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ON GUARD FOR 191 YEARS



Detroit Free Press

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FIESTA BOWL: NO. 2 MICHIGAN (13-0) VS. NO. 3 TCU (12-1), 4 P.M. SATURDAY, ESPN

U-M QB McCarthy found joy in football and success

Tony Garcia
Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. – Jonathan James McCarthy did his best to put on a brave face.

The then-sophomore quarterback at Nazareth Academy in Illinois went back out to the field from the locker room, Sharpie in hand, to sign autographs for the dozens of fans awaiting him on a chilly October night in 2018. McCarthy, then 15, made his way down the line as he signed shirts, footballs, programs and the like, doing his best to put on a happy face for those who waited.

But there was no fooling that little girl whose name he still doesn't know.

"What's wrong," she asked. "Why do you look so sad?"

The blond-haired, blue-eyed signal caller who normally lights up a room was by no means short or rude, but she was right; he *was* sad. Nazareth had just lost to Marist, 34-13. McCarthy had a rare off night, he completed just 4 of 13 passes with one touchdown and one interception. He was sacked five times.

"You need to smile," McCarthy recalled of her response to him in conversation with the Free Press. "You should always be happy. The game is supposed to be fun."

Without hesitation, she grabbed his left hand, took his marker and drew a smiley face.

Prior to his next game against Joliet Catholic, McCarthy drew a smile on his hand in the same spot. Nazareth won, 49-20, and didn't lose again all year – McCarthy led the way to an Illinois Class 7A state championship.

He hasn't practiced or played a game with-



Michigan quarterback J.J. McCarthy waves to fans after the Wolverines won the Big Ten championship in Indianapolis on Dec. 3. On his hand is his smiley face drawing, a tradition he began in high school to remind him to enjoy the sport. JUNFU HAN/DFP

A taste of Detroit in the desert



Neal Rubin
Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

SCOTTSDALE, Arizona – Dave Najor owns two restaurants called Detroit Coney Grill. The one on campus at Arizona State has the Ohio State University logo on the urinal cake, so you know where you stand.

We're at the one on Hayden Road in the tony suburb where the University of Michigan football team is staying and practicing for Saturday's Fiesta Bowl. Teslas are so commonplace on the street out front they could almost be Ubers, and the \$3.50 Faygos in the cooler are made with cane sugar and come in glass bottles.

Najor was supposed to be six rows behind the Michigan bench at the Vrbo

See RUBIN, Page 3A



UAW President Ray Curry is celebrating the union's success on college campuses and looking ahead to union organizing at new battery plants for electric vehicles. SARAHBETH MANEY/DETROIT FREE PRESS

UAW president: '23 agenda is COLA, pension, battery plants

Phoebe Wall Howard
Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

Sometimes it's all about connecting the dots, especially when it comes to organized labor.

Most recently, a high-profile strike of some 48,000 academic workers at 10 college campuses in California spotlighted the Detroit-based labor union known for its history of auto industry negotiations. The University of California system issued a statement Friday saying the 40-day walkout had ended. The United Auto Workers members, who do much of the research and teaching, had voted to ratify their contracts.

"Under the terms of the new contracts, these workers will be among the best supported in public higher education in the country," said a news release from the University of California. "In response to the union's pro-

See UAW PRESIDENT, Page 7A

See U-M'S MCCARTHY, Page 6A

Inside

● Harbaugh back in Phoenix, a lucky spot, 1C

Russia hits key infrastructure with missiles across Ukraine

Renata Brito and Hanna Arhrova
ASSOCIATED PRESS

KYIV, Ukraine – Russian missiles hit Ukraine Thursday in the biggest wave of strikes in weeks, damaging power stations and other

critical infrastructure during freezing winter weather.

Russia fired 69 missiles at energy facilities and Ukrainian forces shot down 54, Ukrainian military chief Gen. Valerii Zaluzhnyi said. Local officials said attacks killed at least two peo-

ple around Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city. The strikes also wounded at least six people across the country, although the toll of the attacks was growing as officials assessed the

See UKRAINE CONFLICT, Page 7A



SPORTS, 1C

Bears QB Fields is 'X-factor' as Lions look to regain mojo

Detroit needs to corral elusive quarterback on Sunday to keep its playoff hopes alive.



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Inside today's Free Press

■ Obituaries8A ■ Puzzles4B-5B
■ Nation+World9A ■ Comics6B

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COVER STORIES

Ukraine conflict

Continued from Page 1A

day's events.

Russia dispatched explosive drones to selected regions overnight before broadening the barrage with air and sea-based missiles, the Ukrainian air force said.

Russia has attacked Ukrainian power and water supplies almost weekly since October while its ground forces struggle to hold ground and advance. Mayor Vitali Klitschko warned of power outages in the capital, asking people to stockpile water and to charge their electronic devices.

Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba called the attacks "senseless barbarism."

"There can be no 'neutrality' in the face of such mass war crimes. Pretending to be 'neutral' equals taking Russia's side," Kuleba tweeted.

After more than 10 months of fighting, Russia and Ukraine

are locked in a grinding battle of attrition. The Ukrainian military has reclaimed swaths of Russian-occupied territory in the country's northeast and south, and continues to resist persistent Russia attempts to seize all of the industrial Donbas region.

At the same time, Moscow has targeted Ukrainian power facilities and other key infrastructure in a bid to weaken the country's resolve and force it to negotiate on Russian terms. The time between strikes has increased in recent weeks, though, leading some commentators to theorize Russia is trying to ration its missile supply.

The Ukrainian military has reported success in shooting down incoming Russian missiles and explosive drones in earlier attacks but many cities have gone without heat, internet and electricity for hours or days at a time.

Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal said a number of energy facilities were damaged during what he said was the 10th such large-scale attack on his country.

"Russia is trying to deprive Ukrainians of light before the New Year," Shmyhal wrote in a Telegram post. He said that emergency blackouts may be necessary "in some areas."

About 90% of Lviv was without electricity, Mayor Andriy Sadovyi wrote on Telegram. Trams and trolley buses were not working, and residents might experience water interruptions, he said.

Meanwhile, a Telegram channel affiliated with the presidential press service of Belarus said a Ukrainian S-300 air defense missile landed in Belarusian territory of Belarus early Thursday. It said the missile could have veered off course accidentally and there were no casualties.

The Belarusian Defense Ministry said later that the missile was downed by the Belarusian air defense over the western Brest region and fell into a field, according to a statement carried by the state Belta news agency

Belarus served as a staging ground for Russia's Feb. 24 invasion of Ukraine.

The governor of Russia's Saratov region, Roman Busargin, said Russian air defenses downed an "unidentified object" near the city of Engels, home to a Russian air base that serves as the main hub for nuclear-capable strategic bombers that are engaged in launching missile strikes on Ukraine.

UAW president

Continued from Page 1A

posals and following the University's evaluation of other top research institutions across the country, UC has restructured and enhanced its support packages to better align with similarly placed institutions of higher education."

It is statements like that from employers that help fuel the growth and strength of the UAW on college campuses nationally.

Data from two years ago shows academic workers made up about 80,000 or an estimated 20% of the UAW membership. Harvard University fought the UAW and lost. The union also represents members at Brown University, Boston College, Columbia University, New York University and the University of Connecticut.

This latest victory had a ripple effect, and led to significant organizing progress among research scholars at the University of Southern California, a private school in Los Angeles. Organizing higher education has been a major priority in recent years and that is continuing with new activity in Washington State and New York.

Academic workers at The New School in New York went on strike this fall, too, and recently ratified a UAW contract.

On the day after Christmas, UAW President Ray Curry accepted a request from the Detroit Free Press to discuss the California victory and how it all ties to autoworkers, battery plants and the future of organizing in the South.

The comments below from Curry are direct quotes. The content has been shortened for clarity.

QUESTION: Why is organizing colleges important to the UAW?

ANSWER: This is a long-term play. We see this as a foundational win that just took place. When you look at 48,000 members coming together collectively to be able to be out the weeks that they were out and have demands met. Also, being able to work with the university system and having multiple months of discussion and then weeks of a strike that led to more discussions. And, ultimately, a friendly mediation. It was a voluntary mediation. They never reached an impasse with the university system. Both parties were able to understand what those issues were. You've got to understand, in this piece, when you look at the 48,000 - 17,000 of that 48,000 members are a group of newly organized research scholars. They were striking to attain their first agreement where the other 31,000 of that group, this was (contract) renewal. It worked out great for everyone.

We see this as a long-term growth opportunity that's going to continue to build. It's part of a bigger organizing strategy when we look across different sectors.

Q: Is the UAW ceding the South based on challenges in the past?

A: We've got organizing campaigns on EV (electric vehicle) startups. We've got organizing campaigns on casinos, where we represent table dealers. We've got organizing campaigns - most recently the Ultium piece in Lordstown. We're not going to sit silent. We're going to reach out to communities across the country where workers want to meet with us, whether they're in Charleston, South Carolina, they're in Alaska, they're in Washington State, or New York. We're going to meet with those workers. And it just shows the interest that workers still have in joining a historic union that's been around 87 years.

Q: Does the UAW reach out to organize or wait to be contacted?

A: We are not actually looking to cold call or disrespect individuals. We want to be respectful of a workplace that, if workers are interested - students, nurses, table dealers, assemblers in manufacturing - if they're interested in forming a union, we'd like to be there for them. That may not always be the case. That's why the cold call situation doesn't necessarily work. You could be cold calling someone who may be happy with their working conditions and their current employer. We're not looking to disrupt those situations.

Q: How do autoworkers feel about academic workers?

A: Our members are supportive of all members across the country because they know it could be them next. Sometimes contracts are successful and they're not an issue; there's not a strike. Things are resolved on the first ratification round after the bargaining is complete. We've always had that type of membership that wants to be supportive of every sector. They recognize they may need that same support in the future, and they're hoping everyone will be able to stand with them.

If you look a year ago at John Deere, John Deere had (national strike) support. That's an agricultural implement sector union. We had an aerospace location down in Ohio and those members came to support members from multiple sectors. So our members are willing to take a stand and be supportive wherever that call is. We had people travel across the country to walk those picket lines.

Q: What is the strategy for unionizing battery plants?

A: We're in the hunt for the battery work and assembly work. We will be in the hunt for that work with Ford (in Tennessee and Kentucky). Then, also, the work for Stellantis on the location they're going to have in Kokomo (Indiana). We're interested in representing all of that work. The one piece we have to remember, and it was stated by the (automakers) from the very beginning, that work at those battery facilities is the powertrain of the future. That will drive electric vehicles and replace the internal combustion engine. We're looking to represent that type of work as we move forward at every one of those locations.

We just organized Lordstown and Ultium (both in Ohio). Ultium has Spring Hill, Tennessee, and Lansing locations coming on board.

Q: What's different about organizing the South?

A: You've got to remember, I am from the South, born and raised. While I've had the opportunity to be able to work globally, my assembly plant was a Daimler Truck assembly plant outside of Charlotte, North Carolina. I was an assembler, grew up through that location and worked the line just like others. That's a good foundational piece to understand it. I've been laid off before. I've worked the odd shifts, tough hours on assembly meeting the demand. I've got an understanding of having worked in the South on organizing drivers. I've got an understanding of geographical areas and attachment. I can have conversations with workers, whether they're in Charleston, South Carolina, or Jackson, Mississippi, or Kentucky or Tennessee. I can relate to them.

Here's the challenge: A lot of employers that have come into Southern areas, a lot of the transnationals more so than anyone else, they've received tax incentives and they have improved current conditions of workers. It doesn't mean that's a long-term improvement. That's the piece that has to be a concern. It's like a startup. Everything is great, benefits are great. What happens long term? How are workers protected long term? Are workers' voices being heard at the table? We may not get the calls initially on a brand new facility but within a couple years of those facilities starting, we wind up hearing from workers in those locations because they get concerns about safety issues, they have concerns about having a voice at the table.

Most recently, there's the Hyundai situation. We've voiced concerns about child labor issues that have taken place there. That was the plant in Montgomery, Alabama. We have those concerns, when you've got child labor in an assembly plant. They should be in middle school, high school attaining an education and not be part of a manufacturing process.

Q: How do past corruption convictions affect organizing now?

A: We've turned a dark corner. I was part of a lot of reforms that have taken place since 2019. We have turned a major corner in the UAW's history. At the same time, there's been excitement about joining the UAW. I see 2023 being an opportunity for growth as much as 2022 and 2021 were. Workers at different locations, organized and unorganized, are looking at what's taking place with these collective bargaining agreements. I see it as part of our strategy that's long range on growing the union in multiple sectors that exist. And when there's not a sector that we currently represent and individuals reach out to us ... we're looking to be engaged and continue to move forward to grow our current numbers and membership. They see what our record looks like.

Q: What are the feelings going into a runoff election for UAW president?

Note: Curry, who took the helm after Rory Gamble retired in 2021, is being challenged by Shawn Fain, an electrician who serves as a skilled trades committeeperson and shop chair at the Stellantis Kokomo Casting Plant and also an international representative. The union will mail runoff ballots Jan. 12 with a Feb 28 return date. The vote count begins March 1.

A: I'm excited about the work I've led as being a reformer. I started some of those initial things that brought outside agencies, outside accounting firms in to do reviews top to bottom that led to our policies of change as we move forward. I'm excited about where I believe we're continuing to go.

I've been blessed. I've worked on the floor, been involved in local leadership, served as a regional representative and then serving as the UAW's secretary-treasurer. Also, having a financial background with a bachelor's in business administration and finance (from the University of North Carolina, Charlotte) and then obtaining an MBA (from the University of Alabama) on non-work hours. All those things are significant. It's not a knock against anyone out there. Our members deserve to be represented by the best experience possible. That educational piece has been key as I've moved forward. Experience matters.

Q: What does a low voter turnout mean for a UAW election?

A: A union election can be no different than general elections or midterm elections across the country. Individuals are either satisfied with where they are or make a decision that they don't

want to participate or want to be a part of it. There were 1.1 million ballots mailed to the convenience of someone's home and they got a choice of being able to make decision on that. Unfortunately, we had right over 10% on this one (in the general election). We're hopeful numbers will grow on the runoff.

Democracy still has prevailed because of the ability to allow members to vote on this historic election. ... Typically, this is an election that has taken place at our convention by the convention delegates. Now every member, active and retired, has had that opportunity (to vote). I see it as a chance that we will see a greater turnout. People are not receiving midterm election mail, flyers and other things at the same time they're receiving their union information. This will be a stand-alone isolated election issue. I expect that the turnout would be greater.

While we've seen change take place (in the general election), we have to remember a couple things that happened - Cindy Estrada (lead bargainer for Stellantis) and Terry Dittes (lead bargainer for General Motors) both retired. Those were two vacant positions that were open. It wasn't that anyone specifically lost that race. Members had the opportunity to run for those two VP situations.

Q: Does the UAW need to be tougher at the bargaining table?

A: I think tone has to fit, at times, the response or the behavior of the employer. That's significant about where that relationship is. Sometimes you can set a tone in discussions, set a tone by strategy, set a tone by experience. There's something to being established and being recognized for bargaining contracts that are successful.

You can't always be the bully in the room, either. That doesn't accomplish anything. It doesn't accomplish anything when that exchange is out there, upfront, as being the bully and you don't know what the issues are. Or you've never been at the table making ninth-hour changes or the 5 a.m. final call, 'Are we going out or not going out (on strike)?' Or the decision to accept an agreement or take it back for membership. Experience will lead you in those situations.

I've been in situations where we called a strike, been in situations where agreement was close and took back to membership and it was a no vote and went back and secured items that were necessary.

I've been in a situation, just two summers ago, where it was a seven-week strike at Volvo trucks. We wanted to eliminate tiers there. That was a key piece for us. We wanted second-tier piece eliminated. Membership demands were heard and we were out until that was accomplished. Tiers can be separation of wages where there's not a true path of attaining the top (pay) rate. Or there is a path to reach the top rate but there's still a separated benefit, pension, post-retirement benefit different.

Q: What are upcoming priorities?

A: As we move into 2023, we'll look at COLA (cost of living adjustment), pensions. There's not been pension increases since the 2003 agreement in auto. ... In our aerospace sectors, every one of our bargaining (contracts) that took place in 2020, 2021, 2022, in every one of those locations, the pensions grew.

Bargaining discussions belong at the table, between members, the employer and elected representatives. Parties have to work together. We're not going to sit idle, not going to sit on sidelines.

Q: How do you describe the competitive UAW election in 2022?

A: It was a democratic process. Members in good standing were eligible to run. I'm supportive of the transition that's just taken place. I swore in new board members, most recently, and we're moving forward. The previous board members who won their elections - we had five directors who were unopposed. We had six members come on -- three officers and three directors. We're all moving forward together on behalf of membership. Hey, we're here, we are working together.

Regardless of what happened in 2019 or before - I, as a candidate, am a reformer. I was not attached to any of the corruption. All of that has been eliminated and been removed from our organization. I've led a lot of change that's significant. That work will not stop; that work must continue. We can never take steps backward prior to what happened in 2019 that became public and led to multiple convictions. We cannot take steps that would ever lead us in that direction ever again.



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