downers

You may have noticed that digital copies of the *Eye Opener* have recently been available on our Local 598 website (uawlocal598.org) and on the GM Chairman's app. If you would prefer to read your paper each month digitally and not receive one at your home, we are offering a way to voluntarily opt out of the mailing. You may request to have the paper mailed again at any time.



This QR code will take you to a form to make the request to opt out. Simply fill it out and email it to the email address listed on the form.

We will also be testing ways to email a digital copy of the paper to you in the future.

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USPS Publication # 110-770



by Retired Judge Duncan Beagle

2024 Any major news or events to recall in two thousand twenty-four? I will highlight just these few, for there were many, many more.

A Year To Remember...

- ▶ We have had record high temperatures, severe tornadoes, and hurricanes; the extreme weather has created havoc; major destruction, and economic pain.
- ▶ There have been 385 mass shootings across our country this year, and 78 school shootings causing families much heartache and fear.
- ▶ Donald Trump was easily this year's #1 story. His election as President has now brought him much glory.
- ▶ Trump had felony convictions and assassination attempts along the way. Half the country strongly disliked him, yet he knew how to play.
- ▶ Living in our divided country, we must search for common ground. After a great deal of thought, I've come up with examples quite profound...
 - Anyone here that misses the all-day political ads, please raise your hand.
 - Anyone here who is not a Detroit Lions fan, please raise your hand.
- ▶ See, there are things we do have in common.
- ▶ While we may often disagree, let us all promote and encourage civility, by showing kindness, courtesy, dignity, and honesty.
- ▶ Our Detroit Lions football team has brought smiles to our faces. We can honestly now say they are no longer a disgrace.
- ▶ Congratulations on winning honors for your excellence in communication. Your monthly *Eye Opener* news magazine is an outstanding publication.
- ▶ This Union's giving and caring separates you from the rest. When it comes to generosity, you are all the best.
- ▶ No matter what the future brings, one thing I know is true, this Local will keep on giving and our community says, "Thank you."
- ▶ A "Local union with a heart" makes this membership great.

Best wishes for happy holidays to everyone at UAW Local 598.

**A Look
Back at
2024**