



"An injury to one is an injury to all."
William "Big Bill" Haywood & David C. Coates



Resolution 2025: Solidarity Forever

Happy New Year, Brothers & Sisters! I hope that we were all able to make some time to recharge our batteries, because we need all the energy we can get for the year ahead.

I'll be blunt. When I think about the direction of our Union heading into 2025, I think that we all need a wake-up call. I know there are disconnects between rank-and-file members and leadership. Many members, openly or secretly, have complaints or see things they don't like. At the same time, there are not many members that want to step up and demand the changes necessary to move us forward. It sounds cliché, but we the members are the union. DC4 isn't a corporation or a government, and it's not the staff or even the leadership. The union is all of us as a collective, and it needs all of us working together to be functional - not from the top-down, but from the bottom-up and inside-out.

In our December issue, I wrote about recommitting ourselves to the original values of the labor movement - solidarity the first among them. It's a word that's thrown around casually by too many union leaders. On the one hand, its meaning seems simple enough: solidarity is mutual support within a group; in this

case, among workers. On the other hand, if we take a hard look at our union, it can sometimes be hard to find.

Don't get me wrong, there are good things happening in DC4, and have been for some years now. But we need to do better. We have many complainers, but too often they do not show up at meetings to voice their concerns. Some of us are quick to attack "the union" but unwilling to come together and make the change we want to see in our union. Some of us are comfortable with the same-old-same-old, and we've become complacent (whether on staff or in the field). This must change, and it will take all of us, together.

A good example of solidarity today is on full display with "the boys in blue." However you feel about the police, one thing is for sure - when it comes to solidarity, they have it in spades! Think of the "thin blue line" - we see it on stickers everywhere. Among other things, it signifies a sense of unity among police officers and sends the message that, through the dangers, sacrifices and commitments officers face together policing the streets, they will have each other's backs. Similarly, the firefighters have the "thin red line," and you find the same solidarity honored among active military and veterans, with their "thin green line."

Like the police, firefighters and military, we need our own thin line, signifying our bond and mutual support as workers. We need to think beyond our own narrow self-interests and dedicate ourselves to the best interests of all our DC4 brothers and sisters. Does it mean we will always get along? Does it mean we will always agree? No. But it does mean that when our brother or sister workers are being given the shaft by the powers that be, we stand with them and fight. It means that we have each other's backs as workers, because we've all had to work to earn the shirts on our back. (And for those who might question the sincerity of these words coming from a lawyer, I'll let you in on some secrets: I don't just come from a blue-collar family, I've worked and lived blue-collar. I've worked retail, food service, warehouses and trucking docks - both within and without unions. I still remember what it's like to have mere change in my checking account after the bills were all paid. And, as a union-side labor lawyer, I never made more than a good journey person (you don't get rich fighting for workers), and there are no trust funds waiting for me anywhere (not possible on my parents' teacher and handyman wages).)

Behind the scenes, solidarity means that disagreements between members are handled among us - not left to fester or given to the bosses to deal with. (I've heard of members throwing other members under the bus to their employer, even getting them fired - one of the most cowardly and anti-union moves I can think of). It means attending union meetings and talking to our reps and other leaders. And trust me - for every Business Rep that's busy or unavailable, there's an Organizer, Steward or other member that can help. We shouldn't be shy about that - we owe it each other to rely on each other, stand up for each other and get to know each other.

I realize all of this is easier said than done, especially across a 33-county jurisdiction. But it's achievable, starting in our home areas and expanding outward. While there are politicians, community groups and even employers who are our allies - no one understands the working person like other working people. No one. We best remember that.

So, for the new year, let's all try to come together and create our own "thin line" - not only to symbolize our bond as working people, but to be an unbreakable line of defense for our working conditions, our CBA's and our labor rights. I'm confident that if we all make the effort, we will have each other's backs through 2025 and beyond. Thank you, and again, Happy New Year!

In Solidarity,
Joe Guza



HIT THE BRICKS! (OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACTION)

- Check out the **FREE** original edition of "A Troublemaker's Handbook: How to Fight Back Where You Work - and Win!" [here](#).
- If you're interested in becoming a labor council delegate, call, text or email Joe Guza at (716) 458-5844 or jguza@dc4.org.
- **Labor Notes Zoom Events:**
 - January 6, 8pm - **Labor Notes National Call: Union Solidarity with Immigrant Workers**. Learn more and register [here](#).
 - January 9, 7:30pm - **Race and Labor**. Learn more and register [here](#).
 - January 27, 7:30pm - **Labor Notes National Call: Beating the Billionaires in 2025**. Learn more and register [here](#).
 - January 29, 7pm - **Stewards' Workshop: Holding Effective Meetings**. Learn more and register [here](#).
 - January 30, 7:30pm - **Secrets of a Successful Organizer**. Learn more and register [here](#).

VOC MEETING

After much discussion we have decided to return to Zoom-only VOC Meetings. While many of our Pre-Game Meetings were successful, attendance is too low to continue them going forward. Our next VOC Meeting will be held **Thursday, January 23, 2025 @ 5:30pm**. Look out for the link!

PHOTO CONTEST

Submit your photos [here](#)! Photos from the field help promote our union trades and display our impact in our local communities. Plus, you could win a gas card!

EDUCATE, AGITATE, ORGANIZE!

Labor Activist Shortlist

For the readers out there, here is a short list of books that every modern labor activist and aspiring labor leader should read.

1. There is Power in a Union: The Epic Story of Labor in America, by Philip Dray.
2. The Hammer: Power, Inequality, and the Struggle for the Soul of Labor, by Hamilton Nolan.
3. Confessions of a Union Buster, by Martin Jay Levitt.
4. On Tyranny: Twenty Lessons from the Twentieth Century, by Timothy Snyder.
5. The Campaign Guide: Organizing & Contract Enforcement in the Construction Industry, NABTU.



If you need help finding any of these books or have questions, contact jguza@dc4.org.

WHAT MAKES A UNION? (SNIPPETS FROM LABOR HISTORY)

- **January 1:**
 - 1920 - John L. Lewis is elected president of the United Mine Workers.
 - 1931 - Workers begin to acquire credits toward Social Security pension benefits. Employers and employees became subject to a tax of one percent of wages on up to \$3,000 a year.
 - 1994 - North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) takes effect, despite objections by Labor.

- **January 2:**
 - 1920 - In what became known as the Palmer Raids, Attorney General Mitchell Palmer arrests 4,000 foreign-born labor activists.
 - 2006 - An underground explosion at Sago Mine in Tallmansville, W.VA. traps 12 miners and cuts power to the mine. Eleven die, mostly by asphyxiation. The mine had been cited 273 times for safety violations over the prior 23 months.

- **January 3:**
 - 1981 - AFL-CIO American Institute for Free Labor Development employees Mike Hammer and Mark Pearlman are assassinated in El Salvador along with a Peasant Workers' Union leader with whom they were working on a land reform program.

- **January 4:**
 - 1961 - What many believe to be the longest strike in modern history, by the Danish barbers' assistants, ends after 33 years.

- **January 5:**
 - 1869 - The nation's first labor convention of black workers was held in Washington, D.C. with 214 delegates forming the Colored National Labor Union.
 - 1914 - Ford Motor Company raises wages from \$2.40 for a nine-hour day to \$5 for an eight-hour day in effort to keep the unions out.
 - 1933 - Construction of the Golden Gate Bridge begins. Ten of the 11 deaths on the job came when safety netting beneath the site - the first-ever use of such equipment - failed under the stress of a scaffold that had fallen.

- **January 6:**
 - 1882 - The Toronto Trades and Labour Council endorses the principle of equal pay for equal work between men and women.
 - 1916 - 8,000 workers strike at Youngstown Sheet & Tube. The following day the strikers' wives and other family members join

in the protest. Company guards use tear gas bombs and fire into the crowd; 3 strikers are killed, 25 wounded.

- **January 7:**

- 1892 - An explosion at Osage Coal and Mining Company's Mine #11 near Krebs, OK kills 100 and injures 150 when an untrained worker accidentally sets off a stash of explosives.

- **January 8:**

- 1811 - The largest slave revolt in U.S. history begins on Louisiana sugar plantations. Slaves armed with hand tools marched toward New Orleans, setting plantations and crops on fire, building their numbers to an estimated 300-500 as they went. The uprising lasted for 2 days before being brutally suppressed by the military.
- 1864 - Birthdate of Mary Kenney O'Sullivan, first AFL woman organizer.
- 1920 - The AFL Iron and Steel Organizing Committee ends the "Great Steel Strike." Some 350,000 to 400,000 steelworkers had been striking for more than 3 months, demanding union recognition. The strike failed.

- **January 9:**

- 1922 - 80,000 Chicago construction workers' strike.
- 2003 - The administration of George W. Bush declares federal airport security screeners will not be allowed to unionize so as not to "complicate" the war on terrorism. The decision was challenged and eventually overturned after Bush left office.



- **January 10:**

- 1860 - In what is described as the worst industrial disaster in state history, the Pemberton Mill in Lawrence, MA collapses, trapping 900 workers, mostly Irish women. More than 100 die, scores more injured in the collapse and ensuing fire. Too much machinery had been crammed into the building.
- 1914 - IWW organizer and singer Joe Hill allegedly kills 2 men during a grocery store hold-up in Utah. He ultimately is executed by firing squad (his last word was "Fire!") for the crime despite much speculation that he was framed.

- **January 11:**

- 1912 - The IWW-organized "Bread & Roses" textile strike of 32,000 women and children begins in Lawrence, MA. It lasted 10 weeks and ended in victory.
- 1936 - Nearly 2 weeks into a sit-down strike at GM's Fisher Body Plant No. 2 in Flint, MI, workers battle police when they try to

prevent the strikers from receiving food deliveries from thousands of supporters on the outside. 16 strikers and spectators, and 11 police, were injured.

- **January 12:**

- 1919 - Seattle Mayor Ole Hanson orders police to raid an open-air mass meeting of shipyard workers to prevent a general strike. Workers were brutally beaten. The strike began the following month, with 60,000 workers walking out in solidarity with some 25,000 metal tradesmen.

- **January 14:**

- 1993 - Clinton-era OSHA issues confined spaces standard to prevent more than 50 deaths and 5,000 serious injuries annually for workers who enter confined spaces.
- 2003 - Some 14,000 General Electric employees strike for 2 days to protest the company's mid-contract decision to shift an average of \$400 in additional health care co-payments onto each worker.



- **January 15:**

- 1919 - 17 workers die when a large molasses storage tank in Boston's North End neighborhood bursts, sending a 40-foot wave of molasses surging through the streets at an estimated 35 miles per hour. In all, 21 people died and 150 were injured.
- 1946 - Some 174,000 members of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers (UE) union struck General Electric and Westinghouse after power companies, with record-setting profits, offered just a half-cent per hour increase. After 9 weeks the strike was settled with an 18.5 cent hourly wage improvement.

- **January 17:**

- 1915 - Radical labor organizer Lucy Parsons leads hunger march in Chicago; IWW songwriter Ralph Chaplin wrote "Solidarity Forever" for the march.
- 1962 - President John F. Kennedy signs Executive Order 10988, guaranteeing federal workers the right to join unions and bargain collectively.

- **January 18:**

- 1909 - U.S. Supreme Court rules in *Moyer v. Peabody* that a governor and officers of a state National Guard may imprison anyone - in the case at hand, striking miners in Colorado - without probable cause "in a time of insurrection" and deny the person the right of appeal.

- 1978 - "Take This Job and Shove It," by Johnny Paycheck, is listed by *Billboard* magazine as the most popular song in the U.S.
- **January 19:**
 - 1920 - Some 3,000 members of the Filipino Federation of Labor strike the plantations of Oahu, HI. Their ranks swell to 8,300 as they are joined by members of the Japanese Federation of Labor.
 - 1986 - Bruce Springsteen makes an unannounced appearance at a benefit for laid-off 3M workers, Asbury Park, NJ.
- **January 20:**
 - 1986 - Bruce Springsteen's "My Hometown," a eulogy for dying industrial cities, is the country's most listened-to song. The lyrics, in part: "Now Main Street's whitewashed windows and vacant stores...Seems like there ain't nobody wants to come down here no more...They're closing down the textile mill across the railroad tracks...Foreman says these jobs are going boys, and they ain't coming back to your hometown..."
- **January 21:**
 - 1946 - Some 750,000 steel workers walk out in 30 states, largest strike in U.S. history at that time.
 - 1974 - Postal workers begin 4-day strike at the Jersey City, NJ bulk and foreign mail center, protesting an involuntary shift change. The wildcat strike was led by a group of young workers who identified themselves as "The Outlaws."
 - 2000 - 600 police officers attack picketing longshoremen in Charleston, SC.
- **January 22:**
 - 1826 - Indian field hands at San Juan Capistrano mission refused to work, engaging in what was probably the first farm worker strike in California.
 - 1849 - Birth of Terence V. Powderly, leader of the Knights of Labor.
- **January 23:**
 - 1913 - Some 10,000 clothing workers strike in Rochester, NY for the 8-hour day, a 10% wage increase, union recognition, and extra pay for overtime and holidays.
- **January 25:**
 - 1851 - Sojourner Truth addresses first Black Women's Rights convention.
 - 1888 - The Sheet Metal Workers union is founded in Toledo, OH.

- 1904 - 200 miners are killed in a horrific explosion at the Harwick mine in Cheswick, PA. Many of the dead lie entombed in the sealed mine to this day.
- 1915 - The Supreme Court upholds "Yellow Dog" employment contracts, which forbid membership in labor unions. Yellow Dog contracts remained legal until 1932.
- 1926 - Some 16,000 textile workers strike in Passaic, NJ
- 1950 - The federal minimum wage rate rises to 75 cents an hour.

- **January 26:**

- In what could be considered the first workers' compensation agreement in America, pirate Henry Morgan pledges his underlings 600 pieces of eight or 6 slaves to compensate for a lost arm or leg.
- 1850 - Samuel Gompers, first AFL president, is born.
- 1937 - Workers win a 2-day sit-down strike at the Brooklyn electric plant that powers the city's entire subway system.
- 2009 - A handful of American companies announce nearly 60,000 layoffs today, as the recession that began during the George W. Bush presidency charges full-tilt toward what became known as the Great Recession.



- **January 27:**

- 1734 - New York City maids organize to improve working conditions.
- 1891 - Mine explosion in Mount Pleasant, PA leaves more than 100 dead.
- 2014 - Pete Seeger dies in New York at age 94. A musician and activist, he was a revered figure on the American left, persecuted during the McCarthy era for his support of progressive, Labor and civil rights causes.
- 2014 - Members of the Northwestern University football team announce they are seeking union recognition. A majority signed cards, later delivered to the National Labor Relations Board office in Chicago, asking for representation by the College Athletes Players Association.

- **January 28:**

- 1861 - American Miners' Association formed.
- 1932 - First U.S. unemployment compensation law enacted, in Wisconsin.

- **January 29:**

- 1834 - Responding to unrest among Irish laborers building the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, President Andrew Jackson orders first use of American troops to suppress a labor dispute.
- 1889 - 6,000 railway workers strike for a union and the end of the 18-hour day.
- 1981 - Dolly Parton hits No. 1 on the record charts with "9-to-5," her anthem to the daily grind.
- 2009 - The Lilly Ledbetter Fair Pay Act is signed into law by President Obama. The Fair Pay Act stipulated that the 180-day statute of limitations for filing an equal-pay lawsuit regarding pay discrimination resets with each new paycheck affected by the discriminatory action.

- **January 30:**

- 1882 - Franklin Delano Roosevelt is born Hyde Park, NY. He was elected president of the United States four times starting in 1932. His legislative achievements included the creation of the National Labor Relations Act, which allows workers to organize unions, bargain collectively, and strike.



- **January 31:**

- 1938 - Some 12,000 pecan shellers in San Antonio, TX - mostly Latino women - walk off their jobs at 400 factories in what was to become a 3-month strike against wage cuts.
- 1940 - Ida M. Fuller is the first retiree to receive an old-age monthly benefit check under the new Social Security law. She paid \$24.75 between 1937 and 1939 on an income of \$2,484; her first check was for \$22.54.
- 1978 - After scoring successes with representation elections conducted by the California Agricultural Labor Relations Board, the United Farm Workers of America officially ends its historic table grape, lettuce and wine boycotts.

- 2002 - Union and student pressure forces Harvard University to adopt new labor policies raising wages for their lowest paid workers.
- 2005 - 5 months after Hurricane Katrina, the New Orleans school board fires every teacher in the district in what the United Teachers of New Orleans sees as an effort to break the union and privatize the school system.



YOU GOTTA FIGHT!...FOR YOUR RIGHTS!
(MILITANT LABOR IN AN ANTI-LABOR AGE)

To keep members informed of labor developments and working-class issues, we introduce this new section of The Organizer.

Amazon Strike!

The Teamsters strike against Amazon began on December 22. While the Teamsters and allied unions have been engaged in sympathy job actions across the United States, the strike stems from Amazon's illegal refusal to bargain in good faith with the Union for a collective bargaining agreement. The Amazon Labor Union (which later affiliated with the Teamsters) won a union election at Amazon's Staten Island Warehouse Facility in 2022. On December 19, 2024, IUPAT District Council 4 assisted Teamsters Local 118 with their job action at Amazon's Rochester facility, along with the Rochester Building & Construction Trades Council, NYSUT Rochester, Federation of Social Workers IUE/CWA 81381 and others local unions.



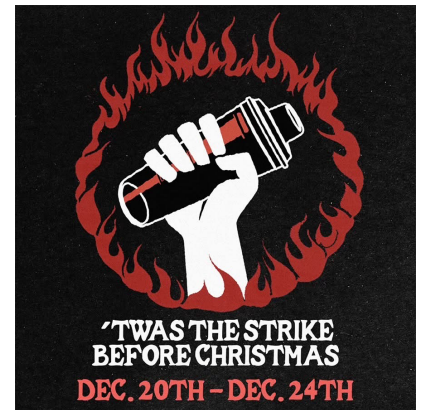


Genesee County IDA Ignores Local Labor Requirements

In early December, the Rochester Building & Construction Trades Council learned that the Genesee County IDA granted tax relief to Hecate Energy's Cider Solar project while waiving the IDA's 90% local labor requirements. The IDA has failed to explain its reasoning for granting the waiver and has cancelled several planned meetings with the Council to address the issue. IUPAT District Council 4 participated in the Council's protest against the local labor waiver at the Genesee County Economic Development Center on December 18, 2024.

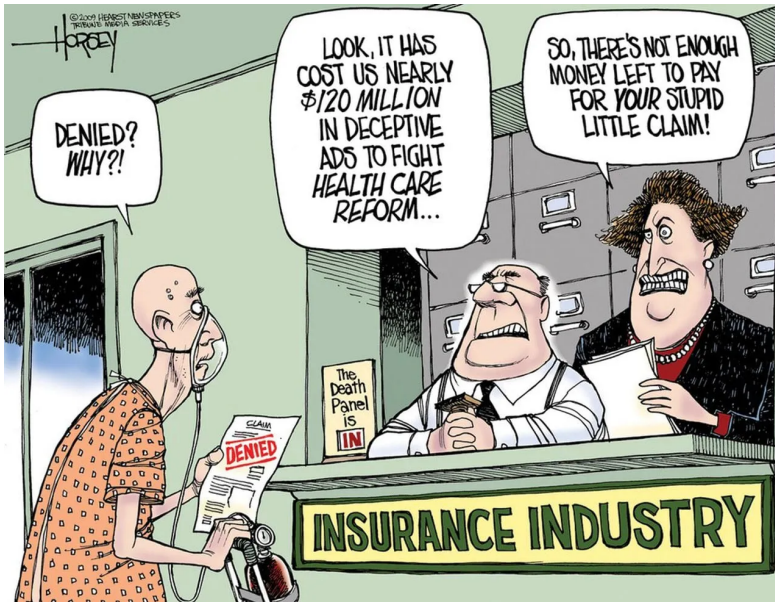
Starbucks - 'Twas The Strike Before Christmas!

"Jingle bells, coffee sells, so why are we all broke?" Starbucks workers went on strike the week before Christmas in an effort to pressure the company to bargain fairly with them in negotiations for a collective bargaining agreement. So far, Starbucks' proposals only include an 1.5% wage increase for future years (barely half the current rate of inflation). The Union supports a base wage of \$20 per hour for all baristas. Currently the base wage is \$15.25, with the average barista making just over \$18 per hour.



General Motors Layoffs in Rochester, NY.

The GM plant in Rochester, NY laid off around 85 UAW members just before Christmas. The word on the street is that the company often lays off workers through January to avoid paying out of its profit-sharing plan (you need to work at least 1 day in January to be eligible).



Luigi Mangione Allegedly Kills UnitedHealthcare CEO.

UnitedHealthcare CEO was killed in New York City on December 4, 2024. Luigi Mangione was arrested on December 9, 2024 and was charged with killing the CEO. The assassination struck a nerve with many U.S. citizens and people from around the world. The response? A distinct lack of sympathy for the CEO's murder. In the wake of the murder, many people have criticized the for-profit healthcare industry and system in the United States for, among other things, denying

otherwise valid claims to increase profits. UnitedHealthcare is the United States' largest health insurer. Its parent company, UnitedHealth Group is

the fourth largest public company in America, behind Walmart, Amazon and Apple. It is the world's 8th largest corporation by market capitalization.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE UNION

- We are still looking to appoint a Local VOC Representative for each local union in DC4. We hope for the VOC to be more than just a community service group, and welcome all members interested in union activism to join. If you are interested, or can recommend someone for your local, please reach out to us!
- We have been making strides in identifying leaders and potential members interested in forming our DC4 CORE Committees! These include the **Women's CORE Committee, Black CORE Committee, Latino CORE Committee, LGBTQ+ CORE Committee, Young Workers CORE Committee and Retiree CORE Committee**. The purpose of each CORE Committee is to help make good on IUPAT's commitment to making our local unions and district council welcoming and inclusive environments for everyone, regardless of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or age.

We know that it can be intimidating and lonely being the only Female, Black or Latino worker (for example) on a job site. While we strive to better represent workers of all backgrounds, being able to speak with fellow members with similar backgrounds can help you realize what issues you share on the job and give you a voice to share and address them at the local and district council level.

We will continue reaching out to individuals who we believe are interested in serving in leadership roles on these committees. Please let us know if you're interested in establishing any one of these committees. The DC4 Organizing Team will work with you to get them up and running. Check out the IUPAT's CORE Committee page [here](#).

IUPAT DC4 Organizer/Inside Counsel Joe Guza has been assigned to the CORE Committee for the IUPAT Eastern Regional Conference in January and will bring back materials and developments from the conference to help kick these committees into gear in 2025.

If you have questions or suggestions for The Organizer, please email jguza@dc4.org.

