

# Horizons

## Message from Nate Gooden: *Preserving a legacy*



At first mention, there are certain names that automatically put you on a personal level with the UAW, even if you aren't a part of it. Steve Yokich is, without question, one of them.

used to say, "What you win at the bargaining table, you can lose in Washington." But that was the kind of vision that Steve had. He could see the future of the UAW when others couldn't, or didn't care to look.

That's why staying committed to the UAW is necessary if we plan to head on a forward track for workers, families and retirees.

Steve's recent loss has left a vacancy in the heart of the UAW, but for me, the loss is personal and extends far beyond the roles we played at the bargaining table. When I first became an international representative, Steve took me under his wing. He was a mentor, a brother and a friend. I have yet to meet anyone more dedicated to the future of the UAW.

Retirees have always stood at the forefront of the UAW as the 'tireless workers'—always ready to do whatever is necessary to champion the union's future. Steve's philosophy was that retiring from work didn't mean retiring from the union. And it's obviously a family tradition. Steve's mother Julia, an active member of her retiree chapter in Florida, is a prime example of the type of constant work, dedication and loyalty to the union that retirees represent.

In every UAW president's era, from Walter Reuther, to Doug Fraser, to Steve, there was something important that they fought for. For Steve, it was product quality, joint programs and the union's political agenda. Steve picked a lot of fights on behalf of union members, but he always made sure the rights of workers and their families were at the center of the battle. One of his most accomplished feats was negotiating Election Day off for Big Three workers. Steve gave UAW members a free pass to put a stamp on the candidates and causes the union supports. He

To be dedicated to this union is to embrace what it stands for at every turn. Steve had a loud voice that spoke up so often for working people. It will be our job to make sure it continues to echo throughout the future of this union. The legacy lives on.

But in the tradition of the UAW, there is always someone ready to step in and fill the shoes of a fallen fighter. Politicians, retirees and UAW members alike will miss this great leader. Yet, with the election of Ron Gettelfinger as president of the UAW, I don't think this union will miss a beat.

## Stitching together memories in Huntsville

For Marie Stone, there are two things that have given her lifetime memories—the classes she's taken at the UAW-DaimlerChrysler Huntsville Regional Training Center and quilting. Now the tables have turned, giving her the chance to share her talents with others at the place where her passion for the stitch began.

"I love quilts," says Stone, retired UAW Local 1413 member from Huntsville Electronics who started taking classes at the training center in 1992 as an extra activity to keep her occupied. A widower who lives alone, Stone now busies herself during retirement teaching a class like the one that nurtured her fondness for



quilting.

"I have always loved quilting. I know a lot of people who don't do much. I have to stay busy," she says. One night a week, Stone travels 50 miles to the training center to teach a roomful of women the art of quilting.

"I can't believe some of the women have never hemmed a dress!" adds Stone, who's been sewing since her childhood days.

One of Stone's more popular quilts was entered in the UAW-DaimlerChrysler National Training Center's 2000 Artists At Work competition and won honorable

## Memories in Huntsville

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mention for a beautifully displayed tapestry signed by classmates from over 16 different courses she has taken at the training center.

“Lots of people tried to buy it, but I said it wasn’t for sale,” she says. Encouraged by her supervisor at Huntsville Electronics, Stone sent in the quilt and was surprised that it was accepted. The quilt, fittingly titled “Memories of Chrysler,” has adorned the main lobby at the NTC.

Stone gives high praise to Huntsville’s Regional Training Center, having taken numerous classes there over the years. The Huntsville Center is one of eight regional family training centers around the country offering personal enrichment and college credit classes to employees and their families.

“The training center has meant a lot to me,” Stone says. “It has helped me out before and after I retired. It gave me a lot of things to do while I was working. And now, it is still a big part of my life.”

Stone was especially excited when she entered her first classroom as an instructor with a larger turnout than she expected. “There were so many students in my class,” she says. “I’ve never even been in a class that large. That surely makes me feel good.”

Every Monday, as Marie Stone captures good times with her quilting class, she’s also building more memories—stitch by stitch.

## Getting rid of the blues

By Tanisha Perez

**Fact or fiction?** Popular opinion says that aging can lead to bouts of extreme depression. Although somber moods and feelings of despair are not temperaments that come about because of old age, depression is a bona fide illness that is quite common among seniors. In fact, it has become so widespread that over 6 million Americans over age 65 suffer from late-life depression.



However, treatment of depression doesn’t have to come in the form of therapy or medication. Many medications actually cause mood swings and feelings of profound emptiness. Loss of interest in once pleasurable activities is often the first sign of depression. Changes in sleeping habits, weight gain or loss and morbid thoughts can all contribute heavily to depression.

Yet, while the causes can be extensive, many of the treatments are simple. The presence of the holidays with its focus on family and togetherness can be just the kind of catalyst that can spark a depressive state. But there are ways to put joy back into your life and shift the focus to valuing yourself and your health.

Volunteering can be just the life-altering experience you need. It’s an excellent way to get back in the swing of things and break the mold of social and emotional isolation. The spirit of giving is such a powerful medicine that the effect of interaction with others can be remarkable.

As retirees, you have spent a lifetime learning skills and developing talents that can benefit others. It could be your time or expertise that can help change someone’s life—especially yours.

A substantial piece of the 90 million hours of weekly volunteer services comes from the senior population. The benefits of volunteering stretch a long way and can help curb some of the despondent feelings associated with depression. There are a number of ways you can lend a hand and numerous organizations, like the American Red Cross, United Way and others, waiting for you to sign up.

In the spirit of good health and giving, take a moment out of your season to throw out the blues and make your time during the holidays, *time well spent*.

## UAW SPOTLIGHT

**Steve Yokich was one of the UAW’s most distinguished presidents. Although he is no longer with us, he left some significant marks on the union and its members. Test your skills and see how well you know the UAW’s seventh elected president.**

1. At what age did Steve Yokich attend his first UAW picket line?
2. What is Steve’s home union local?
3. What landmark 1999 negotiation initiative did he win for UAW members at the Big Three?
4. How many times was he elected vice president within the UAW?
5. In what military service did he serve?



Answers on back page

# John Coyne keeping up the fight

By Tanisha Perez

John Coyne is a man on the move. And even though he's retired after nearly 29 years, he's still working for the union and many causes it supports.

Coyne, who served as president and committeeman of UAW Local 212 at DaimlerChrysler Transport, has migrated to Florida where much of his time goes to volunteering. Coyne volunteers for the West Coast Council of Retired UAW Workers, which operates one of 35 community drop-in centers in the nation available to help UAW retirees with benefit issues, changing health care coverage and other matters.

The center, which services over 2,500 families, is open only two days a week, and Coyne makes the most of every hour.

"I'm in there early and always leaving late," he says with a laugh. And his dedication to the union's retired community is not thwarted by the fact that John suffers from osteoarthritis and does all his Good Samaritan work from the seat of a mobility scooter.

"I try to keep up with ongoing

change," says Coyne. And that he does. He typically gives up nearly 30 hours a week working to make a difference. Although he helps retired union workers, Coyne has turned his attention to helping the community-at-large with many of the same issues that the union stands for.

"The UAW has pretty good pensions,



good health care and social security, but we still have the same concerns as the working family. It's time to pitch in and help the next generation."

And as for the union, Coyne says he's doing exactly what it does—advocate for the people.

"The union has done so much for me personally that I don't think you ever

pay that back," he says. "We are one of the most socially conscious organizations and that's what's made the union what it is today. It's the involvement that keeps you alive."

Politics is high on Coyne's agenda. He started the West Pasco Democratic Club after it had been inactive for 15 years. He encourages people to participate in the political process by promoting voter registration and using the absentee ballot.

"Seeing us get our political priorities back at the forefront of people's minds is extremely important," he adds.

"America need not get disheartened. We just need to be conscious and urge people to be politically active. We still have a voice."

Despite his busy schedule, Coyne always finds time to serve his union, such as when he was asked to be a sergeant at arms at the UAW's 33<sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Convention in Las Vegas in June.

"It was an incredible experience," he says. "It was just something great to be a part of."

## Taking the road less traveled

Although we expect the hustle and bustle during the holidays, traveling can make life even more hectic for the older American. New travel security procedures can become distressing. In an effort to keep the spirits high during your holiday season, here are a few tips to keep you on your toes as you travel.

- Always check the weather for your destination and pack appropriately. It's *always* a good idea to wear layers of

clothing as you travel in the event your luggage is lost or stolen.

- Try the new-and-improved suitcase with wheels for easier hauling and less back pressure.
- Include a kit with all necessary medication in your carry-on bag in case you are separated from your luggage.
- Pack a spare pair of glasses.

- Don't forget documents—passport, airline ticket, railpass, driver's license and medical card with prescription and allergy information.
- Bring a mix of traveler's checks, credit cards and cash and avoid place.



## Too High a Price

Just a few more years and your home will be paid for. However, mortgage lenders have contacted you, reminding about those much needed home repairs or encouraging you to take advantage of some extra cash if you refinance your home. Of course, it sounds impressive since you have a fair amount of equity in your home. But beware! By the stroke of a pen, you could sign away your single greatest asset.

Seniors have become prime targets for unscrupulous mortgage lending practices. The idea is to encourage seniors to use their hard-earned equity to secure a new, more expensive loan with hidden terms that make it close to impossible to pay back.

In the first three months of this year, over \$55.5 billion was generated in this lucrative lending market. Quite simply, if a consumer defaults on a



mortgage loan it creates big bucks for the lender, yet hard times for you.

The American Association of Retired Persons, one of the nation's largest advocacy groups for retired Americans, has been fighting to curb predatory lending practices aimed at seniors as one of its top priorities. It has adopted three important initiatives in its fight—consumer education programs, legislative reform and continued litigation on behalf of homeowners struggling to maintain their homes.

While it's a good idea to shop

around if you need to refinance, identifying the warning signs of abusive mortgage practices can prevent the possible loss of your home.

**Beware of home improvement scams!** If you must borrow money to repair your home, don't let a home improvement company arrange financing for you. Most often, these are home equity loans with high interest rates, points and fees.

**Avoid loans with "balloon" payments.** Balloon payments are exactly what they sound like--expansive payments due at the end of the loan term.

**Don't sign over your deed.** If you're having trouble making your payments, don't let another lender provide new financing by deeding your property to them as a temporary measure to save you from foreclosure.

**Don't purchase credit insurance with your loan.** Another attractive addition lenders try to sell to "pad" the cost of your monthly payment.

**If you have story ideas, comments or suggestions on how New Horizons can better meet your needs and interests, contact Tanisha Perez at 313-567-3300 or e-mail [tdavis@ucntc.org](mailto:tdavis@ucntc.org)**

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#### Answers to Steve Yokich quiz

1. 22 months old;
2. Local 155;
3. Paid day off on Election Day;
4. Three times;
5. U.S. Air Force.

### *New Horizons*

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