

Cutting autoworker pay offers society mixed bag



DAN MCCOSH

Today, the rate hasn't changed much, although the U.S. auto wage rate has slipped from first to

mid-pack among the top ten industrial nations. Take-home pay has multiplied by a factor of five since the 1960s, as has the minimum wage, which not surprisingly tracks with new-car prices as well.

Medical costs, housing, taxes, social security and more public sector jobs have far outstripped the take-home pay of the average autoworker, even as total employment dwindles. The casual, easy money at the plant gate is pretty much gone forever.

Needless to say, this is not a good time to be negotiating a labor contract, despite the short-

lived success of Ford and Chrysler. Still, it was a selling point for GM a/c for the first bonafide pay cut since the depression in the 1930s.

GM's proposal was cloaked in something that has been accepted in other industries — namely offering lower pay for new hires. Still, if it were accepted it would mean a lower pay base for the entire industry, and make the U.S. the only country in the world where a major heavy industry presents a dwindling standard of living to its workers.

All this is against a background

of dramatically rising payroll costs, especially the cost of medical care, heavy payouts to pension funds, benefits for retirees and even the ironic costs of benefits due after plant closings. The basic rationale for paying less for new hires at certain component plants is that the alternative is to simply buy the components outside GM from companies paying less.

Also, I've never quite understood the basic philosophy pursued by the UAW of paying such high base labor rates for unskilled labor, with so little premium for

highly skilled jobs that take years of training. After a four year apprenticeship, or even an associate degree, you only get a few bucks an hour under the current pay structure. Lowering the rates for entry-level jobs could well be long overdue.

That, of course, would mean restructuring the pay rates for the whole corporation, and by extension the whole industry — a difficult, if not impossible task.

Still, there is something odd about a company heavily laden with retirees and those about to retire, shuffling the deck to keep

what's left for those leaving and reducing the pie for the future generation. Even more ironic is the notion that the same future generation is expected to shoulder the debts and social debris they left behind.

Dan McCosh is automotive editor of Popular Science magazine. If you have a comment, question or suggestion concerning Auto Talk, write to Dan McCosh, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150, or you can call him directly by dialing 953-2047, mail box number 1870, on a touch-tone phone.

Pet from Next page

Like most new offerings, Medipet became popular along the East and West coasts before moving inland.

Two different plans

"When an emergency does arise people always say they wish they had medical insurance," said Jeff Dink, a veterinarian for First Veterinary Clinics of Michigan, which is based in Southfield and operates area clinics in Novi, Rochester Hills, Southfield and Troy.

"Pet insurance does work, but people have to make an initial payment. There is another insurance plan (VPI), which began several years ago in California by a group of veterinarians. Both programs are becoming more wide-

spread. Insurance does have a place in the market."

Medipet offers two plans. The first, Silver Tag, provides lower annual deductibles (\$150) in return for coverage limits totaling \$1,000 per injury or illness. Annual premiums are \$129 for pets three months to nine years old or \$219 for pets 10 years and over.

The Gold Tag plan, meanwhile, provides higher coverage limits (\$3,000 per injury or illness) and a higher annual deductible (\$300) and a lower premium — \$59 for pets three months to nine years old or \$99 for pets 10 years or older.

Each plan allows a policy holder to insure up to nine pets under one maximum deductible per year. Co-payment for the two plans is 30 percent.

To submit materials to this column, please send a brief biographical summary along with a black-and-white photo, if possible, to: Business Editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers, 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia 48150.

Steven D. Grant M.D. has been named chairman of the Holocaust Memorial Center's Ninth Anniversary Dinner Event to be held Sunday, October 24 at the Westin Hotel in Detroit's Renaissance Center.

Bobby Phillips has been named sales service administrator — international at Brass Craft in Southfield.

Rose M. Pelot, B.S., CEBS, of Troy has joined brokerage consultant firm, The ABOW Companies as a senior benefits consultant.

William M. Brukoff has joined the law firm of Sommers, Schwartz, Silver, Schwartz, P.C. as a shareholder specializing in matrimonial, family law, personal injury law, and commercial litigations.

The following earned Truck Significant Achievement Awards from Ford Motor Company, awards that recognize employees who best exemplify technological achievement, product innovation and work effort: James Mason from Bloomfield Hills, Aaron Shin from Troy, Sal G. Khoury from Troy, William Dodge from Farmington Hills, Susan Gorman from Farmington Hills, Chris Cavalliere from Farmington Hills and Ray Schneider from Farmington.

Jack Frakes of Bloomfield Hills, Ross Roy Inc. executive creative director, has retired, ending a 30-career in advertising, for the past 11 years he has headed Ross Roy's creative department. Frakes continues as executive creative director.

Joseph Khanula of Farmington Hills received the Grand Prize award in the 1993 International Powder Metallurgy Port-of-the-Year Design. The award was given to Khanula for a transmission output shaft hub used in a Ford AOD transmission for rear-wheel drive cars. Khanula is an advanced technology engineer with Ford Motor Co.

Tom Deskovitz was promoted to account executive with Gold-Farb & Co. in Southfield. Deskovitz joined the agency in 1991 as an assistant account executive.

Gary Greenway of Southfield was recently honored by United States Service in Livonia for completing 20 years of service with the company.

Judy Franulio was promoted to senior account executive from account executive in the multi-account executive group of Southfield-based CME/KHBB Advertising, and Ann Baker was promoted to account executive from assistant account executive.

E. Lynn Risdan has joined Franklin Bank's commercial lending department as a commercial lending officer. Risdan comes to Franklin from Comerica Bank where she was a private banking officer for the past six years.

Ross Roy Communications has promoted Rosalyn Collins of Bloomfield Hills to senior account executive and hired Regis Cavander of Troy as national training coordinator and Cynthia Jean Morgan of Farmington Hills as a project manager.

Karen Steyffhag has been named Ameritech director of Employee Communications. In her

SUBURBAN BUSINESS LEADERS



Grant



Phillips



Pelot



Brukoff

Raymond E. Howard of Farmington Hills has received the Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants 1993 Distinguished Service Award.

Jeffrey W. Dwyer of Rochester Hills has been named director of the Institute of Gerontology at Wayne State University.

Birmingham attorney Scott Bassett, of the law firm Victor, Robbins & Bassett, is a co-editor of the new Fourth Edition of Michigan Family Law, published by the Institute of the Continuing Legal Education.

Rochester Hills resident Kenneth J. Matzick, vice president and hospital director of William Beaumont Hospital in Royal Oak, was elected a member of the Michigan Hospital Association corporate board.

James Zolad has been promoted from assistant vice president to vice president at Michigan National Bank in Farmington Hills.

Robert C. Boylen of Bloomfield Hills has joined Norris, Perne & French, a Grand Rapids-based investment management and consulting firm, as an associate.

Dennis R. Burnside, senior vice president of the Metro Detroit office of Grubb & Ellis, has been named manager of the year for Grubb & Ellis' Midwest/Texas region.

Southfield attorney Joseph Shulman has been appointed vice chair of the Sole Practitioners and Small Firms Committee in the general practice of the American Bar Association.

Gail Darn of Marketing for TMP Associates and Craig Rutherford, manager of marketing for Ellis, Neysner, Genshler Associates have been honored by the Michigan chapter of the Society of Marketing Professional Services.

Rick Rosen, as associate broker with the real estate office of RE/MAX in The Hills Inc. in Bloomfield Hills has completed the Floyd Wickman Master's Sales Academy.

Gregory Jamlan, president and CEO of Americare Medical, Inc. was elected as an officer of the Oakland Family Services Board of Directors at its recent annual meeting.

Michael D. Weisenfeld, D.D.S. of Farmington Hills was installed as president of the Academy of General Dentistry at the Academy's 41st annual meeting.

Southfield resident and director of public information with Michigan Credit Union League of Southfield, Michael E. Kelly and West Bloomfield resident Sandra L. Knight, client service director with Servis Marketing Specialties Inc. in Detroit and Farmington Hills resident Maria Formis Simonte, account supervisor with Hermanoff & Associates have been awarded accreditation by the Public Relations Society of America.

Michelle Meler, maternal scheduler in the maternal control department at Farmington Hills-based Jervis B. Webb has been named the quality achiever of the month.

Eileen McCarthy, a graduate of Mercy High School in Farmington Hills and Boston College, has been named the Chicago Marketing Manager for the Lincoln Mercury Division of the Ford Motor Company. She was recently married to Mr. Christopher Gardner of Chicago, and they reside in the "Windy City."

new position, she will be responsible for planning and executive internal communications programs to support the ongoing transformation of Ameritech.

Jean E. Hall of Auten Group Inc., Insurance Agents and Consultants, in Birmingham has recently been appointed vice president of operations.

Judy Goldwasser has received two writing awards — including an award of merit for a national public relations campaign and an honorable mention for special event publicity — from the International Association of Business Communications/Detroit.

The Better Business Bureau of Detroit and Eastern Michigan has announced that Roger Bau is the newly elected chairman of the BBB. He is vice president of sales for the advertising services unit of Ameritech in Troy.

David A. Richards, AIA, has been named director of Technical Services for Birmingham-based Rossett Associates Architect.

Donald Sklar of Bloomfield Hills has been named clinic manager for the Detroit Medical Center Occupational Health Services/Detroit Industrial Clinic in Warren.

Gary S. Gerler, a specialist in commercial and retail collections as well as retail law, has joined the law firm of Ronald B. Rich and Associates in Farmington Hills.

Northwestern Mutual Life agents Anis Ahmed, John M. Dankovich, and Michael D. Emerson of Troy have been named to the Diamond class, and James E. Cooney, Ray McCarus, Thomas M. Kukes, John F. Allen, James D. Landsberg and Rick Balazmuck of Troy were named to the Emerald class for their sales accomplishments.

Walter C. Sanders of Troy has been named sales representative of Grenville Management and Printing Limited.

Mark C. Delaba has joined Flexible Plan Investments, LTD. of Bloomfield Hills as a wholesale broker.

DATEBOOK

PUBLIC SPEAKING
Join ITC, International Training in Communications, for an evening of training and coping with public speaking from 6:30-9 p.m., Thursday, September 2, at the Dearborn Civic Center, 16801 Michigan Ave. Call 583-0361.

FDIC/RTC
L. William Seadman, former chairman of the FDIC and RTC, will address a special reception on Tuesday, September 7 from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Troy Marriott Hotel. Sponsor: BDO Seidman. Detroit. Call 362-2100.

QUALITY PLANNING
An advanced nine-week workshop, "Improving Customer Satisfaction Through Process Control and Quality Planning," offered 6-9 p.m. starting Tuesday, Sept. 7 at Oakland University near Rochester. Fee: \$133. Information: 370-3120.

STATE OF ECONOMY
The Real Estate Roundtable is presenting "Dinner with David G. Sowerby," Chief Economist for Beacon Investment Co. at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 8, at the Glen Oaks Country Club at 13 Mile and Orchard Lake roads.

CAREER WOMEN
The National Association of Career Women - Metro Detroit Chapter will hold a regular monthly luncheon meeting on Thursday, Sept. 9 at 11:30 a.m. at the Steak & Ale Restaurant, Orchard Lake Road and I-696 in Farmington Hills. Tawn Brooks, community education specialist at HAVEN will address domestic violence.

CHALLENGE OF DIVERSITY
The Greater Detroit Chapter of the American Society for Training and Development monthly meeting will be at 5:30 p.m. on Wednesday, September 8, at the Guest Quarters Suite Hotel in Troy. Speaker: Jennifer Jackson, a diversity consultant/trainer with The PACE Group of Michigan, will discuss "The Diversity of Challenge." Call 532-2080 for information and reservations.

QUALITY LEADERS
Human Synergistics International, a developer and publisher of training materials and organization consulting firm, will be conducting a one-day workshop Sept. 8 at the Hotel Baronette in Novi, on the implementation of scientifically researched development tools designed to help members of any organization become more effective decision makers, leaders, problem solvers and team members. Call 1-800-622-7584 for more information.

DIRECT MARKETING
Bernie Goldberg, president of Direct Marketing Publishers Inc. in Yardley Pennsylvania will address the Direct Marketing Association of Detroit at the Sept. 9 luncheon meeting at the Clarion Hotel in Farmington Hills. Topics: The Five necessary elements of direct marketing and the four most important ingredients required in designing successful marketing programs. Call 258-8803 for information.

MICROCOMPUTER CONFERENCE
The Michigan Association of Certified Public Accountants is presenting a Microcomputer Conference on Friday, Sept. 10 at the MSU Management Education Center in Troy beginning at 8 p.m. Call 855-2288 for reservations and information.

PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS
"The Managers Complete Course on Performance Evaluations" presented 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday-Tuesday, Sept. 20-21, at the Omni International Hotel. Fee: \$395. Information: 1-800-255-4141. Sponsor: Padgett-Thompson division of the American Management Association.

FIX PC PROBLEMS
Identify and Fix Pesky PC Problems! (Without Calling a Repair Person!) presented Thursday, Sept. 23, at the Hotel St. Regis in Detroit. Fee: \$145. Information: 1-800-255-4141. Sponsor: Padgett-Thompson division of the American Management Association.

SUCCESSFUL SALES
"The Five Habits of Successful Sales People," a seminar sponsored by the Robert Morris Associates of Southeast Michigan Group will be the Clarion Hotel in Farmington Hills on Sept. 23 from 7:30-9:30 a.m. Call 473-4235.

WOMEN ACHIEVERS
The WYCA of Western Wayne County is seeking nominees for its second annual Women of Achievement awards luncheon on Friday, Nov. 5, at the Fairlane Club in Dearborn. The program recognizes women who have distinguished themselves in the following categories: arts/communications, business/industry, education, government/law, community volunteerism/teen achievement. Call 561-4110.

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