

North Carolina State Council of Machinists Spring Convention



The NC State Council of Machinists gathered at Pine Knolls, Atlantic Beach, NC on 26 April for its convention.

We had a two day session of business with speakers from the IAM, AFL-CIO as well as a candidate for office.



Communications Director Bob Wood
presenting a banner to Rory

Brown and other members of "Smoke Nation" who were there. The presentation was the official induction of "Wimpy" (William W. Winpisinger) as an honorary member

We discussed the upcoming primaries and the screenings we accomplished throughout the state to vet candidates. A discussion was held on the funding and means to sponsor the vetted candidates. How to get members involved and out to vote was a major topic of discussion. We need to find a way to stir members to action in not only voting but to actively support the candidates, get others (neighbors, friends, family, coworkers) out to vote.

Rick de la Fuente spoke in great lengths on the bad state of politics for unions and workers in general. He spoke and shared specific conversations he had with Senators and Representatives in DC. He stressed over and over the need to change the atmosphere and attitude in DC and in state politics. The only way this change will occur is through all of our actions. It is not going to be an easy task. It will be a challenge but one of the most necessary challenges we face. A challenge we must hit head on and knock out of the park, over the wall! We are in deep waters already barely keeping our heads above. Many non-union workers are in much dire situations. If we do not come together and take proper action we will be sunk.

So please all of us need to heed these words and get involved. Become active in a campaign, organizing drive, community activities shining a positive glow on the IAMAW, Unions, and workers at large. I am stating the situation as positive but HONEST as possible. I need y'all to take action, to participate, to do more, NOW! Like the "Greatest Generation" let us be the **fighting generation**. Let us be the ones to rise

up for the cause and for the future generations.

Rhonda Rogers Director of Women's and Human Rights Department talked to us about community involvement. She emphasized the need to show the public through our actions the involved and caring citizens we are. She stressed we need to make sure we involve the press when possible and be our own advocates in getting the word out on functions and actions. The public needs to see and hear from us and about us. We all have neighbors, family, friends and clubs or associations we belong to and at which we need to show and educate them on the benefits of Unionism.



VP Charlie Hines with President Teddy MacNeal stating our support for Congresswoman Alma Adams, NC 12th

Mark Blondin General Vice President, Southern Territory spoke

with us on some of the tough battles negotiating with United Launch Alliance. (Which, coincidentally they voted that weekend to strike). He talked of the long history of the Union in the south. Though the south does not have the highest population of Unions the workers that are unionized are solid and **fighters**. He spoke of workplace injuries and deaths which recently and sadly included the death of his own mother a Union member for many years. He talked on how the members had reached out to him with condolences. One in particular he mentioned was from the NCSCM President Teddy McNeal. He mentioned how Teddy made sure Mark knew he had his back. Mark said that is exactly what the Union is about, having each other's backs. He talked on how with OSHA and contractual language for safety has helped increase the safeness of the work place. Much of these were simple precautions like proper gloves and clothing to stop unhealthy exposure that caused illnesses or diseases, most not showing until years later. He reminisced on the NC State Council of Machinists and the changes, the battles and the continuing fight for workers. He stressed the need to continue the fight, continue to organize. Unions are not only better for workers but they are better for everyone. With Unions looking out for workers and enabling the better wages and benefits it brings wealth and growth to the community. Mark closed with his deep appreciation to all the members.

Bob Wood Director of Communications from Headquarters joined us and spoke also. He followed up on and agreed with Rhonda Rogers with the need of coming out of the woodwork per se and being seen and heard. He advised us that the communications department is a phone call or email away for help. They are there to help get the word out through the IAMAW channels and possibly with press. He also told us they have means available to help us advertise functions and activities for less than outside vendors. They also offer help in getting articles written for publication. He talked of all the changes the Communications Department has done over the years. As with

technology and social media making our lives different so too has it brought new means of communicating with the membership.(example Imail, Activate live) He closed by telling us all to make sure we sign up for **Imail** (a weekly video podcast/stream)as it is the easiest way to stay informed.

MaryBe McMillan, President of the NC State AFL-CIO spoke right in line with others on this need for our activism for change. She gave a rousing speech on the need for all workers, Union and Non-Union to join together and fight this rigged economy. We need to fight to rise above the stagnation, and low paying wages. She spoke on the fight to change the politicians that are not in the fight with us, they will not get our support. If you're not helping us, you will not get our help. She stated how the plan for the NC AFL-CIO is to stop playing defense and set the move for the "working peoples" agenda. We will do this by holding the politicians and corporations accountable, expecting more from them. We will no longer be choosing between the lesser of two evils at the ballot box. We are and will continue now to recruit candidates that will support and fight with us. MaryBe concluded her speech with organizing. She talked on the need for the already organized to reach out and help organize all workers. When the labor movement is organized and a solid Union movement then, and only then, we become the force to drive the nation in the direction of our favor. "What's good for working people, is good for all people"



Directing Business
Representative Anthony Cruz
with President Teddy MacNeal
stating our support for
Congressman G.K.
Butterfield, NC 3rd

We were introduced to Michael Oathout from Headquarters Crest Department, where he is Project Coordinator/instructor. Crest is a non-profit organization sponsored by the IAM to provide job re-entry, safety, and training programs. They provide in depth knowledge and hands on training offering a partnership with employers for safety, efficiency, and productivity. They work with employees and their families to help the employee return to productive employment. They have a professional staff of rehabilitation counselors to provide return to work assistance. They offer training of safety, health and ergonomics programs designed to reduce injury and illnesses in the workplace. Working in a partnership with eastern Michigan University, CREST is able to provide OSHA Course completion

Cards. CREST is funded through grants, and fees paid by businesses for services. It is a 501(C)(5) non-profit organization. CREST also has a scholarship program for members and members' children.

Speaking of scholarships for members and members' children, how about free college for members and members' family. Family does include all of family not just children. Yes that is correct you read it, it did say free and it is indeed free. As an IAMAW member in good standing not only are you able to earn a two year Associate's Degree but also your entire family is able to take advantage of this program. Dan Jones, the Vice President, of Academics Student Resource Center attended and spoke at the conference. He explained in detail the process and means of this Free College Benefit. Any member in good standing interested in this program or a family member then simply goes to the website or call and you will have all the help you need to proceed.

I know this is a bit of a lengthy report but honestly there was such great information and discussions I simply had to share with all of you. I want to thank the membership for sending me to this conference. I am humbled by your generosity but more so by your confidence in me to represent you at such events. I am honored to serve this Local.

In solidarity

Maureen Kelly