January brings the start of a new legislative session in Concord. The new Reps and Senators have been sworn in. In the house we have a new Democratic majority and a friendly speaker; in the Senate we have a much more reasonable group with 11 Democrats and 13 Republicans. The new Governor Maggie Hassan has taken office as well as a new Democratic majority in the Executive Council.

We are looking forward to a two year session that will not involve weekly defensive action at the State House. We know that “Right to Work has been filed by ex-speaker Bill O’Brien and should be heard as early as late January or early February. Although RTW is not going anywhere this session, every bill filed is scheduled for a hearing and vote in the NH House. We have a meeting scheduled with the chair of the labor committee to discuss what our best approach will be on the day of the hearing. If need be we will be contacting unemployed members to attend the hearing.

We will be monitoring house and senate bills as they are released to determine what will impact labor and working families. Some of the LSR’s that have not been assigned bill numbers pertain to renewal fees for licensure, backflow prevention valves, Unemployment compensation, Workers comp. and Gaming. We will also be talking to reps about responsible contractor language and other legislation that would help level the bidding on State projects.

At the December Union meeting we had nominations to fill vacated positions on the finance committee and a position on the Board of Trustee’s; I want to thank Mark Neville for accepting the finance position and Mark Grant for accepting the Trustee position.

Remember Union Meetings are held every second Wednesday of the Month. Meeting attendance in the past few months has been very light; meetings are your opportunity to voice concerns and help shape the future of your union.

Have a Happy New Year and see you at the next Union meeting.

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I hope everyone enjoyed an excellent holiday season from Thanksgiving through the New Year start of 2013. Work in the area and on the road has been slow due to the time of year and weather. Work for Local Contractors is very tight with so few jobs to bid and the competition for those jobs at an all-time high. Work on the road is slow with no new projects scheduled to start in the first quarter. The Nuclear Outage cycle will begin in February, March and April and I am looking to get our members on those sites as soon as possible.

We currently have;
- 94 working for Local Contractors
- 57 working locally for Out of Town Contractors
- 7 working on the road
- 66 members out of work

JS Thomas at the Safron job in Rochester expects to hire between 3-12 members over the next month to help get that project back on track for a June 2013 completion date.

B&W at the Berlin Biomass Plant has had delays due to weather, materials and the holidays and has not hired over the past month as expected. They have a completion date of October 2013 and may have to go to 2 shifts to meet that deadline with all the current delays. There is more hiring expected on this job that is now working a 5-10 schedule.

NPI has picked up some work at Budweiser that should hire 4-6 members for work on some 2” & 3” solution lines for at least 1 month. They also are reporting that they may have a 100 unit apartment complex in Nashua that they have under the Residential Agreement. This job will require NH Licensed Plumbers.

RTH landed Building 174 at the PNSY with ECC and expects to hire some members in the first Quarter of 2013 for underground on that project. They also landed the Covers job on the Miami Drydock but believe that project might be delayed due to the Sub Fire at the PNSY.
Of course, normally by now I'd have 2 feet of snow on my roof, 3 in my yard, and my driveway would be down to one car wide instead of two! The new year always brings the feeling of anticipation of new beginnings. A time to pack up the seasonal decorations and start thinking about the winter projects around the house. Maybe use those gift cards from Christmas for some new curtains in the living room. Or paint for the bathroom. Heaven knows the house took a beating over the holidays. Anything on the outside of the house can wait for warmer weather. And now is when we start dreaming of longer days and higher temperatures.

The start of the new calendar is also the time to start thinking about one of the certainties of life; TAXES! Not only collecting all your records to submit for last year, but to start thinking about what changes you need to make for this year. So many things to consider: am I moving this year? getting married? getting divorced? having a child? sending a child off to college? retiring? collecting Social Security or not? Planning is key.

Well, myself; I've got a long way to go before I can retire. But I still need to think about these things right now. My husband is older than me. Quite a bit older than me. OK... he's 20 years older than me. Well, that was fine when he was 45 and I was 25. But now I'm 54 and he's 74. I'm still climbing the hill of middle age, and he's rapidly sliding down the other side. Overall it's been a great run so far and the unusual issues that we deal with, up until now have been minor. But at this stage of our lives, things are different. 10 years ago, when I was only 44, I was dealing with whether or not it was time for my husband to start collecting Social Security. He stopped working full time, but kept a part-time job to keep occupied and have some fun money. That is when I became the primary bread-winner in our house.

Now, with the start of this new year, my husband has retired completely. I am so happy for him. He has worked hard all his life and earned the right to stop. So this is another "new beginning" for us. Now, instead of putting money into a retirement fund, we are faced with starting to take it out. He was already forced to start taking the minimum at age 72.5. But until now we were just putting that back into savings. Now we are actually replacing his income, so that he is not dependent on me for every penny. It's important that he has HIS money in HIS wallet to spend as HE wants. Now the household budget needs a new review.

This is when one of the age-difference obstacles is being sorely felt. He and I will never be able to retire together. We can't buy a house in Florida and become snow birds, spending our winters in warmer weather. I have to work. We can't pack up the camper and travel the country, riding off into the sunset together: I have to work. We can't go visit the grandkids for a month. I have to work. Don't get me wrong. We're comfortable. We saved for retirement. We can afford movies and pizza. I bought the new cars before he quit. The house will be paid off when I'm 65. But by then he'll be 85. I sure hope his health holds out. In the meantime, he faces the start of many long days spent at home, waiting for me to get home from work. Sure would like to win the lottery right about now.
The Local 131 JATC has completed the construction of a rigging training structure in the rear of the facility at the Local Union Hall. This structure provides the JATC with the ability to provide on-site rigging training to our apprentices.

The local would like to thank the following people for their help in getting this structure constructed.

Dave Pelletier
Jeff Welch
Dave Hunter
Travis Cooper
Charlie Harte
Jim Hawkins
Rich Lamarre
Sean Neville
Jim Griffin
Kim Trisciani
Rich Trubion
Mark Grant
Travis Cooper
Andrew Willbrant
Joe Miller
Adam MacAllister
Dave Hunter
Andrew Nostrom
Albin Vasquez
Adam MacAllister
Justin Drymon
Dave Pelletier
Steve Lachance
Mark Grant
Rich Lamarre
Sean Neville
Jim Griffin
Kim Trisciani
Andrew Willbrant
Andrew Nostrom
Dan Coffey

Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor, and could never have existed if Labor had not first existed. Labor is superior to capital, and deserves much the higher consideration.

- Abraham Lincoln

You simply MUST try one of my fresh baked oatmeal cookies!!

Important Dates to Remember

Applications
Apprenticeship Program
The LU 131 JATC accepts applications from Jan to April. Interviews follow in May and classroom work starts with the school year in September.

Applications
LU131 Scholarship Reimbursement Program
Applications become available May 1st. After May 1st the form may be downloaded from the LU131 website or picked up at the hall office. Submission deadline is June 30th.

(Please note: this is a reimbursement program. Applicant must have already attended, passed and paid for tuition. This is NOT an advance award.)

Summer Outing 2013
Local 131 has once again reserved the Bear Brook State Park for our summer outing. Hold the date: Saturday - June 1st

If I was at the Equator and dropped a heavy metal ball into a tub of water which was at a temperature of 55 degrees F and dropped another identical ball into an identical tub of water at 25 degrees F, which ball would hit the bottom of the tub first?