



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**

**[IAM Legislative Activists Descend on Capitol Hill](#)**

I was at the IAM Legislative Conference held May 11<sup>th</sup> through the 16<sup>th</sup> in Washington, DC. Speakers kicked off the conference by calling for an end to sequestration, trade agreements that benefit people instead of corporations and a renewed respect for federal workers.

With midterm elections coming in November, IAM International President Tom Buffenbarger told attendees that now is the time to hold Congress accountable. Democrats hold a slim eight-seat majority in the Senate and trail Republicans by 33 seats in the House.

“The people of America are ready for economic equality,” said Buffenbarger. “We need to convince people that what we’re fighting for isn’t just a lofty discussion on Capitol Hill, this is about building a culture of jobs and preserving the American dream.”

Buffenbarger and others railed against sequestration, now in its second of 10 years of mandated budget cuts, which has taken away job security from federal employees and contractors and harmed national security. **The Trans-Pacific Partnership, a secretly negotiated free trade deal that promises jobs but instead will export thousands of jobs to low-wage countries, is “the biggest threat to the American worker since NAFTA,”** said Buffenbarger.

IAM members met with their members of Congress, also fighting against the privatization of the Tennessee Valley Authority, opposing a law that would allow operators of multi-employer pension plans to cut benefits for current retirees, and urging their support for the full reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank so U.S. companies can compete fairly with global competitors.

Speakers at the conference included Acting Deputy Transportation Secretary Victor Mendez, AFL-CIO Transportation Trades Department President Ed Wytkind, DC Delegate Eleanor Holmes-Norton, Sen. Mark Heinrich (D-NM) and Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA), who is retiring after almost 40 years in Congress.

“On every big legislative fight over the years, I may have been out front, but what carried the day was the passionate, relentless, unstoppable advocacy from the members of the IAM,” said Harkin, whose father and brother were both union members. “This is a two-fisted, never-back-down, fighting union.”

Harkin, the first non-union member to be inducted into the Iowa Labor Hall of Fame, said the right-wing assault on labor unions is also an assault on the middle class. A report from the Center for American Progress shows how as union membership rates have decreased, so have middle-class incomes. “Make no mistake, this has been a planned, plotted, well-funded campaign to destroy organized labor in America,” Harkin said. “I may be leaving the U.S. Senate, but I’m going to keep fighting for collective bargaining rights as long as I’ve got a breath left in me.”

The politicians who act in support of our cause for jobs and justice for the middle class in the United States are becoming fewer and farther between. Our participation in the political process at both the National and State level has never been more important. We have an extremely capable Legislative Department operating out of the Grand Lodge. We are represented by Co-Directors Rick de la Fuente and Hasan Solomon along with Assistant Director Bruce Olsson and the full staff, but they need our help. Do you want to make a difference for a better future? 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 and acts to support those who support us, **regardless of their political affiliation**. MNPL sponsoring memberships cost only \$25.00, a small price to pay for fulltime representation of your interests. Donations to the MNPL are voluntary, not tax deductible, and can be made only by members of the IAMAW.

Wisconsin is going to be ground zero in this fight given the election to be held for Governor of our state. We need to stand up and be heard to meet the challenge. Please consider giving your support. We need to work together to preserve our ability to stand together as members of a Union. Right to work is not a right; it is a sentence to a lower standard of living for all, Union and non-union alike. **Work to support those who support us with the best tools we have to get this accomplished, your vote and the MNPL.** Together, we can make a difference!

### **IAM Midwest Territory Staff Conference and Midwest States Conference of Machinists**

This month I also attended the combined Territory Staff Conferences and Midwest States Conference held in Myrtle Beach SC June 1<sup>st</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup>. Also in attendance at these

meetings were District President Dean Rink, District Secretary Treasurer Dennis Gerke, and Local Lodge 1115 President Ernie Domnie.

Meetings and sessions were held on a daily basis with many from the IAMAW Grand Lodge and Midwest staff discussing issues of major importance not only to all of us in the Midwest but also to the entire Union. Those speakers were highlighted by IAM International President Tom Buffenbarger and IAM General Secretary-Treasurer Robert Roach, Jr., along with General Vice Presidents Robert Martinez, Jr., Dianne Babineaux, Dora Cervantes, and our own Midwest Territory GVP Phil Gruber, who lead us over the entire conference.

Included in the subjects presented were updates on the recently completed Grand Lodge Executive Council Elections, political updates from our area and across the nation, and updates on the Midwest Territory hosting of the 2016 Grand Lodge Convention to be held in Chicago IL.

### **IAMAW Grand Lodge Executive Council Election Update**

Members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) have elected the top leadership of their union by a more than a two-to-one margin. The preliminary results were announced following a tabulation of ballots from IAM Local Lodges across the U.S. and Canada. The vote count was performed at IAM Headquarters in Upper Marlboro, MD under the direct supervision of Department of Labor representatives.

“IAM members made their collective voice heard and elected a diverse leadership team with the experience and capabilities to lead one of the greatest unions in North America,” said IAM International President Tom Buffenbarger. “Our members have spoken and we thank them for their support. They overwhelmingly rejected an effort to move this union backwards and we now turn our full attention to moving the IAM forward.”

IAM members in the United States and Canada elected the incumbent officers R. Thomas Buffenbarger for International President and Robert Roach, Jr. for General Secretary-Treasurer. In voting in the United States, IAM members elected eight incumbent General Vice Presidents including Lynn D. Tucker, Jr., Robert Martinez, Jr., Philip J. Gruber, Gary R. Allen, Sito Pantoja, Mark Blondin, Diane Babineaux and Dora Cervantes. The preliminary results announced are subject to final certification by the Department of Labor.

As of this writing the results of the election have yet to be certified pending investigation of the process and results. The final determination is to be concluded no later than July 31. As always, I will keep you posted!

## **Local Lodge 21 and 1115 Trane Company Negotiations**

The first face to face negotiating sessions on a new contract for our members of Local Lodges 21 and 1115, Trane Company will take place at the end of this month. I am working with the Committees of both to develop proposals and strategies for bargaining. As always, I am hopeful and optimistic that we will be able to work together with the Trane/IR management team to solve the number of issues before us at the La Crosse facility. We will keep you informed in the coming weeks of our communications strategies through shop postings and the District Lodge website, [districtlodge66@centurytel.net](mailto:districtlodge66@centurytel.net).

## **District Lodge 66**

The District Lodge delegates representing you through your Local Lodge met on Monday May 19. Along with the regular business of the District they took action on a number of issues including discussion and decisions made on attendance at numerous conferences and seminars. Tracey Taylor will be attending the 2014 Women's Conference to be held this fall. In addition we will be sending two individuals from the District to the IAM Young Worker and Emerging Leader conference to be held at the William Winpisinger Education center in Placid Harbor. Those individuals are currently on standby as the available openings have filled already; a great thing for the future of our Union! We also made a donation to the Memorial Day Grave Flagging Fund to place flags on the graves of those who have served our country.

Summer must be here as the mosquitos are competing with the gnats for space. Until next month...