



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

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Elections 2014: A Post Mortem

Election season 2014 has come to a conclusion and now we can look to the future. What can be said in a year such as this? First things first, congratulations to Governor Walker. Like it or not, his victory was impressive given the rancour surrounding his term in office. Equally impressive is the fact that he has now run three successful elections in a four year period, sure to be noticed by those in the Republican establishment now looking forward to 2016. Watching the Governor's victory speech, his ambitions to move to the national stage were obvious. Giving credit where credit is due, Scott Walker is a smooth and polished politician who will be a force to be reckoned with during the next election cycle.

First, the Bad News from the results of November 4...where does one start when there is so much to choose from? Scott Walker's victory in Wisconsin is going to be a huge negative for organized labor, particularly when you consider it as part of the national results.

Republicans now have their majority in the Senate, along with the largest majority in the House since the presidency of Herbert Hoover. In our immediate area, we saw Tom Harkin in Iowa replaced by Republican Joni Ernst and lost another friend of labor in Illinois with the defeat of Governor Pat Quinn, leaving only Governor Dayton in Minnesota standing with us to forestall the march towards Right to Work. Governor Walker has tried to dispel any talk of making a Right to Work push in Wisconsin, but the reality of the situation cannot be ignored. I have no doubt we will see legislation in Wisconsin and I believe we will see it soon; my prediction is within 120 days of inauguration.

There are strategic reasons for this calculation. First, given Governor Walker's support provided by outside interests, I believe that the movement embracing Right to Work is inevitable. They did not make the investment with no expectation of seeing a return. This is particularly true now given similar pushes in the Great Lakes Region. With an eye towards 2016 and the national stage, Governor Walker will further burnish his conservative credentials by making Wisconsin the next Right to Work state. At the same time, he more than anyone is certainly aware of the firestorm this will create. This will not dissuade him from action, but I believe it will cause him to move sooner rather than later, thus my timeline prediction. Campaigning for the 2016 Presidential elections will begin in earnest by the summer of 2015. He needs to act quickly enough to allow the wounds opened by a move against organized labor some time to heal. There are those who will agree with what he has done but will shy away from the heat; that heat needs to move from fire to ember before he can expect these supporters to openly embrace his candidacy. The furor created must dissipate enough to give sufficient time to develop support amongst those outside of his immediate base. Aside from this, here in Wisconsin I would assume he will continue to move against equality in Women's Healthcare and Economic rights, along with making further attempts to suppress the right to Vote. I would also expect continuing assaults on the dignity of the poor and the unemployed. In the very near term, we will certainly see additional reductions in taxes, with the bulk of those reductions aimed at those who need it least, paid for by further cuts in the programs provided to those who need them the most. These are my predictions for Governor Walker's second term. Let's pray he proves me wrong.

Now for the Good News...yes, there is some. We had a terrific turnout particularly in La Crosse County, which showed about two thirds of those eligible to vote participated. I would like to thank all who voted. Always could be better, but pretty good just the same. In La Crosse County, Mary Burke was the candidate of choice for the Governor's office. Although Ms. Burke was unsuccessful, we need to give her special thanks for standing up and making the run. She fought the good fight on our behalf. We had some success in that we returned Congressman Ron Kind for another term, along with Representatives Jill Billings, Steve Doyle, and Chris Danou from our immediate area of the state. Hopefully they can work with other members of the minority to influence as best they can the legislation they are certain to see put forth by the reinvigorated Republican Majority. We also had some state wide and county ballot initiatives to consider. The Transportation question passed, which I believe is a good thing. The questions on Medicaid Funding and Raising the Minimum Wage? Both were advisory and I think it is a safe bet that Governor Walker will not be taking our advice.

While the news certainly could have been better from my personal perspective, we cannot deny nor ignore the results. I am very aware that many of our own members voted Republican, as do Union Members across the state. I cannot say I agree with this, but I can understand it and say congratulations on the victory none the less. You have your reasons for voting the way that you do and as I have said before, it is less important for whom you vote than that you do so. This outcome has not changed that sentiment. Hopefully in the future we can find a candidate that the majority of us can stand behind together.

So now we move forward. We need to prepare for the battles to come and I hope we can find a way to do so. We ignore the strength of our collective and unified voice at our own peril.

Machinist Union Members Win New Contract at Schneider Electric, Strike Ends

Washington, D.C., October 19, 2014 – Members of Local 2069 of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers (IAM) voted today to accept an improved offer from Schneider Electric which ends a two-week strike by more than 300 IAM members in Schneider’s Square D facility in Peru, Indiana.

“Our members stood strong and won improvements that they can be proud of,” said IAM Director of Collective Bargaining Tom O’Heron. “Schneider Electric is an extremely profitable company and our members, who make those profits possible, fought for their rightful share of the company’s success.” Local 2069 members won improvements in key areas of the new three-year contract. In addition to a signing bonus of \$1,600, there are general wage increases of 3 percent in year one, 2 percent in year two and 2 percent in year three. IAM negotiators also addressed members’ concerns that the gap between lower and higher-paid workers was growing too wide. Although the new pact freezes the traditional Defined Benefit Pension as of December 31, 2015, IAM negotiators achieved company contributions in the transition to a Defined Contribution plan that are higher than the company originally proposed.

“Both local businesses and other local area unions gave our members tremendous support,” said O’Heron. “Local 2069’s Bargaining Committee also did a great job keeping our members and the community informed throughout the entire process. Together, it made a big difference and we are grateful that it helped lead to an agreement.”

IAM Member Makes Flawless Case for Modern Unions

An op-ed penned by Maine paralegal Carol Sanborn, a member of IAM Local S89, tells her own unique story of joining the IAM and takes outdated anti-union sentiment to task in the process.

“I was recently involved with organizing one of the most innovative collective bargaining units in Maine, and I can confirm that people who toss around phrases such as ‘union thugs’ and ‘union bosses’ have little idea what they are talking about and are sadly out of touch,” writes Sanborn on centralmaine.com. “Today’s unions have evolved and incorporate the best of the past (the power of the collective voice) with contemporary business expertise, current technology and an inclusive, fresh approach.” Sanborn and her fellow legal professionals at a Topsham, ME-based law firm decided to join the IAM in 2013. They ratified their first contract in September of that year, earning generous wage increases, good benefits and better job security.

They “wanted to be heard in a meaningful way that would provide both the opportunity and incentive for internal changes,” but weren’t out to make unreasonable demands or disparage their employer in the process. IAM negotiating experts helped Sanborn and her coworkers focus their ideas and communicate them effectively with their employer, all while keeping today’s economic reality in mind.

“Our IAM representatives were honest with us and helped us find an approach that improved our circumstances, strengthened the company, and did not cause harm to either,” wrote Sanborn.

Those who vilify unions often base their beliefs “on a combination of old stereotypes from the industrial age and general misinformation,” writes Sanborn. “These union members look just like all of us,” she writes. “They look like our parents, our friends, family and neighbors because they are parents, friends, family and neighbors. People often overlook the most basic concept of organized labor: We are the union.” Read the entire op-ed, “Unionization is good for business and labor,” at centralmaine.com.

District Lodge 66

The District Lodge Delegates came together for our regular monthly meeting on Monday October 20. In addition to the regular business of the Lodge, we received a report on Election Activities from Local Lodge 21 Member John Davis. John has been assigned to work on Member Education for Election Issues during this political cycle. I would like to thank John for his enthusiasm and commitment to this important work on behalf of the District. The delegates also approved sending District Secretary Treasurer Dennis Gerke, Local Lodge 2191, to the Machinists Non-Partisan Political League National Planning Committee meetings scheduled for March of 2015. Dennis has been our delegate to the Planning Conference since 2013. The Delegates also accepted another change to the District Lodge Bylaws, moving the meeting time one half hour earlier to better accommodate our delegates. In other news, the L-3 Communications contract was voted on and ratified by our Local Lodge 1115 members working for L-3 at the Sparta Facility. This group is part of a National Agreement that was negotiated in October by Aerospace Coordinator Jody Bennett of the Grand Lodge Aerospace Department. The L-3 group has been represented locally by Chief Steward Greg Douce who decided to step down after many years of service. Greg has been replaced by Clifford Paulson as the new Chief Steward at L-3. I would like to thank Greg for his representation over the years and welcome Cliff to his new role.

Our wonderful Autumn will soon turn to another Wisconsin Winter Season. I hope that all of our hunters in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa have a safe and successful fall hunt. November holds our special holiday that reminds us to take time to be thankful for all of the blessings in our lives. Enjoy that day and everyday with those you love; savor the ability to again witness the beauty of the changing seasons. To all of our members, their families, and everyone, Happy Thanksgiving! Until next month...