



**INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS
LOCAL UNION 953 NEWS - OCTOBER 2013**

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For "Contact Us" link.



Hello Brothers and Sisters:

It is hard to believe that summer has come and gone again and fall is already in the air!

It has been extremely busy at Local 953 this year negotiating contracts. We have successfully completed several contract negotiations. Most of them being 3 year contracts averaging between 2.5% and 3% in wages, somewhat minimal changes in health insurance, but the most disturbing news is the attitude change from management concerning the defined pension plans. Almost every employer that has or had a contract come open this year has had an amendment to change the pension plans. They either want to lower the retirement factor or create a 2 tier system for new employees with a smaller benefit. So far in negotiations, we have been successful at getting the employer to withdraw their pension amendments. The other disturbing statements that we hear is, the defined benefit pension plans are a "dead horse" or an "extinct dinosaur" that need to go away. The employer says we will put more money in a 401k Plan! I believe the main reason for the change in mindset concerning the defined benefit pension plans is the economy. It has never fully recovered from the 2008 Market Collapse and the employers have had to contribute significant amounts of money to pension plans to keep them properly funded. Hopefully, once the economy gets back on the right path and stays there, all the money that is invested will start to earn money again, the plans will once again become self-funded and this issue will go away. In the interim we will continue to negotiate the best possible contracts that we can.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce our newest employee at Local 953, "Grace Malone". She has been hired into the accountant's position.

Until next time....work safe, enjoy the fall, "good luck hunting! Go Packers!

Yours in Solidarity,

Dale Blank, Business Manager/Financial Secretary

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Many of the Cooperatives have either went through negotiations the past couple of months or will be in the near future. We have faced many of the same issues at the table that we have been facing for several years. The negotiating committee members worked very hard during this process. They are relied heavily upon to supply the committees with information needed for negotiations, their presence at the table, and for relaying information back to the rest of the membership. Faced with tough decisions at the table, I was very impressed with how the committee members showed their SOLIDARITY and fought for the entire membership that they were there to represent. I very much appreciate all of your efforts and thank you.

The way these members stuck together is a prime example of how we all need to stick together, not just on Union issues that we face, but also while doing our daily job duties. While we all have different personalities, we all need to be professional, treat everybody with respect, communicate, work together as a group, follow the safety rules, and look out for each other. As important as SOLIDARITY is to the strength of the Union, it can be just as important in your daily tasks in ensuring that we all go home safely.

In Solidarity,

Martin Sandberg
Asst. Business Manager

Dear Members,

Once again, as summer passes to fall, it's a lot like the guy standing in the field with a rope in his hand wondering whether he found a rope or lost his horse. What happened, where did it

go? Likewise, as we move into the fall and winter seasons, please keep in mind that as the seasons change, so will your work environment. Plan accordingly to keep yourself as well as your co-workers safe and injury free.

It hardly seems like three years have gone by, but once again, the Xcel Members are awaiting the results of another contract ratification vote. I look forward to the tallying of the ballots and hope that our membership takes the time to vote for their future.

I would also like to take a bit of time to briefly touch on the most recent round of contract explanation meetings that I recently conducted. I express my thanks to those of you who took the time out of your busy schedules to attend and ask some well thought out questions, as well as the manner in which everybody conducted themselves. Hopefully, I was able to provide you with satisfactory answers at the time or later in the emails that I sent out as a follow-up.

On another front, in August, Local 953 entered Mid-Term Negotiations with Xcel Energy in Wisconsin. Once again, the primary want on the Company's list was the right to bring in contract locators. However, unlike past years, this year the Company chose to, not only seek locating during normal hours, but after hours, as well. After four meetings with the Company and an unwillingness to move on their part, the Union made the difficult, but I believe correct, decision and voted unanimously to walk away from the bargaining table. The Bargaining Committee was comprised of the following brothers: Business Manager Dale Blank, President Tim Hemenway, Executive Board Member Joseph Haley, Political Registrar Mark Yohnk, Steward Pat Grass and myself.

On behalf of that Committee, I would like to express our appreciation to those of you who took the initiative to either contact myself or the other members and communicate your

thoughts and feelings on matters related to the mid-term discussions. There is no question that the leadership of this Local values the voice of its membership and this can be no more clearly evidenced than by the above referenced action of your Committee.

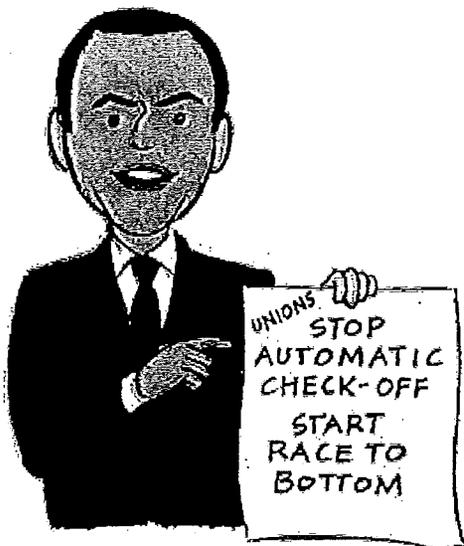
Just a final note, on November 14th, the La Crosse Brothers and Sisters will be holding their Annual Old Timers/Stew Feed. Please note that our regular meeting which is scheduled for 5:00 p.m. will begin at 6:00 p.m. with the Stew Feed and Old Timers Get-Together to follow. The meeting is held at the VFW on Market Street in La Crosse and if you are in the area, all are welcome.

Stay strong. Support your Union and your Brothers and Sisters!

In Solidarity,

Robert J. Lahti
Asst. Business Manager

HUDAK'S JOB CREATION PLAN



Dear Members:

A question that comes up from time to time is about Union Dues, how much they cost and what they are used for?

Union dues are funds that are legally collected from its members to run the organization. Like a church, club or union, there is a cost in doing business. Dues pay for contract negotiations expenses, office and support services, legal services, new member organizing, member and stewards training and most importantly administering and upholding the contract under which you work!

With a Union in place, it changes the basic power structure at work. Without a Union employers (The Company) has almost all the rights. They can change your pay and working conditions at any time, as long as they do not violate certain laws, like minimum wage, I highly doubt any of you would work for that! Your Union makes sure changes in your working conditions are negotiated. Your wages, benefits and working conditions are covered by your contract and protected by law!

"The Union" is not made up of outsiders. You and your co-workers are the Union. You elect your own Union Officers and Leadership, which in turn runs the day to day operations of the Union. At regular monthly meetings the Financial Statement of the Union is reviewed. This shows funds and expenses the Union has incurred each month. Each year at the Annual Meeting changes can be proposed about the Local Union's Bylaws, which include Union dues assessments. This meeting is typically held in the early spring. A notice is always mailed out ahead of time. I encourage all of you to attend.

One last thing, our Local Union has a C.O.P.E. (Committee On Political Education) Fund, which members chose to contribute money towards. This money is not part of your Union Dues, and believe it or not the IBEW gives

money to political candidates regardless of their party affiliation if they support the Labor Movement!

So the next time you or your co-worker makes the statement, "We don't get anything for our dues," you may want to ask yourself where you would be if it wasn't for your Union, sure as hell wouldn't be better off!

Hope you enjoy the cartoons!

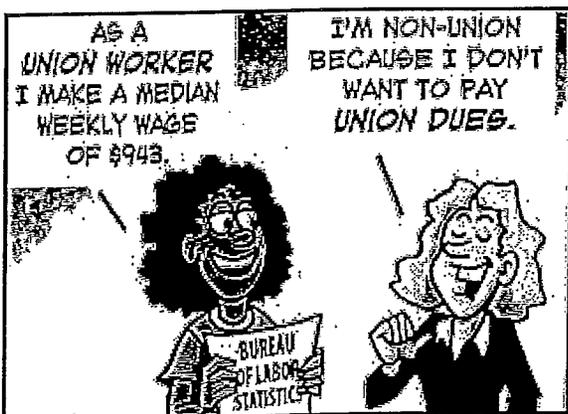
Happy Hunting!

Brady L. Weiss
Asst. Business Manager



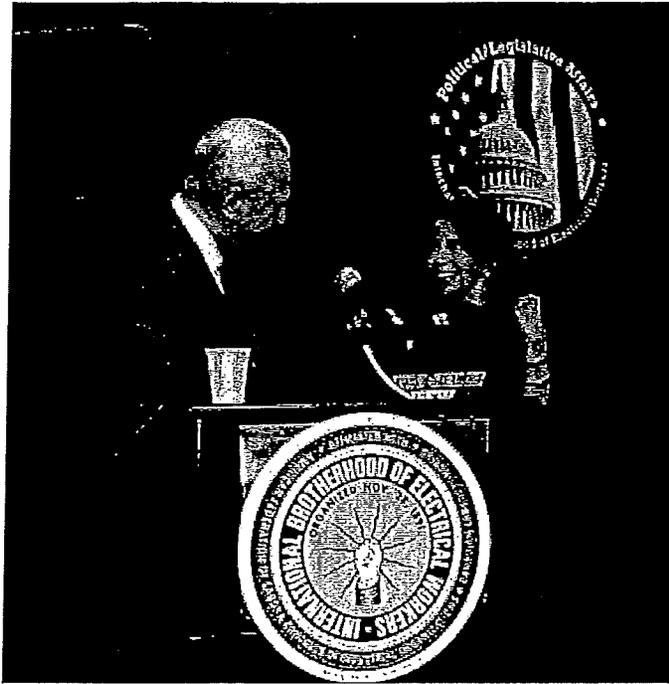
DEER HUNTERS!!
Send us your pictures!
2 Contests: Archery or Gun.

This year's winners will be determined by
"Luck of the Draw!"
GOOD LUCK!!



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ON THE POLITICAL SCENE



Pictured above is IBEW President Hill with Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi

The 2013 IBEW Political / Legislative Affairs Conference in Washington DC was held September 30 through October 2, 2013. Theme of the 3-day conference was "Stand Up & Speak Out," highlighting some of ways in which IBEW Local Unions can maximize their political action plans to benefit its membership.

Among the featured speakers at this year's PLA Conference are U.S. Senators Tom Harkin of Iowa, Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts and Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of California. U.S. Representatives Steny Hoyer of Maryland, John Lewis of Georgia, Tammy Duckworth of Illinois, Patrick Murphy of Florida, George Miller of California, Bruce Barley of Iowa, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka and IBEW International President Edwin D. Hill.

Many very important topics were covered at this conference. I would like to ask you to take time to read the fact sheet on the Trans Pacific Partnership. *We need to **Stand Together, Work Together and STOP The TPP.***

In Solidarity,

Mark Yohnk

Political Registrar, IBEW Local 953



IBEW[®] FACT SHEET

THE TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP

If implemented, the TPP will have lasting effects on the United States. Therefore, we need to be sure appropriate protections are in place to protect jobs here at home. Urge Congress to not grant TPA so the TPP can be amended under Congress' authority.

What is the TPP?

The Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) refers to the Asia-Pacific trade agreement that is being negotiated between twelve countries: Australia, Brunei Darussalam, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, the United States, and Vietnam. The TPP is expected to be a "living agreement," which means that new countries can join after the agreement is put into effect. Negotiations for the agreement are closed to the public and the majority of the TPP content is classified.

Why Does the TPP Matter?

The content of the TPP is relatively unknown, but there are indications that it is similar to NAFTA. Although it is hard to know exactly what will be written in the final agreement, it is probable that the United States will be negatively affected as it has been with other trade agreements. It is estimated that nearly 700,000 American jobs have been lost as a result of the growing trade deficits between the United States and its NAFTA trading partners. Because the TPP is being designed as a living agreement, it has the potential to govern most of the United States' international trade for years to come. American workers cannot afford another long-term agreement that results in job losses.

If Congress grants President Obama Trade Promotion Authority (TPA), Congress will not be able to amend the TPP. As president, Barack Obama has the executive authority to negotiate international trade agreements. After an international trade agreement is negotiated, Congress must vote on the agreement. Absent TPA, Congress may amend any trade agreements that come before it. However, if Congress grants TPA, it would be required to vote on the agreement without amendments within 90 days of it being submitted to Congress by the executive branch.

What Would Make the TPP Negotiation Process Better?

It is critical that the TPP creates high-wage jobs, encourages collective bargaining, implements a strategic manufacturing policy, and invests

in American workers. The IBEW maintains that the following must be part of the TPP negotiation process:

- Greater transparency before the TPP is approved or entered into by making use of federal rulemaking notice, comment, and hearing procedures
- A congressional role in determining which countries the United States will negotiate with
- A requirement that Congress must give formal approval to a free trade agreement before it can go into effect

What Policies Could Make the TPP Better Than Other Trade Agreements in Recent History?

Most of the United States' trade is currently covered by free trade agreements. Unfortunately, the United States has a trade deficit that has increased each year since 2001.¹ It is important that the TPP advances domestic economic development, increases employment for American workers, and improves our nation's prospects for future sustainable growth. These goals can only be met through directive TPP content that:

- Supports collective bargaining
- Includes rules of origin so that trade and sourcing is encouraged between member countries
- Prevents countries from joining until certain human and labor rights standards have been met

Conclusion

It is the IBEW's hope that the quality of trade agreements between the United States and other countries will increase. Given the opportunity to weigh in during the negotiation process through notice and comment procedures, constituent groups such as the IBEW will have a chance to shape the potential agreements and protect American workers. If enacted, the TPP will have lasting effects on the United States. Therefore, we need to be sure that appropriate protections are in place to protect jobs here at home.

¹ United States Government, *Trade in Goods With World, Seasonally Adjusted*, www.census.gov, 2013.