

Stand firm as they try to profit from our loss

There is a scene in the movie "Return of the King," part of the "Lord Of The Rings" trilogy, where the forces of good are surrounded on all sides by an enormous enemy. This is the way the rank-and-file of UAW 23 is starting to feel. With GM, JD Norman Industries, the city of Indianapolis and the representatives of the UAW International circling wagons and firing flaming arrows into our midst, we are nearly overwhelmed. All of those entities are entreating members of UAW Local 23 to voluntarily lower our standard of living so that GM can be rid of us, local and state governments can continue to earn their tax revenues and the International can continue to live well on our union dues.

All this is happening when GM is ready to announce \$1.3 billion quarterly profits and upper-echelon union leaders recently received a raise.

We should be happy to reduce our wages by a third. Everyone knows union employees are overpaid, don't they? Of course, office workers, teachers, dental assistants and department store employees don't normally have to do mind-numbing, repetitious tasks like our production employees do. Back problems, carpal tunnel syndrome and assorted joint problems are not as common in the office as in the factory. Chilling cold in winter and sweltering, humid summers are not suffered in the doctor's office. Hazards from moving machinery, sharp metal, oily floors and airborne pollutants are uncommon in other workplaces.

Most of our skilled-trade work force has gone through apprenticeships, often at low wages, purchased thousands of dollars worth of tools and suffered through countless hours of night school to gain journeyman status.

Perhaps there are reasons why we deserve the money we make. I believe we, the rank-and-file of UAW 23 should stand fast and vote no to demands to open our contract and once again give concessions so others may benefit from our loss.

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