



# The Sparkie Sentinel

**Mark D. Hoffmann,  
Business Manager/Financial  
Secretary**

Greetings Brothers and Sisters,

It's been a year now since our Governor Scott Walker woke a sleeping giant and created a labor movement across this state and nation. We knew when Walker was elected Governor that we would have a battle on our hands holding on to conditions we had worked for over the years, but I don't believe anyone would have guessed Walker would destroy the rights of public sector workers across the state.

His so-called Budget Repair Bill was nothing more than a union busing bill, taking away the collective bargaining rights of our public sector workers. This brought the working class of Wisconsin to the streets of Madison, marching around the capital, the people's house, in protest of the actions of our Governor. We were being watched by people all over the Nation with great interest as to whether we the people would stand by and let this happen without a fight.

We stood together in solidarity and said "**Hell No.**" People from across the nation came to Madison, Wisconsin to join us in our fight. With eyes still on us, six public sector unions were required by Governor Walker, (who was hoping to break down those unions) to recertify, saying they wanted to be represented.

I am happy to report that all six overwhelmingly voted in favor of recertification again, showing solidarity and standing up and defeating Governor Walker's plan. The Wisconsin State Building Trades Bargaining Unit voted 320 to 11 in favor of recertification.

Yes there were 96 non voters out of 434 Building Trades State Employees, which I do not understand but of those who had voted, 97% said yes. 97% of those who voted said that even though they have lost ground as state employees, they believe in their unions and their purposes in the fight for worker's rights in Wisconsin. We will continue the fight in restoring their collective bargaining rights by backing candidates who will work hard for us, even those who have, for whatever reason, have lost faith in their unions for their benefit as well.

On January 17, 2012, over 1 million signatures were handed in to recall Governor Walker. While these signatures are being scrutinized by the GAB and the Republican supporters, I am confident in saying there will be an election this spring to oust Governor Walker and Lt. Governor, Kleefish.

Brothers and Sisters, I am calling on you again to come to the capital square to march in solidarity, to stand again against Governor Walker and his anti-union, anti-worker style of legislature.

We must take this state back for the working people of this state, union and non-union alike, for our children and grandchildren, and for the future workers in the years to come.

On March 10, 2012, the AFL-CIO has called for a rally here in Madison, around the capital. The pre-rally events begin at 1:00 p.m. at the State Street steps. I have also called for a rally of the Building Trades to come to the Concourse Hotel at 10 a.m. on the morning of March 10, 2012. We will have a Candidate Forum on the second floor in the Grand Ballroom. We have invited Kathleen Falk and Kathleen Vinhout (candidates for Governor), Tammy Baldwin, (candidate for Senate), Mark Pocan, Kelda Helen Roys and Dave Worzala (candidates for Congress).

They will speak to you about their plans to regain collective bargaining rights and how they will work to protect your rights as the working class. Let's continue to stand in **SOLIDARITY** and fight to keep what our forefathers have fought for and in many cases, died for, to secure for you a better standard of living. Mark your calendars and I will see all of you on March 10<sup>th</sup>.

On January 31, 2012, I attended the Medical Trust meeting. Out claims payout for 2011 ended slightly higher than 2010 by \$130,000. Our investments in the fund ended the year on a positive note and at this time, there is no talk of any premium increase. I dare to say it seems there will be none but we will know for sure after April's meeting.

On February 7, 2012, I attended the Pension Trust meeting. The Core Balanced fund reported the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter earnings of positive 6.3% and a 3.0% year to date. In the self-directed menu, there has been a change. In October of 2011, American Growth Fund was replaced by T. Rowe Price Growth Fund.

Please make sure you attend the pension seminar on Tuesday, February 28<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at the Madison Labor Temple room 201-A&B. All members and spouses are welcome to attend. Refreshments will be provided.

### **Quote of the Month**

"Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That is why it is called the present."

Eleanor Roosevelt

### **Website**

Check out our new website. I think you will find this will be the place to find out what's going on in Local #159, as we keep a more active role in this age of technology. We still have more to do yet, so keep your eye on it for updates.

To log into our member's login area, you must be current on your dues receipt. Create your username and password and within 1-2 business days, you should be approved.

### **Did You Know?**

February 16, 1926

Beginning of a seventeen week general strike of 12,000 New York furriers, in which Jewish workers formed a coalition with Greek and African American workers and became the first union to win a five day, forty hour week.

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### **Joel Kapusta Business Agent/Referral Agent**

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The UW School of Nursing bids March 13<sup>th</sup>.

R.J. Nickles is the apparent low bidder on the Madison Central Library.

The Building Trades of South Central Wisconsin will be meeting about the Portage project on February 22<sup>nd</sup> and I should know a lot more after we meet.

Electric Construction is the apparent low bidder on phase 2 of the Lake Shore dorm project.

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### **Business Agent/Organizer Report by Chris Crossen**

Hello Brothers and Sisters,

I have been contacted by Faith employees wondering about the Union wages, health care and dues. I think the "shake up" that I talked about last month in the newsletter is beginning.

It is good that they are looking at other avenues of employment. Hopefully we can get a few of their key employees out of this.

The work picture is definitely going to improve this year and we should see significant movement in getting our members back to work to some very good projects. The improving economy will also have an impact and strengthen the unions' ability to organize more shops. In the last month we have been contacting Non- Signatory Contractors. It seems like they are starting to get busier and will also need manpower, something we can provide.

We continue to add non-signatory contractors and employees to O.A.R.S. This data base will be instrumental in organizing throughout the state. This is still being revamped by the I.O., making it easier and more user-friendly. It takes a while to enter in all of the data for a new non-signatory contractor and employee, but after it's all added, other organizers will be able to look at our area non-signatory contractors and see what is entered in for each one. The entries are for visits, employees, and concerns or questions that they have.

I would like to thank the members that continue to keep their eyes open for work in our jurisdiction. It is greatly appreciated in continuing to organize our area and get out market share back.

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## **President Report**

### **Fred W. Brown**

One of our long time IBEW members has left us. Larry Libert passed away February 6, 2012. It was a sad event but one that all of us will experience.

I first came to know Larry in the early 1990s when he was installing electrical distribution in a commercial store on the east side of Madison. The supply was 120/208 volt, three phase, 4 wire and he was using the up to six service disconnect rule [230.71(A)] instead of just a single main.(Much more economical for the customer).

The main service panel had four (4) 200 ampere, three pole breakers and the service entrance conductors were 500 kcmil copper. At first glance, the service conductors that have an allowable ampacity of 380 amperes [Table 310.16], seemed too small because they terminated into four 200 ampere breakers. But Larry knew it was all about the calculated load and Article 230.90 (A) Exception No. 3 : Two to six circuit breakers or sets of fuses shall be permitted as the over current device to provide the overload protection ... provided the calculated load does not exceed the ampacity of the service conductors.

From the service panel, Larry installed a Surface Metal Raceway that contained the feeder conductors to four 200 ampere panel boards, all lined up in a row above the raceway. There was going to be more than three current carry conductors in the raceway and may require the allowable ampacity of each conductor to be derating. Once again, he knew Article 386.22. that when the number of current carrying conductors does not exceed 30 in the Surface Metal Raceway, the requirement of derating does not apply.

Now for the genius of Larry Libert. He ran one neutral conductor for two sets of feeder conductors in the raceway. There was one neutral for six (6) phase conductors. When I saw that, I was sure Larry was nuts. But once again he knew Article 215.4 up to two sets of 4-wire feeders shall be permitted to utilize a common neutral.

Later in his life time, Larry became a huge asset to the Holiday Fantasy in Lights. He would come to warehouse each day, when asked, to help with the building and repair of displays. One display he took pride in was the Rocking Horse. Rollie Braun of Braun Electric had built the display in the early 1990s and when the displayed need some

gentle tender care, Larry came to rescue. The points that the display rocked on, needed to be replaced. So Larry got some old poly hockey pucks out of his basement, cut some grooves in them, and installed them on the display. Now whenever I see the Rocking Horse in the park, I will think of Larry.

The local and all of the IBEW need electricians like Larry Libert. All of us should have worked and learned from him. I did and will always remember it.

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**David Boetcher**  
**Government Affairs Coordinator**

**68 DAYS OR LESS**

It seems every column I write, there is something happening that instant that may be gone by the time you read it. Today there are several – the Redistricting Scandal, the wind setting rules and the Recall.

As the Redistricting Scandal continues there are sure to be more and more revelations. From the fact the Republican Leadership demanded signed oaths to reveal nothing from each of their members to lawyer's emails saying they were 'severely gerrymandering' districts to push up republican voter numbers to demands from the lawyers that each member had to promise to vote for the redistricting before even seeing the maps the constant release of new outrages continues. It is hard to see how the federal judges won't eventually do something to overturn the back door, hidden, illegal process that basically had legislation written and passed before the public even saw what would become their ability to vote for their representatives.

Yesterday, Feb 16, Republican Assemblyman Frank Lasse introduced a bill to change the setback for wind towers to 1,800-foot setback from the property lines of all adjacent non-participating landowners. Setbacks are typically measured from the nearest structure, so the

property-line provision means it is even more stringent than it appears. Unless property owners give special permission, any one turbine would need to be surrounded by a buffer zone as large as 360 acres.

Walker basically stopped all new wind development for the past year when he began this change shortly after taking office. *Since then, Wisconsin has lost hundreds of jobs, at least 3 major wind projects were canceled, and several others are on indefinite hold.* The net effect was a loss of \$1.8 billion dollars of investment in the state and aggregate employment impacts of at least 2 million job-hours (at 2,000 hr/yr that is 1,000 jobs).

We lost a lot of work because of this and now need to stop a permanent loss of this work by stopping Lasse and Walker's bill.

On the Recall front we are under 68 days until a possible election (I am writing this on Feb 18 so it will be less by the time you read it). Walker has already opened 10 offices around the State and hired campaign staff. We need to get going because we won't have time to actually contact voters. Over a million people signed the recall but we can't let Walker steal our momentum by sitting idly by while the election is certified.

IBEW 159 endorsed Kathleen Falk at the last union meeting because we know we need to start fighting now to win this election. You can see our endorsement letter on our new web page at IBEW159.org and soon see video of some our members and Kathleen Falk on why we support her. We did it because after talking to all the candidates and potential candidates she said she would fight all the way (which give a republican assembly would require putting it into the budget) to restore collective bargaining.

None of the other candidates would say that, they all talked about negotiating – you can see how well that has worked with the republicans this past year. This is about our members having the right to belong to a union. There is no greater purpose we have than allowing members a voice and fair wages.

Walker and the republicans have said no to that. They have killed our jobs by blocking wind towers (favoring the real estate agents instead of workers and farmers) and are breaking the law to try to keep us from being able to vote them out of office.

During the next two months we need help to win. If you can volunteer, contact the office and let me know. There will be plenty to do from phone banking, going to doors, job site leafleting to just taking some leaflets to your job. Anything that gets the message to more people will help us win. This recall is the fight we have to win but it will do us no good if we have a candidate who won't fight as hard to win our rights back as Walker fought to take them away.

We need to finish what we started in this recall. After a year of rallies, occupying the capitol and getting the signatures for recall, we can now take the fight to the final step of voting Walker out of office.



### **Retirees Club**

The Retirees met February 13, 2012 at Alt N Bach's Bar. The following were in attendance: Ken Goss, Bernie Braun, Steve Lease, David Baltes, Lester Gammeter, Bill Kracke, Don Dushek, Ray Becker, Dave Krey, Ken Hillebrand, Bob Call, Rich Gorst, Fred Brown, Bob Quackenboss, Vern Connor, Gary Gander, Donald Boe, Roy Holm, Tom Corcoran, Jim Virnig, Ron Dommershausen, John Whitman, and Elmer Racek.

Local Union President, Fred Brown reported on union affairs.

There was a moment of silence for departed Brother, Larry Libert.

Dave Baltes updated us on the House of Hope transplant house in Middleton.

Winners of the raffle were: David Baltes, Bill Kracke, Don Dushek, Ken Hillebrand, Dave Krey, Donald Boe, Ron Dommershausen, John Whitman and Elmer Racek.

Thanks to Ken Goss for helping with the meeting. Special thanks to Elmer Racek for doing a great job running the meeting and for all the time and effort he gives to the union. You're the best Elmer! Happy 80<sup>th</sup> birthday Elmer (2/25)!

The next meeting will be March 12<sup>th</sup> at the 5<sup>th</sup> Quarter in Verona at noon. See you there!

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It is with great sadness that we report the death of retired Brother, Larry Libert who passed away February 6<sup>th</sup>.

Larry was a proud member of IBEW Local #159 for 54 years, completing the apprenticeship and becoming a master electrician.

He was involved every year with the Fantasy in Lights, helping with the displays and counting the donations.

Larry was a great story teller and never stopped being involved in all aspect of union life and its issues.

His family was the center of his life; his wife Ann, his best friend and the love of his life.

Special condolences go out to Larry's sons, #159 members, John and Tony who followed in their

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Father's footsteps and have made him proud.



Condolences also go out to the family of Brother Keith Urbach who passed away February 20<sup>th</sup>. Keith was a proud 46 year member of Local #159.

He is survived by his wife of 46 years, Jean, two children Kelly (Elmer) Megna and Craig (Kelly) Urbach and five grandchildren.

During his working years, Keith was an important part of the local, volunteering his time and serving on numerous committees.

Special condolences to Sister Carol Megna and the entire Megna family.

This member has lost two very instrumental and cherished members. They were living proof that one person can make a difference, as they both proved by their example.



**Baby News**

Brother Bret Beine and wife, Amy welcomed new daughter, Brooke Elizabeth, January 29, 2012 weighing 7 lbs. 3 oz. and 19.5"

Brother Cory Dregne and wife, Holly welcomed son, Clayton on February 5<sup>th</sup>, weighing 7 lbs 15 oz. and 19.5" Big sister 4 year old Eden, will be a good helper.

Congratulations to all our families.

**2012 Pocket Planners**

We still have 2012 pocket planners available at the union office. You can stop by and pick one up or we can mail one out to you.

**We need your email address**

We are continuing our efforts to get member's emails. If you currently have an email address, please provide it to the union office. We do not share this information and it will be used to provide information to members only.

**2011 Tax Information**

Working dues deducted from member's checks by signatory contractors are calculated as follows from your W-2:

- Inside – 3.5% of gross earnings
- Residential - 2.5% of gross earnings
- VDV – 1% of gross earnings

To calculate the amount of working dues deducted you should take your gross wages and multiple it by the appropriate percentage for your classification.

Union dues for 2011 were 28.75 per month.

If you need to know the amount of union dues you paid in 2011, you can contact our office.

As with any tax questions and legitimate deductions, contact a tax professional.

freedom



**Administrative Notice:**  
**Basic Dues**

**“A” Members –Effective 1/1/2012**

Monthly - \$30.75  
Quarterly- \$92.25  
Semi-Annual -\$184.50  
Yearly-\$369.00

**“BA Members”**

Monthly - \$17.05  
Quarterly - \$51.15  
Semi-Annual - \$102.30  
Yearly. - \$204.60

Basic dues are paid in advance and must be received in the Local Union Office before the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month or quarter for which you are paying.

- 1<sup>st</sup> Qtr. – January 1
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Qtr. – April 1
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Qtr. – July 1
- 4<sup>th</sup> Qtr. – October 1

**Electrical Workers Local #159**  
**1602 S. Park Street**  
**Madison, WI. 53715**

“A” members should send death benefit payments along with their dues payment (\$1.00 for each death benefit). We are currently on #179.

The failure of any Local Union #159 member to pay union dues in a timely manner will not only result in membership being dropped, causing the loss of Union benefits, but also discharge from employment. Members who are three months or more in arrears will be charge a \$30.00 reinstatement fee.

**Please check over your dues receipt immediately for accuracy. If you have moved, changed classification or have questions about your dues, please notify the Union office. If you have not been issued a receipt within two weeks from the time you sent your payment, please call the office to make sure it was received.**

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