

S.O.S. BULLETIN

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Report from Carquest Picket Line

The workers at the Carquest warehouse in Bay City returned to work last Friday, one day after the contract extension expired. Roger Payne thanked the workers in the morning for returning to work. He recognized one of the workers that achieved 1 million miles of safe driving. Then that afternoon the sociopath Payne told the workers to go home – they weren't needed anymore. These workers make on average of \$14.00 dollars an hour with some benefits. They have a total work force of approximately 65. Seniority ranges from 3 years to 46 years. Their spirits are high and they know what they are up against (break the union and pay minimum wages). The community support is good, Roma's dropped off pizza while I was there, and neighbors were dropping off coffee.

One worker was injured the first day when one of the scab truck drivers rammed him. Security is high for management. They ride with the scabs and video tape everything but tell the locked out workers they cannot use cameras and video on them. Many of the scab drivers came from Carquest non-union warehouses in other states. Others were just employed for the planned lockout. If you are in the area please show up and support these brothers and sisters. Bring cameras and video and if you are talking to people about this issue, please emphasize they are locked out. Many of the local people think they are on strike. My favorite sign was "Support local workers". – from a GM retiree.

Learning the Hard Way At Lake Orion

At GM's Lake Orion Assembly, a union rep told management time and again to move a waste gondola out of the way of sparks coming from a welder. Management did nothing. Sure enough, the gondola caught fire and burned up.

Maybe next time they will pay more attention.

Need Those Workers Back

About 20,000 GM workers are on layoff due to plant closings and production cutbacks. But the workers still on the job can't get medical or emergency reliefs because "there's no one available."

More Production But Few More Jobs

Ford expects to increase its production by 35 per cent in the next quarter, because their sales are up. Are they going to recall 35% more workers? Hell no. But why not? More work is supposed to equal more jobs. They tell us that all the time. But actions speak louder than words.

No No-strike Clause at Delphi

UAW members at Delphi feel under the gun. The majority are relatively new and have never experienced a strong union, but the pendulum swings both ways. Recently GM took back five plants—Lockport, Rochester, Kokomo, Saginaw Steering, Grand Rapids—on top of two SPOs in Dayton and Flint. This signals the importance of the operations to GM's success.

The Delphi plants function under the 2007 Delphi contract until a new contract is negotiated in July 2011. UAW members at Delphi are not restricted by the no strike clause imposed at Chrysler and GM. Delphi workers hold the power to shut down large sections of GM. Supervisors and engineers at Delphi who lost their pensions and health care in retirement would like to see union members get a healthy raise because they need one too.

Royal Treatment or Royal Shaft?

One year ago, the banks went on strike. They refused to make loans. They crashed the economy. What happened? The government bailed them out with billions of dollars. Meanwhile, we the workforce went on and did our jobs and played by the rules. What happened? The government helped the companies through phony "bankruptcies," ripped up our contracts, and set our wages and conditions back 50 years.

Lessons: ... Stop the whole economy, you get the royal treatment.
... Wait and hope, you get the royal shaft.

Down Payment On the Future

In Canada, at the Ford plant in Oakville, Ontario, workers were only two years into the new flex plant manufacturing system building the Ford Edge, MKX, and Flex. Even with the constant threat of their jobs going to Chicago, the workers felt they had been making concessions and opening agreements too many times. Their rank and file, CAW Local 707, rejected concessions in May 2008 by nearly 60% and made history by rejecting the union leadership's recommendation for the first time in CAW history.

Unfortunately, the concessions were accepted by the three other Ford plants. But not everyone agrees!

Now Ford workers in the U.S. and Canada face demands to take more concessions, down to the GM and Chrysler levels. The race to the bottom doesn't stop until someone takes the lead and stands firm.

GM Needs American Axle

General Motors Co. has pledged as much as \$210 million in financial support for American Axle (AAM), including a \$100 million loan, if the company succeeds in renegotiating bank financing. That deal could also result in GM owning 19.9 percent of American Axle, which provides axles and other components to GM vehicles.

About 75 percent of American Axle's sales are to GM. The supplier has about 2,000 workers in Michigan at factories in Detroit and Three Rivers.

American Axle forced workers to take deep concessions after a 13-week strike last year. AAM said they would have to close shop. Now we see that GM will do whatever it takes to keep those axles coming. The workers were lied to.

401(k) Deductions

New hires at GM, Ford, Chrysler, Delphi, Visteon, American Axle and others get automatic deductions from their checks for 401(k) contributions. What many of them don't realize is that they can opt out of these IRA deductions. All they have to do is tell the personnel department that they want to sign the form to stop all contributions to the IRA. Many are never informed of the option. While it is wise to save money for retirement, some workers have more immediate concerns -- like house payments, utilities and food!

Redlining Recognition

"In recognition of all your sacrifices and commitment, we have determined that it is appropriate for base pay to be restored effective Sept. 1," said Mary Barra, GM vice president of global human resources, in an e-mail to white collar workers, obtained by the *Detroit Free Press*.

Of course recognition of sacrifices and commitment is restricted to salary employees.

So when, UAW members ask, will their COLA and performance bonuses be restored? Or don't our sacrifices and commitment count? We know that answer!

This bulletin is put out in the interests of informing workers and renewing the fighting power of organized labor.

Please send your comments and your on-the-job, on-scene reports to:
soldiersofsolidarity@yahoo.com

Solidarity!
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