



37th Grand Lodge Convention

# Highlights

Monday, September 8, 2008

## Buffenbarger Opens Historic 37th Grand Lodge Convention

International President Tom Buffenbarger opened the 37th Grand Lodge Convention with a stirring call to action and a hard look at the stark choices facing the union on its 120th anniversary.

“Over the next few days, nearly 1,500 delegates will make critical decisions, life and death decisions, about the kind of union the IAM is going to be,” said Buffenbarger, who prefaced his remarks by recalling similarly grave choices facing the nation

in the early days of 1941.

“FDR saw the storm clouds on the horizon,” said Buffenbarger. “He saw how desperately unprepared the nation was for what was coming. And he acted to ready the nation for the almost inevitable conflict. Brothers and Sisters, what was true for a great nation is equally true for our great union.”

“In the world as it is today, we confront across the bargaining table the cold-blooded, single-minded true believers in a ruthless business ideolo-

gy,” declared Buffenbarger. “To them, workers are the enemy. And in dealing with us, their objective is simple: to give nothing and to take everything. That’s why everybody needs a strong union. It’s a fact of life. Either you get a union, a strong, a tough union or you get the shaft.”

Buffenbarger also took aim at the union’s political adversaries who spent the past eight years working with radical corporate allies to remake the nation into a feeding trough for “bankers, brokers



*IAM President Tom Buffenbarger opened the 37th Grand Lodge Convention in Orlando, FL, with a bold call for action to ensure a sound future for the Machinists Union and North America’s working families.*



**R. Thomas Buffenbarger**  
*International President*

and Wall Street wise guys.”

“We’ve been in a recession for over a year now. And the Bush Administration still cannot get its act together,” said Buffenbarger, who also took aim at Republican Presidential candidate John McCain for his record attacking working families.

“The gravest risk to our jobs and our freedoms lies in two words: John

McCain,” said Buffenbarger. “Twelve years out of the last twenty years we have had to put up with bush-league presidents. And, if John McCain wins the White House, he will make it an even score.”

The packed hall of delegates and guests welcomed Buffenbarger with a standing ovation and rose numerous times in agreement with his strongly delivered remarks. When asked if anyone wants to “let the wolves of Corporate America devour our future,” the packed convention hall thundered with repeated shouts of “No.”

“As delegates to this 37th Grand Lodge Convention, you have a special responsibility to chart a new course for our union. You have a duty to all who went before you, and all who may come after you, to promote the interest and further the principles of this great union of ours,” said Buffenbarger.

Buffenbarger also outlined the financial crisis facing the IAM for the

delegates and the importance the delegates’ work will play in plotting the course of the IAM for years to come.

“We need to face up to the harsh reality that our finances do not match our members’ rightful expectations – nor our current and legitimate expenditure levels,” said Buffenbarger. “And I am confident that this convention will come up with a ‘Plan B’ that can, and will, secure our future not just for the next calendar year, but for the next thirty years.”

Delegates rose in unison as Buffenbarger wrapped up his speech, emphasizing it will be the delegates that will chart the course of the IAM.

“The strength we have today is derived from the battles Machinist after Machinist fought since 1888,” said Buffenbarger. “Let us resolve here and now that delegates meeting fifty, a hundred, or a hundred and twenty years from now will see no less resolve from this convention.”

## Convention Celebrates 120 Year Anniversary

The Machinists Union commemorated 120 years of fighting for workers’ rights with an opening-day ceremony that featured a procession of delegates from locals founded in each decade from 1888 to the present.

Wearing work clothes and hailing from every territory in the U.S. and Canada, the delegates gathered on the main stage and provided a living link to those early IAM members who rode the rails and helped get the Machinists Union off to a roaring start.

Machinists Local 123 member Windell Gregory from Paducah, Kentucky, kicked off the event by stepping up to a microphone and requesting permission to come forward with more than a dozen delegates from local lodges founded between 1888 and 1897.

Eleven more groups followed,



*Delegates from Local Lodges founded in every decade since 1888 gathered on the stage to mark the IAM’s 120th anniversary.*

each led by a spokesperson who described key IAM events in the decade of their local’s founding. With each successive decade, the group at the front of the hall grew larger, louder and stronger.

Temporary chairman Johnny

Walker welcomed each group to the stage and concluded the event by summoning delegates from District 19, who brought the convention to its feet with traditional ringing of the IAM railroad bell.

# Guest Speakers Emphasize Call for Action

A host of distinguished guest speakers addressed convention delegates on opening day, including James Roosevelt Jr., grandson of Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Roosevelt Jr. echoed the importance of the Four Freedoms and making critical decisions in tough times.

“Today the Four Freedoms ring as true and as ambitious as when they were first outlined, said Roosevelt, who currently serves as the President and CEO of Tufts Health Plan. “They are goals to be striven for by nations and organizations. They are ethical moral outlines how individuals can and should treat one another.”

Florida Representatives Corrine Brown (D-3rd) and Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-20th) also addressed the delegates. “We’ve seen eight years of what I call ‘reverse Robin Hood’ – robbing from the poor and working families and giving tax breaks to the wealthy,” said Brown, as delegates chanted “eight is enough.”

“We don’t need four more years of hell, so everyone in this room has to be a committee of one and make sure your house is in order,” said Brown.

“My brothers and sisters of the Machinists, working together, standing together, voting together, we will build on our progress for the American people,” said Wasserman Schultz. “We will build a progressive White House where the American working family comes first.”

AFL-CIO Executive Vice President Arlene Holt Baker echoed the importance of the upcoming elections. “I know we can count on your expertise as we work to secure a filibuster-proof, veto-proof Senate,” said Baker. “Then we can get on with the long-delayed business of guaranteeing every family quality, affordable health care and get on with the task of turning around an economy that is destroying many working families.”



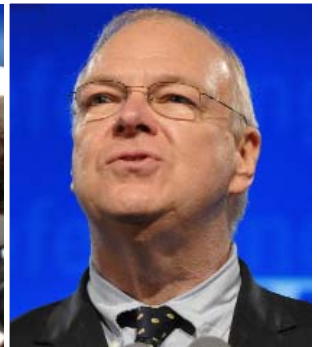
**Arlene Holt Baker**  
Executive Vice President  
AFL-CIO



**Debbie Wasserman Schultz**  
U.S. Representative  
D-FL, 20th District



**Corrine Brown**  
U.S. Representative  
D-FL, 3rd District



**James Roosevelt**  
President and CEO  
Tufts Health Plan

## Special Gavels Mark Convention Opening

Unique gavels from woodworkers, pictured at right, and aerospace machinists, pictured below, marked the opening of 37th Grand Lodge Convention. A delegation of IAM leaders from Local Lodge 839 in Wichita and District W-2 in Memphis joined temporary



Convention Chairman Johnny Walker, Directing Business Representative of District 166 in Cocoa Beach, FL, to present International President Tom Buffenbarger special gavels made especially for the Convention.

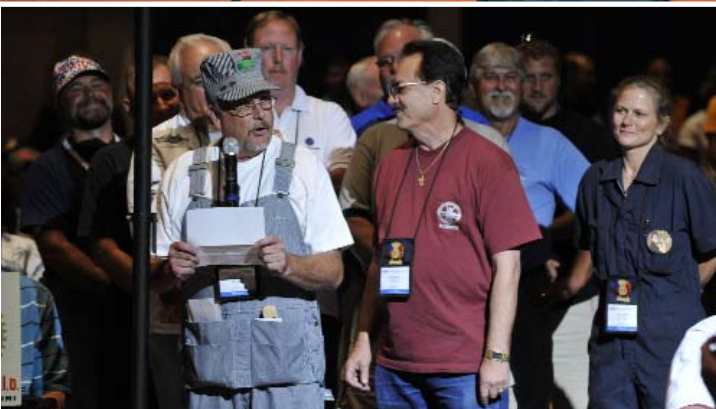
“It’s an honor to accept these gavels on the 120th anniversary of this great union,” said Buffenbarger. “I look forward to displaying them so everyone can see the great craftsmanship of our members.”

Joining Buffenbarger for the presentation, from Local Lodge 839, was David Eagle, Kathy Peterson, Joni Pierce and Stanley Chapman



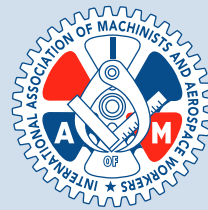
and from Woodworkers District W-2: Leon Blocker, Kelvin Godwin, Darrell Tharp and Melvin Montford.

# Convention Photo Album



International Association of Machinists  
and Aerospace Workers

## 37<sup>TH</sup> Grand Lodge Convention Highlights



**R. Thomas Buffenbarger**  
*International President*

**Warren L. Mart**  
*General Secretary-Treasurer*

**GENERAL VICE PRESIDENTS:**

**Lee Pearson**  
Western Territory

**Robert Martinez, Jr.**  
Southern Territory

**Dave Ritchie**  
Canada

**Richard Michalski**  
Headquarters

**Robert Roach, Jr.**  
Transportation

**Philip Gruber**  
Midwestern Territory

**Lynn D. Tucker, Jr.**  
Eastern Territory

