

President's Report – May 2017



Presidents Report

I recently watched an excellent documentary by Ken Burns titled "The National Parks; America's Greatest Idea." While the cinematography was incredible, one of the things that stood out to me was the parallels between the creation and care of our national park system and the creation and care of our labor unions.

In both cases, corporate and human greed sought to exploit resources for their own selfish gains. Corporations wanted to strip the land of its timber, minerals, and oil much like corporations want to strip workers of their wages, working conditions, and dignity.

This documentary highlighted how a single determined and committed individual could make a difference in the battle between greed and good. Without the individual efforts of men like Stephen Mather, John Muir, and Horace Albright, we would not enjoy and benefit from national parks like Yosemite, or Yellowstone, or the Grand Canyon.

The same is true for labor unions. Without men and women like Samuel Gompers, Mother Jones and Eugene Debs, union members would not enjoy and benefit from the work place rights, high wages, and good benefits that we have today.

Many of the heroes of the national parks just like the heroes of labor were regular people who simply refused to stand by,

who choose to act, and refused to give up on what they knew was right.

As union members, we should be inspired by and learn from their example that a single determined individual can make a difference. Every day we must decide that we will be that individual, that we will not stand by, that we will act, and that we will make a difference for our members and our union.