



The Communicator

A Publication for SEIU Local 284 Education Workers Across Minnesota

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Moved? Name change? Go to www.seiu284.org and submit your updates.

SEIU MN State Council
www.seiumn.org

Job Opening:

Maintenance at the Union Office. We are looking for a skilled trades person who can do light electrical, plumbing, painting and other maintenance type work that occasionally arises around the office. This would be on a casual basis with no guarantee of hours. Please contact Keith Niemi at 651.256.9108 or email him at keithn@local284.com

Working Folks Take the Rich to Task

284 Members Join with Union and Community Allies to Challenge Corporate CEO's and the Rich to Step Up for Minnesota

A frequent refrain the past few months in Minnesota's state budget fight has been that 'Minnesotans' can't afford higher taxes.

On May 21st over a thousand union members and community allies including over a hundred local 284 members rallied at the state capitol to challenge this claim. Several speakers highlighted the struggles that working families are facing in this economy while the richest among us have done quite well. In fact these Minnesotans clearly can afford to do more.

Among them was our own Local 284 member Tilly Gitchuway a food service worker for Minneapolis public schools. Tilly told her story-working full time at the Minneapolis Food Service Center she still cannot afford health insurance for herself and her daughter and is forced to rely on public services- also now threatened-to insure that they are receiving a least basic medical services. Tilly spoke eloquently of the struggle to pay the bills without insurance and with wages held down by state politics that shortchanges and undervalues public education.

Tilly loudly proclaimed that despite her struggle she is a fighter, joining in Minnesotans for a Fair Economy's campaign to expose the untruths about our economy and tax system and work for an economy that works for all.

The day began and ended with Local 284 members gathering at the Carpenters Union Hall for a member action conference that focused on what has happened to our economy and why. Members were presented with hard facts about how wealth and income is distributed in America and shared personal stories about how working families are being affected.

Many members expressed shock and anger to learn that while hard-working folks are losing homes, jobs and healthcare, a few rich folks are doing better than ever. CEO pay went up 25% last year and in the third quarter of 2010 US Corporations posted record profits.

After the capitol rally members bussed to the Minneapolis Club-an exclusive haunt for the very rich where the CEO of Wells Fargo in Minnesota is on the Board. He is also the Chair of the Minnesota Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber has been active in pushing the "story" that "we" can't afford to do more- neglecting to tell the whole truth- that many Minnesotans can indeed do more. Certainly bankers should after receiving billions in bailouts courtesy of taxpaying working families.

Afterwards members regrouped at the Carpenters Hall and many pledged to help get the word out that - WE NEED AN ECONOMY THAT WORKS FOR ALL!

"I work hard to support education for our children but budget cuts make it hard to support my family. Corporations and the rich need to stop attacking working families and public employees, and start investing in our economy."

—Tilly Gitchuway



Minnesota Legislative Session Update by Matt Toburen, Political Organizer

It was a difficult year at the capitol for school employees, with the legislature proposing a historic number of bills that would negatively affect your wages and benefits. There were nearly 50 bills in all that would harm public employees and union members throughout the state. There were bills to limit your ability to collectively bargain and take away your right to strike, so that school districts could reduce your wages and benefits without having to negotiate (SF56, HF269, SF1260, and HF934). There were two bills aimed at your PERA pension (SF813 and HF542) that would have increased the amount you had to pay into the pension and change your pension into a defined contribution plan (similar to a 403(b)).

Thankfully, we were able to fight off these attacks! Hundreds of members like you stood up and took action: they called and emailed their legislators and came to the capitol to meet with them one-on-one. It has never been clearer that what happens at the capitol directly affects your wages and benefits!

You made your voices heard and it made a difference! There were a few Republicans, like Rep. Steve Smith (Mound) who helped stop some of these bills from passing, and thankfully Governor Dayton vetoed the rest.

But the fight is not over! As you know, the session ended without an agreement on the budget. If the legislature and Governor cannot reach agreement by July 1st, then government will shutdown. Your legislators need to hear from you that it is not acceptable to shut down government. They need to do their job, compromise with Dayton for a balanced approach of cuts and revenue to protect education and other vital services.

The GOP majority has signaled that next year they are going to continue these same attacks. We need you to get involved! There is so much at stake: your job, your wages and benefits, your pension and your basic civil right to collectively bargain! Call or email Matt Toburen, SEIU Political Organizer, at 651-256-9101, or matt@local284.com, to find out how you can make a difference.

SEIU Republican Advisory Committee

Hello, my name is Bob Mallon and I am a custodian for the Edina Public Schools, and a member of SEIU Local 284 for the last 20 years. Our membership at SEIU is a diverse group of Democratic, Republican and Independent voters. A few years ago, a group of union members came together and organized what is called the Republican Advisory Committee. This committee was created to give Republican and Independent members like myself a voice. However, any member is welcome to attend, as we are working on issues that affect all of us as union members, regardless of party. With the polarization of parties we need a united front as union members with an emphasis on all opinions. With what we see going on in Wisconsin and in our own capitol, now is the time to make the importance of collective bargaining bi-partisan. We need you to help us make this happen! Come join the SEIU Republican Advisory Committee and work with other like-minded union members.

We meet monthly at the union office. For more information contact Matt Toburen at 651-256-9101, or matt@local284.com

Retiree Corner

If you are a recent retiree, or have a retirement coming up, congratulations! We would like to invite you to join our SEIU Local 284 retiree group. The many Members-only benefits will continue at minimal cost to you (\$48/yr). These include Memorial Fund, Term Life Insurance, Travel Discounts, Low-Cost Legal Help, as well as many other perks. Please contact SEIU Local 284 for more information: 651-256-9100.

A State Government Shutdown: Why it Matters to SEIU Local 284 Members and Families

At this writing we are only a few days from having the State of Minnesota shutdown. That is unless the Republican Leadership in the House and Senate and the Governor are able to reach a budget compromise. But what does this mean for members of Local 284? After all, we work for school district's not the State of Minnesota. Well it does matter. Depending on the district that you work in, between 70% to 85% of the funding comes from the State. This means a shutdown will at a minimum delay when your district receives its funding from the State. Your district may have a fund balance to hold out for a short time; or it may have to engage in short-term borrowing which means more public education money going to banks and taken from direct services to students.

The actual extent of a state government shutdown will ultimately be determined in courts. A judge will ultimately decide which public services are essential and will continue and those that are not. The 2005 state government shutdown was only a partial shutdown because most of the budget bills were agreed to. This time, the only budget bill that the Republican Leadership and the Governor agreed to was for the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

Road construction projects will likely end, because even though they are usually bid out to outside contractors, all the highway inspectors are state employees. Need new license tabs, or to renew your driver's license, you may be out of luck. Does someone you know depend on home health aide services or in-home child care provides? It is an open question as whether the state will continue to fund these services. Metro Transit buses ran during the last shut down, but no one knows if they will be declared essential and continue to run.

A state government shutdown is not in the interest of Minnesotans; it will be disruptive and expensive to all Minnesotans. Please call, write, e-mail or attend a town hall meeting with your state senator and state legislator and urge them to work towards a compromise with the Governor. If we collectively use our voices we *can* make a difference.

Keith Niemi, President, SEIU Local 284

It's an SEIU summer!



SEIU Local 284
Day with the
Saint's & Picnic
Sat. July 23rd
at 7:05pm
Saints vs. Sioux City
Explorers



\$10 Package includes (\$23 Value):

- General Admission Ticket
- Hot Dog and Soda Voucher
- Saints Hat

\$11 Package includes (\$25 Value):

- General Admission Ticket
- Hot Dog and Soda Voucher
- Darryl Strawberry Bobblehead

Please join us for a fun night of friends and baseball at the St. Paul Saints Game! Pre-Game SEIU Tailgating in Area C, located along Energy Park Drive.

Order online at SAINTSGROUPS.com (password: *seiu284*)

SEIU Picnic starts at 5:05 (2-hours) before game time, hot dogs, pop and beer will be provided.



SEIU Member Day at the MN Zoo!
Sunday, August 7th 4:30-8:30pm

**Admission and Parking free
for members and their families.**

Food and beverages can be purchased at the zoo or you can bring a picnic lunch to enjoy in the picnic area.

Paid by SEIU MN State Council

SEIU Summer Member Picnics Around the State

**Please plan to attend a picnic in your area.
Bring your family.**

Tuesday, August 23rd, 4:30-7pm
Memorial Park on Serpent Lake
Crosby, MN 56411

Saturday, August 27th, 12-2pm
E Silver Lake Dr & 14th St NE
Rochester, MN 55906

Thursday, September 1st, 4:30- 7pm
Municipal Park
1001 River Ave N, Sauk Rapids, MN 56379

Wednesday, September 7th, 4:30-7pm
Sturges Park
Hwy 25 & 2nd Ave S, Buffalo, MN 55313

Saturday, September 10th, 12-2pm
Wabun Park Area, Minnehaha Falls
4655 46th Ave S, Minneapolis MN 55417

Congratulations April 2011 Scholarship Winners!

Laura Church - daughter of Member Carolyn Church, District #624

Ross Gammell - son of Member Teresa Gammell, District #885

Travis Przybilla - son of Member Lisa Przybilla, District #47



SEIU LOCAL 284

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Calendar of Events

LOCAL 284 OFFICERS

Executive Director:	Carol Nieters
President:	Keith Niemi
Vice Presidents:	Mark Hanson Sandy Ringler
Trustees:	Brian Dimberg Marion Conwell Peter Fitzpatrick
Members at Large:	Val Brott Bob Cook Sue Krefl Mark Krey Valerie Rolstad
Sergeant at Arms:	Mark Bolin
Senior Member:	Ginia Klamecki

The Officers of Local 284 make up the Executive Board. Executive Board meetings are open to all members in good standing. Please contact Union headquarters if you would like to attend.

June 30	SEIU Finance Committee 6:00 SEIU 284 Office
NOTE: No Executive Board/General Member Meeting in July	
July 23	SEIU St. Paul Saints Day (see inside for details)
Aug 7	SEIU Day at the MN Zoo (see inside for details)
Aug 18	SEIU 284 Executive Board Mtg 3:00 SEIU Local 284 General Member Mtg 6:30 SEIU 284 Office 450 Southview Blvd So St Paul
Aug 23	SEIU picnic in Crosby
Aug 27	SEIU picnic in Rochester
Sept 1	SEIU picnic in Sauk Rapids
Sept 7	SEIU picnic in Buffalo
Sept 10	SEIU picnic at Minnehaha Falls

PAC/COPE committee meets before each E-Board meeting at 2:30