

# 2019 District Lodge 142 Biennial Convention Report



The 2019 Biennial Convention of IAM District Lodge 142 convened in Pittsburgh, PA on August 27 at the Omni William Penn Hotel. Victory Lodge 1725 was represented by the following delegates: Ken Coley, Bud Brown, Kenny Geis, Mark Heim, Mark DeLuke, Simon Simpson and Todd Day. Additional Victory Lodge members in attendance were John Bidoglio, DL142 VP American Airlines; Paul Shultz, DL142 EAP Chair and John Hall, DL142 Flight Safety Chair.

## **Day One – August 27<sup>th</sup>**

The convention was called to order at 9:00 A.M. on August 27 by DL142 President David Supplee. Delegates participated in the Pledge of Allegiance, Invocation and Presentation of Colors. The rest of the morning session consisted of the introductions of guests, roll call by Secretary-Treasurer Ian Scott-Anderman, welcome from Mike Stoica, President of LL1976 and a speech by General Vice President Sito Pantoja.

Pantoja began by touching on the success of the IAM, especially the Transportation Department. He then went down the list of airlines and companies which are currently in negotiations with the IAM and summarized where each stood in the process, how far they've come and what they have left to accomplish. The recent overwhelming ratification of a contract at Alaska Airlines was a focal point of his presentation and brought a standing ovation from all the delegates. A lot of

time was then spent discussing the ongoing negotiations between American Airlines and our Mechanic and Related and Fleet Service groups. Pantoja wrapped up by reiterating the success of the IAM's organizing efforts. He stated that the IAM has organized more members in the AFL-CIO than any other union in the last five years. Over 35,000 new members.

After Sito Pantoja's speech, Airline Coordinator Tim Klima spoke on the significant growth in District 142 in the two years since the last convention in New Orleans. He emphasized the IAM's commitment to **"unifying negotiations for all airlines and protecting scope at all costs."**

The morning session was concluded with presentations by Grand Lodge Legal Counsel Mark Schneider and DL142 Counsel Jeff Bartos. Schneider spoke extensively on President Trump's war on labor and his appointing of 150 judges since his election. All of these judges have anti-labor track records. With 123 more judicial vacancies left to fill, labor faces a daunting task in the courtrooms. Bartos spent most of his time recapping and explaining in-depth the recent TRO brought against the IAM-TWU Association by American Airlines. He also explained in more detail the functions of the National Mediation Board, The Railway Labor Act and Right to Work laws. Bartos wrapped up with a statement worth repeating: **"When the legal landscape is bleak, that's the time to fight."**

After lunch, the afternoon session kicked off with a presentation from Paul Raymond of National Group Protection. NGP is an independent broker for supplemental insurance and is an IAM union organized company. Raymond presented overviews on the following policies: supplemental accident, cancer, critical illness, disability, hospital indemnity and whole life insurance.

The next presentation was definitely a favorite of the delegates. Guide Dogs of America Director Russ Gittlen (along with Joy, a furry delegate) talked about the mission of GDA

and its newest initiative which is to take puppies that flunk out of the regular GDA program and repurpose them as comfort dogs for people such as veterans dealing with PTSD, folks in nursing homes, children with Autism and more. A video was shown which detailed the process of pairing candidates with a guide dog and the training that is required to make the team work together safely and successfully. All delegates were given an opportunity to contribute to GDA and a live screen displayed the donations received and the total amount collected.

Pennsylvania AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer Frank Snyder followed with a talk that centered on legislative initiatives in the local and state arenas on Right to Work and the elimination of Taft-Hartley. Taft-Hartley was originally known as the Labor Management Relations Act. It was enacted by Congress in 1947 and restricts the power and activities of labor unions. Snyder also mentioned gender pay inequality and the fact that unions have been fighting this for ages. Snyder finished up with another phrase that is worth repeating: **“100 years ago they fought us with bullets, today they fight us with briefcases.”**

The first day concluded with committee reports. Jessica Morris, General Chair of the DL142 Scholarship Committee, reported on the winners of this year's scholarship contest. Paul Shultz, Chair of DL142 EAP, reported on the addition of Alaska Airlines and Southwest Airlines members to EAP classes at Winpisinger and the Critical Incident Team's response to the tragic shootings in Aurora, Illinois. Brian Szolodko, Ground Safety Chair, reported on the update of lightning detection systems at American Airlines and new oiler vehicles/stands for wide body aircraft engines. Szolodko recognized the retirement of IAM Ground Safety Director Ron Miller. John Hall, Flight Safety Chair, finished up with reports on ASAP, more training needed for members, the importance of mentoring new aircraft mechanics and the increase in cabin air issues. This is especially critical

given the fact that aircraft manufacturers are consistently denying there is a problem even though there is overwhelming evidence to the contrary.

## **Day Two – August 28th**

Day two began in a big way with a rousing speech by IAM International President Robert Martinez. Mr. Martinez began by congratulating David Supplee and Ian Scott-Anderman on their superior leadership in making District 142 one of the most successful districts in the IAM. Martinez then talked in-depth on the following subjects:

- The Alaska Airlines contract ratification
- American Airlines/TWU-IAM Association negotiations
- ExpressJet negotiations
- The organizing campaign at Delta
- The Presidential Election Endorsement website: [iam2020.org](http://iam2020.org)
- NAFTA 2.0
- Reorganization at IAM Headquarters
- The condition of the IAM Strike Fund (currently over \$106 million dollars with more coming)
- 2018 being the best organizing year in the history of the IAM
- The firing of Boeing workers for organizing
- The new IAM Healthcare Department
- The organization of healthcare workers in Toronto and Carpenters Union in Puerto Rico
- The number of plant closings since Trump was elected (26)
- The need for all U.S. Military goods, equipment, etc. to be made in the U.S.A.
- The Cadillac Tax Repeal Bill (Mitch McConnell and the Senate refusing to vote)
- OSHA budget cuts
- Increases to the IAM Disaster Relief Fund
- IAM Addiction Services

- Retiring IAM Ground Safety Director Ron Miller's 47-year career
- Thank You's to the spouses and families of shop stewards, committee members, local and district lodge officers and staff for their sacrifices in supporting the work, travel and long hours

**“Our dream is that workers come first, before CEO's and Board of Directors,” Robert Martinez**

Hasan Solomon, MNPL Director, followed Mr. Martinez with a report on the legislative efforts of the IAM. Solomon spent a lot of time on the FAA Reauthorization Bill signed into law in 2018. The bill contains minimum rest requirements for Flight Attendants and mandatory steel cockpit doors from aircraft manufacturers to name a few important elements, yet the FAA has yet to implement and enforce the new regulations across the board. Solomon noted that the **“FAA is putting profits ahead of safety.”**

Mr. Solomon also touched on foreign repair stations and their lack of oversight in regard to drug and alcohol testing and the senate's failure to vote on the Butch Lewis Act, a bill which would address the growing pension crisis in America by creating the Pension Rehabilitation Administration within the Treasury Department.

Next on the agenda was Conor Lamb. Mr. Lamb is a Member of the U.S. House of Representatives from PA 17<sup>th</sup> District and a friend of labor. He spent time on the Butch Lewis Act, the Trump Administration's proposed cuts to Medicare and the problem with companies such as Eli Lilly, an American pharmaceutical company which manufactures insulin for diabetics. Last year Eli Lilly paid zero dollars in taxes while raising the price of insulin to \$300 for some patients.

The morning session on Day Two was brought to a close with reports by Education Committee Chair John Bidoglio and a

report by special representative Melissa Brennan on Organizing.

Bidoglio started his report by challenging the delegates to remember and recite when and where the IAM was founded (May 5, 1888 in Atlanta, GA). He then educated the members on the importance of the IAM Archives which are housed at Georgia State University. Bidoglio went on to emphasize the importance of the role of Shop Steward in the success of the union and the role that the Education Committee plays in traveling around the country teaching shop steward classes.

Ms. Brennan reported on the current organizing campaigns at Delta and JetBlue. The IAM is actively seeking to organize over 40,000 workers at Delta and 3,000 at JetBlue. This increase in numbers will be an amazing addition to our already growing union if we are successful in completing their organization.

After lunch on Day Two was devoted to Breakout Sessions. Each delegate had the opportunity to sign up for a committee. The choices were Flight Safety, Ground Safety, Legislative, Community Service and Education. The committees met in separate conference rooms and spent the afternoon recapping what was accomplished in the two years since the last convention and then planning and setting the agenda for what each committee seeks to accomplish over the next two years.

Day Two was officially brought to a close Wednesday evening with a fantastic reception and dinner for all delegates and their guests in one of the grand ballrooms. This was a great way to relax, enjoy an amazing dinner and network with other delegates from around the country.

### **Day Three – August 29th**

Day Three began with reports from all the committees from the previous day's breakout sessions. Each committee nominated a spokesperson who delivered a report on the agenda for that

committee for the next two years. It was inspiring to hear the great ideas our delegates came up with to further the cause of not only the various committees, but the IAM and unionism in general. The next two years look very bright for our district.

Day Three wrapped up with a quick By-Laws Committee Report (there were no new by-laws to consider), an Article L report (internal disputes) and Good & Welfare. It was reported that during the convention we raised over **\$9,000** for MNPL and over **\$4,300** for Guide Dogs of America.

President Supplee went over his President's Report (which was passed out previously to all delegates), Ian Scott-Anderman reported from the Building Corporation that there were no issues with any buildings/real estate, and we were official finished. President Supplee adjourned the convention and dismissed the delegates with a charge to return to our respective workplaces and continue the fight to strengthen solidarity, our district and our union until the next convention.

On behalf of all the delegates we would like to thank Victory Lodge 1725 President Craig Vanderhoof, the E-Board and all the members for enabling us to attend this important convention. We did our best to represent our Local in a professional manner and look forward to the next convention in two years.

In Solidarity,

Ken Coley

Kenny Geis

Bud Brown

Mark DeLuke

Mark Heim

Simon Simpson

Todd Day

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