

The logo of the Brotherhood of Marine, Wharf, and Dock Employees (BMWED) is a large, faint watermark in the background. It features a circular emblem with a ship's wheel and a compass rose, surrounded by the text "BROTHERHOOD OF MARINE, WHARF, AND DOCK EMPLOYEES".

President's Perspective
Freddie N. Simpson
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Preparing a New Generation

Much has been said, and written about BMWED's program, "Transition to the Future." I hope that our actions and deeds illustrate our commitment, not only to the next generation of leadership, but also to the next generation of members.

Recognizing the need to educate our members about our union, and preparing to fill the void of leadership that surely will occur over the next few years, the current BMWED leadership hatched a ten year plan to try and meet those needs.

A recent study conducted by the BMWED, which included a poll of the membership, confirmed the need for what we have been doing with our educational efforts and our increased attempts to better communicate with our members. Frankly, it also illustrated to us that we need to do an even better job of communicating with our membership. The study has not been ignored and not fallen on deaf ears.

Obviously, nothing can replace the one-on-one relationship between the members and their representatives received at local lodge meetings. However, we recognize the pressures of travel and other issues that keep many of our members from attending those meetings. And, while union representatives try to visit members as often as possible, their many duties, and the fact that a large number of our membership is mobile, sometimes makes those visits hard, if not impossible. While nothing should replace that one-on-one contact, we have instituted a number of methods in an attempt to better share information with the membership.

Our website is updated as often as possible with information concerning a myriad of issues. Most recently, we have tried to post information concerning national bargaining, from the serving of our demands, up to the current status. A lot of helpful information can be found and utilized by just visiting our website. We have also created and maintain a facebook page and twitter account so that our members will have more access to information, and can share their views.

Also, we send out regular news alerts to those who have provided us with their email addresses. As you can see by the "QR codes" we provided on the front page of this issue of the *Journal*, we are trying every method available to share information.

In preparation for the transition to a host of new union leaders, and in order to assure that our members have the very best representation possible, we continue our educational efforts. In

cooperation with Volunteer State Community College, we have implemented an intense two-week educational program designed to prepare prospective and current union officers in the techniques we believe they need to better perform the duties of a union representative. That program will continue with classes scheduled again in July. National Division officers and staff are currently planning an even more advanced program, designed to build on the existing program.

We also continue to conduct our Local Lodge Chairman and Secretary-Treasurer Seminars in various locations around the country. We cannot ask our members to step into these positions of responsibility without providing the knowledge and tools needed to succeed.

Continuing the theme of education, National Division's new building in Novi, Michigan, houses a new state of the art training center. Union officers and members from around the country will soon be brought in to utilize these facilities, where they will receive training in a variety of skills.

Obviously, a lot of emphasis has been placed on providing training, and providing better communications with our younger members. But, by no means are we ignoring, or taking for granted, our more senior members. We believe all of our members, including our retirees, will benefit from the steps we are taking to secure our union going into the future. Only a strong union, led by a strong and competent leadership, can protect the welfare of our members, and make sure that our benefits, decent pay, and pensions remain intact.

I encourage any of our members who want to accept the challenge of being a leader in this union to let your current representatives know. Training opportunities are there and you are encouraged to participate. To those who enjoy their union benefits but have no interest in holding leadership position, I ask that you stay involved and informed, support those who are willing to step up and fill those positions, and always share your opinions and ideas with your representatives. An educated and involved membership is no less important than those holding leadership roles.

