

the Council Connection

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Labor Day: It's About Solidarity

Considered the unofficial end of America's summer, Labor Day is the holiday in the United States to come together and celebrate the rich culture of the labor movement and the impact it has had on the American economy. It honors the enormous contributions that workers have made to the strength, prosperity, laws and well-being of the country. What's more, for some, Labor Day is about solidarity. It is tied in with working individuals and unions standing together... in solidarity.

Solidarity Forever, sung to the tune of the Battle Hymn of the Republic, is the most famous anthem of the American Labor movement. It was composed by Ralph Chaplin in 1915, who lived out the last decade of his life in Tacoma and finished his vocation at the Washington State Historical Society. The song can be heard at union meetings, rallies, and on picket lines throughout the United States.

Chaplin's relationship with the Pacific Northwest was revealed time and again in his writings as well as in his conversation. The "Free Speech" battles at Spokane, Everett, Tacoma, and different urban communities on the Northwest Coast motivated Chaplin to continue his labor activism. He was inspired by the rugged region of mountains and the Puget Sound. He said the unfolding drama of labor history and 'epic pioneering and great conflicts' provided a satisfying backdrop for inspiring and strengthening his cause. In 1960 he wrote, "*Even at this late hour I am more grimly convinced than ever that neither the song itself nor the organization that sparked it could have emerged from any environment other than the Pacific Northwest. It is true that Solidarity Forever was written in Chicago, but it is also true that nobody ever heard of it until fifty thousand striking Puget Sound loggers bellered it out to a world.*"

Solidarity Forever

When the union's inspiration through the workers' blood shall run,
There can be no power greater anywhere beneath the sun.
Yet what force on earth is weaker than the feeble strength of one.
For the Union makes us strong.
Solidarity Forever, solidarity forever, solidarity forever.
For the Union makes us strong.

Ralph Chaplin 1915

September 2017

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Washington State
Council of Fire Fighters

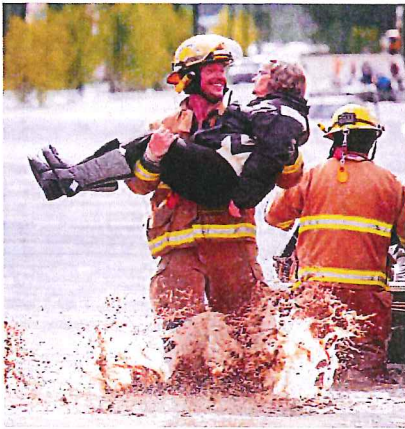
Hurricane Harvey Disaster Relief Fund for IAFF Members

We're all thinking about our members in Texas and Louisiana who are on the frontlines of Hurricane Harvey helping communities and their citizens knowing their own homes and possessions may be lost. The best way you can assist your brothers and sisters is through the IAFF Disaster Relief Fund, which provides short-term, immediate financial assistance to IAFF members affected by major disasters.

Donate today with a tax-deductible contribution online or by texting DISASTER to 50555* to make a \$10 donation.



“To me, there’s only 5 real jobs in America: Police Officers, Teachers, Firefighters, Doctors, and the Military Service”. – *Charles Barkley, American retired professional basketball player who is currently the analyst on Inside the NBA.*



Pictures Courtesy ViralNova - “Don’t Take These Heroes For Granted”



New Charter Application!

The WSCFF is excited to welcome Local 5133, Whidbey Island Paramedics. The IAFF Executive Board approved their application on Friday, August 25, 2017.

Welcome aboard Local 5133, Whidbey Island Paramedics!

“It is the Vision of the WSCFF to coordinate the statewide efforts of professional fire fighters by providing creative leadership and dedicated service, resulting in a unified, progressive membership that strives to improve social attitudes and promote legislation to benefit the fire and EMS communities and the citizens we serve, with a foundation anchored in the principles of honesty, integrity and commitment.”

An Historic Win for Families

Beginning in 2020, working families in Washington will have a new safety net to ensure that a new baby, ailing parent, or cancer diagnosis doesn't result in financial calamity.

Late on June 30, the same night they were scrambling to avoid a government shutdown, the Legislature approved an historic family and medical leave program. It was the result of months of negotiations between legislators, labor and business leaders spearheaded by Rep. June Robinson (D-Everett) and Sens. Joe Fain (R-Auburn) and Karen Keiser (D-Kent). Governor Jay Insee hailed its passage as a “great bipartisan achievement.”

Right-to-Work Update

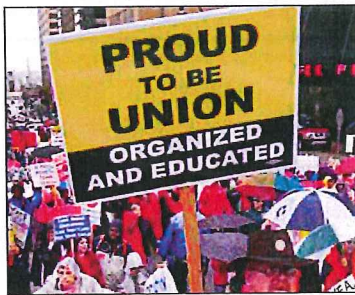
Six months ago, on short notice, over 1,000 union members turned out in the rain to voice their objection to SB 5692, legislation to make Washington a so-called "Right-to-Work" state. While 1,100 people signed in opposed to SB 5692, just three people supported it.

Back in February, many members of the WSCFF took time off, packed up their loved ones, and came in solidarity to the State Capitol to voice their objection to SB 5692.

SB 5692, sponsored by Senator Michael Baumgartner (R-Spokane) and Senator John Braun (R-Centralia) was heard in the Senate Commerce, Labor & Sports Committee chaired by Baumgartner. The hearing overflow rooms set up to accommodate the crowds were all full, so hundreds more protested outside in the rain, many visiting their legislators' offices.

The bill would have denied unions and employers in Washington state the freedom to negotiate union-security clauses in contracts. Such a ban allow workers to "free-ride" by not paying for representation because they can get it, and the benefits of the contract, without paying union dues. The goal is to weaken unions and lower wages, and that is exactly what happens in states that enact such laws.

SB 5692 died without a vote.



Unionized College Faculty Are Winning Themselves a Lot of Money

•Unions are not just a feel-good sort of thing to do. New research about higher education unions shows just how much workers have actually gained from organizing, in a short period of time.

•One of the most active areas of new union organizing in America is higher education: adjunct professors and other academic and non-academic workers on college campuses, who tend to have shockingly low pay and poor job security even though they tend to be highly educated and work in prestigious settings. Those are the sort of ingredients that can motivate people to unionize. And voila: it has been so.

And the gains have been clear.

•Duke University non-tenured faculty members who signed their first union contract this summer immediately got double digit raises and improved job security.

•This is all just to illustrate a fact that has always been true, whether you are a college professor or a janitor: If you unionize your workplace you will get more than you have now, and the reason your boss does not want you to do so is because they don't want to give you more.

•But it's all just sitting on the table, waiting for you to pick it up.

*By Hamilton Nolan, Splinter News
Hamilton@Gizmodomedia.com*

Washington State Council of Fire Fighters Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan (MERP)

Do Something . . .

- Now, instead of at retirement time
- To plan – specifically – for healthcare expenses in retirement
- To take advantage of all current and future IRS tax advantages to assist in this planning
- Do not wait for a national healthcare plan to save you from this burden

The WSCFF MERP is a Medical Expense Reimbursement Plan established to provide financial support during retirement for Firefighters in the IAFF 7th District. MERP is a tax-sheltered plan in which members' pre-tax contributions are pooled and invested in a tax-free fund. After retiring, members receive a tax-free, lifetime benefit for the reimbursement of qualifying medical expenses. The team at DiMartino Associates is available to visit locals to educate groups regarding the plans and benefits.

For further information please visit www.wscff.org or contact DiMartino Associates at 800-488-8277.



IAFF 7th District Vice President RICKY WALSH

Ricky Walsh has been elected as IAFF 7th District Vice President. Ricky can be reached at (509) 999-3090 or rwalsh@iaff.org. Please join us in wishing Kelly Fox the best of luck in his future endeavors.

Per Capita Change



Due to Convention action, the 2017-18 per capita rate per member beginning September 1, 2017, will be \$20.74. This rate is a **\$.56 change** from the 2016-17 fiscal year. Per Article XII, Section 7, the dues for Active Retiree members shall be 25% of the annual per capita rounded to the nearest dollar. Therefore, the per capita rate for active retirees remains \$5.00 per member. Packets of new per capita forms were mailed to each local in late July.

Please email Laura if you did not receive your new forms:

Laura@wscff.org or call at (360) 943-3030.

If you have questions regarding the per capita increase, please contact your district representative.

Calendar of Events

Hello
September!

September

- 4 Labor Day, WSCFF office closed.
- 5 WSCFF Board Meeting, WSCFF office.
- 9-10 Women and Fire. Combines classroom time with hands-on activities to build your experience in firefighting skills and professional development. Contact: campblazefirecamp@gmail.com.
- 10 Join Seattle Sounders FC as they honor First Responders. \$28, 6:00 CenturyLink Field. Contact: Justin Hill, justinh@soundersfc.com or 206-512-1262 .
- 29 Richland Fire Charity Golf Tournament. Sun Willow Golf Course, Pasco. Benefiting the Richland Firefighters Community Outreach Program, formed in order to raise money with the sole purpose of giving back to their community members in their time of need. Contact: Pete Zukowski (509) 264-3832.

Visit the events page at www.wscff.org for these events and more.
If you have upcoming events, email laura@wscff.org or (360) 943-3030.

If you don't have your professional Firefighter license plate, now is the time to get one. Each purchase or renewal of a set of special plates generates a tax-deductible \$28 donation to the WSCFF Benevolent Fund. www.wscff.org.



Happy Labor Day to all the hard working union members and other workers who have made this country great!



Washington State
Council of Fire Fighters

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Affiliated with AFL-CIO, IAFF, WSLC



UNION MADE



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