



International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
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Union Herald Article from the desk of:

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Mid-August already! Time certainly flies by and it has been a very active month. One break in the schedule for July was that most of our Local Lodges suspend their monthly meetings to provide our officers and members who regularly attend some time off. As a reminder, in August all of the Lodges will be on their regular monthly meeting schedule again. The meeting schedule is published in every edition of the Union Herald. Once again, as I will each month, I encourage you to attend your monthly meeting. An hour a month is not too much time to invest.

Monday September 3rd is Labor Day. The 2012 Labor Day parade is going to be held this year thanks to the efforts of Bill Brockmiller and the financial support of a number of Unions and individuals. The Local Lodges of District 66 will again be marching in the parade, gathering prior to the 10:00 a.m. start near the corner of Kane and Gillette. We will have candy to distribute along the route and all members participating (unless EVERYBODY shows up) will receive a District Lodge 66 T-Shirt. All are invited and encouraged to attend. Once again there will be a post parade celebration in the Copeland Park Shelter with food and refreshments available.

In the past year here in Wisconsin and in many other states across the nation, being a member of a labor union suddenly made us a target for the ire of a great many of our politicians and fellow members of the middle class. I understand the political side of this puzzle, although I certainly would disagree with the artificial divides that are created between the parties. I must say though that the disagreements that developed between working men and women are something I just don't get.

What is the problem with being a member of a labor union? After all, what is it that we want for ourselves that every other member of the working class in this country doesn't also want and deserve? Do we not all want to earn a decent living wage? How about good health insurance to protect you and your family? Would anyone of us not want to have a solid pension plan to help us to live well after retirement?

Beyond these things, how about the conditions of your employment in the first place? Aren't all of us interested in a fair and safe workplace with clearly defined responsibilities and rewards? How about the ability to work directly with your employer to achieve your mutual goals? Or let's think about being protected from arbitrary treatment through the power of a written contract that sets the standards of performance and punishment as opposed to being subject to the whims of personality or personal differences of opinion? So my question stands...do we not really all desire the same things? I think in reality we do. The problem is that the working men and woman in this country can be each other's worst enemies. When we reach certain milestones here on the lower rungs of this country's economic ladder, our tendency is to ignore those around us who are not quite there. On the flipside, if we are not there we tend to envy those who have managed to rise a bit higher, and resent the fact that they have received rewards that we have not yet gained for ourselves. It is always easier to band together to take things away from others than it is to band together to achieve what we desire for ourselves, because what we desire for ourselves can be lost in the clamor of the collective voice. Group think is a difficult thing to keep focused, unless of course that focus is a target. That is what makes it easier to strip something from those who have what we do not than to collectively aim to achieve for all what we desire for ourselves.

So what I am is one of a group that chooses to work together for the common good. Our collective voice is given strength and focused by the fact we are joined together. Make no mistake; we do not speak as one. We speak individually of our own wants and needs but also know that achieving and protecting what we desire is far easier if it is shared by all. The wider spread the prosperity among our peers and in this country the better off we all are.

So as opposed to looking amongst ourselves only to seek a target, maybe the time has come for us to look around and realize that we are all in this together. Maybe we should set aside our differences to enable us to begin to focus on the bigger, real picture. We need to set our sights on building each other up and on working again to achieve for all what we desire for ourselves. Unless we renew that process, we will continue to see the steady downward drift of the middle class towards the lowest economic common denominator. Let's try it for a change, all of us. Union and non-union, public employee or private sector, factory floor or middle manager, blue jeans and work boots or white shirt and

tie. Think about where you really stand in the America of today and answer the questions for yourself. Are we not all trying to be part of the Great American Middle Class? Doesn't everyone in this group really want the same things for ourselves and our families? If your answer is yes, let us begin to build together for a change.

Financial Planning for IAM Convention Delegates

Delegates planning to attend the 2012 Grand Lodge Convention in Toronto, Ontario, are reminded that they will need a valid U.S passport to enter Canada. In addition to ensuring passports are up to date, delegates should also have sufficient funds or credit balances to pay for a week's worth of hotel accommodations, food and other expenses. While some of these expenses are reimbursed after the convention by local and district lodges, the initial out-of-pocket amounts can be significant.

Another concern is extra charges for international cell phone usage. Before leaving for the Convention, contact your cell phone carrier about making and receiving calls while in Canada. Most major phone companies have ongoing or temporary service plans that allow you to make international calls. Call your carrier for specific information about your phone plan. Also, international text messaging and data charges are expensive.

The delegates from District Lodge 66 have been provided with a Delegate Guide created by the Midwest Territory that contains helpful information and travel tips. If you have any questions consult the guide or give us a call at the District Office, 608-784-2025. Have a safe and productive trip!