



Local Lodge 1746

insight

357 Main Street East Hartford, CT. 06118 – Telephone: 860-568-3000

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Harley-Davidson's Bumpy Ride

Spring is finally in the air, and after a dreadful series of late-season snowfalls we may finally be able to pack the shovels and snowblowers away. After a long, cold winter people are eager to get out of the house and enjoy some warmer weather in the ways they deem best. For many of our members, that means polishing up the Hog and hitting the road.

There's a special kind of freedom that comes from riding a bike, and while not all of us ride, we can all appreciate the allure. It's an easy-going lifestyle, a brotherhood in its own right, riding with friends and no particular place to go, living to ride and riding to live. Many of our union brothers and sisters have taken extra pride in owning a Harley Davidson motorcycle, knowing their bikes were American-made in IAM union shops.

So it was with great dismay that we heard the news in January, that Harley Davidson Company had announced it was shuttering its Kansas City facility in 2019, a decision that would affect about 400 Machinist and 200 Steelworker jobs. About 450 of those jobs will be absorbed by Harley Davidson's other union facility in York, PA, but how realistic is that kind of transfer for families with their roots in the Midwest? The rest of the jobs will apparently be heading overseas to a new production facility in Thailand. Sales in Europe and Asia have remained steadier than those in the U.S., which have consistently fallen since the Great Recession and totaled an 8.4% reduction in 2017.

The IAM had been preparing for negotiations for a new contract with the company on a heels of a five-year wage freeze. Instead, they are now dealing with the terms of a plant closure. "They didn't even give us a call ahead of time," Joe Capra, directing business agent for Local 778 of the International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers, told The Kansas City Star. "It is real devastation for these people who work here and work hard in the Kansas City area." City officials and the community were also taken aback by the news after floating a \$6.4 million incentive package to lure the company and offering millions of dollars in subsequent tax breaks.

President Trump once lauded the Harley Davidson Co. as a shining example for building factories and creating jobs in America. "Companies are not going to leave the United States anymore without consequences," he told the nation as UTC's own Carrier Corporation was planning to pack up its



Illinois facility for Mexico. The reality is that 500 jobs were lost at Carrier due to trade agreements, and since Trump took office more than 93,000 jobs have gone to other countries, according to one labor advocacy group. That's not all Trump's fault—the average was about 87,500 in the last five years of the Obama administration. But it does tell a story of how difficult trade problems have been to address.

One solution President Trump is proposing to stem trade deficits is to institute tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from overseas countries, but tariffs can be like setting free a bull in an economic China shop. And the China shop is fighting back, as Beijing has announced \$3 billion in retaliatory tariffs against the U.S., including a 25% tax on pork and wine, and 15% on fruit, nuts, steel pipe, and other items. Fears of a trade war have rattled investors, and the Dow Jones average has fallen about 3,000 pts from an all-time high in January.

Trump is also going after NAFTA, a trade agreement long opposed by the IAM and this Local even before its enactment. Independent presidential candidate Ross Perot had warned the nation in a 1992 debate about a "giant sucking sound" that would be created by jobs leaving our country for Mexico if it happened, and it's hard to look at the plight of the Midwest and other regions and say that it hasn't happened. Truth be told, the United States is currently partners in 14 Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) around the globe, accounting for 47% of U.S. exported goods and a \$12 billion trade surplus in 2015, according to the International Trade Association. Trade agreements can be beneficial if they work to raise other countries to our standards, not

TRADES DEPLETION

By John Taylor, Vice-President LL1746

Back in December 2017 I sent an email to the company regarding how many yellow badge vendors were in the EH Plant doing our trades work. I recently drove past the guard shack out near the fire dept. where the vendors sign in—there must have been 20 trucks lined up to sign in for access to the shop! Yellow badge vendors are everywhere, in every building and in every trade occupational code, and our trade members are furious that nothing is being done about it. On average our trade members work roughly 350 overtime hours for the entire year. Little wonder why that is...HR/IR and Trades Supervision tell us it's because there isn't enough money in the overtime budget (bucket) for our trades guys but there seems to be an unlimited budget (MILLIONS) for yellow badge employees to come in the plant to do our work.

I took it upon myself to do some research as to what our trade numbers were in 2014 and what they were in 2017:

DEPT.	Trade	Employees (2014)	Employees (2017)	Change
Dept. 12	HVAC	27	25	-2
Dept. 24	Carpenters	10	10	0
Dept. 26	Multi-Trade	23	19	-4
Dept. 27	Electrical	25	23	-2
Dept. 28	Switchgear	6	5	-1
Dept. 943	MERL	3	1	-2
Dept. 45069	EHRO	25	22	-3

Trade job losses totaled 14 from 2014 to 2017 but over the years that number is spectacularly higher, a fact that is obscured by the vast number of yellow badgers doing our trades work now. Trades supervision at PWA and HR/IR either can't or won't tell us how many contract coordinators PWA employs. Can you imagine, in this day and age, a company not knowing how many yellow badgers are on site at any given time? How safe is that?

Contract coordinators are supposed to offer our trades leadmen the opportunity to assign the work per "right of first refusal" by our guys. Often, they either just go to the outside vendors or put time constraints on jobs by asking at the last minute and with our inability to work overtime due to no funds in the "overtime bucket". It puts our guys at a distinct disadvantage and jeopardizes their future employment.

The company also deems jobs "projects" so as to deny our leadmen the first right-of-refusal. Supervision also now claims that our trades groups are not in the "construction" business anymore but past practices and job write-ups say otherwise. The company also uses their standard claim of anything over \$5,000 omits our guys from first right-of-refusal. This is utter nonsense and has to stop—this \$5,000 claim was *never agreed upon*. We also need that claim in writing ASAP. Personally, I feel our trade members are owed monies as they have suffered financially thru PWA's ineptitude and lack of ethics.

In conclusion, I've often wondered why so many of our trade unionists are riding in their job carts and vehicles (ladders/tools) all by themselves. Not long ago that they always worked in tandem so as to train one another, work in a cohesive unit and keep the vast tribal knowledge in house. I would add to work safely as well, but when our trades members are working alone, how safe can that be?

Harley, continued

lower ours to theirs. Global problems like environmental protection, pollution, child-labor, drug and sex trafficking, and workplace safety can be addressed as part of these business deals, but only if advocates have a voice in the process beyond the isolated towers of the World Trade Organization.

So what can we do as union members? We want to buy American and buy union, but sometimes that gets murky in the waters of free trade. In terms of Harley Davidson, we can do our homework and buy a product that is manufactured in York, rather than Thailand. And we can apply that logic to other purchases as well. We can stay union strong and advocate union ideals in the workplace. There's some good news on that front, as the Dept of Labor reported an uptick in union membership in 2017 after years of decline. We can recognize that we play a vital role in what happens to our economy, either through our action or our indifference.

We can also remain as Americans a beacon of hope to the citizens of the world. We can live free. And we can ride on.

Brother Steve Merrick

- ◇ Shop Steward
- ◇ Senior Steward
- ◇ Shop Committeeman
- ◇ LL 1746 President
- ◇ District Business Rep
- ◇ 43+ years of activism



Join us May 12th, 2018 at Local Lodge 1746, 357 Main Street, East Hartford to honor Brother Steve and celebrate his **retirement!** Festivities start at 6:00 p.m. and include open bar, dinner, and dancing. Tickets are only \$50.

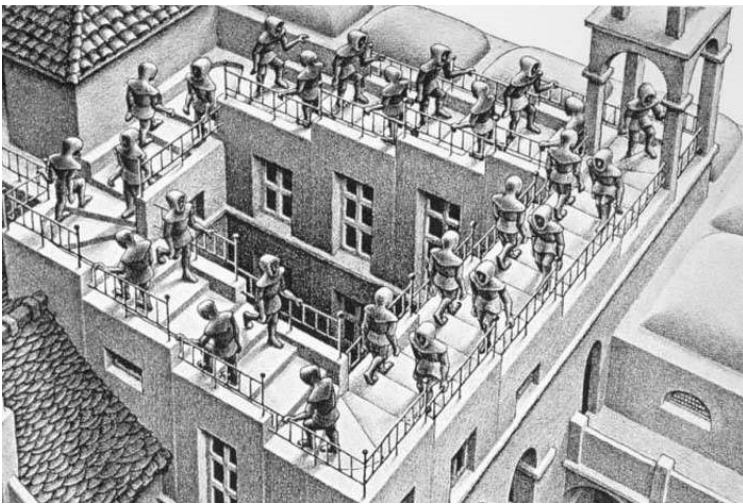
Please contact District 26 Office Manager Bridget Karchere at 860-554-3003 or email her at district26@snet.net for more info or to RSVP. Your DBR also has info on Steve's party.

Fighting the Good Fight

by Therese Hervieux

Can you imagine working a 12 hour shift and, just when it's time to go home, you are told you have no choice but to work another 12 hours? You might think this is happening in India or China or Mexico but it's happening right here in Connecticut. And it doesn't end there.

Becton, Dickinson & Co. is a medical syringe company in Canaan, CT and one of the largest employers in that region. Workers travel from MA, NY and CT to work at the plant. There's lots of overtime, much of it mandatory. There are two 12 hour shifts, 7 am to 7 pm and vice versa on a rotating weekly schedule of 3-4 days, but workers may be required to work seven days in a row with these long shifts. Mandatory shifts can be as long as 36 hours when your relief can't make it in to take over your machine. Last year, a planned holiday shutdown was canceled at the last minute and workers are forced to come to work in spite of their holiday plans. Safety conditions are unknown at this time. Step out of line and you can easily be entered into a "performance management system" that includes progressive discipline and a freeze on raises as its standard fare. Menial offenses like being too sick to report to work can throw you into this difficult to escape discipli-



nary system. Once you get on, it's hard to get off... Late last year, 30% of the workers signed authorization cards declaring their desire to be represented by the IAM as required by law. District 26 union representatives and organizers spent weeks preparing and meeting with interested employees. Our own Regan Toomey was a great resource during this time along with many others like Tony Walter Business Rep from District 26. However, Becton Dickinson hired Ogletree, one of the largest anti union law firms in the US and went on a full force campaign to keep the IAM out. They employed a temp agency to hire anti-union workers in the shop to vote against a union. They held "captive audience" meetings daily to deride the "union thugs" and kept pro-union workers away from those meetings so they could not sway workers on the positive impact the IAM might have on their workplace.

They even ceased the mandatory overtime requirement during the solicitation campaign to mislead workers into thinking the company was ready to make permanent improvements without the union.

In the end, Becton, Dickinson & Co. paid anti-union consultants to have a strong influence to keep the IAM out at this time. Several of our Local's sisters and brothers showed a strong commitment during the days of the vote standing out by the company driveway during shift changes holding posters and cheering the workers, but as it turned out only the original 30% voted for the union. It was sad moment indeed, knowing how these workers are being treated. Hopefully these workers will not give up

On Healthcare

by John C. Taylor

Brothers and sisters, are you having problems with your health insurance? I know I am. In December 2016, when we voted on whether to accept or reject Pratt's final offer, I voted to reject. This was because I believed that our health insurance choices were abysmal in that we only had two choices, either Connecticutcare or Cigna. During negotiations, PWA basically threw down what our two choices were to be and the costs of such, and that was that. After 40+ years with the company I have never experienced such limited negotiations and competition for our health insurance providers, especially knowing that the Pratt is self-insured. Further, that Connecticutcare, —my preference for as long as I could remember— was going up in cost to \$642 per week for employee and family. That equates to roughly \$33,400 a year, not counting co-pays for office visits, meds, etc. If that number hasn't made you pass out in disgust, think what you'd be paying over 40 years at that rate. It's over \$1.3 million dollars! I remember when health insurance at Pratt & Whitney was FREE! How times have changed! How anyone can pass this off with a straight face as "ethical" is anyone's guess.

Recently on a vacation day off I found myself in Manchester by the new Connecticutcare office and decided to stop in. I wanted to see what my health insurance costs for my family of three if I retired this month at 62. I was stunned to find out that if I retired from Pratt and purchased health insurance on the outside through Connecticutcare for my family, the weekly cost would be \$498.63 which is \$144.17 a week cheaper than as an employee under Pratt's self-insured umbrella for the same coverage. That's about \$7,500 cheaper, and it makes me wonder what justification the company has for the higher cost, or if it's just plain old bald-faced profiteering on the backs of our membership in the name of the collec-



The Next Monthly Meeting is
April 8, 2018 at 11:00 am.



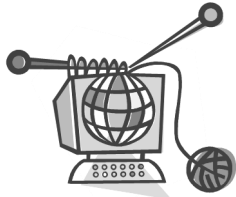
Remember Our Troops Red-Shirt Friday's!



The EAP Coordinator for IAM LL 1746 is Lenny Ward. Brother Ward is LAP-C Certified, an NAADAC / NCAC Certified AFL-CIO Union Peer Counselor, and SAP (Substance Abuse Professional) Certified.

Contact Lenny with any personal issues or concerns and be assured that he will work with you with respect and complete confidentiality.

Phone 203-444-0267 Fax 203-787-4180



WEBSITES:
www.iamLL1746.org
www.iamdistrict26.org
www.goiam.org
www.shopunionmade.org

Here are some of the officers email addresses to contact with your concerns and suggestions.

- * Kirby Boyce
President1746@ll1746.comcastbiz.net
- * John C. Taylor vp1746@ll1746.comcastbiz.net
- * Howie Huestis rs1746@ll1746.comcastbiz.net
- * Kurt Burkhart st1746@ll1746.comcastbiz.net

February RIDII Winners

- | | |
|----------------|--------------------|
| Don Hutchins | Abraham Kurichyath |
| Richard Porter | Brian Shiveley |
| Zachary Miller | Nate Lemieux |
| Donald Fahr | Josh Kimball |
| Peter Reyes | Jesse Burton |



Congratulations!



Insight welcomes your opinion!
Send your feedback to
1746news@gmail.com!

We'd love to hear from you!



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