

Dear Sisters & Brothers,

There was a time that unions were there for members and their families, cradle to grave. Health care, retirement, disability, scholarships for your kids? Your union made sure you had access to it. Utah Phillips, for instance, was born in a CIO hospital. Well, lots of things have changed, but lots have not. Workers still need health care, retirement, help through tough times. And your union is still there.

One of the ways Local 1000 has tried to be of help to our membership is via our Emergency Relief Fund. It has provided thousands of dollars to members who've experienced health problems, natural disasters, the hard times of this economy. There are guidelines for taking advantage of the Fund on the web site at: <http://local1000.com/benefits/erf-emergency-relief-fund>.

Local 1000's Emergency Relief Fund is completely financed by donations from our membership. It's what unions have done forever: pooled individual money for the collective good. But the Fund rises and falls, just as we each do, with the times. When times are tight, donations go down. So we have to resort to creative, fun ways to make giving a little easier. That's where Woody Guthrie comes in.

Thanks to the generosity of Nora Guthrie and our friends at the Woody Guthrie Foundation, we're helping celebrate Woody's 98th birthday (just a little late), by inaugurating the *Woody Guthrie Birthday Bowling Tournament*. The tournament is a benefit raising money for our Emergency Relief Fund. It'll run from Labor Day (September 6th) for two months. Get a team together, get an opposing team (or two, or three!), reserve some time at a local alley, talk smack, bowl a bunch of games, have a good time, benefit a great cause. All the how-to's are available on the Local 1000 www site at: <http://local1000.com/bowling>

This tournament is open to everyone: members, non-members, potential members, family members, friends, fans. Advertise it on your Facebook and MySpace pages. Twitter about it. There are prizes:

*Highest Team Score

*Highest Individual Score

*Lowest Team Score

*Lowest Individual Score

*Most Gutter Balls

*Best Bowling Shirts

*Worst Bowling Shirts

The Tournament winners will be announced in New Deal's January issue and, prior to that, on the Local's web site.

Over the years, we've all learned we have plenty of obstacles to success, being a non-geographic Local. There's no union hall where we can gather to tackle important issues, build camaraderie, share a sense of belonging. Despite all the nay-sayers and the down-right opponents to our survival and success, we've grown and thrived, at a time when most AFM Locals were languishing. We're the largest Local in AFM history without a symphony. We have people retiring with good Union pensions. We've done this by using creative, fun ways to connect, cooperate, and create community. This bowling tournament is a chance to build our Union, help our brothers and sisters, and have a fund evening, to boot.

Thanks for participating. Thanks for spreading the word. And thanks, in advance, for helping each of us help one another weather unexpected rough waters.

Be sure to send photos! And, as Woody would say, "Take it easy, but take it!"

John McCutcheon,

President, Local 1000 AFM