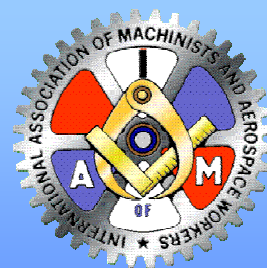


# LL839 Machinists Matters

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Wichita, KS. 67210



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May 2011



## President's Corner

May 2011

By Kathy Petersen

### You Can't Fix Stupid

In 2007, artist Judy Taylor was commissioned to design, paint and construct an 11-panel mural to be placed in the lobby of the state Department of Labor headquarters in Portland, Maine. The artwork was paid for by a grant from the U.S. Department of Labor. The mural was installed in 2008 when John Baldacci was governor. It depicted scenes from Maine's labor history, including a 1986 paper mill strike in the town of Jay, a 1937 strike at a shoe plant in Lewiston, colonial-era shoemaking apprentices, lumberjacks, women shipbuilders (*à la* "Rosie the Riveter") at Bath Iron Works during World War II, and child laborers. In other words, it was an art project based on the historical facts of the history of Maine labor. Ms. Taylor has publicly stated that there was no bias intended, no intention to be pro-labor or anti-labor, it was simply a pure depiction of the facts.

In addition to Ms. Taylor's mural, the Department of Labor building also had rooms named after historic labor figures including FDR-era Labor Secretary Frances Perkins and Cesar Chavez.

In January 2011, Paul LePage was elected as governor of Maine. In March 2011, he ordered the mural be removed from the lobby. He also intends to change the names of the conference rooms because they are too pro-labor. His suggestion is to name the rooms "after mountains, counties or something." LePage said that business had complained about the mural and "the

message from state agencies needs to be balanced." LePage deemed the artwork inappropriate for the Department of Labor because it is one-sided in favor of labor interests at the expense of business interests.

**I wish somebody would tell me where in the world there would be a more appropriate place for a work of art depicting labor history than in the headquarters of the Department of Labor?** Isn't it common knowledge that the Department of Labor is supposed to protect the rights of workers? Maybe LePage's next idea will be to revamp the Department of Labor so that it is more pro-business and then rename it the "Department of Anti-Labor." Then he could name the conference rooms for current and historical anti-union businesses such as "The Triangle Shirtwaist Room" or "The Upper Big Branch Mine Room."

Now, you may be thinking that this mural somehow must have offended someone really important in order for LePage to take this step. Oh, my yes, it was someone terribly important, someone by the name of "A Secret Admirer." Turns out LePage received an anonymous fax (signed only as "A Secret Admirer"). In this fax, the "Admirer" tells LePage that the mural was "nothing but propaganda to further the agenda of the Union movement. I felt for a moment that I was in communist North Korea where they use these murals to brainwash the masses." I guess LePage took this as his Reaganesque moment, you know, "Governor LePage, tear down that mural."

Propaganda, huh? My dictionary defines propaganda as "the spreading of ideas, information or rumor for the purpose of helping or injuring an institution, a cause, or a person." In other

**Memorial Day is May 30th 2011.** Be careful of what you complain about being expensive on our four day weekend. Many of us will be going to the lake, or barbequing with family, and yes high gas prices have driven the price up of nearly everything we buy. So needless to say this Memorial Weekend will be more expensive than years past.

But just how expensive is it? Ask a mother who had to bury her hero son. Ask a daughter who accepted the flag after a twenty one gun salute and watching her mother or father being lowered down. Ask any single parent that is having to raise their children alone because they chose to live the life of being married to a soldier. I'd like to thank all of our members who have served in the Armed Forces. ***You are the real American Idols, you are the real heroes.*** Thank you for your service, and to all those who have lost family members in war, I thank you for sacrificing your sons, your daughters, your wives, your husbands. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to live in a Country where so many things are free to us. We still have many things to overcome in our Country, and even when many politicians, and business leaders are trying to take us back a hundred years and forget everything that we learned in the industrial revolution we still need to be thankful of those who have given, and lost for what we are going to enjoy this holiday... *freedom.*

—Jarrod Lehman Editor




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*Presidents Corner cont.*

words, “propaganda” is not the same thing as “facts.” This mural, which depicts factual historical events, cannot in any way, shape or form accurately be considered to be propaganda. And these events took place in Maine, not North Korea. I would hope that most governors who received such a ridiculous document from someone too cowardly to even sign his name would perhaps get a chuckle out of it and promptly ‘round file’ it. But not LePage. Apparently he has a soft spot in his heart for those sensitive and caring corporations that are cut to the quick by such artwork. So, let’s remedy that by giving them more tax breaks. Talk about hubris. I can’t believe LePage thought he could just order the removal of the mural and get away with it. This is an outright attack on workers and their rights. (And if you don’t care one way or the other about this mural, please do some fact checking on LePage’s other activities such as trying to roll back Maine’s child labor laws.)

No, you can’t fix stupid, but perhaps we can marginalize its effects. In April a lawsuit was filed in U.S. District Court to confirm the mural’s current location, to ensure that it is adequately preserved, and to restore it to the lobby of the Department of Labor.

Brothers and Sisters, we are labor, we are workers, we are the middle class. Why are we electing these people who are hell-bent on taking us out? There is a war going on, my friends – a war on unions, a war against workers, a war against the middle class in this country – and we have to be the ones who win it. In this instance, LePage wants to rewrite history – to remove all memories of organized labor’s hard-earned history. In other states (including Kansas), other governors and legislators are going after union workers more directly.

As I have previously stated, enlightened capitalism is about being pro-labor **and** pro-business. We can get there if we start electing representatives who truly care about workers. We must look beyond just the “R” or “D” on the ballot and only vote for those people who will truly represent the interests of the American middle class. Next election, do some research and some soul searching before heading to the voting booth. Maybe we can’t fix stupid, but we can slow it down.

## Saddest Thing of All

By Kathleen Butler

I've been witnessing something profoundly sad at my job lately; it's demise. I've worked in factory support at Spirit AeroSystems/Boeing for 31 years. When I was hired in 1979 I was told right off the bat that my position is "non-value added"; meaning since my job is "only " to make sure the sub-assemblies are wrapped, routed and transported correctly my job was not as important as making the actual airplane itself. OK, maybe it isn't, but I dare major assembly to build the damn plane with damaged or lost parts.

I am not against free trade; The US has been doing it with the whole world long before we were a country. But the game has changed profoundly in the interim. Free trade used to mean lots of jobs here and abroad. But now in a time of massive corporate profits that would make King Midas blush, the jobs being created are not translating into hiring here in America. While it's sad to watch the kids who were my age-22-when I started my job, cart off the parts I used to store in my PCA to their facility a mile down the road so they can issue them instead of me, it's sadder still knowing they are working for a company that not only pays them 10 bucks an hour less with few bennies at all, its knowing they will not live in the same prosperity I did because of it. I don't begrudge them the

job, or the small company they work for who I'm sure had to give the lowest bid they could to get the work in the first place. But I do begrudge large companies and increasingly this country itself that thinks it's perfectly fine to squeeze as much profit as it can off the backs of an increasing low wage workforce and since pensions are a thing of the past expect that workforce to save for retirement and raise a family while they are doing it.

I sometimes wonder how culpable we consumers are in all of this. People make choices to maximize their family's budgets, I get that. But while folks are looking for super saver airfares they know are too low to insure an airline can buy the planes they need to get them where they are going safely, (peeled off 737 roofs anybody?) and buy cheap gadgets of every kind from the rest of the world with no thought of the working conditions of those who produce all that stuff, we have slowly become what we feared all along- THEM. We've become the people so desperate for a job-any job-that we will work in conditions and for wages we put behind us long ago. And what's worse is so many American's are buying the corporate and increasingly conservative political line that its "greedy unions" who got us here in the first place. And THAT my brothers and sisters is the saddest thing of all.



## April Easter Baskets

By Stan Chapman

We did something a little different this month. We made three baskets for three winners.

The value of the baskets ranged from \$18.00 to \$10.00. The lucky winners are Ronnie Fisher Basket #1, Craig Dunbar Basket #2 and Myra Reynolds Basket #3. The baskets contained all the things you would find at Easter. Easter coloring books, toys, Yellow Peeps, Marshmallow Eggs, Jelly Beans and Plastic Eggs full of Sweet Treats and other fun stuff. 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 tick-

ets 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! We also are planning a drawing on May 14th at our membership meeting. That drawing will be for a Westinghouse 42" Flat Screen LED HDTV.

### New Members for April 2011

ARTHUR BALDERAS  
 ADRIAN BRIDGEWATER  
 JACOB D. CAIN  
 CHAMNAP CHRAN  
 JENNIFER CROW  
 HUY DANG DO  
 CHRISTOPHER EGBERT  
 JARED ENDERS  
 JOSHUA GLENN  
 THOMAS W. GLINSEY JR.  
 THOMAS E. HALL

MICHAEL E. HARRIS  
 AARON T. HOAG  
 ROBIN HOWERTON  
 KATIE HOYT  
 CODY JACOBSON  
 JACOB KENNEY  
 BRIAN W. MCDONALD  
 KENNETH R. MILLER  
 RANDLE MILLER  
 KEITH OWENS  
 SOTHY B. PHO

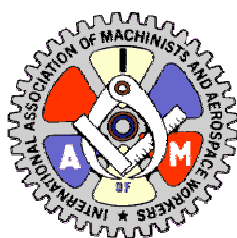
BRENT SLOVER  
 CONNIE SMITH  
 RAYDEN G. STATON  
 BLAKE THOMPSON  
 STEPHANIE TIMMONS  
 SKYLAR TRAVIS  
 TAMIA WASHINGTON  
 JORDAN WESTBURY  
 LINCOLN G. WILLIAMS  
 JAY A. YEAGER  
 WILLIAM W. WASHABAUGH JR

**International Association of Machinists  
 and Aerospace Workers**

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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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