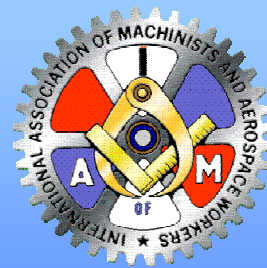


# LL839 Machinists Matters



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## President's Corner

March 2011

By Kathy Petersen

### War on Unions – Part 2

*A CEO, a Tea Party member, and a Union member sit down at a table. Before them is a plate with 12 cookies on it. The CEO immediately takes 11 of them, then turns to the Tea Party member and says, "Watch out for that Union guy – he wants part of your cookie."*

Like many other states, Wisconsin is facing a budget crunch. Wisconsin's is in the form of a \$137 million shortfall. The Feb. 17, 2011 issue of The New York Times noted, however, that Gov. Walker should accept a major share of responsibility for that shortfall since in January "he and the Legislature gave away \$117 million in tax breaks, mostly for businesses that expand and for private health savings accounts. That was a choice lawmakers made, and had it not been for those decisions and a few others, according to the state's Legislative Fiscal Bureau, the state would have had a surplus." Instead, Walker is blaming Wisconsin workers, and specifically those belonging to public unions, for the state's budget deficit.

I am not going to devote space here to debate the necessity of those tax breaks, and will concede that in the face of a weak economy, it is reasonable to call for shared sacrifice, including monetary concessions from state workers. Public union leaders in Wisconsin immediately agreed to make all such concessions on wages, benefits, and pensions. But that did not satisfy Gov. Walker. Instead, he refused to acknowledge that his actions had anything to do with

the state's budget crisis, and he is hell bent on stripping public unions of their collective bargaining rights.

Walker's budget bill is not really about addressing the state's budget woes. If it were, he would not have exempted the unions that supported him (police, fire and state troopers). Walker's bill would undermine the unions – which would have no direct impact on the state budget. What it will do is take away nearly all of the unions' rights to negotiate. Unions would be barred from bargaining about anything except wages. Any pay increase they win would be limited by the consumer price index. Contracts would be limited to one year, and union dues could no longer be deducted from paychecks. Walker has not been willing to negotiate any of this – it's his way or the highway. Wisconsin's 14 Democratic state senators chose the highway.

As I write this, not one of the Wisconsin 14 has returned to the state. It bothers me that some people are calling them cowards and saying that they are shirking their duties. In reality, had the Wisconsin 14 stayed and voted on Walker's proposed bill, it would easily have passed because the Republicans outnumber the Democrats 19 to 14. Although the Democrats probably will not be able to permanently block the bill, at the very least, postponing the vote has given the public time to scrutinize the bill and allow a light to shine on Walker's ultimate goal – that of busting public unions. And it has given workers, not only in Wisconsin, but all across the country the opportunity to show their displeasure with Walker and his proposed budget bill.

The strategy undertaken by the Wisconsin 14 has paid off. The Wichita Eagle reported that a recent poll shows that Americans oppose weak-

*Continued from Presidents Corner*

ening the bargaining rights of public employee unions by a margin of nearly two to one: 60 percent to 33 percent.

Apparently, however, some governors do not care what the American people say they support. Ohio has pushed through an anti-collective bargaining bill as part of its budget balancing measure. Similar bills are before the legislature in Indiana and Michigan.

Why are these states so determined to bust the unions? It absolutely has nothing to do with balancing budgets. It is about POWER. Think about it. Ostensibly, every one of us has an equal say in our political process. In reality, money talks. Billionaires can hire armies of lobbyists; they can and do finance think tanks to put their desired spin on policy issues; and they can funnel cash to politicians with sympathetic views. (We know for a fact that the Koch brothers did this with Gov. Walker.)

Given the power of these wealthy individuals and their special interest groups, it is vital that we have institutions that can act as counterweights to the power of the billionaires. If they succeed in busting the unions, what group with any clout at all will be left to fight for the middle class? I don't care if you are a Republican or a

Democrat. If there is no opposition to these political power plays, then we are going to end up with a government of the rich, by the rich and for the rich.

What puzzles me the most is why tea party groups allow themselves to be used by organizations such as Americans for Prosperity. Most of the tea party members are not wealthy. If they would do any research into the issues at all, they would arrive at the conclusions outlined above. The tea party groups are being manipulated by the ultra-rich to work against their fellow working class Americans. If they really want to revolt, they need to stop letting billionaires pull their strings and work with the unions to save the middle class.

It has been gratifying to see the large number of protestors in Wisconsin. They are sending a message to Gov. Walker and the rest of the country that unions are not going to go away. American workers should not be treated as though they don't matter. We have to stand together. Strength lies in organization – in solidarity. We can't let the super rich take all the cookies and set us to fighting among ourselves.

If you are not a union member, join today! Support those who support the middle class!

## Valentine Basket Winner

By Stan Chapman



The winner of February's Valentine Basket is Chris Florio. Brother Chris is a Union Steward over shop 2966 in Plant II on 3<sup>rd</sup> shift. Congratulations to Chris for having the winning ticket! The value of the basket is \$70.00. The basket contained a \$15.00 Gift Certificate to Johnny Carino's, 1 box Russell Stover Chocolates, 1 set of 4 "Best Romance" DVDs, 1 CD- "For Lovers Only," a necklace & earrings set and a lot of other goodies for Valentine's Day. We will be back in the kitchen for our March meeting.

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. Please try and attend your monthly meetings and maybe you will be the lucky winner next time!

Coming up at the meeting in March, we will have a drawing for a St Patrick's Day basket.

*The following article was written by Marjorie Johnson, the daughter of a lifelong Machinist, who retired in the early 1960's. President Kathy Petersen received this article and asked me if I could get permission to publish it in our newsletter. So I wrote to the publisher of the website, and he informed me that Marjorie does not have an e-mail address, and she hand delivers her typed letters to the publishers, so he gave me Marjorie's phone number. Before I could pick up the phone to call her my phone rang. On the other line was the very fragile voice of an 80 year old woman named Marjorie Johnson. She seemed very excited that I would want to re-publish her article. I explained to her how important it is for this new generation of Machinists to understand the sacrifices that were made by our former brothers and sisters. After talking with Marjorie I felt this overwhelming sense of pride. Pride of being a part of something so great; an organization that cares more about people and their futures, than life itself. These former Machinists were willing to lay their lives on the line so that we, the working people of today, could have it better than they did. I also felt an overwhelming sense of shame; shame for not doing more. So I hope after reading this article you too will want to do more. More for yourself, but more importantly, more for your children and grandchildren. Let's continue to serve our members and our union well, so that all those who laid down their lives before us did not die in vain. Jarrod Lehman –*  
*-The Article below was reprinted from the Delta County Independent Newspaper 02 March 2011*

## Sacrifices of Early Union Members Should be Recognized

By Marjorie Johnson

Union busting. That's what a lot of members of public workers' unions in my home state of Wisconsin say their governor is trying to do.

And it seems like they have good reason to think so. It reminds me of something I heard on a Phil Donahue TV show some years ago.

Donahue's guest that day was an old man who was the head of a machinist's union. The audience was made up of people who wanted to discuss whether unions were needed in our country, what good were they anyway, and did they do more harm than good.

Donahue was playing his usual devil's advocate role and getting the audience stirred up. The conclusion of most of the people who got up to speak seemed to be that unions were old hat. There was no reason for them to still exist in this day and age, so they should just go away.

The old man listened carefully to what was being said, then when it was his turn to speak, he began asking questions. He asked how many folks there were in the audience who worked 40-hour weeks, and to raise their hands if they did. Many hands were raised. Then he asked how many got scheduled days off, and those days were often on the weekends.

He went on to ask about sick leave and health

insurance. How many had things like that, and how many had unemployment insurance? After each question many hands were raised. Vacation time and job-related retirement programs? How about those? And many who raised their hands were smiling, as if to congratulate themselves in their good fortune.

Then it happened. The old man rose up and asked them where the hell they thought those things came from. Did they think that all their employers just got together one day and decided to be nice to them and give them all those things? Then he pretty much told them they were idiots and fools, that they had no sense of history and no gratitude to those who went before them and fought for the things they took for granted. The courageous folks who won them a middle class income and lifestyle that allowed them the time and wherewithal to be sitting in the daytime participating in a TV show. Then he told them there were people who actually died for what they had, and the way he said it made it sound like he was questioning whether they were worth it.

I never forgot that day and the things that man said, and I've never forgotten the stories I heard about my father's father when I was a little girl, and how he worked 53 years in a lumber mill and never missed one day of work. He was born in 1857 and he worked through what was called the gilded age, when the rich got very rich and the poor got next to nothing, and he was a poor man.

I am sure that in those 53 years there had to be

*Continued from page 3*

days when he was sick, but there was no such thing as sick leave and if a man missed even one day of work, it could cost him his job. He had a wife and children to support, so he could not take that risk. As for vacation time, no one had ever heard of it.

What was his reward for his fidelity? After 50 years he was given a silver cup with his name engraved on it. A cup I sometimes played with when I was a little girl, while being told the stories of his accomplishments. (There was no reward for the extra three years, so I guess they were just a bonus for his employer.)

Eventually, though, some of the workers in the company he worked for rose up against what they felt was terrible treatment, and the family that owned the company fled the town and never returned. They left behind a big mansion they had built for themselves and it stood empty for many years.

Long afterward their heirs deeded it to the town and it was turned into an art center. So in a way I look upon my grandfather's sacrifices as having gone to a good cause. I hope the sacrifices made by early union members didn't go for naught, to people who don't appreciate what was given to them, even if they weren't union members themselves.

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## District 70 Report

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We hope this month finds all of you well. We would like to thank those of you who really believe in unions and what they stand for. All one has to do is look at Wisconsin. These people are willing to pay more into their pension, pay more into their insurance just to keep their bargaining rights. Wait, we don't have to go that far -just look next door at Hawker Beech and Cessna. The jobs are gone.

We know a lot of you are upset by this 10 year agreement. We can assure you of one thing...**in 10 years you will be one of the few plants out here with locked-in insurance and a pension.** This pension is one of our negotiated benefits. This Company is committed to Wichita and staying in Wichita. Do you see this from our neighbors at the other aircraft plants? Please consider the tough times this whole Country is in and encourage your brothers and sisters into hanging onto what we have or it will be gone. Simply gone. We are available at 522-1591.

Becky Ledbetter, Mark Love, Michael Burleigh, Steve Groom, Tony Larkin, Rita Rogers

## Get More Members Involved

By Roger Stamback

Getting more members involved in the Union is a worthy idea, and certainly not an original one, but it is a goal we must achieve. A focused goal might be this: Get 3 or 4 members to attend a Local Lodge meeting next month or ask them to participate on a Local Lodge Committee. Some might say this goal is too high, unattainable; but we need to be ambitious. Being a Union Member secures your Union Negotiated Benefits and Representation.

Unions are under attack and **we are all in this fight.** We need to build our Union into a stronger force to be reckoned with. Let the politicians focus on the budget instead of coming after our bargaining rights. As citizens of these United States, we need to voice our opinions to the men and women who we vote into office. That means, from the Local Lodge to the President of the United States and every elected official in-between.

There are so many misconceptions about Unions, we need to educate everyone about what we really do....and who we are....and that starts with the membership. Ask our members to educate their neighbors and friends about why Unions are in politics. MNPL (*Machinists Non-Partisan Political League*) is a way we give money for political purposes, through voluntary contributions. Take a first step, ASK A MEMBER TO A MEETING, and let's start educating.

Roger Stamback

Local Lodge Educator

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## Brother Stan Chapman calls for Mike O'Neal to "Put Up, or Shut Up."

By Stan Chapman

Last month I wrote about a bumpy ride. Well, I was wrong. It's more like sliding into hell. All across this country Republican lawmakers are trying their damndest to kill all unions. It's amazing to listen to all that is being said about unions. Politicians are telling people that the unions have caused all the problems with the economy. No one is blaming corporate greed, bad management, or bad legislation. The sad part is there are a lot of people who have no idea that the benefits they enjoy today (40 hour week, paid vacations, sick leave, etc.) are the result of unions standing up for the rights of the working class.

On February 24<sup>th</sup> the Kansas State Council of Machinists, along with other represented unions, met at the State Capitol in Topeka. We were there to talk to the legislators about HB 2130, which is the bill that will prohibit union members from making donations to finance political activities through payroll deductions. I've heard a lot of nonsense from Republican lawmakers in the past two weeks. It's amazing how dishonest they are about HB 2130. They have misled the public about union dues and PAC money.

I work hard for my membership, and I am not going to disgrace the people that I represent. Things were reported in the news by Speaker O'Neal that I did not see happen. The places where I waited to speak with the legislators were peaceful. The legislators going to the House chamber did not go through the front door. Some of the legislators hid their badges so you could not tell who was a legislator and who was an aide. It seems to me that they wanted to avoid talking to their constituents.

Speaker of the House of Representatives, Mike

O'Neal, R-Hutchinson, called for state troopers to come to the Capitol. He told them there was a disturbance in the Capitol, even before the chamber was to be in session. The state trooper I talked with could not believe that they were called in because clearly there was no disturbance in the Capitol.

We were not going to go into the gallery of the chamber initially, but decided to do so in order to be present while the voting was going on. We sat patiently waiting for HB 2130 to come up. We listened to all the speakers, and when the

vote came up we watched the voting board go green. (The board has all the legislators' names on it. A green light indicates a "yes" vote, and a red light indicates a "no" vote.) When the board started turning green, we shouted "vote no, vote no." We were not aware that this violated House rules. We were asked to leave the gallery,

and we did so, orderly and quietly.

The Sedgwick County Post (March 1, 2011) reported that Mike O'Neal said that he had "verified reports from at least six people that union protestors shouted obscenities at them and a lawmaker who claimed they tried to intimidate him to vote against the bill." I was there and I did not see anything like that occur. I would like to know what he means by having "verified reports." What evidence does he have? If you'd like to see videotape of us in the chamber, you can find it on You Tube. That is the only video I have seen; I certainly have not seen anything that shows the protestors being rude, shouting obscenities, sexually harassing anyone, or making threats. I am calling for Mr. O'Neal to produce the evidence he has that will verify these allegations or offer a public apology to all union members.



### New Members for February 2011

Shelly Avery  
 James W. Carpenter  
 Gilberto Galindo  
 Derek Leach  
 Robert Paul McCalla  
 Jeremiah Pyrtle  
 Derek Sharon  
 Huong Truong

Duane Becker  
 Sherman P. Crawford  
 Dustin Hrencher  
 Austin J. Ledbetter  
 Joseph Moskal  
 Preston Rubottom  
 Marlin Simpson  
 Wesley A. Wilson

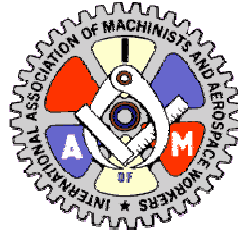
Christifer Black  
 Frank Dyer  
 Mark A. Lankford  
 Myron Lucas  
 Nguan N. Nguyen  
 Beverly Schellenger  
 Anna Tran

**International Association of Machinists  
 and Aerospace Workers**

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**Wichita, Kansas 67210**  
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**Fax: (316) 529-1277**



[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**  
**Communicator - Dennis Williams**  
**Educator - Roger Stamback**  
**1st Shift In-Plant Rep. - David Eagle**  
**2nd Shift In-Plant Rep. - Howard "HoJo" Johnson**  
**Editor - Jarrod Lehman**

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. If you have any articles you want published, e-mail the Editor at [jlehman@ll839.org](mailto:jlehman@ll839.org). The opinions expressed in any articles are the opinions of that author not the representatives of LL839  
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