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## Woebegone Times for Boeing Corporation

by Joe Durette

After decades of success as the world's top aerospace manufacturer, hard times have fallen upon Boeing Corporation, the Seattle-based company that employs over 2,500 of our fellow IAM members. The company's troubles boiled to the surface on October 29, 2018, when Lion Air Flight 610 originating out of Jakarta, Indonesia, crashed into the Java Sea off the north coast shortly after takeoff, killing all 189 people on board. Initial speculation from Boeing executives pointed to pilot error and the spotty safety record of Lion Air as contributing factors to the crash of the brand new 737 Max 8 aircraft. But when Ethiopia Airlines Flight 302 crashed five months later, killing all 157 people on board, alarms went up around the world that the problem extended beyond human error. Flight 302 was also a 737 Max 8 plane, and the flight data recorder depicted a faulty performance eerily similar to the crash of Lion Air 610.

Boeing had set the industry standard for safety and quality in its products for many years, and because of that they enjoyed a cozy relationship with the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), up to and including self-regulation by company officials. According to the 2022 documentary film *Downfall: The Case Against Boeing*, directed by Rory Kennedy, there was a long series of events—many of them administrative in nature—that led up to the fatal Lion Air crash. The film points to a key moment in corporate history: the 1997 merger between Boeing and McDonnell Douglas that ultimately supplanted Boeing executives with McDonnell Douglas leadership. It's a story we've heard before—the focus on profits and stock performance begins to supersede quality and safety initiatives, while organizational communication and employee trust begins to erode. It's quite common, actually.



Another key factor was market share, and when chief competitor Airbus released the A320 airplane with fuel-efficient NEO engines on board, Boeing was caught off guard. It saw its sales fall below those of Airbus for the first time in history. Developing a new plane to compete would take 7-10 years with all of the required FAA certifications, but Boeing engineers came up with an alternate solution: equip the existing 737 airframe—a design now more than 50 years old—with new, efficient CFM Leap 1B engines. The problem was that the engines were too big and heavy for the existing airframe, so they were moved forward and higher on the wing. This caused the plane to nose up in certain conditions and threaten a stall condition, so they

implemented a software change they called MCAS, which stands for Maneuvering Characteristics Augmentation System. Basically, if the plane's computer detected an unfavorable Angle-of-Attack from the AOA sensor, MCAS would drive the rear stabilizer to bring the AOA back to a safe condition. The problem is the AOA sensor is an external sensor subject to damage, and if it delivers erroneous information to MCAS, then there was a probability that MCAS could drive the plane into the ground or the ocean. Flight data indicated this is what happened in both of the fatal crashes.

After the Lion Air crash, Boeing had data to show that the MCAS system was a problem, but sales of the 737 were through the roof. and the FAA bought into the company's assertion that grounding the fleet was not necessary because a software patch could fix the issue. Boeing was also adamant that flight simulator training for pilots was not required, which in fact was a key selling point for the Max. However, the response time to

*Continued on Page 2*



### **Boeing, continued**

save a plane in an MCAS crisis was estimated to be no more than *ten seconds* before the plane was unrecoverable, and most pilots weren't even aware of the software changes on the plane.

Instead, the status quo continued while the company secretly worked on a fix, but when Ethiopia Airlines Flight 302 crashed five months later, Boeing lost that gamble and another 157 people needlessly lost their lives. The FAA continued to drag its feet in grounding the fleet but countries around the world, starting with Japan, took the initiative to ground the planes under their own authority. Eventually President Trump signed a grounding order that would extend for 20 months until the company was finally able to fix the software issues and the pilots were properly trained on MCAS. Redundant AOA sensors were also ordered.

In the subsequent congressional investigation, Boeing's deception was revealed and its once-pristine reputation was sullied. CEO Dennis Mullenberg appeared callous and indifferent toward the families of the victims, and he was subsequently fired by the Board of Directors. The company pleaded not guilty to fraud charges, but agreed to pay \$2.5 billion in fines and compensation to the families, lending a whole new dynamic to the term "penny-wise and pound-foolish" in regard to repeatedly denying any requirement for flight-simulator training.

Now, with the new problems of the recent door plug blow-out on the Alaska Airlines 737 Max 9, there's no wiggle room for the company to come up with a corrective action. The entire fleet of 171 planes, owned by United Airlines and Alaska Air has been grounded and many flights have been canceled. Preliminary inspections have uncovered several planes with loose bolts on the door plug assembly, but there's more to be heard on that. It's an unfortunate turn of events for the beleaguered company, but at least nobody died. Local 1746 Machinists are pulling for Boeing to regain its former prestige, because a strong Boeing means a strong Pratt, and the livelihoods of our IAM Brothers and Sisters across the country depend on just that.



## **American Unity on Display on Wreaths Across America Day**



National Wreaths Across America Day took place at over 4,225 participating locations across the country, including Arlington National Cemetery, on Saturday, December 16, 2023. Volunteers remembered our nation's heroes as they said their names aloud, honoring over three million veterans this year.

Wreaths Across America would like to thank the communities, dedicated volunteers, and generous sponsors for coming together in unity and supporting those who have protected our freedom. Each person has played a part in the year-long mission to Remember the fallen, Honor those who serve, and Teach the next generation the value of freedom.

"What I love most about this day, and this mission, is that it is so much more than just the placement of a wreath. The wreath is the catalyst, it brings together communities - families and strangers -- to learn about those who have served and sacrificed," said Karen Worcester, executive director, Wreaths Across America. "We have more than three million volunteers across the country and a third of them are children. This mission and the events happening today provide the opportunity to teach kids about what freedom is."

For centuries, fresh evergreens have been used to symbolize honor and a living tribute renewed annually. Wreaths Across America believes the tradition represents a living memorial that honors veterans, active-duty military, and their families. When volunteers say the name of a veteran aloud while placing a wreath, it ensures they live on in our hearts and memories and are always remembered.

*Article reprinted from [www.wreathscrossamerica.org](http://www.wreathscrossamerica.org)*



IAM Members lay a wreath at a past activist's grave.  
L to R Howie Huestis, Taylor Salman, Geoffrey Shayler, Katelynn Shayler (daughter)



# Trend Continues in States Across the Country to Weaken Child Labor Laws

By Therese Hervieux

When you think of the holidays, do you picture children across the country decorating trees, sledding, and partaking in their family's holiday traditions? While most parents wish to give their children a better life, many states (corporations?) across the country are working hard (AND SUCCEEDING!) to put young children back to work in jobs historically classified as dangerous. This includes working hours that will affect their ability to be awake enough to learn in school and move forward in the future to become our next generation of learned problem solvers.



Child laborers inside the Cherryville Manufacturing Company.  
(Universal History Archive/Universal Images Group/Getty Images)

The Fair Labor Standards Act was passed in 1938 with child labor provisions that remain the law of the land today. It bars the employment of anyone under the age of 16 for most jobs, yet many states fail to enforce its provisions. Even more seriously, many states are passing laws to return us to a morbid time in our nation's history when children as young as 13 were working in exceedingly dangerous jobs. And if you think the news must be many years old, there are so many reports this year alone. It's staggering!

One prime example from The Guardian in February where "The Department of Labor (DOL) announced that a federal investigation found Wisconsin-based Packers Sanitation Services Inc (PSSI) employed at least 102 children, ranging from 13 to 17 years old, to work overnight shifts at thirteen meat processing facilities in eight states." They found children working with hazardous chemicals, and on equipment such as band saws where no safety protocols were in place to protect the children from injury.



Days gone by: Children working in the Pennsylvania Coal Mines

This is just the tip of the iceberg, brothers and sisters. According to the Economic Policy Institute, fourteen states have passed or introduced legislation that rolls back child labor protection laws in the past two years. One of the worst happened in May last year, when Iowa Governor Kimberly Reynolds signed an extreme new law that violates federal prohibition on hazardous occupation and excessive work hours for children. Employers who follow weaker new state rules in Iowa will be violating federal child labor law, but the burden of enforcement will now be solely on the federal government.

There is much work to be done to protect our nation's children from being subjected to workplace hazards, and unions are at the forefront of the fight now, just like they were back 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century. According to a CT Department of Education article on child labor, it was once considered an economic advantage to employ young workers, because they were more manageable and cheaper to employ. It was great for the bottom line of the employers, but reformers considered this a form of exploitation, and they still do today. Children trust adults to ensure that they are protected, but certain state governments are showing again that profits for business from low-paying child labor jobs are more important than our children's safety, well-being, and childhoods.





The next Monthly Meeting will be held on January 14th in Grace Baker Hall at 11 a.m.



# Remember Our Troops Red-Shirt Fridays!!!



## December RIDII Winners

- Scott Waters
- Dan Carr
- Travis Walden
- David Trybulski
- David Hitchcock
- Daniel Cox
- Ronald King
- Steve McLaughlin



Due to shortages within the RStars program, payouts for winning RIDII drawings have been delayed. The company has assured the union that all RIDII winners will be properly compensated in the near future. Thanks for your patience.

## THE UNIONMEN

By Henry Hewson  
New England Trans.

Some members keep their union strong.  
While others join and just belong.  
Some dig right in, some serve with pride.

Some go along just for the ride.  
Some volunteer to do their share.  
While some lay back and just don't care.  
On Sunday meetings, some always show up.

While there are those who never go.  
Some do their best, some build and some make.

Some never give, but always take.  
Some lag behind, some let things go.

Some never help their union grow  
Some drag, some pull, some don't, some do

**CONSIDER WHICH OF THESE ARE YOU?**

Poem submitted by Steward Mike Oziomek

Check out our  
New & Improved Website!  
[www.iam1746.org](http://www.iam1746.org)



## WEBSITES:



- [www.iam1746.org](http://www.iam1746.org)
- [www.iamdistrict26.org](http://www.iamdistrict26.org)
- [www.goiam.org](http://www.goiam.org)
- [www.ctaflcio.org](http://www.ctaflcio.org)

**NEW IAM T-Shirts are coming!!! Check at the Hall at the end of the month!!!**



## Emergencies

Internal: 5-1111 External: 860-565-1111



**Non-Emergencies**  
EH Security HQ: 860-565-3210  
EH Medical Department: 860-565-3587  
EH Optical: 860-565-4981  
EH Fire HQ: 860-565-5907  
EH Facility Hotline: 860-565-9999

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