



INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS LOCAL UNION 953 NEWS - MARCH 2011

LOCAL OFFICERS

DALE J. BLANK

Business Manager &
Financial Secretary

TIMOTHY J. HEMENWAY

President

BRADY L. WEISS

Vice President

JOSEPH S. HALEY

Recording Secretary

FREDERICK A. HINES

Treasurer

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Steven C. Burmeister

David A. Hogan

Scott A. Magnuson

Scott C. Wild

Mark J. Yohnk

OFFICE STAFF

Robert Lahti, Asst. Bus. Mgr

Brady Weiss, Asst. Bus. Mgr

Martin Sandberg, Asst. Bus Mgr

Connie Bremer, Office Mgr

Don Grorud, Accountant

OUR ADDRESS

2206 Highland Avenue

Post Office Box 3005

Eau Claire, WI 54702

TEL: 715-834-4911

Brothers and Sisters,

It appears that troubling times are ahead. I am sure that you have been watching or at least have heard about what is going on in Madison. Governor Walker has started an "all out assault" on working families in Wisconsin. He is trying to disguise it by calling it a "Budget Repair Bill" when, in reality; he is trying to strip away the collective bargaining rights of public employees. Before I go any further, let me make it clear, I don't like high taxes any more than anyone else does, but blaming the economic troubles in Wisconsin on the public employees and their wages and benefits is "Bull"!!!!

The process of collective bargaining has been around for over 100 years in this country. It is a process of give and take. It takes a lot of preparation, perseverance and patience to make the process work, but it does work! It is not the Union's fault if the Management side comes to the table unprepared.

Brothers and Sisters, the "all out attack" on Unions is here. What is happening in Wisconsin has spread across the country. There are a lot of "polls" out there asking, "Do we still need Unions?" The time has come, brothers and sisters! I don't care which political affiliation you claim to be. It is time to stand up for your "Union Rights" and stop this race to the bottom before the United States is the new 3rd World Country!

Local 953 currently represents 13 Municipal Collective Bargaining Contracts, representing approximately 68 members that need our support and that is why I requested and got approval from the Executive Board to send fifteen thousand dollars (\$15,000) to the AFL-CIO Wisconsin State Defense Fund to help in this fight against eliminating public employees rights to be Union and to collectively bargain. We have gone to Madison on several occasions to join in the protesting against the budget repair bill and will continue to do so. My belief is that when this issue is completed, the "Right to Work" will be introduced as a Bill in Wisconsin. That will be the next step in the sequence to eventually eliminate Unions completely. There are currently 22 states that are "Right to Work". Wages in those states generally average \$5 to \$6 dollars an hour less! Is that where we want to end up? No! Now is the time to educate yourselves, ask questions, and most of all, **STAND UP FOR YOUR UNION**, get involved and let everyone know, **WE ARE HERE TO STAY!** Solidarity is what got us here and Solidarity will keep us here!

TOGETHER WE SHALL STAND IN SOLIDARITY,
Dale Blank, Business Manager/Financial Secretary

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

There is no time like the present to show our solidarity!

We all know what has happened in the United States to the manufacturing industry and the economy, resulting in the union membership declining to 11.9% nationally in 2010. The private sector is below 7% and the public sector ended 2010 at 36.2%.

Wisconsin's Governor, acting like a dictator, and his anti-union friends are on a mission. In the past few weeks the intensity of attacks on unions in Wisconsin and across the nation has exploded. Worker rights (8 hour workday, wages, overtime pay, safety, pensions, health benefits, all working conditions, a voice in the workplace, etc.) are at stake. These are some of the very things we and past generations have fought for and some even died for. These battles have not only benefited union workers but all working families. Now, without discussion or negotiation, Governor Walker and his friends want to take these rights away.

I don't care what walk of life you're from. This is not about repairing the state's budget. This is about killing the unions, the working middle class, democracy, and the Democratic Party. Corporate "Greed" wants all the political power, control, and riches. Some less fortunate people that do not enjoy the wages, benefits, and working conditions that union workers have, appear to be "jealous". They believe that if they don't receive these benefits, than neither should anyone else. Whatever your belief on this subject may be, this anti-worker rights movement is unjust.

Several of us have been protesting in Madison and elsewhere. I have met people from all facets of life, union and non-union, democrats and republicans, laid off workers and retirees, parents and children. We also have support from other states. Together, we have been

peacefully protesting against this "so called" budget repair bill and showing united support for all working families.

We cannot sit idle and watch this injustice play out. Everything that has been fought for in the past and today will be gone in the future. It is time that we all stand up, unite, and make our voices heard. Now, more than ever, we need to fight against this anti-worker movement. Yes! I am fired up and there is no time like the present to show our solidarity!

In Brotherhood,
Martin Sandberg

Dear Membership,

As I write this letter, Union Workers in Wisconsin are under direct attack! The new governor has blamed the workers of this great state, even after they have agreed to the proposed cuts to balance the state budget, asking only to maintain their rights in the workplace and collective bargain.

History will show that the United States, as a part of the United Nations (UN) approved the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Article 23 of the U.D.H.R. states; "Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests."

The world belongs to those who show up! In Madison, Wisconsin and across the states, Unions have showed that people can make a difference. The American Worker is the backbone of this country and for years has watched corporate tycoons attempt to destroy the rights of working people, all for profits and greed! The people who wake up every morning and go to work are not the problem, they are the solution!

Many of you have asked, "How can I help?" The answer is simple; be involved, show your support for workers rights, talk to your family and friends, attend a rally, send out a text message, post on facebook, twitter or e-mail. Most important, call your government elected officials, they work for you!

In Solidarity,

Brady Weiss
Asst. Business Manager

P.S. REMEMBER UNIONS FIGHT FOR
WORKING PEOPLE!

UNION SOLIDARITY IS ALIVE AND WELL

At the time of this writing, I, along with several other members of this Local are 3 days removed from taking part in the biggest protest to take place in Madison, Wisconsin since the days of the Vietnam War. The last I heard, the numbers marching on Saturday, February 26, 2011, were a staggering 100,000 brothers and sisters marching together in Solidarity. The news media does not do justice to what is really going on down there. I have heard the same reports from FOX News as most of you. (FOX NEWS LIES) After marching on five different days in Madison, I have not witnessed "one" confrontation. The so called "Union thugs" that were supposedly brought in, are nowhere to be found. However, I did witness some planted thugs from the other side that were parading around in our midst with signs contrary to our position attempting to elicit some form of response that would be contrary to the heartbeat of the movement. To the credit of the union rank and file, nobody stepped over that line. Having been witness to day care children wearing posters, school age kids marching in support of their teachers provides testimony enough to the fact that this is more than just a demonstration, it is the power of the people in an emotionally charged state of mind marching

in support of something they truly believe in. It is all about **SOLIDARITY** and I support those brothers and sisters of which I had the pleasure and honor to march beside and in support of. I cannot accurately convey the emotional high one experiences by participating in a collective effort such as the Solidarity movement presently taking place in Madison. The Governor has awoken a sleeping giant in this state and I am not sure that even he expected the Union show of force that Madison, the rest of this state, and now the entire county is witnessing. It is truly awe inspiring and I encourage each of you to do what you can in support of not only our brothers and sisters in this Local that are Public Employees, but all of our Brothers and Sisters in this State that are fighting this battle.

While marching in Madison and exercising my 1st Amendment Rights, I was approached by an individual on the street that asked what was going on with the Unions and how come Walker was attacking us? In response, I replied that I felt too many of the Union Members of this State "Drank the Kool Aide" during the last election and whether it was simply apathy or actually voting Republican, it certainly helped create the dilemma that we face today.

In retrospect, I should have told the individual that taking all things into consideration, it wasn't merely the votes of this state that helped Walker in his ascent to the throne, as much as it was the donations of millions of dollars to his campaign by wealthy conservatives. Affluent contributors such as the Koch Brothers or corporations like Miller-Coors Brewing or Kwik Trip Stores, to name a few. There is no doubt that his rise to power was fueled by legalized bribery. Take the Koch Brothers for instance, they are intent to kill good jobs in America. Koch Industries has been laying off workers and shipping their jobs overseas. In Green Bay, Wisconsin they recently eliminated 158 jobs but somehow

found it right to give themselves an 11 million dollar bonus. Their intentions are clearly to turn good jobs with a future into low paying jobs that will provide no benefits and no future. These are the kind of people backing your Governor and that is why the Union Busting Bill, or excuse me, "the Bill to Balance the State Budget" was introduced by the Governor as nothing more than a wolf in sheep's clothing! This is not about the tax payers, it is about breaking the backs of the Unions. Should the Governor be successful in dismantling the Public Unions, he will have successfully disrupted the balance of power enough that future challenges to the Republican Agenda will, for the most part, go uncontested. Guess what people; it will not be an agenda favorable to the unionized working men and women of the United States.

Across this country, 36% of State and Public employees are unionized. Eliminate that sector and you can see where things are headed. That is why the fight that wages on in Madison is so vital and important to the Union movement! Most of you have probably heard, "as Wisconsin goes, so goes the Nation." As I stated previously, this is not about tax payers, it is about workers rights, human rights and the right to collectively bargain. It is about your rights, and your right to make a decent living for yourself and your families. It is about your right to challenge! Governor Walker doesn't give a damn about your financial well being! I encourage you to do your own research regarding his questionable political career. Once you do, I am very sure that you will reach the same conclusion as I did. Governor Scott Walker is not a Wisconsin Badger, rather, he is a Wisconsin Weasel!

Please remember this: "A Union Member who votes Republican is like a chicken voting for Colonel Sanders."

In Solidarity.....Robert J. Lahti
Asst. Business Manager

NOTICE TO ALL MEMBERS

Local 953 is working on establishing a faster communication process to get important information out to our membership in a timely manner. We are asking that all members supply us with their personal e-mail address and/or personal cell phone number and whether you have texting capabilities on your cell phone.

Please contact your Bargaining Rep or contact 953's office at (715) 834-4911.

BIRTHDAY/BENEFIT

MARCH 12, 2011

Grand Occasions Banquet Hall
Hwy 10 & 53 Osseo, WI 54758

3pm-12am

Join us in celebrating Andy Koxlien's 40th birthday by raising money for the following IBEW members' families: Wietings, Harshmans, Rhodes, Bourgets, and Windjues

Music, Food and Refreshments provided for a free will donation!

Please RSVP to: koxlien@hughes.net