



President's Report

March 2016

- **Membership Meeting is scheduled for March 3 @4:00 at 3625 Douglas Ave.**
- **Executive Board Meeting is scheduled for March 17@ 4:00 at 3625 Douglas Ave.**

Hello once again AFSCME Local 1668! I hope this edition of your newsletter finds you all happy and healthy! I would like to start my report this month by saying Thanks! Thanks for all you do each and every day to make WMU happen, and to make AFSCME the best union around! In light of recent events, I just want you all know that you are appreciated.

Our lives changed in Kalamazoo recently. And not for the better. Evil visited our community, and took six innocent souls when it left. It stunned our community, and left us all with an unknown feeling inside. It left many in shock, not knowing how to react or how to feel. It wasn't some faraway place. The faces on the television weren't strangers; they were our local news reporters that we see every day. They were talking about Kalamazoo. These things don't happen in Kalamazoo. That is how our lives changed... we can't say that any more.

The events served as a stark reminder that nobody is immune to the horrors that can occur at any moment. Our town is now on a list we never wanted to be on. I hope we all can take a moment to reflect, and to hold those affected by this tragedy close to our hearts. Not just those that we lost and their families, or those still fighting, but everybody that had to deal with the aftermath as well. Let's all be grateful for our local law enforcement agencies and all other first responders that did such an amazing job that night. These people are our neighbors, brothers, nieces and friends. Many of them are union brothers and sisters. But most importantly, they are human beings just like you and me. They saw things that most would look away from. They were searching the shadows of the night while most of us watched in the comfort of our homes. They deserve our respect, and our thanks. In the calm after the storm, we are learning that things most likely would have been much worse if not for them. Their teamwork and leadership kept a terrible situation from becoming even worse. We are fortunate to have them.

We may never know why this happened. We will never forget what happened. But we will overcome what happened. Several times already, our community has come together to show that we are strong. Hundreds came together at local churches, parks and schools, not just to honor those lost, but to support each other. People came from all over the county to join together as one community to help each other not only mourn our losses, but also to begin the healing process. Together, we will all get through this. Together we are strong! Kalamazoo Strong!

Thank you AFSCME, for being part of what makes Kalamazoo such a great community!
In solidarity,

Dennis

Vice President's Report

Well folks Spring is right around the corner which is very welcome news to most of us. I'm guessing that most of you are looking forward to replacing snow shovels with fishing poles, golf clubs, or whatever else you would rather be doing than scraping ice and shoveling snow. Please keep in mind that July 1 is still 4 months away and that we only have 1 paid holiday between now and then. Enjoy the annual leave that your Union has negotiated for you but be mindful not to run yourselves out before July 1st.

Thank you to everyone involved in organizing the showings of At The River I Stand. The feedback I have gotten from those who were able to view it for the first time has been very positive, and it did a lot to show the early struggles of the labor movement and why we need to continue to stand strong together to protect our rights.

I want to remind everyone that membership meetings are held on the 1st Thursday of every month at 4:00 at our Union Hall and that everyone is welcome and encouraged to attend. Also, the phone number at the hall is 381-1668. If you have an issue or need answers to a question that your steward cannot answer, calling that number and leaving a message or talking to either Kathi or Dennis is your best option. Too often people are waiting for the next meeting or the next time you run into one of them only to find out that it's too late to address the issue.

Please be sure to read this newsletter carefully and consider joining one of the many committees listed inside. Being a member of a committee is a great way to become active in your Local and we are always looking for people to help keep our Union strong.

In solidarity,

Bryan

AFSCME Local 1668 Committees

Below you will find a list of committees within our Local. Occasionally these positions get opened up to the membership to encourage participation. The fact that all of these are up for review in no way reflects negatively on those who are currently part of this structure, nor does it mean that the same people will not be chosen to continue. If you are interested in assisting with any of these committees or would like some more information, please call the Union Hall Wednesday-Friday or email Dennis. Thank you.

**Constitution Committee
Good and Welfare Committee
Community Services Committee**

**Subcontracting Committee
Education Committee
Uniform Committee**

Chief Steward Report

Greeting my brothers and sisters! It's been a very busy semester thus far. Mark Robinson and I have been working closely with dining services to finalize details for our "pick day" which will allow for people to use their classification seniority to decide what unit they wish to work in next fall. We have held many "town hall" style meetings with Q&A. I believe this will be the smoothest way to transition into the new Dining model. I look forward to next Friday and walking through this transition with you.

We are also working on summer dining which will be very different this year. Only about half of the summer will be spent working in other departments. The rest of the time will be spent in Dining working on getting the old kitchens closed and the new one opened. And with all the changes coming to the new kitchen, there will be lots of training as well. The new serving styles and new equipment will require a new way of doing things.

Landscape Services has been interviewing for a new Director. They held a mass interview with the employees a couple of weeks ago. Tim plans to retire at the end of the semester so they are eagerly trying to hire a new Director before he leaves.

We heard a hand full of grievances last week and we are waiting those answers. We are also in the process of processing forward to arbitration, the athletics catering grievance. We are also waiting on some requested information to file a grievance on the Universities failure to notify the union of subcontracting the catering at the Herititage hall.

Hope you all enjoy your spring break!
In solidarity forever,
Kathi Babbitt



The Invisible Need Project



The Invisible Need Project is a multi-faceted initiative intended to serve students with unmet needs, while strengthening the culture of giving at WMU. The Project engages the entire campus community, encouraging faculty, staff, administrators, and fellow students to come together to help those in need.

Student Emergency Relief Fund/ T-Shirt:

Annually a T-shirt is sold to the campus and community, with 100% of the proceeds dedicated to the Student Emergency Relief Fund. This fund assists students with various immediate needs, not covered by financial aid, which could force them to leave WMU and abandon their educational pursuits.

The Invisible Need Project partners with campus departments and community agencies to create, market and sell “the shirt” to all interested parties.

How to support the Student Emergency Relief Fund:

- Buy a shirt
- Make a cash donation
- Become a shirt sponsor



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WMU Food Pantry:

In recent years, campus communities across the nation have recognized that there are large populations of students who experience food insecurity. We opened a food pantry in September 2014. Collection sites are located in most campus buildings with a centralized pantry location in the Faunce Student Services Building. Students in need have access to “shop” the pantry as often as every two weeks.

How to support the WMU Food Pantry:

- Donate food items
- Make a cash donation

Bryan and Kathy Stauffer Health Emergency Fund:

This fund supports uninsured and under-insured students with emergency health care needs that can be met at the Sindecuse Health Center.

How to support the Stauffer Health Emergency Fund:

- Make a cash donation

Visit MyWMU.com/invisibleneed to learn how to get involved!