



International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers
District Lodge 66
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Union Herald Article from the desk of:

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January, 2013. Well, it's looking to be a promising year as it begins with the fact that we did not all die on December 21st, when the world was to come to an end. The world did not end, we made it through another stressful Christmas season, and most important of all we did not go over the fiscal cliff.

The diligent work of our politicians in Washington saved us again, but I just have to ask. If it was that much work to avert and took us until the very last second to do so, might we not have been better served by not creating the law that created the cliff in the first place? This did not just come from thin air, but was legislation passed as the "hammer" to force our elected officials into action. Created by them to force themselves; sort of like holding yourself hostage, isn't it?

Our political process is broken. It seems there is no longer room for discussion and compromise. Unfortunately, the vocal minorities from the extremes of the political spectrum have full sway over the current process and their money fuels the fire. But it is deeper than that. Money can only buy so much time, and time translates into votes. Money directed at the politicians themselves buys time with those in the halls of government, allowing undue influence to be used to secure the votes of those making the decisions. Money directed at the masses through unfettered, one sided portrayals of issues allows for full control of the message, framing the question and the answer to achieve the desired outcome; reduction of the problems confronting this country to a commercial or a sound bite is an art form. The only thing left to us is to ask ourselves what if anything can be done about it.

As citizens one of the best things we can do is to make sure we understand an issue. Not necessarily just to accept the right view or the left view, but to develop our own view. My experience has been that generally, when people sit down and have a civil discussion of the issues in search of a solution, most desire a compromise. Most people realize that compromise is necessary to achieve real sustainable changes in our society. We do not all agree with each other and never will, but common sense tells us that by working together when possible to achieve consensus, the outcome will always have more support than that which represents the desired result of only one group or another. Educating ourselves on the issues is a big first step that will eventually translate into our demanding good governance from our political leaders, respectful of all sides.

In the long run, our politicians will respond to the electorate. They are after all a reflection of what is demanded of them; right now we are demanding nothing of substance. We need to make the decision for ourselves to not allow the money flooding our political system to deter us from making intelligent choices and thoughtful compromise. Then we can use our vote to install those individuals into political office who will think and act for the good of all, for the good of the country. We do have the power to do this but must make the decision to do so. We have met the enemy and he is us. Here is a final thought. Maybe the system is too disabled as it currently stands. It might be that our politicians are so enmeshed in the current system, so enthralled by its perks and powers that they will never consider passing the laws needed to clean up the mess that we have allowed them to create. If so, a house cleaning is in order. This would be painful because it requires “we the people” to sweep out the good with the bad, for we cannot preserve one without the other if everyone is to be represented equally in this process. One man’s trash is another man’s treasure, after all. Shall we consider the heresy of Citizen Legislators as opposed to Professional Politicians? May I make a suggestion; how about Term Limits? Food for thought...

Next month I am hoping to tackle some suggestions for the New Year, but I will leave you with this one suggestion for a resolution. See you at this month’s Local Lodge Meeting?

On a somber and heartbreaking note, remember all of the victims of Sandy Hook in your prayers.

DISTRICT 66 ORGANIZING COMMITTEE FOOD DRIVE

The District Lodge 66 first annual food drive was not the roaring success we had hoped for but overall we did all right. We will give it a whirl again next year and incorporate some of what we learned, including the possibility of a different time frame in which to hold it. According to what I now know, there were at least 7 other drives happening at the same time in the area, including the fantastic Rotary Lights in La Crosse. They do a great job down there with a massive effort of volunteers and organizations from the area. If you know anyone who participated in that effort give them a pat on the back; they deserve it!

(I have included the following information from iMAIL, which is available to all at www.goiam.org)

HOSTESS WORKERS FIGHT FOR FINAL PAY CHECKS

While current and former executives at bankrupt Hostess Brands, Inc., decide how to spend millions in bonuses, hourly workers are discovering their final pay checks will be short several hundred dollars in promised vacation pay.

According to a bankruptcy-brokered Employee Retention Program at Hostess, workers taking part in the shutdown of Hostess facilities and those workers displaced by the closures will not be paid for vacation time accrued during the previous year. The workers were previously told their earned vacation pay would be included in their final pay checks.

“This is the latest example of how harshly workers are being treated in the Hostess bankruptcy,” said Jim Price, who coordinates activities on behalf of several hundred IAM-represented Hostess employees. “Outrageous payments for Hostess executives are being paid for with outrageous sacrifices from Hostess workers. There is a crying need for balance here.”

In an emotional letter to the judge charged with administering the Hostess bankruptcy, one employee’s spouse urges the judge to reconsider the priorities of the so-called bonus program.

“My family and our friends are going to be struggling based on the lack of pay. While our savings may keep us afloat, it is hard to say how long,” wrote

Patricia Saunders of Puyallup, WA, whose husband was recently notified he would not receive the promised vacation pay. "At this point, we are going to be lucky to make it to February."

2013 MACHINISTS UNION SCHOLARSHIP COMPETITION

Sisters and Brothers,

Following are the details of the **Machinists Union 2013 Scholarship Competition**. This competition is available to children of Machinists Union members and the member themselves.

To keep up with current times, the International has made the Scholarship Program fully accessible from the web. Please check out the web-site to see about the eligibility for competition. Additionally, applications are available via internet from the IAM Scholarship web page at **<http://www.goiam.org/iamscholarship>** for downloading. You can now download and print the three (3) different Scholarship Applications online.

- IAM Child of a Member applying for College
- IAM Child of a Member applying for Vocational/Technical School
- IAM Member applying for College

Another option is you can call the District at (608) 784-2025 and have a paper application sent to you.

At the 2004 Grand Lodge convention, the delegates voted unanimously to name one of the scholarships after Roman A. Mayfield, a 55-year member of D.L. 751, now deceased. This will be given to one of the scholarship recipients who best represent the spirit of volunteerism and the strong sense of service to their community that was a hallmark of Brother Mayfield.

Since its implementation in 1960, the Scholarship Competition has continued to grow.

Although information appears in the IAM JOURNAL as well as on the web page, please let any member you know who has children graduating and going on to college about this very valuable scholarship opportunity. We need your help letting others know in order to eliminate the many disappointments expressed in past years by members who learn about the Scholarship competition too late.

Do not wait to request your application packet, the sooner the better. The deadline for returning your application packet is February 25, 2013. District Lodge 66 has had 2 winners and 1 honorable mention in recent years of this competition, so apply today! Good luck to all applicants!