

## Strike relief

*United Auto Workers offers financial assistance to laid off General Motors employees in Texas*

FORT WORTH (AP) — Workers laid off by General Motors because of strikes at two key plants in Michigan are getting some financial help from the United Auto Workers.

The international union has agreed to issue strike loans to workers from Local 276, since the state is not likely to pay them unemployment benefits.

The workers were laid off two weeks ago when strikes at two GM parts supply plants in Flint, Mich., shut down the automaker's Arlington assembly plant as well as 25 other GM production facilities.

Texas workers only will have to repay the \$150-a-week loans if the state denies them assistance.

"It makes you feel good about the union," David Barnes, a second-shift repair worker at GM-Arlington, told the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* in story for yesterday's edition. "We pulled enough savings to pay our bills through the month. I hope to go back to work by Aug. 1. After that, I'll probably be looking for some (work)."

Union officials helping dole out the checks at the union hall in Arlington said about half of the nearly 1,400 eligible union members collected their loan checks by Monday afternoon.

Since GM is in its traditional summer shutdown, many union workers were out of town on vacation and may pick up their checks next week, David Liggins, a union member who volunteered to help write checks, said. The checks may have relieved union leaders of some pressure from members.

C.E. Williams, shop chair of Local 276, said some members were critical because he and other leaders of the local went to Las Vegas

two weeks ago for the UAW's triennial constitutional convention. But it was at that convention that UAW President Stephen Yokich approved the strike loans for Arlington workers.

"There was a percentage that felt it was our duty to stay in town," Williams said. "We had the opportunity to speak to Yokich face to face and got him to provide us with strike loans."

That the loans are even considered necessary is a sore spot for union members.

Two years ago, during a 1996 strike at a GM brake plant in Dayton, Ohio, Arlington workers were laid off when the local plant ran out of brakes.

The Texas Workforce Commission subsequently refused to pay unemployment benefits to the laid-off workers.

The union appealed the ruling and still is in court over the dispute.

## University of Texas receives first woman provost in October

AUSTIN (AP) — Edie Goldenberg, an influential dean at the University of Michigan, has been named the No. 2 official at the University of Texas.

Goldenberg, 53, who has served as dean of the College of Literature, Science and the Arts at Michigan, will be UT's first woman provost or chief academic officer when she takes office in October. UT had a woman president, Lorene Rogers, from 1974-79.

"Edie Goldenberg has a long record of distinguished service in one of the most complex academic jobs in the United States," UT President Larry Faulkner said.

"She ... has shown the kind of leadership that can help us move the University of Texas forward."

Goldenberg also will have the title of executive vice president at Texas and will be responsible for much of the day-to-day operations on the campus, as well as managing the budget, recruiting faculty and overseeing academics.

Goldenberg will be paid \$230,000 a year. Her salary at Michigan is \$219,000.

Goldenberg is a political scientist and an expert on federal bureaucracy and the role of mass media in politics. She has served as director of Michigan's School of Public Policy, was a consultant to ABC News and served more than two years at the U.S. Office of Personnel Management.

Goldenberg, who earned a political science degree from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1967 and a master's in political science from Stanford University in 1968, announced in April that she was stepping down at Michigan, saying it was time for a change.

"I think the University of Texas has tremendous strengths, some of which are not as recognized as they should be," Goldenberg said. "It's an important priority of mine to help make the institution stronger and stay strong in the areas where it already is."

## Babysitter claims infant death was accidental

AUSTIN (AP) — The baby-sitter of a 19-month-old girl fatally burned last weekend says she accidentally spilled hot soup on the child.

Sabrina Ashley Garcia was found dead in a cardboard box outside an eastern Travis County mobile home Sunday morning. Travis County sheriff's deputies are investigating and have filed no charges.

State child welfare workers, who had previously investigated the welfare of three children living in the home, have removed Sabrina's 5-year-old brother and 6-year-old sister.

A 16-year-old boy, who said he was taking care of Sabrina the day she was burned, on Monday described the death as an accident. The boy said he was caring for the children while their mother was in jail on traffic violation warrants.

The boy told law enforcement officers that he was preparing chicken noodle soup for the children about 11 a.m. Friday when several sheriff's deputies knocked on the door and asked him questions about a neighbor, the *Austin American-Statesman* reported Tuesday. He said when he returned to the kitchen the soup was exceptionally hot.

"I called (Sabrina) out, and she came, and I accidentally tripped and spilled the hot noodles," the boy said, adding that he did not call immediately for medical attention. "I got scared, panicked."

Deputies said Sabrina's mother sought medical help for the girl after she returned home from jail Sunday. But at that point, the child was already dead, sheriff's department spokesperson Curtis Weeks said Tuesday.

Weeks said investigators hadn't yet determined why the child was placed in a cardboard box.

An official ruling on the cause of death was not immediately available, but Sabrina died of complications from the scalding, including dehydration, Weeks said.

## Leading the way

*Launching a probe to Mars over the weekend. Japan proves formidable force in space exploration*

TOKYO (AP) — There's a new star rising in space exploration: Japan.

Over the past 40 years, Japan has built up one of the world's leading space programs, and it has done it with low budgets, no manned flights of its own and very little fanfare.

Little fanfare, that is, until two milestone missions this week.

Over the weekend, Japan launched a probe to Mars on its way to Mars. If successful, the probe will make Japan only the third country — after the United States and Russia — to reach another planet.

And on Tuesday, two Japanese satellites docked by remote control in outer space — the first such operation by two unmanned spacecraft.

Russia's space program has often docked cargo ships with the manned Mir space station by remote control in a similar procedure.

The rendezvous had a deliberately Japanese twist: It was timed to coincide with Japan's "Tanabata," or star festival, which celebrates a mythical meeting between the princess Orihime and her

lover, Hikoboshi. According to legend, the two — associated with the stars Altair and Vega — are only allowed to meet once a year, on the night of July 7.

“Without the technology do it yourself, you're also going to rely on other agencies, each building their own rockets. Japan's space program has humbly as a handling university professors launching rockets the size of people in 1955. Japan's efforts in space have suffered from bureaucratic haggling. Its space program is split between agencies, each building their own rockets. And Japanese scientists have had to make do with shoestring budgets; spending on civilian space projects this year totaled only one-tenth of NASA's \$10 billion budget. Still, the efforts are paying off. Japan now leads the world in several space-related fields including research on planetary magnetic fields. Japan's next interplanetary mission will probably be a probe to Mercury early in the next millennium.

— Mitsunori Miyasato  
spokesperson for Japan's NSDA

For Japan's space planners, the link-up had a different symbolism.

"Space exploration started as competition between America and the Soviet Union," said Mitsunori Miyasato, a spokesperson for Japan's National Space Development Agency. "But that era is over."

Japan's space bureaucracy

## Capital murder trial jury selection begins

*murder of Houston merchant, jewelry thief*

HOUSTON (AP) — Jury selection has begun in the capital murder trial of a once-prominent Houston jeweler accused of conspiring with his brother to murder a diamond merchant and steal \$3.6 million in jewels.

Attorneys on Monday started interviewing potential jurors for the trial of Jose Alberto Dennes, 44. Prosecutors are seeking the death penalty.

Dennes' brother, Reinaldo, was sentenced to death in September for his part in the Jan. 24, 1996, murder of Janos Szucs, 44, a world-renowned diamond merchant.

Prosecutors and police said the brothers arranged to get into Szucs' office building after hours. He and his brother worked in the high-security building and had done business with Szucs for many years.

A cleaning woman testified that after she let Dennes and his brother in, the men went upstairs. The woman, who accepted \$5,000 to let them in, has received probation for an aggravated robbery charge in exchange for her testimony.

According to testimony, Reinaldo Dennes returned to

the lobby less than an hour later, shot an unarmed security guard twice at close range, grabbed a security videotape and left.

Guard David Copeland feigned death and later testified Dennes as the man who shot him.

Police later found Szucs' body with multiple wounds, his nearby safe open and empty.

Police said Szucs was shot with a weapon fitted with a silencer. A toolmaker hired by Reinaldo Dennes to build a silencer for his gun testified in the first trial Dennes instructed him to make it with steel wood and he tested it twice.

The brothers became suspects when police checked Szucs' computer files and found that Reinaldo Dennes owed him a large sum of money.

The diamonds and an unspecified amount of jewelry were never recovered.

Testimony should start late this month or in August in state District Judge Jim Wallace's court.

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