

Home of the Original Fisher 2 Sit-Downers

VOLUME 44 ISSUE 09 www.uawlocal598.org SEPTEMBER 2025

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage

The Young Labor Activist You May Never Have Heard Of...

EMMA TENAYUCA

by Debi Kirchner, Editor

As we celebrate *Hispanic Heritage Month* (September 15 thru October 15), let me tell you a story about 12,000 workers, and how a young activist named Emma Tenayuca led them in the longest strike in San Antonio history.

This story begins in 1938. Here in Michigan, a young UAW was beginning to organize and negotiate for manufacturing workers they had just won the right to represent. While across the country in Texas, there was another group of workers fighting for their very survival.

In the winter of 1938, thousands of Mexican American workers in San Antonio, Texas, stood together in one of the most important labor struggles in U.S. history – the *Pecan Shellers' Strike*. Their fight for dignity and fair pay, led by young activist Emma Tenayuca, reminds us today of the power of unity and courage in the face of exploitation.

Grinding Work, Poverty Wages

San Antonio was the heart of the pecan industry. More than 12,000 workers – mostly Mexican American women – sat in cramped, dusty rooms cracking pecans by hand. The work was tedious, the air thick with dust that scarred lungs, and the pay pitiful. Most earned just a couple of dollars a week, barely enough to keep families afloat during the Great Depression.

In January 1938, when the shelling companies cut wages even further, workers had had enough. They walked off the job in the largest strike San Antonio has ever seen. Tenayuca organized the strike, rallying thousands of shellers with her message – "You deserve dignity, you deserve fair pay, and you deserve to be heard."

At just 21 years old, she had already built a reputation as a fearless defender of working people. She became interested in activism and was a labor activist before graduating from Brackenridge High School in San Antonio. Tenayuca's first arrest came at the age of 16, in 1933, when she joined a picket line of workers on strike against the Finck Cigar Company.



A Mexican American woman in a deeply segregated Texas, she had seen firsthand how employers and politicians dismissed her community. Many Mexican and Mexican Americans in San Antonio at the time had fled the Mexican Revolution during the 1910s and were excluded from the New Deal's jobs and housing programs. Additionally, Mexican Americans were facing massive deportations due to fears that they were stealing U.S. jobs and because of reduced jobs available during the Great Depression.

The strike was met with brutal opposition. Police raided strike meetings, tear-gassed picketers, and arrested over 1,000 workers, including Tenayuca herself. Newspapers painted the workers as troublemakers and labeled Tenayuca "too radical." But the shellers held the line. Their courage forced the city, and the nation, to pay attention.

A Turning Point

Tenayuca worked tirelessly to ensure that the workers' demands were met. She organized picket lines, delivered speeches, and used her communication skills to garner support from other unions and organizations. After 37 days an arbitration board brought the strike to an end when it gave the Pecan Shellers Union recognition to represent the workers.

That same year, Congress passed the Fair Labor Standards Act, in response to the widespread exploitation of workers during the Great Depression and decades of pressure from labor unions like the UAW and the Peacan Shellers Union, setting a federal minimum wage for the first time. Pecan shellers saw their wages rise, though many jobs were soon lost to new technology.

When we remember Emma Tenayuca, we honor a leader who showed the country that, like in the 1937 Sit Down Strike, ordinary people can change the world.

(See EMMA TENAYUCA children's publications on page 7)

Our Engagement Makes Local 598 Special

"We've made a strong commitment to staying educated, informed, active, charitable, and supportive; not just of each other, but of our broader community."

STEPHANIE RILEY

from the **PRESIDENT'S DESK**

Good day UAW Local 598 Family,

I hope everyone had a fun summer. As I write this article, I am filled with pride, appreciation, and optimism because the summer was one filled with fun and productivity. And the membership reaped the rewards.

Our membership has shown an incredible level of engagement, and it's truly inspiring. We've made a strong commitment to staying educated, informed, active, charitable, and supportive; not just of each other, but of our broader community. That's what makes us so powerful. That's what makes 598 special.

Thanks to the support and blessing of the membership – and make no mistake, we are a very blessed Local – we had the opportunity to send members to a variety of conferences this summer. These included workshops and training in education, chaplaincy, community service, bargaining, civil rights, communications, veterans affairs, EAP, safety, benefits, and, of course, our UAW Women, who continue to be the backbone of our community.

These experiences have not only expanded our knowledge and skills, but they've also sparked new interest and activity within our ranks. It's exciting to see more of our Union family stepping forward, getting involved, and embracing leadership. This kind of participation only strengthens our collective power, and I couldn't be prouder to serve as the President of such a fruitful and growing membership.

We didn't stop at education. Our summer was packed with activities, led by our incredible standing committees. Let me highlight just a few...

- Our Community Service Committee organized a Community Give Back event right here in Flint, where we were able to distribute food and school supplies to families in need in our community. They also took part in the Adopt-a-Highway road clean up, assisting in keeping our city cared for.
- ► The Recreation Committee brought us together for our

CANSTER EYERYSOT

It's always an honor to display our UAW Local 598 flag.

Annual Golf Outing and the ever-popular Membership Appreciation Picnic, where we had a chance to relax, reconnect, and recognize the value of each and every member.

► Our Women's

Committee showed up strong with a *Pet Expo* and hosted a *Purse Party* to raise money for breast cancer awareness. They also partnered with our local CLUW Chapter for *Round Up* event, gathering hygiene products for those in need; another powerful example of solidarity in action.

- ► We also volunteered at the *Lois Craig Invitational/Special Olympics* event in downtown Flint. Running alongside our Special Olympians, cheering them on it is emotional, uplifting, and something we will carry with us for a long time.
- ► And we closed out the summer by proudly marching in the 2nd Annual Flint Labor Day Parade, standing shoulder to shoulder with other labor unions in a powerful demonstration of unity and pride in the labor movement.

Speaking of solidarity, I want to take a moment to recognize a very important fight happening in our community. UAW Local 598 proudly stands with our brothers and sisters of Teamsters Local 332, who are on the strike line at Henry Ford in Grand Blanc. They are fighting for fair patient-to-nurse ratios – a cause that is not only just, but vital to the health and safety of patients and caregivers alike.

We have supported them, and we will continue to support them in their stand for dignity, fairness, and the kind of working conditions every healthcare worker deserves. When one of us stands up, we all stand up. Because that's what solidarity looks like.

Union Family, this is the spirit of UAW Local 598. When we work together – when we give back, get involved, and look out

for one another – there is nothing we can't achieve. Let's carry this momentum into the fall and continue building on everything we've started.

Thank you for being part of this journey.
Thank you for your dedication. And thank you for making Local 598 a Local we can all be proud of.

Leaders from UAW Local 598, alongside Teamsters Local 332 and members of IBEW, SMW, IUPAT, AFL-CIO, and other unions, stood in solidarity with nurses on the picket line today. We provided food and water and shared messages of support, calling on

others to join the fight for fair wages and better nurse-to-patient ratios.

Stephanie Riley

Production Standards, Skilled Trades Staffing and Extended Christmas Break

"...under this agreement, our members for 40 hours are making an additional \$1,100 a month over the previous agreement."

ERIC WELTER

SHOP CHAIRMAN

We have had a number of production standards arguments with Body Shop management. Last year was YB5/YB9, which we were successful in overturning, recently the Weld monitor group was made whole and we are currently arguing TD. These arguments are extremely detailed and we would not be successful without the assistance of the GMS team, especially Bill Osmun. Bill absolutely destroys their standardized work and time studies. I would like to thank Bill for going above his normal job requirement to help the bargaining team.

The plant recently announced that our Christmas break will be extended until after the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday. This allows the plant to complete a number of projects necessary for launch. In addition, the Saturday schedule is out for the rest of the year. This will give our members a chance to plan holiday events with their families.

We just received the third raise negotiated in the 2023NA, elevating the production rate to \$38.07, and COLA has increased this quarter to \$1.10. In total, under this agreement, our members for 40 hours are making an additional \$1,100 a month over the previous agreement.

We recently attended the GM department National Sub Council meeting. This is the bargaining arm of the UAW, and this conference gathers all the shop committees together. There was extensive discussion about technology and automation. There is great concern over job losses. The International Union indicated they are working on something to mitigate the losses.



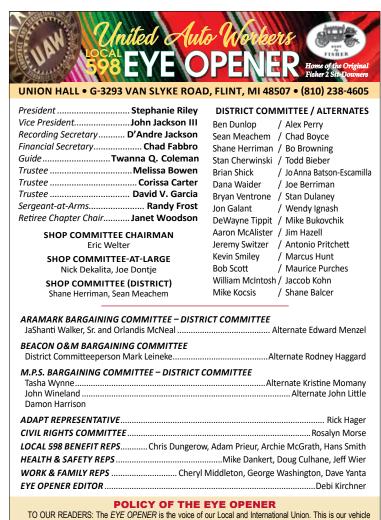
Locally, we are making arguments on behalf of our skilled trades members. First, we want all the maintenance work on the autonomous material movement equipment. This is a difficult fight that agreements don't support, but we believe there is some instances that do fit our position and can crack the door to more.

The other argument is based on skilled trades staffing and the increase in automated equipment. Over the last year, we have been arguing that the ratio of operators to trades is outdated and doesn't account for the unprecedented increase in robots.

Our total number of trades was 226, but last year they had to cut 8 trades out, reducing our number to 218. This resulted in the arguing over skilled trades' numbers, which are currently at 219.

After much negotiating, we were successful in increasing our skilled head count to 240. This will add 21 skilled trades journey persons to the plant, improving our ability to respond to this

This is the first post-bankruptcy increase in skilled trade's headcount. That's 15 years of reducing trades. Hopefully, this will start the pendulum to swing the other way.



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

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the Union and its policies and to edit any article for clarity and length.

\$1.70 for members only; retirees \$1.00.





2025 UAW INTERNATIONAL WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

We wanted to thank our membership for allowing us the privilege to attend the UAW International Women's Conference in August. It was a lovely week filled with information, bonding, and networking.

What was your favorite part of the UAW International

WOMEN'S CONFERENCE

or what did you learn?

Sharon REEVES

We come from different walks of life but are united in purpose, which creates unity in diversity. One of the most powerful aspects of the International Women's Conferences for me is the transformation that happens in those rooms. We arrive with workplace frustrations and leave with renewed hope, fresh perspectives on resolution, and a network of sisters to lean on creating a strong sisterhood! Lastly, respecting each other's differences and combining our

strengths is how we build a united front and women empowerment.

Terrica ALDRIDGE-WILLIS

I enjoyed the entire conference, the sisterhood, the Solidarity, and listening to the other sisters about their experiences.

Alyssa REBROVICH

The Women's Conference was an amazing opportunity to gather and grow with one another in a unified movement of sisterhood. To commune and learn with UAW sisters from a wide variety of backgrounds and work experience was empowering and uplifting. To advocate in unity for women's issues and abilities in the UAW and workplace, inspired a new hope for the future. I am beyond grateful for the experience and will advocate for new members to get involved. Thank you, Local 598.

Melissa BOWEN

I really enjoyed this year's conference because the instructors allowed for more discussion time during our classes. Hearing other women's stories, the everyday struggles, the mistakes along the way, and about their eventual success allows for us to learn from their experiences. Listening to others and hearing about our commonalities helps to strengthen our solidarity. I met so many fantastic women during the week, plus I was able to catch up with friends I've met at past conferences and UAW events. Thank you, Local 598!

Aubrie MAIN

I learned that the Bargaining Committee does a lot for the advancement of women within the 'Big Three.' Those achievements help to get things that the smaller Locals don't have, like basic feminine needs and issues solved. I love how the instructors were highly informative. Overall, the experience was just wonderful, and I would highly recommend it to anyone who has not been to one.



(L-R) Sharon Reeves, Terrica Aldridge-Willis, Alyssa Rebrovich, Melissa Bowen, Aubrie Main, Britta Rusaw, Stephanie Riley, Lisa Townsend, Pamela Wells, Corissa Carter

Stephanie RILEY

Attending the Women's Conference with fellow members from the Local was a meaningful experience, fostering learning, personal growth, bonding, and breaking barriers. It strengthened solidarity among our women, leaving us feeling renewed and inspired with fresh ideas for the future.

Britta RUSAW

I felt inspired meeting women from all over our Union who have worked and accomplished amazing things for our membership. They taught us how to have confidence, to not just speak, but how to be heard. And the importance of advocating for others.

Lisa TOWNSEND

WC 2025 was not only an educational conference, but an inspirational one as well. With strong speakers like Dr. Patricia Compas-Medina teaching us that leadership is not just a title; it is also about the capacity to influence a needed outcome for change. Ashley Lewis reminded us that it's the "U" and "I" in UNION, when put together, makes us stronger! President Shawn Fain took time from his busy schedule for a much-needed Q&A with the women at the conference, while explaining the importance of the Mouseland theory to us all. It's about how we need to elect representatives that reflect our values.

Not only were the speakers powerful, but so were the classes; my favorite being "The Resilient Bargaining" with Robin Taylor and Dawana King, who are very passionate about what they do and engaging us all.

Corissa CARTER

My favorite part was building sisterhood with our 598 sisters. I love being able to build relationships with ladies from other Locals and regions. It was a week of healing and resilience, along with solidarity with the women in the UAW.

Would you like your young readers to learn more about **EMMA TENAYUCA** and the 1938 Pecan Shellers' Strike?



That's Not Fair!

Emma Tenayuca's Struggle for Justice / ¡No Es Justo! by Carmen Tafolla & Sharyll Teneyu

- Bilingual picture book (English/Spanish).
- Tells Emma's story in an inspiring way for kids ages 5-9.



THE PECAN SHELLER

by Lupe Ruiz-Flores

- Historical fiction for ages 9-13.
- Follows a young girl whose family joins the strike.

SMALL BUSINESS EXPO

Are you or your spouse the OWNER of a small business?

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Invite all members to shop, connect, and support fellow Local 598 entrepreneurs.

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REGISTER at the hall to reserve your spot.

MEMBER Appreciation DAY





Local 598 GOLF OUTING





Debi Kirchner and Britta Rusaw







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register runners, and assisted and encouraged

Photos courtesy of Debi Kirchner



OCTOBER 21, 2025 •

7:00 a.m. I will open the gates to Union City Ballfields

8:00 a.m. Bus will arrive

8:15 a.m. Bus will leave for Local 699 (Saginaw)

8:45 a.m. Bus is scheduled to arrive at Local 699 for pickup.

We will be stopping in West Branch for a meal.

If time allows, we may make a stop in Mackinaw City (small casino)

4:30 p.m. Arrive at St. Ignace Casino. We will receive \$10 and a

\$10 food coupon that can be used at either casino.

6:30 p.m. Transfer to Sault St. Marie Casino for overnight stay.

We will receive \$10 the first day, \$10 the second day.

- OCTOBER 22, 2025 -

Breakfast provided at the hotel/casino. No buffet service avalable. There will be a boxed breakfast with a hot sandwich, muffin, fruit, yogurt, bottle of water and coffee available.

The Breakfast room is exclusively for our motor coach groups and is next to the hotel lobby.

8:30 a.m. Check-out time

8:45 a.m. We will load the bus

9:00 a.m. Leave for Hessell Casino (9:30 - 11:30 a.m.)

Receive package

12:00 p.m. Arrive at St. Ignace. Receive \$10.00. (Noon - 3:30 p.m.)

3:30 p.m. Leave for home with rest stop in West Branch.

6:30 p.m. Arrive back in Saginaw

7:30 p.m. Arrive in Flint.

Welcome Back Retirees

"We had 20 members sign up... and there is still room for you to sign up if you would like to go."

JANET WOODSON

RETIRED WORKERS CHAIR

It was good to see so many of you at our September meeting. We will have the UAW Trust at our October meeting. If you have questions about any of your benefits, this is the meeting to attend.

We will have dinner tickets for Thanksgiving and Christmas dinners available. Tickets are \$5 each.

Our Fall Casino Color Tour will be October 21-22, 2025. The deadline to sign up and pay is October 3, 2025. The cost is \$77.50 for members and \$87.50 for non-members. We had 20 members sign up at our September Chapter meeting, and there is still room for you to sign up if you would like to go. The ladies at the front lobby will take your money and register you for the trip.

This will be an overnight trip and Local 699 Retirees will be joining in on the fun. We will be leaving, as usual, from our Local 598 Union City ballfields.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, October 9th Retiree Chapter Meeting, 12:00 noon Ruben Burks Hall, Local 598

Tuesday-Wednesday October 21st - 22nd

Fall Casino Trip (overnight)

Thursday, Nov. 13th

Retiree Chapter Meeting, 12:00 noon Ruben Burks Hall, Local 598

Thanksgiving Dinner tickets: \$5.00

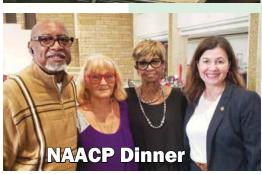
Thursday, Dec. 11th

Retiree Chapter Meeting, 12:00 noon Ruben Burks Hall, Local 598 Christmas Dinner tickets: \$5.00



Your Local 598 Retiree officers busy representing our Chapter at several events.









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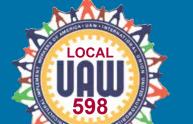
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Linden Chapel 810.735.7833

Miller Road Chapel 810.635.4411





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General Motors Bargaining Unit

District 1A - 1st Shift

COMMITTEEPERSON and ALTERNATE

Motor line, Pre-Final, Box line, Paint

POLLING LOCATIONS

North Unit Gym Area, Paint Cafeteria & Local 598

District 2C - 3rd Shift

ALTERNATE COMMITTEEPERSON

Chassis 1,2,3,4,5, Final Line, Repair, DVT, Store

POLLING LOCATIONS

North Unit Gym Area and Local 598

District 3C - 3rd Shift

COMMITTEEPERSON and ALTERNATE

Material, Salvage, and Skilled Trades

POLLING LOCATIONS

North Unit Gym Area, Paint Cafeteria, Trim Shop, Paint Shop Cafeteria, **Body Shop Cafeteria**, and Local 598

NOMINATIONS will be accepted:

Tuesday, September 30 & Wednesday, October 1, 2025

TIME:

6:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

LOCATION:

Local 598 Union Hall, G-3293 Van Slyke Rd, Flint, MI 48507

To accept nomination by mail, you must send a registered letter to: Election Committee, UAW Local 598, P.O. Box 7800, Flint, MI 48507. It must be received no earlier than Tuesday, September 30, at 6:00 a.m., and no later than Wednesday, October 1, 2025, by 4:00 p.m. This registered letter must specify the position AND district for which nomination is being accepted. Your name must be PRINTED as you wish it to appear on the ballot, your signature, along with complete address and GMIN.

RULES:

- 1. All members of Local 598, UAW, who have been in continuous good standing with Local 598 for one (1) year immediately prior to nomination, are nominated with exception to paragraph 96 moves. (Per Article 38, Section 3 & 4, UAW Constitution; and Article 12, Section 3, Local 598 Bylaws).
- 2. Those desiring to accept nomination must do so by completing and submitting the acceptance form at the Local 598 Union Hall, G-3293 Van Slyke Rd, Flint, MI 48507.

Any Run-off Elections will be held

Wednesday, October 29; 1st Shift polls open at 6:00AM and close at 4:00PM; 3rd Shift polls will open at 10:00PM and close 7:00PM. Thursday, October 30, 2025.



for positions listed above

DATE:

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2025 and **WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2025**

TIME:

1st Shift POLLS OPEN (10/21/25) at 6:00AM and close at 4:00 PM,

3rd Shift POLLS OPEN (10/22/25) at 10:00PM and close at 7:00AM (10/23/25)

ELECTION LOCATIONS:

North Unit Gym Area in the Main Plant, Trim Shop, Paint & Body Shop Cafeterias, and at Local 598 Union Hall.

NOTE: Only Members in Good Standing will be eligible to vote. Voting will be by secret ballot. You must have an employee badge or picture I.D. Members on Leaves of Absence may vote at the Local 598 Union Hall.

– UAW Local 598 Election Committee and President Stephanie Riley