

A Vice President Speaks

Roger Sanchez

BMWED Journal - March/April 2013

Our Union was founded 125 years ago by the man who became our first BMWED President, John Wilson. The main inspiration that set Wilson on a path to form the beginnings of our Brotherhood was the death of a co-worker that left his widow with no means of support. Of course, the injustices he saw at the time as a Track Foreman had to have played a part in his decision to take up the cause. However, Wilson believed that those who labor together have a responsibility to look out for the welfare of each other - the tenet of organized Labor. He believed that each of us are our Brothers (and Sisters) keepers.

Our Union was founded on these principles and they carry forward today. The Preamble of our National Division Bylaws still contain those objectives and inspire us to, "...alleviate distress and suffering caused by sickness or disability among our members," and to, "...assist the families of deceased members."

Over the years, BMWED has established these objectives through the bargaining process, and continues to improve on these programs and benefits. However, I believe that we all have a moral responsibility and need to reach those in need within our own communities, as a Labor Organization fighting for these objectives. General President Hoffa and our National President Simpson also believe that we need to reach out and help our brothers and sisters in need within the local communities. Their commitment is illustrated in their support for these efforts.

As the appointed BMWED Director of the IBT Human Rights Commission (HRC), I have been tasked by our Union to spearhead a number of initiatives that are intended to benefit those in need within each of our local communities.

One of those initiatives is our food drive for local food pantries in which we asked that our members collect food at local lodge meetings. We have had some success with this campaign, but not enough. Our BMWED Diversity Committee has been very active in several campaigns to help the needy, cooking for the homeless, helping at homeless shelters, and delivering food to local food banks. Our members can, and should be more involved. We can do much more.

The BMWED is still asking for local HRC Representatives, and the goal is to have a representative in every Local Lodge. The economy is still struggling, and many of our neighbors are still out of work and could use a hand. Having a Representative in each Local Lodge leading these campaigns would assure much more success with our efforts to lend them the help they need.

You can become a Local HRC Representative by contacting me, Roger Sanchez at (281) 354-4812, or by email at lodge1507@aol.com.

Please continue to lend comfort and aid to our BMWED Brothers and Sisters who may be sick or disabled, as well as the families of our deceased brothers and sisters. And, take it a step further to think about those in your community that may be less fortunate and that we have the means to assist.

We must make sure that our founding principles of 125 years ago still guide our actions today.

Roger D. Sanchez
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HRC Director for the BMWED

