



International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
District Lodge 66
1307 Market Street
La Crosse, WI 54601

Union Herald Article from the desk of:

Martin Gaul, DBR

MNPL Sponsoring Memberships: A PAC FOR THE MIDDLE CLASS

Along with District Lodge 66 Secretary Treasurer and President of Local Lodge 2191 Chart Energy and Chemicals Dennis Gerke, I attended the MNPL National Planning Conference meetings held in San Antonio Texas. The meetings were very enlightening and we heard from some great speakers. As has been made abundantly clear both on a National and State level, participation in the political process by the Great American Middle Class has never been more important or more difficult because of the flood of unregulated money into the system. One way for each of us to have our voice heard is to stand together as a group, and a great way to do that is through the **Machinists Non-Partisan Political League**, a political action committee that speaks for working men and women across the country, regardless of their union affiliation. **MNPL sponsoring memberships cost only \$25.00**, a small price to pay for fulltime representation of your interests. You do not need to be a member of the Machinists Union or any Union to contribute. **The Fight for the Preservation of the Middle Class knows no Boundaries. Look for the MNPL ad in the Union Herald. Please consider giving your support. Together, we can make a difference!**

District 66 Organizing Committee Sponsors Take Kids Fishing Day

The Union Sportsmen's Alliance is coordinating a Take Kids Fishing Day on Sunday June 9th, 2013 at Pettibone Park from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in the morning. The District Lodge 66 Organizing Committee is again one of the major sponsors of this event. We are looking for volunteers to help these kids have a great day. Some kids will need extra or special help because some have never fished before. So from fishing techniques to baiting a hook, we need your help. We will also need members to help with food and the other logistics of the day. This can be a terrific day with your help. I am

asking all members and retirees to consider giving us a morning of your time. Please call the District Office at (608) 784-2025 to get on the volunteer list.

Worker Memorial Day April 28

Each year on April 28th, we take time out to honor all of the fallen workers of our Nation. This year's ceremony will be at Laborer's Grove next to Green Island Ice Arena. It is on Sunday, April 28th, 2013 at 1:00 pm. There is a program that honors workers who have died while working. There are speakers and a poem written each year by Lodge 21 member Mike Baird; special thanks to Mike for doing this each year. Thanks to the Western WI AFL-CIO for planning and having this ceremony. This ceremony honors our Sisters and Brothers who gave the ultimate sacrifice. I would ask each of you to try to take time out and attend this tribute to our fallen workers.

DISTRICT LODGE 66 SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Each year District Lodge 66 donates two (2) Scholarship Awards to a son and a daughter of a Machinists Union member. District Lodge 66 is pleased to announce the winners for this year. Each essay was great and we would like to thank all who participated. The Scholarship Committee of District Delegates had a tough decision to make with all of the essays being well written. For 2013 there were no male entries. The first recipient is **Nikki Rink**, daughter of Dean and Maxine Rink. Dean is a member of Local Lodge 1115 and is employed at BSA/LB&B Joint Venture at Fort McCoy, WI. Nikki is a senior attending Aquinas High School. The second recipient is **Emily Mihalovic**, daughter of Eric and Tonya Mihalovic. Eric is a member of Local Lodge 2191 and is employed at Chart Energy & Chemicals in La Crosse. Emily is a senior attending Holmen High School. Everyone at District Lodge 66 and all of our membership would like to thank all of the participants and wish them the best of luck in their future endeavors. The winning essays follow.

Life's Advancements Due to Unions By: Nikki Rink

According to Webster's dictionary, a union is an organization of workers formed for the purpose of advancing its members' interests in respect to wages, benefits, and working conditions. This definition is exactly what being a part of the union has done for my family. Three years ago my fathers' work was shut down because they wanted to use more overseas companies. Having my father laid off was a huge struggle for my family for a number of reasons. My father was a large contributor financially to my mother, sister, and I due to the fact that he worked full time and often worked over time. With my father without a job everything bought had to have had a purpose; there was no more pleasure purchases, no more trips to be taken, and not a penny more was spent if it wasn't a necessity. In these down times within our household, the only thing keeping

my father on his feet was being part of the Machinist Union. For him, being part of the Machinist Union gave him a sense of hope, and it showed on his face and in his actions that he was proud to go to meetings, proud to help other struggling workers, and proud to be serving the community in any way possible.

I know that over the past few years I have heard my father come home and talk about how important it is that there remains decent wages. These decent wages that the unions fight for help my family maintain the cost of living. My family is fortunate to have a house over our heads, food on our plates, clothes to wear, and vehicles to drive. When my father was unemployed, the union helped him with re-employment procedures, retraining/continuing education, and filing for unemployment. Without the union there wouldn't have been the fighting for the fringe benefits, insurance, and vacations. Without the union, my father wouldn't have the job he has now, and without the union my family would be suffering a veritable plethora of hardships.

The union does not just benefit my family, but also the community. Since my family has been involved with the union for as long as I can remember, I have always helped with any community functions that my father needed help with; for example, the Labor Day parade. The Labor Day parades are an annual event. Year after year I go to Copeland Park and help set up and take down the festivities. As I watch the large number of people crowd into the shade, while enjoying games, food, and company, I notice the large number of people embracing each other and celebrating each other's accomplishments within the work field. This same thought comes to mind every year when I attend the Labor Day festivities because every year more and more people gather and show their gratitude towards one another. None of this would happen if it wasn't for the unions. In this case, the unions bring the community together and show that everyone deserves to be recognized for their contributions to the community. Another example of the unions benefiting the community is the Workers Memorial Day. This is a day that families are recognized *for* losing their loved ones due to an unsafe working environment.

This day is often times an eye opener to the community because it shows that there are men and women out there who lose their lives over dedication and hard work at the job they love. The unions put together this day and it allows for recognitions to be made. Last but not least, unions offer a number of local food drives. These food drives provide canned goods to local food pantries that are in desperate need of help. Anyone suffering or in poverty is able to visit the local food pantries and use the unions' donated food to feed themselves and families.

Overall, unions help in every way possible. Whether it's fighting for what the people want, donations to food pantries, bringing the community together for recognition, or even helping a common household with employment, unions are always there. Without the unions, unity and peace wouldn't be available to anyone in need and I know this from first and second hand experiences.

Emily Mihalovic: One For All and All For One

When I was a little girl I loved Labor Day because our family always attended the local parade. Labor Day guaranteed me a stash of candy thrown by people from the floats and a variety of stickers handed out by the politicians walking the route. My dad pulled the float with his new pickup for lodge 21, district 66, and I got to wave at all the people lined up making my then 8 year old self feel pretty important. Labor Day meant family, picnics and fun. As I got older it meant the day before the start of the new school year. I participated less in the festivities and spent the time hanging out with friends instead. However, with the election of Governor Walker and the advent of his contentious politics aimed at weakening public unions, I began to educate myself about unions and their purpose in advancing workers rights. I advocated for my teachers whom I felt were doing a noble and often times unappreciated job. I participated in a school walkout to show support and listened closer to conversations my parents had around the dinner table. I began to understand the connection between labor unions and better working conditions.

To gain a more intimate understanding of the benefits of being a union member I interviewed my Grandpa Dan, who was the district lodge 66 directing business representative for the International Association of Machinist and Aerospace Workers for 17 years. He explained that the purpose of a union is to give everyone a voice through one person, who can then negotiate to secure better benefits, salary and working conditions. Contracts are voted on by all union members and everyone can be heard. Unions also protect workers from arbitrary actions of employers and managers. My Dad experienced this first hand when there was a posting for a position in the tool and die shop at his company, which at the time was Altec and later became Chart Industries. After I was born my Dad realized that in order to better himself he would need to go back to school to fit the criteria in the posting. A two year tool and die degree was necessary along with a two year apprenticeship to follow. My Dad went to school from 7 to 230 five days a week and then went to work from 3 to 11 pm as a machinist for two years. The stipulation of the posting said that a degree was required or progress toward one and seniority was a deciding factor as well as to who would get the position. My Dad in good faith worked diligently toward getting his degree and my Mom and he made a lot of sacrifices during that time. Then the rug was literally pulled out from underneath him when management put an employee who had a degree but lacked seniority in the tool room. My Dad filed a grievance and he was promised that he would have a spot in the tool room within the next six months at the completion of his degree. If the union had not fought for what was right, my Dad would have been at the mercy of whatever decisions were made by management. With his own hard work and with the help of the union representation, my Dad was able to advance his career and make a better living for our family.

I realize that unions have been very important for the past two generations for my family. That is why this year, when Labor Day is celebrated, I will be at the parade again. When I watch the men and women march past, it will be with a much deeper understanding of the meaning of the holiday and an appreciation for the support and opportunities provided to my family through unions.

Cherish the Arrival of Spring! Until next month...