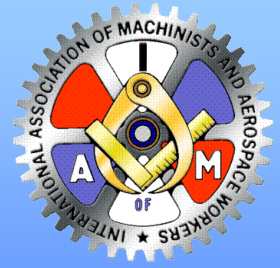


# LL839 Machinists Matters

3917 E MacArthur Rd.  
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## ARE PEOPLE REALLY AGAINST UNIONS? President's Corner September 2010

By Kathy Petersen



In last Sunday's Wichita Eagle (Sept 5, 2010) there is an article written by Dan Voorhis entitled "Why are People Against Unions?" Good question. Maybe the article should have asked, "Do People Know What Unions Have Accomplished?" If so, are they really against those gains for middle class Americans? Mr. Voorhis states that "many Kansans aren't very appreciative of organized labor" and "words such as 'greedy,' 'entitled' and 'out-of-touch' keep popping up." The article goes on to quote a laid-off Hawker Beechcraft employee and ex-union member who blames union leadership for not working harder to keep the company from potentially leaving town. Unions cannot 100% guarantee that a company will not outsource work, especially if a company is hell-bent on doing so. Enforcement is only as good as the language in a contract, and most companies will not put in writing that they will not outsource work under any conditions. The recent IAM/Spirit agreement came as close to guaranteeing that as any contract ever has.

While I started out reading the article with optimism, I quickly found myself in disagreement with most of the people whom Mr. Voorhis quoted. I found their comments to be full of half-truths. For example, the author quotes Jeremy Hill, director of the Center for Economics, saying that the mission and purpose of un-

ions is to "demand above-market wages and benefits from companies and to enforce work rules such as seniority during layoffs."

The mission and purpose of unions is to negotiate the best collective bargaining agreements that they can for employees of various companies. Negotiators do not demand above-market wages and benefits; rather, they bargain with employers over fair wages and affordable benefits, safe working environments, and work rules that are as fair as they can be for the employees. Seniority is something that unions have always fought for to create a sense of fairness and uniformity in the workplace. There really is no "fair" way to lay people off – going by reverse seniority is less subjective than allowing managers to pick and choose who stays and who doesn't. Perhaps it is even a relief to management (would you want to pick who gets laid off between Johnny, who has 5 kids to support and Joe, who has no kids, but his wife has cancer and relies on his healthcare benefits?). Seniority can also be used for such things as shift assignment, promotion, transfer, recall and vacation accrual.

Unions do not fire, hire, or discipline workers. Unions provide a balance of power between management and the workers. Without a collective bargaining agreement, management would have all the power and as the saying

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goes, "power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely." Without union representation, workers are "at-will" employees subject to the guidelines of management. No guaranteed 40-hour workweeks, paid holidays, bereavement leave, medical benefits or retirement plan.

One statement in the article that I would have to agree with came from Harold Schlechtweg, union representative of Local 513 of the Service Employees International Union, when he said that a lot of people who dislike unions "have little direct knowledge of the unionized workforce." Instead, they choose to jump on the bandwagon with others who do not understand the real purpose that unions play in America. These are the same people who are out of touch with labor and are quick to find fault with the unions.

As I read further into the news article, I was disgusted at the emotional objections listed there such as the one that Martin Perline, an economics professor at WSU made about union workers. "There are a lot of people who make a lot less money than union members," he said. "The money is good and then they (union members) complain and go on strike. People are saying 'How greedy are you?'" This comment is very misleading. Although there are a lot of people who earn less than aviation workers, there are also a lot who earn more (the article says that only 6.2% of the Kansas work force is unionized). During union negotiations, wages and benefits and other economic items are discussed. Any cuts to these items result in "takeaways." No one (union or not) likes to go backwards in their pay and benefits. When an offer is made by a company that would increase the portion of healthcare that the employee pays or decrease their pay, certainly this will be a topic of discussion amongst workers. It should be of concern to local businesses also, because when workers don't get raises, they can't spend as much or donate as much money in the community.

Most people I know don't think it is greedy to negotiate for a decent living wage and good benefits, especially when a company is profitable enough to pay their executive management millions of dollars.

This article focused on Kansas being a state with "conservative, Western values, where people are expected to be self-reliant and justify their pay with their work." Well, from where I stand, I see an awful lot of airplanes in the sky and that would make me believe that some folks at the unionized aircraft plants are working pretty damn hard. Those fuselages don't assemble themselves. I know a lot of Kansans with conservative values who are also union members. They believe in the American middle class and know that unions have helped create it.

I was also disappointed that the article did not even mention the recent Spirit/IAM agreement. Even a cursory look at the agreement should immediately put to rest most anti-union sentiments. The whole idea of the 2010 agreement was that the union and the company would work together to ensure the future success of the company, and that by doing so both parties would share in the profits. Spirit employees lost nothing in the agreement, and gained job security as well as pension increases and other benefits.

In addition, I fail to see the purpose of the article in the first place. How is it helpful to rant and rave about unions in general? That's the same as saying that all businesses are greedy, evil, and out-of-touch. That can't be true or surely Mr. Voorhis would not be working for a fine organization such as The Wichita Eagle. Not all businesses are alike, nor are all unions alike. It would perhaps have been a better strategy to focus on one union and discuss specifics about that particular union. Broad generalizations, especially those focusing on "dislike" or "hate" seldom accomplish anything useful.

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President's Corner from Page 2

It wasn't that long ago that most of the working class men and women proudly held union cards as a tribute to their skills and craftsmanship. I am a proud union member and hope to be one from now on. I still hold out hope that the rest of the employees working at a company with union representation will step up and join their union and help keep the modern American middle class alive.

Kathy Petersen, President  
IAMAW Local Lodge 839



**"Good morrow citizen, I'm Robin Hood and this is Sherwood Forest Merry Band local number one."**

# Back to School Basket

## August Meeting

By Stan Chapman



The winner of the August Back to School Basket was Sonny Nguyen. Sonny is a 2nd shift Steward over Shop 328D. Sonny is a repeat winner. The basket was put together for the Community Service Committee's monthly drawing and was filled with plenty of supplies to start school year. The value of the basket was \$85.00 and included a variety pens, pencils, sharpies, a Backpack, 1 Fill Box, folders and many more items for school. Also 1 CD Player/AM-FM Radio, \$30.00 Gift Certificates to Johnny Carino's and 6 QuikTrip coupons for free Fountain Drinks (any size).

**Congratulations, Sonny!**

The Community Service Committee would like to thank the membership for the support you give to us when you purchase food from the kitchen and tickets for the basket drawings. The money you spend enables us to procure additional items for baskets and raffles and allows us to help our members in need.

We draw for the baskets at the end of the Local Lodge meeting and a picture is taken to put in the newsletter.

## United Way Labor Kickoff

By Larry Stafford

The Labor Liaison for the United Way, Mario Cervantes, kicked off this year's United Way campaign with a lunch with Labor at the Best Western in Park City. All of the aviation locals were present as well as many other Labor Unions from across the city. Most of Local 839's Community Service Committee attended plus some of the Local's Labor Federation Delegates.

After lunch, Mario introduced Pat Hanrahan, president of the United Way of the Plains. Pat talked about the challenge this year's campaign would be facing with the loss of 27 percent of aviation jobs at the local companies. For every aviation loss there was a ripple effect of three more job losses in the community. Many of these laid off workers who used to be donors for the United Way are now becoming recipients of the United Way's services.

The Laid-Off Workers center has been helping with the laid off workers in the community. The Center helps with Education, Income and

Health. They had to cut support last year by 10% to the agencies they financially support. They do not like cutting budgets but they can only give what they have and that money comes from the people who give in the yearly campaign.

Pat asked for everyone to give 5 minutes of pay per month to this year's campaign. He said if every worker in Sedgwick County gave 3 minutes of pay, over 54 million dollars would be collected. He knows that not everyone would do this so he is asking for 5 minutes from everyone who supports the United Way today and from any new supporters. The United Way needs our help to help the people in this community help themselves.

I do not have any details on how this year's campaign will be conducted at Spirit, but those details will be forthcoming. This year's video is very touching and can be seen on the United Way of the Plains website. If you are not giving today, please sign a pledge card and start helping our aviation Brothers and Sisters.



## Labor Day Picnic at District 70

By Larry Stafford

The Wichita/ Hutchison Federation of Labor held its Labor Day celebration at the District 70 Lodge Hall on September 4, 2010. With the many aviation layoffs and contract struggles going on at the present time, no one knew how this year's attendance would hold to past years. Let me just say it was a great success. One of the reasons for the packed house was that it is an election year and many of the candidates for office were present and talking with anyone who would listen.

It was really refreshing to have to set up more tables and chairs to accommodate the crowd. The hot dogs were flying off of the grill and the kitchen staff was hustling to keep all of the attendees fed. We even had to send Leroy Lehman out to the store to get more desserts and we ran out of them again.

Jake Lowen, the political Director of the Wichita/ Hutchison Federation of Labor, introduced the keynote speakers. They included State Senator Tom Holland running for Governor, State Representative Raj Goyle running for the US House of Representatives and Lisa Johnston running for the US senate. The themes in all of their speeches were about keeping and creating jobs in Kansas and stopping of the exportation of our aviation jobs to other states and countries.

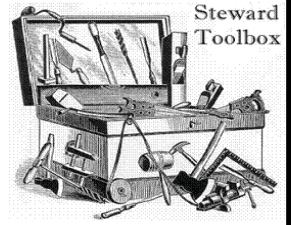
After the speeches, Dennis Williams the District 70 Educator, called the numbers for the annual bingo. There were many prizes won and a lot of happy faces and full stomachs when everyone left at 4:00.

This was a great Labor Day Picnic and many thanks go out to all of the Labor Fed's Delegates and especially Jake Lowen and Sarah Cooper for putting this event together. We all look forward to seeing everyone again next year.



## Shop Stewards Duties

by Roger Stamback



The duties of a Shop Steward have changed with the new CBA, but what I am going to write about this month is the normal duties that all Shop Stewards should be doing every day.

Brothers and Sisters we should make every effort to keep the members in our shops informed and active in the affairs of the Union. To police the agreement within our shops to assure compliance and that all members enjoy all the benefits provided under the CBA. To immediately investigate all complaints called to our attention and to attempt to settle all such complaints with the supervisor involved. If you are unable to settle complaints with your supervisor you should without delay refer it to the In-Plant Representative.

Shop Stewards should give general assistance to the Representative staff assigned, Lodge Officers and Committees in a variety of Union activities. To, at all times wear their Union Steward's badge prominently displayed and to conduct themselves in conformance with the IAM Constitution, District Lodge and Local Lodge Bylaws. All Shop Stewards should maintain a file containing a copy of CBA, complaint forms, application forms, job descriptions, IAM Constitution, District Lodge and Local Lodge Bylaws.

The most important thing of all is to attend all Shop Steward and Local Lodge meetings, being regular or special meetings. **REMEMBER WORKING OVERTIME IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE EXCUSE TO MISS A MEETING; YOU ARE EXCUSED FROM WORK TO GO TO THE MEETINGS.**

Roger Stamback

Local Lodge Educator



# NEW UNION MEMBERS JOINING August 2010



BILLIE BALL	EMMANUEL GARIBAY	STEVEN P. MARSHALL	RICHARD STECHER
TIMOTHY L. BAUMGARTNER	PATRICIA GAY	ED MCINTOSH	JAMES B. STONE
JEREMY BEGA	JEFF GHERE	MARK MITCHELL	ARDEN L. TELFORD
LEE BIRD	DARWIN T. GORDON	TRAVIS R. OTIS	MATTHEW C. TIPTON
REBECCA L. BOUCHER	HENRY HARRIS	NORRIS G. PALMER, JR.	ROBERT TRUMPOWER
RON BROWN	JOSEPH A. HAY	ZAHIR RACHEDI	ALLISON TURNER
JOHN BRUCE	KENNETH HELMS	DOUG REASONER	TROY TURNER
DUANE L. BURK	SHAWN R. HOCK	CHARLES E. RUPERT	JOHN L. TYLER
NAVY V. CHAN-PORTEOUS	BRIAN J. HOLINDE	MICHELLE SACKETT	ANTHONY VU
PORFIRIO STEVEN CLARK	LORENZE KEARNEY	TAMMY L. SCHMIDT	JESSE E. WADDELL
CLAUD A. FAULKNER	VICTOR KIRKPATRICK	DAVID E. SILL	JIMMIR R. WALLIN
DANIEL FLORES	LARRY KOCH	LEANN SKINNER	DALTON WAYMAN
LARRY J. FOLEY	STACY KOWALSKY	WILLIAM PHILIP SOELL	MICKEY E. WILLIAMS
ELIZA G. GARCIA	SHERRY LETSCH	DARRELL E. STAATS	

### International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers

Local Lodge 839  
3917 E. MacArthur Rd.  
Wichita, Kansas 67210  
Phone: (316) 524-1090



*The Fighting Machinists*

**Fight & Win**

**In 2010**

[www.ll839.org](http://www.ll839.org)



### Monthly Union Meetings

**2nd Saturday of the Month**

**Executive Board meets at 8:00 AM**

**Regular Meeting at 10:00 AM**

**President - Kathy Petersen**

**Vice President - Brent Allen**

**Recording Secretary - Larry Stafford**

**Treasurer - Joni Pierce**

**Conductor/Sentinel - Jeff Meis**

**Trustees - Susan Hiebert, Stan Chapman,  
Terry Rodriquez**

**Communicator - Dennis Williams**

**Educator - Roger Stamback**

**1st Shift In-Plant Rep. - David Eagle**

**2nd Shift In-Plant Rep. - Howard "HoJo" Johnson**

We are the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers. We belong to Local Lodge 839 of District 70 in Wichita Kansas. We represent the Fighting Machinists of Spirit AeroSystems. We work to give our members a voice on the job. Visit our website often at [www.ll839.org](http://www.ll839.org) for helpful and timely information. If you have any questions, contact one of your In-Plant Representatives at 524-1090. All Content © of IAM Local Lodge 839 2005-2010, All Rights Reserved