

# Wendy Thompson for Convention Delegate

AM.AXLE/ARAMARK/VITEC/NURSES GROUPS

Thurs., April 15, 2010

Voting Locations:

American Axle Local 235 Hall, 2140 Holbrook, Hamtramck

Detroit/Hamtramck New Woodcock Center (former Mezz Cafeteria) Main Cafeteria 5am – 6pm,

GMPT Livonia Pride Center 5 am- 3:30pm,

VITEC Cafeteria 5 am-6 pm,

L. 22 Hall 8am-6pm

Experience

2006, 2002, 1998, 1995, 1986 & 1983: Elected Delegate to the UAW Constitutional & Bargaining Conventions, Local 235, UAW

2002 Re-Elected President, Local 235

1999 Elected President, Local 235

1987 Elected Chairperson of the Shop Committee, Local 235

1984 Elected District Committeeperson Pl. 3, 1st Shift, Local 235

1981 Re-Elected Shop Committeeperson-At-Large, 2nd Shift, Local 235

1980 Elected Shop Committeeperson-At-Large, 2nd Shift, Local 235

1978 Elected Educational Director, Local 235, UAW

1975 Elected District Committeeperson, Pl. 6, 2nd Shift, Local 235

This year former Local 235 members share a delegate position for the UAW Constitutional and Bargaining Conventions with the Aramark, Vitec and Nurses groups of L. 22. I want to thank L. 22 members for the support you gave to the strikers during the American Axle Strike in 2008.

After gutting the contract, American Axle demanded the contract be reopened the following year. When the Union refused, they moved work away from the Detroit plants in violation of the contract. The workforce was almost 2000 after the strike. Now it is approximately 135. An arbitration case has been won and this should mean that work comes back to the plant. Many felt forced to take a buy-out because they saw no future for the plant. They should be offered a chance to re-hire at the same rate.

The economic crisis has been devastating for all of us. I retired in 2006, but have still stayed active in the union, winning a delegate position in 2006 as a retiree. We must regroup and rebuild the strength of the Union. This can only happen if we get involved and take control of our future. The Conventions are important to the future of the UAW because they are where the major decisions affecting the Union as a whole are supposed to be made. This year for the first time in memory the Constitutional Convention will be in Detroit. This gives the membership a chance to participate in a way we have not had before.

Each time I have been elected as delegate, I have spoken out on the floor, and voted for the membership even when most delegates have just gone along. I have presented resolutions to Local 22 for discussion and vote at the General Membership Meeting. If passed they will be sent to the Convention and I will try to get them on the Convention floor for discussion. They are:

- 1) Rebuild a Fighting Union – We need to stand united in solidarity to eliminate two-tier wage structure and whipsawing, to stop mass layoffs and plant closings, and to reverse the overall concessionary trend that stems from the disastrous strategy of promoting competitiveness.
- 2) Right to a Job – We must reopen our closed plants. Why not a massive retooling like what occurred during World War II? Reopened plants can build needed mass transit, light rail, buses, electric cars and renewable - non-fossil - energy (wind and hydraulic turbines, solar panels, etc).
- 3) One Member One Vote for International Officers to encourage more membership participation and create a more democratic, and therefore stronger, Union.
- 4) Single Payer Health Care for All – Even with the passage of the healthcare bill, we need to eliminate the pitfalls of the VEBA, and the division in a two tier workforce.
- 5) Right to Vote for Retirees on changes to their pensions and health care benefits.
- 6) UAW Unification with the USWA and the CAW, the combined membership would total close to 1½ million, the equivalent of the UAW's membership at its peak in 1979, and would represent a more powerful political force in the both collective bargaining and the political arena.

Our Union and everything we have fought for and won has been under assault. The idea of the unions having a partnership strategy with the corporations has led to incessant demands for concessions. Last year Ford workers had enough and voted against further concessions. Five Delphi plants have been brought back into the General Motors fold, but are being pressured to give more concessions. Several locals are resisting; they deserve our support. I have always voted against concessions and recommended against two-tier wages when in AAM Negotiations. It doesn't bring job security, it just leads to more concessions.

In December 2008, I helped organize an autoworkers caravan to Washington, D.C. when right-wing senators were attacking the Detroit Three because the workforce was unionized. We visited these senators, gave them an earful and held a large press conference so the voice of rank and file autoworkers could be heard. It was important for us to reach out to the American public when the lie was circulating that we made \$75 an hour! We promoted health care, pensions and decent jobs for everyone.

I have also been involved in organizing autoworker rallies at the last two Detroit Auto Shows demanding jobs. There was a meeting of autoworkers at Metro Airport in January and another will be held at the Labor Notes Conference, April 23-25th at the Hyatt Regency in Dearborn, [HTTP://www.labornotes.org./conference](http://www.labornotes.org./conference). This bi-annual conference brings over 1000 unionists from all over the country and internationally. American Axle strikers may remember 200 people came in buses down to the picket line during the lunch break including autoworkers from Brazil, Mexico and Germany.

At the UAW Convention we will be organizing a rank and file autoworkers rally to reach out to the public and start the turn-around that is needed to rebuild our union into the fighting , strong organization it was when we started in the 30's.

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