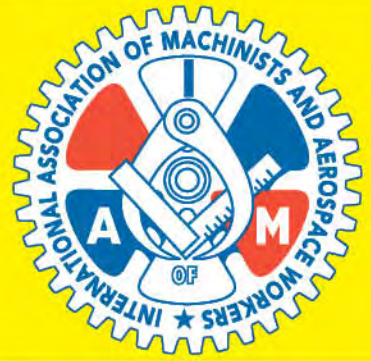


HIGHLIGHTS

Monday, September 10, 2012



Buffenbarger Opens 38th Grand Lodge Convention

Delegates Welcome Liz Shuler and Distinguished Speakers



Convention Salutes Canadian Labor History



IAM Convention Opens on a High Note



Convention Photo Gallery



Buffenbarger Opens 38th Grand Lodge Convention



IAM International President Tom Buffenbarger opened the 38th Grand Lodge Convention in Toronto, Ontario, and reaffirmed the IAM's commitment to international solidarity to improve the lives of workers across the globe.

In a keynote address that reaffirmed the IAM's 124-year commitment to international solidarity, IAM President Tom Buffenbarger urged delegates at the 38th Grand Lodge Convention in Toronto, Ontario, to focus on the bonds that unite workers regardless of continent, country, class or culture.

"As this week progresses, you will see how workers all across the globe are connected," said Buffenbarger. "What happens to workers in China impacts workers in Nigeria. What goes on down in South Carolina affects what happens in South America. Working conditions in India have an impact on conditions for workers in Indonesia, Vietnam and Bangladesh."

Delegates at the Convention will have ample



opportunity to consider the scenarios described by Buffenbarger. With an agenda featuring speakers and activists from around the world, this year's Convention will provide the IAM's answer to multinational corporations who eagerly pit nation against nation and worker against worker.

Buffenbarger was blunt when it came to describing the impact of unrestrained, unregulated free-market capitalism: "Corporate greed, immoral, implacable and insatiable, has wrecked the lives and blighted the hopes of millions of working people all over the world," said Buffenbarger. "It has taken away the livelihoods of millions and it has subjected millions more to brutal, crushing, dehumanizing exploitation."

While the exploitation of workers is rampant in underdeveloped nations, workers in industrial nations are equally vulnerable.

"Now that the global economy has expanded to take in Russia, India, China and other new entries, it is easier than ever before for globalized management to pit the world against us," said Buffenbarger. "For four decades now, the corporate wise guys have been shipping jobs from North America to countries that offer the lowest common denominators – cheap labor, lax or non-existent labor and environmental laws and massive government corruption."



In response to the crisis, the IAM is partnering with trade unionists around the globe, forming federations and working closely with labor leaders in Japan, Germany, France, Brazil, Sweden, Italy and other countries.

Just this year, the IAM played a key role in the merger of three manufacturing union federations to create IndustriALL, the world's largest union, representing 50 million workers in 140 countries on five continents.

"International solidarity begins with you, the delegates to this Grand Lodge Convention," said Buffenbarger. "We must never forget, that in a race to the bottom, there are no winners."

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Delegates welcomed AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler and other distinguished speakers on the opening day of the Convention.

Delegates Welcome Liz Shuler and Distinguished Speakers

A host of distinguished guest speakers addressed delegates on the opening day of the IAM 38th Grand Lodge Convention, including AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Liz Shuler.

Shuler discussed the many challenges facing working families and reiterated the importance of global solidarity. “Across the world, we are all in the same precarious economic boat—and the same political iceberg is heading for us,” said Shuler. “You know what I’m referring to? It’s austerity—the new mantra of the anti-worker, anti-government right, and a false response to a global jobs crisis.

“With all the challenges we face, we can’t do this alone—especially not in the face of the vast sums of



money our opponents can throw at lobbying and political races. So what do we do? We broaden ourselves. We broaden ourselves to include people we generally haven't in the past. To include all people who work—'all who toil,' as your theme so aptly suggests."

Sid Ryan, President of the Ontario Federation of Labour, also addressed the delegates. "Today, with globalization and free trade agreements, we need international unions more than we've ever needed international unions before," said Ryan. "Workers need to come together. We need to send signals that workers cannot just sit back and allow our social programs, our health care systems, and particularly our jobs to be contracted out and shipped overseas to China and wherever else they can lower the rate of pay for workers. Let us form stronger links between the AFL-CIO and the Canadian Labour Congress and all the unions in between."



Sid Ryan

John Cartwright, President of the Toronto and York Labour Council, played a vital role in the fight to increase Ontario's minimum wage to \$10.25 per hour – the highest in North America. "Today our message to the employers



John Cartwright



and global CEOs who are saying to the next generation of your country and my country that they deserve less, they are worth less than my generation, that two-tiered wages and lower benefits are their future, and that they do not deserve a decent pension. As they say that to the next generation, I think it's our obligation to fight like hell," said Cartwright to delegates.

Andrea Horwath, Ontario New Democratic Party Leader, echoed the need for change in Canadian government. "'Hope for all who toil' – these are not idle words," said Horwath. "I'm still a big believer in hope, and optimism, and what we can achieve – all of us – by working together. We need to make some choices. You can stick with a system that leaves the middle class feeling squeezed and leaves people falling further and further behind, or we can embrace change that puts people that actually make this province work at the heart of our plans."



Andrea Horwath

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On opening day, delegates watched Canadian labor history come alive on the giant Dataton screen.

Convention Salutes Canadian Labor History

As part of the opening day ceremonies, delegates watched Canadian labor history come to life on a football field-size screen. The vivid images covered Canada's rich labor heritage from the shores of Newfoundland and Labrador to the mountains of British Columbia and north to the Arctic.

From its roots during the War of 1812, unions in Canada grew with the emerging industrial economy. The first nationwide labor organization, the Trades and Labour Congress of Canada, formed in 1883. Two years after the IAM's founding in 1888, the first Canadian Lodge, Local 103, was organized in Stratford, Ontario and in 1895



the first General Vice President for Canada, Arthur Holmes, took office.

Machinists were at the forefront of many labor battles, including taking a prominent role in one of the most militant and bloody strikes in Canadian history, the Winnipeg General Strike of 1919.

Canadian IAM members survived the Great Depression and another World War, and blazed new trails by helping form a labor-based political party, the New Democratic Party, under the leadership of the charismatic Tommy Douglas.

When delegates gathered in Montreal in 1992, the last time the Grand Lodge Convention was held in Canada, the Convention theme of International Solidarity – strength, security and success – echoed today's challenges of globalization.

In the first ten years of the 21st Century, IAM members in the transportation and manufacturing sector faced similar challenges as their brothers and sisters across the border. But they organized and pushed back, as Machinists do, and by 2011, they helped elect 102 New Democratic Party candidates to Parliament and formed the Official Opposition.



IAM Convention Opens on a High Note

The Canadian and American national anthems and the presentation of the ceremonial Convention gavel provided a memorable opening for the 38th IAM Grand Lodge Convention.

The Canadian anthem was sung in English by Harold Palmer, a renowned baritone who has performed at the White House and Kennedy Center and stages around the world.

Palmer was followed by Érik Beauchamps, a 14-year member of Local 712 in Montreal, Quebec, who delivered the Canadian anthem in French.

The American anthem was memorably rendered by retired IAM member Teresa Blevins, who took the stage accompanied

Retired IAM Local 2003 member Teresa Blevins, center, gave a stirring rendition of the Star Spangled Banner. Singing the Canadian national anthem in English was renowned baritone Harold Palmer, left. Érik Beauchamps of IAM Local 712 sang "O Canada" in French.



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by Cambria, a golden retriever and honorary member of Local 2003 in Daleville, AL. Blevins and Cambria are graduates of the Guide Dogs of America Training Center in Sylmar, CA, where Blevins became one of thousands of sight impaired people who have been provided with guide dogs free of charge.

Presentation of Convention Gavel



From left, IAM International President Tom Buffenbarger accepts a custom-built gavel from Montreal Local Lodge 712 members Daniel Poirier and Claude Levasseur and District 11 President and DBR David Chartrand to mark the opening of the 38th Grand Lodge Convention.

Opening day also included a long-standing IAM tradition as members of Local Lodge 712 presented a superbly-crafted gavel to International President Tom Buffenbarger to mark the opening of the 38th Grand Lodge Convention. Claude Levasseur, Dan-



iel Poirier, George Cloutier and Stéphane Poirier, members employed by Bombardier in Montreal, all had a hand in making the gavel.

Made of aluminum, brass, Teflon and carbon fiber, the gavel was housed in a box worthy of its content and custom-built by Rejean Constantin, carpenter and fellow Local 712 member.

"The presentation of a Convention gavel has been a mainstay in our Union since 1889 when Tom Talbot received a gavel from Richmond, Virginia Local 10 to open our first Convention," recounted President Buffenbarger. "And now, 123 years and 37 Conventions later, I am honored to accept this gavel, and thank the members of Montreal, Quebec Local 712 for keeping our tradition alive in such fine fashion."

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