

## A BRIEF REPORT **update**

GARY JOHNSON, INTERIM EXEC. DIRECTOR

## **workshop** CORE TRAINING

### Multiple Hats

It's true. We all do so much; it's a wonder that we can keep it all straight! Juggling our various responsibilities can often seem overwhelming and create undo anxiety. That is why MSEA offered the Core Training entitled "Multiple Hats" to give unit leaders a fresh perspective and new techniques when representing and communicating with members. Thirty MSEA members traveled to Shakopee and 36 turned out in Bemidji to listen, discuss, question and role play during these two-day workshops.

### Lecture & Small Groups

The first Friday session focused on the basic elements of "just cause", employee rights and how our own perception and bias can interfere with reality. Members were then treated to a short melodrama called "The Interview" where much of what they'd just learned was demonstrated and put into practice as a chief steward was asked to represent another employee during a meeting that could potentially lead to discipline.

For the rest of Friday afternoon, participants concentrated on taking a fresh look at the age-old problem of approaching new employees and eventually signing them as full members. Creating effective steward programs to "catch" new employees early is essential in strengthening a unit, improving internal communication and

decreasing the need for fair share conversions in the future. Members broke into small groups to customized steward programs in an attempt to address the specific challenges faced by MSEA's diverse bargaining units.



ABOVE: Laurie Zebell, Chaska  
RIGHT: Andrea Bergquist, Alexandria

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### Successful Workshops

The year seems to be moving along quite rapidly; I hope that is the same for each of you. We just completed our fall training. Between the north and south locations, we had almost 70 participants attend the two-day workshop. If you ask any of the attendees, you will hear wonderful reports as to how much each person learned. Our field staff did an excellent job covering the very important topics of internal organizing, grievance handling and negotiations. If you have a chance to attend an MSEA workshop in the future I assure you that you will learn a lot and have fun besides! Keep it in mind for next year or give me a call at the office and we will arrange training for your unit.

### Executive Director Search Update

Your Board of Directors is in the process of narrowing down the number of applications for Executive Director, which should be completed at the November Board meeting. Following that, the Board will conduct interviews and then make a final decision on your next Executive Director.

### MSEA Staff

Staff issues are on my mind. Chris Schaefer, MSEA Field Rep, was injured in a car accident in late October and will be out of work for quite a long time. Chris is on the mend and I know that you will join with me in wishing him a speedy recovery. Also, Cheryl Rosheim is leaving us for another position. Cheryl has been with MSEA for nine years and I know will be greatly missed by all of us in this organization. Good Luck Cheryl!

As you can see your Board of Directors and staff have their work cut out for them. I want to assure all of you that those of us who work for and on your behalf will be working very hard to continue to provide the very best service that we can. We do care, very much, about what takes place in your workplace. As always, if you have questions, concerns or just want to voice your opinion, please give me a call, send me an e-mail or invite me to one of your meetings. I do care!

A Happy Holidays to all of you!!

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## DATES & deadlines

BE SURE TO NOTE THESE IMPORTANT  
DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR!

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- Jan 10 MSEA Board Meeting
- Jan 19-23 MN Para Week  
Many thanks to all MSEA  
paras - we are so very  
proud of the work you do!
- Feb 1 DA Resolutions Due  
Affecting the Articles of  
Incorporation, Bylaws or  
dues schedule
- Feb 11 Spring Regional (4)
- Feb 18 Spring Regional (5)
- Feb 21 MSEA Board Meeting
- Feb 26 Spring Regional (3)
- Feb 28 Spring Regional (1&2)
- Mar 1 DA Submissions Due  
Assembly Registrations  
Scholarship Applications  
Sue Ezell Nominations  
Unit Newsletters  
Fair Share Conversions  
100% Full Membership
- Mar 10 Spring Regional (7)
- Mar 19 Spring Regional (6)
- Mar 25 Resolutions Mailed Out  
To all unit Chief Stewards,  
Delegates & Alternates
- Mar 25-27 Day on the Hill
- Mar 28 MSEA Board Meeting
- Apr 24 MSEA Board Meeting
- Apr 24-25 Delegate Assembly  
Fergus Falls Convention Ctr
- July 27-29 MSEA Board Meeting

## webTRIVIA

Don't forget to play MSEA's trivia  
game! Submit your answer from the  
1st thru the 14th of each month. It's  
fast, easy & fun!

[www.msea-mn.com](http://www.msea-mn.com)

## FROM THE PRESIDENT



WOW! 2008 is almost over; time sure seems to fly by. As you know, the Board is in the process of hiring a new Executive Director, and I want you to know, it is not an easy thing to do. The Board realizes it is very important to hire someone who is qualified and also just as important, someone that will hopefully remain MSEA's Executive Director for many years to come. So please be patient, that person is out there. We just need to find him/her.

An issue that concerns some of our members is the classified school employee coalition that MSEA belongs to along with other state organizations across the nation. I'd like to try to explain why I think it is important for us to continue with this coalition. First, MSEA is no longer a little mom and pop organization. We are 6,000 members strong. As an independent union, that is impressive. MSEA can and has the ability to be THE voice for classified school employees in Minnesota. Belonging to this coalition means that when someone wants to know what Minnesota school employees think, they come to MSEA. You also need to understand that MSEA is not the only union from Minnesota in this coalition. At the spring meeting in Washington DC, the coalition does joint lobbying, and when we tell Congress we have over 150,000 combined members, they listen. With legislation like No Child Left Behind, it is important that we have a voice. Because whether we like it or not, our members are affected by legislation that comes out of Washington DC. Unfortunately, with our limited funds, we cannot do this alone. SCHOOL EMPLOYEES NEED TO HAVE A VOICE AND I BELIEVE MSEA NEEDS TO BE THAT VOICE.

As I said, MSEA can be the voice for classified school employees in this coalition and also in Minnesota. If MSEA is willing to work toward this goal, we can have a positive effect in Minnesota and elsewhere. Our wages and benefits are decided not only by our school districts, but by what happens in St. Paul and Washington DC and we need to have our voices heard. Having said that, I think we need to make local and state issues our priority, but not forget the importance of the federal level.

On behalf of the MSEA Board of Directors, I would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

In Unity,  
Evan Mapes, MSEA President

Members were able to benefit from networking and brainstorming with other leaders throughout the state on this ongoing issue.

## Role Play

Saturday morning was reserved for the ever-popular negotiation role play which consisted of members playing the various labor and management roles during a bargaining session. Both teams



Mark Spangler (Mankato) and Sharon Lauwagie (Chaska) played the hard-nosed school district administrators in Shakopee

had their own objectives and played their parts well; drawing upon their own personal experiences to flesh out their roles. The moods rose and fell in tune with the simulation, offering key opportunities to identify and discuss the natural barriers and biases that are a normal part of the negotiation process.

As usual, members jumped right into the discussions, small groups and role plays with enthusiasm and vigor. This training proved once again that there is no shortage of talented and committed MSEA leaders. The training received high praise from the participants and their comments and feedback will undoubtedly help us to create other exciting learning opportunities in the future.

MSEA would like to thank all of the attendees for their willingness to share their personal opinions and eagerness to learn something new. For those of you who haven't yet attended an MSEA workshop - we encourage you to do so next time around. And as always, remember to bring a friend!

# cass lake

## CONTRACT CAMPAIGN

### Difficult Bargaining, the Latest Trend?

Due to the strained economic climate we are currently facing, we are beginning to experience more difficult negotiations at bargaining tables across the state. Developing and implementing unit contract campaigns may be necessary to move your negotiations along, as seen with the Cass Lake/Bena unit. MSEA's Cass Lake/Bena unit has been in a prolonged battle with the district at the negotiation table. Inasmuch, the unit has employed a number of strategies that include:

- ◆ numerous unit meetings
- ◆ articles in local newspapers & Letters to the Editor
- ◆ sending flyers to our members & other district units
- ◆ attending School Board meetings in numbers and speaking during the public comment sections
- ◆ informational picketing before School Board meetings
- ◆ contacting School Board members directly in writing or by phone
- ◆ posing questions to School Board Candidates during public forums
- ◆ requesting support from community leaders and neighboring MSEA units

As we continue to move forward in Cass Lake/Bena, we need to recognize the unit's hard work and especially the efforts of their leadership and negotiation team! Their struggle is OUR struggle to not only advance workplace wages and benefits, but sometimes just to keep what you have! Please rally your support and let folks in Cass Lake know you stand with them – they are not alone!

## new hires

### MEMBER CONTACT PROGRAM

ALYSSA MUELLER, DIR. OF ORGANIZING

This fall our MSEA Core Training "Multiple Hats" focused on working with local leaders to implement a **New Member Contact Program**. This program will set up structures in each unit that can be used to strengthen internal communications, increase member participation and welcome new members into the school and union family.

Each unit should strive to welcome new hires as soon as possible and point out the benefits that your unit has negotiated on behalf of the members. It is also a great time to talk to new hires about basic school information that can be overlooked during orientation. This would include things like where to hang their coat, how to call in sick, how to "clock-in" and "clock-out" each day and who to talk to in the administration regarding various issues. Making the union a friendly and helpful group will help you to gain full members, which reduces the need for the more difficult fair share conversions later on.

If you and/or your unit would like help in implementing a new member program, please contact Alyssa Mueller at [alyssa@msea-mn.com](mailto:alyssa@msea-mn.com) or 800.622.0289 or your field representative. We would be happy to train your unit on how to start and maintain a fun and effective **New Member Contact Program!**

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## LABOR HISTORY

### Walking in Their Shoes **1930**

During the 1930's, a series of labor strikes involving truck drivers and business owners plagued the Minneapolis warehouse district. Minneapolis had become a major hauling center in the United States, employing thousands of drivers, many of who were unorganized. Workers were striking for the right to organize in an effort to secure better wages and working conditions.

In May of 1934, a settlement was reached that met the union's major objectives, however in the following weeks it became clear the employers were not carrying out the agreement. Several hundred cases of discrimination were recorded and another strike was called for July 16, 1934. Trucking was again effectively closed down until Friday, July 20, 1934 when police opened fire on unarmed strikers, shooting 67 people; 46 of those in the back.

The labor movement in the United States has experienced a long and often violent history. By understanding past struggles, workers can better appreciate and safeguard the rights and protections afforded them through unionizing.

Two men, John Belor and Henry Ness, literally gave their lives while fighting for their right to organize on July 20, 1934, which later became known as "Bloody Friday." Over 100,000 people attended Henry's funeral and massive public support ensued for the workers' plight. A public commission established after the strike later testified that, "Police took direct aim at the pickets and fired to kill. Physical safety of the police was at no time endangered. No weapons were in possession of the pickets". The actions these workers took during these strikes in the 1930's led to some of the greatest achievements in the labor movement at a great personal cost!

looking back...