

Political Training Class at Winpisinger



Political Training Class

I was invited by our District 142 President, Dave Supplee to attend The Political Training Class at W3, (William W. Winpisinger Education and Technology Center). I was thrilled and pleased to attend and represent our local.

This class focuses on MNPL, elections, legislative issues, the political process, and the relation and importance of our involvement to politics and government.

Our class started off by assigning members to a group that would create a faux candidate and a campaign operation to get them elected. Every person in our group was assigned particular jobs that actually exist in campaigns. As a group we worked collectively and discussed plans and modes of operation. We created the candidate together based on the criteria set by our instructor, Rick de la Fuente, political Director for IAMAW. I was appointed as the fundraiser and treasurer for our campaign. As many of you know it seems to be my niche hence the nickname of "Mo'money".

As the fundraiser person I and all group members started an email, and phone chain with our IAMAW representatives at all the district and international levels. Transportation General Vice President, Sito Pantoja was the most generous of contributors. He not only donated a large sum but he encouraged his whole team to support this fundraiser. They came through with an unbelievable enthusiasm and generous donations. With raffles, donations and contributions from our

Local 1725, we alone almost matched dollar for dollar the Transportation Department's funds. I have never felt so proud and overjoyed with the support and



From left: Abigail Mejia LL1930, Tim Owens LL660, Maureen Kelly LL1725, Andrew Davis LL1432, Jim McKenzie LL751C, Tony Gibson DL141AGC , front row: Brandi, Derek Cearley LL776B.

backing as I did that week. I sincerely and deeply thank all of this membership here in Charlotte as well as the whole Transportation Department. We also had on site raffles and activities to raise money. Our group collected the most money that week and we set a new record for fundraising totals of a group at the Political Training Class. Not only did our group set a record but our whole class set a new class record for MNPL donations. Though, to brag a bit here, our group collected half of the total class sums. Yeah we are bragging!

We did work hard for this bragging right.

As much credit that we deserve I also need to emphasize and stress I could not have done it without the group I had at this class. Jim McKenzie, LL 751-C; Tony Gibson, DL 141 AGC; Abigail Mejiu, LL 1930; Derek Cearley, LL 776-B; Timothy Owens, LL 660; and Andrew Davis, LL 1432. This group is IAMAW members from all departments, different locals across the country. We worked together in a structured fun and intelligent manner. We created a wonderful candidate (made easy for the group by the individual Andrew Davis, the perfect repulsican politician). I learned the importance of working together and building a team. I also learned and saw firsthand how when a goal is set and that goal is to win a bit of ruthlessness comes out in all of us.

The class did consist of many speakers with great information also. We had representatives from the National AFL-CIO who spoke on each state and the political situations they face. Being that we had members attending from multiple states it was nice to have the national representatives to answer questions about individual states. Money and actual participation is always at the top of the list for needs. How and why to get members informed, interested and activley participate in the election process was discussed. This is a vital need to validate the Labor Movement and to keep it strong and growing. Participation is what keeps us as individuals and as unionists focused on the important political issues. When we don't participate or stay connected through actions we are easily distracted and misled by outside interests that divide and disrupt our movement. For the purpose of strengthening our cause we need to use our actions of attending meetings, going to rallies, fighting for all workers, organizing, voting for candidates that will fight with and for us as our strategy to win at the polls.



Winning group, new record setting of MNPL fundraiser at Political Training 2018. From left: Tony Gibson DL141AGC, Derek Cearley LL776B, Jim McKenzie LL751C, Maureen Kelly LL1725, Abigail Mejia LL1930, Tim Owens LL660, in front: Andrew Davis LL1432

We had speakers from every department of the state and national Democratic Party. I personally was unaware of the workings of the Democratic Party and that it is split into many factions with particular and singulrly issues at hand. It starts with the DNC, Democratic National Committee which is the overhead for the whole Democratic Party national and states. There is the DCCC, the congressional campaign committee that handles the house races; the DSCC, handles the senate races; the DGA, is the governors association and deals with gubernatorial races; and my favorite the DLCC, they focus on the state legislative races. There is also an NCDM, National Conference of Democratic Mayors that are mostly in larger cities or urban centers.

How can I attend a Political Training Class and not talk to you about politics? Not possible. Please understand my only intent here is to inform and educate. I am truly a non partisan individual and voter. I have actually voted for candidates in both parties as well as independents. So I need

you to understand I am not trying to convince anyone to join any party or affiliation. I simply want you all, to inform and educate yourselves of the state of our government, the laws affecting our work now and in the future, retirement laws, and healthcare. Our involvement in politics is absolutely necessary. We cannot afford to be spectators of our government but active participating players, fans, and supporters.

Do you ever wonder where your voluntary donations of money, time and effort would be best spent and used? I can honestly tell you by far it is in the hands of people that are in government and agree with you and will be making rules you live by. The politicians, lobbyists, and activists that support, fight for and defend the working class, they are the ones that need and deserve your help.

I am the Chairperson of our Local MNPL Committee. MNPL is the Machinist's Non-Partisan Political League. I sincerely support freedom to choose who you vote for and support. My goal as the Chair of this committee is to learn and know the politicians, to find the candidates that do support the issues that are first and foremost important and imperative to Unions and all workers. I want to elect individuals that are not being bought out by big cooperations or special interest groups. I also want candidates at the state levels that do not support gerrymandering but prefer a non partisan free from governing individuals drawing our voting lines. More than anything as chairperson I want you to participate. Nothing would please me more than having any or all of you attend a rally, a meeting, a campaign rally or fundraiser, any activity or event to get you closer to a candidate or the legislative process.

This is going to be a very important year for voting. The mid terms are here. There is big hope by many Democrats to take back the majority of seats in both the House and Senate. I am hopeful we can at least diminish the super majority here in NC as well as the federal level. This will not be an easy task or a breeze of mid term elections. I along with Charlie Hines

and the rest of the MNPL and Legislative committee, Mark Deluke, Mike Jones, Greg Lance, Mary Goettl, and Ranita Redden need your help. Please jump in, join the committees and volunteer with elections or fundraising. I guarantee your help in any way will be appreciated and needed. Let's change the course of government here in NC as well as the whole country.

In Solidarity

Maureen Kelly

LL 1725 MNPL Committee Chair