

Local Lodge 1746

# insight

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## When the Levee Breaks

August was a wild ride on many fronts for our nation. Internationally, we have been coping with the alarming missile threats from North Korea and Kim Jong Un, as well as the prospects of a continuing investigation into Russian meddling into last year's presidential election amidst an announcement by President Trump to send more troops into Afghanistan.

On the home front, the fabric of our nation seemed stretched to its tearing point when white nationalists and neo-Nazi protesters squared off against counter-protesters during a planned removal of a statue of Robert E. Lee from Emancipation Park in Charlottesville, Virginia. The height of chaos occurred when a Nazi sympathizer rammed his vehicle into a crowd of protesters, killing one woman and injuring 19 counter-protesters, five of them critically. A few hours later, a Virginia state police helicopter crashed, killing both troopers on board.

The bold conflict ripped the scab off the wound of racial unrest that has plagued our country for decades, even centuries. President Trump exacerbated the tension by placing blame on "both sides", which is akin to claiming that the Germans and Poles were equally responsible for starting World War II. His words sparked numerous outcries from many people and groups, including both political parties in the House and Senate, and it's not a stretch to say that his comments about Charlottesville have contributed to the historically low approval ratings the president now endures just seven months into his term.

Then, just when it seemed as if America couldn't stomach any more of this, Hurricane Harvey slammed into the Texas coastline, packing 140 m.p.h winds and dumping more than four feet of rain on the greater Houston area, washing away historic rainfall records in the continental United States. Hurricane Harvey claimed nearly 50 lives and forced tens of thousands from their homes with widespread flooding brought on by an estimated 27 trillion gallons of rainwater that fell on Texas in the span of a week. Many experts

predict that the storm could cost upwards of \$190 Billion in damages, surpassing the costs of Hurricane Katrina by almost twenty percent.

The human response was quite different from Charlottesville, however. In Houston, people of all races, ethnicities, and backgrounds came together to rescue one another from a common foe, Mother Nature, and their heroics help to restore the country's faith in the best of our society: our ability to look past our differences and pull together a common good that we all benefit from, even in the face of disaster and devastation.

We hear the term "united we stand" so often it almost sounds cliché, but the people of Houston remind us just how powerful that concept can be, even in the face of a menacing threat. It's a concept that makes our military great, our union strong, and our country the most amazing experiment in governance that the world has ever known. And with another monster hurricane now bearing down on Florida and the gulf states, it's a concept that we must turn to again for the sake of our fellow Americans.



Survivors walk through flooded waters in Houston as Hurricane Harvey batters southeast Texas. (source ABC News)



Hurricane Irma might be even worse than Harvey.

## Bang for Your Charity Buck

Want to help out the relief efforts of Hurricanes Harvey and Irma but don't know how? There seems to be countless organizations abound seeking to steer your dollars in the right direction. There always seems to be much debate about "good" charities vs. "bad" charities, and *Insight* doesn't pretend to know about all of the nuances of spending policies and executive compensation for non-profit organizations. There's a lot of competition between non-profits and sometimes that means making the competition look bad. All we can recommend is that you do your homework before deciding where to send your aid. We've listed a few organizations below with the caveat that we have not researched any of them in depth at this time.

### IAM Disaster Relief Fund

([www.goiam.org](http://www.goiam.org))

Director Carlos San Miguel: 443-220-7522

"This fund quickly delivers financial assistance to members who endure hardships due to natural disasters before most resources are able to respond."

### Texas Workers Relief Fund

([www.texasaflcio.org/donate](http://www.texasaflcio.org/donate))

Overseen by the Texas AFL-CIO, the Texas Workers Relief Fund "sends a message of solidarity and the knowledge that working people affected by this disaster are supported by Brothers and Sisters across the nation."

### Friends for Life

([www.friendsforlife.org](http://www.friendsforlife.org))

Founded in Waco, TX in 1989, Friends for Life works to improve the quality of life for seniors and people with disabilities, often for those who have no one else to care for them. They are also helping to save and care for animals displaced by Hurricane Harvey.



## This Month in Union History

By Therese Hervieux

### *The Adamson Act, September 2, 1916*

The Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers and Trainmen (BLET) was instrumental in many labor laws establishing fair working hours and pay for overtime.

Also known as the Eight Hour Standard Work-Day Act, The Adamson Act was passed and signed by President Woodrow Wilson to avoid a massive railroad worker strike during the ramp up to WWI. This Act not only established the 8 hour workday but also won the victory for time and a half paid for overtime, the first time overtime was ever paid for.

Prior to the Adamson Act in 1916, BLET along with other labor organizations fought and won the passage of the Hours of Service Act in 1907 which changed the precedence of a twenty four hour work pattern to a maximum of a sixteen hour work day. It took another nine years to reduce working hours to the reasonable and healthy eight hours.

Labor Unions and organizations have worked hard over the years to establish working conditions that union and non-union workers all take for granted today. These brave men of the Railroad Industry were able to organize and stand together to fight for the rights of workers when no precedent had ever been set. They risked much so that we can enjoy these benefits today. We need to continue to be vigilante and active so we do not lose hard won rights like the ones our BLET brothers worked so hard to get.



## New Horizons and Long, Strange Trips

### An Interview by Jamie Harris

Trust is a difficult thing. It must be earned, protected and nurtured for it to last. All relationships are built on some level of trust; however, it is difficult to trust someone you don't know. Our Union represents us on a daily basis and at the end of the day we are all in this together. We owe it to ourselves to know those who go to bat for us. In an effort to help in that first step of getting to know our Union, I sat down with outgoing Secretary-Treasurer Nancy Flagg and the incoming Secretary- Treasurer, shop steward Kurt Burkhart.

Precise. Caring. Activist. These are the 3 words Kurt Burkhart used to describe himself. I would add to that optimistic and forthright. As a captain and volunteer fire fighter/EMT for 5 years, his bravery and leadership also came to mind. He is passionate about Union involvement by all members, and education about what we do as a Union and the importance of unity. He truly looks at us as a family. We call ourselves brothers and sisters and it's clear he takes that sentiment seriously.

"I am motivated to protect my Union brothers and sisters. My goal is to give them a voice and to educate the new hires on what the Union is and what it can do for them. I want to encourage them to get involved. That is something I am going to be working on personally," Brother Burkhart stated, clearly hopeful and energized at the prospect of growing an active and vibrant Union.

About taking over the position of Secretary Treasurer, he is humbled, honored and excited for the huge responsibility that is in store for him.

"I'm comfortable with numbers and finance, and I'm just so excited for the opportunity to interact with the history and the people from our local and other locals. Numbers in a book are just that, but getting to know the people and experience the sense of history and the family of the Union really excites me. Getting some of Nancy's knowledge before she retires is going to be so great. I'm going to learn it to the best of my ability."

Personally, I am heartened to see someone this committed to the Union and willing to lead by example. On the topic of leading by example, we come to my conversation with Nancy Flagg. She has been a constant and active fixture in the Union for many years. Through all her time serving, whether as Vice President or Secretary Treasurer, she has maintained an optimistic realism, a heart for service and a fierce determination to keep the voice of the Union strong. Her wit, wisdom, honesty and willingness to help have been a cornerstone of all her roles in the Union.

I found the most telling quote in my conversation with Sister Flagg was as follows: "The strength of the Union is me and you, and the more 'mes and yous' there are the stronger we are. This is a public service job. You have to welcome people in. You have to treat everyone equally. It's been a long strange trip but always very rewarding. You meet so many different kinds of people but I've always felt that I've done the best I could for them." It is this sense of commitment, caring and resolve that really speaks to the person she is.

Nancy is retiring this September and I encourage you to meet her if you haven't yet. She has been an inspiration to me personally as a woman in leadership and is a genuine example of resolve and unity. It is no coincidence that "union" and "unity" come from the same root, and if anyone exemplifies that, it's Nancy Flagg. The 3 words that she used to describe herself are "Fair, dedicated and caring". I couldn't agree more.







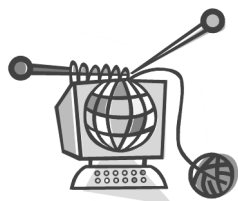
**The Next Monthly Meeting is  
September 10, 2017 at 11:00 am**



# **Remember Our Troops Red-Shirt Friday's!**

**In memory of**

Pedro Carrero  
Jose Oyolo



## **WEBSITES:**

[www.iamLL1746.org](http://www.iamLL1746.org)

[www.iamdistrict26.org](http://www.iamdistrict26.org)

[www.goiam.org](http://www.goiam.org)

[www.shopunionmade.org](http://www.shopunionmade.org)

## **August RIDII Winners**

**August RIDII winners  
will be selected  
Sept. 7th**

**Stay tuned!**



## ***Insight welcomes your opinion!***

Send your feedback to  
[1746news@gmail.com](mailto:1746news@gmail.com) !

*We'd love to  
hear from you!*



**Here are some of the  
officers email addresses to  
contact with your  
concerns and suggestions.**

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- \* Nancy Flagg [st1746@ll1746.comcastbiz.net](mailto:st1746@ll1746.comcastbiz.net)

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