

Live Bait & Ammo #108: Buck the Bull

"I did not anticipate that we would be where we're at with Axle," Ron Gettelfinger told the Detroit News. ["UAW: No Role in Axle Talks" 4/29/08]

Didn't expect it? Where has the president of the UAW been? Did he somehow imagine after record breaking concessions at GM, Ford, Chrysler, Delphi, and Visteon that Dauch wouldn't want a piece of the patsy?

UAW members better take a hard look at what's going down at Axle— reduced wages and benefits and frozen pension— cause there's nothing between you and the Concession Train but your bodies.

Meanwhile, the Canadian Auto Workers [CAW] have a tentative contract with Ford that allows new hires to achieve parity in three years as opposed to NEVER, and includes cost of living adjustments on pensions. But here's the kicker:

"The two sides reached agreement on the big-ticket items on a new three-year contract, but must now negotiate provisions on such local issues as health and safety provisions and clauses covering skilled trades workers **before it becomes a tentative contract** to be voted on by workers at all Ford's CAW-represented plants in Canada." ["Unprecedented CAW Deal" Toronto Globe and Mail Update 4/28/08 by Greg Keenan]

The CAW doesn't ratify a national contract until all the locals are settled? The UAW not only shatters solidarity between core and non core, active and retired, young and old, they further fracture cohesion by abandoning local unions and forcing them to compete with one another for the worst local agreement.

Right now UAW Local 602 at GM's Delta plant in Lansing has the worst contract of all the assembly plants in the Big Three. They are the only UAW Local in the Big Three on strike despite the fact that very few locals have agreements. Local 602 has a new plant, good products, and no threat of closure. Their local contract is a bellwether — for better or for worse.

We all better hope that UAW-VP Jimmy Settles doesn't settle for less at American Axle, and that members at Local 602 buck the bull.

What does hope mean? Double the strike pay, a Paul Revere call to reject scabs and turn back trucks, and a resounding NO vote on any concessions.

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