

Classified

FEBRUARY 2005

VOLUME 25

NUMBER 2

MINNESOTA SCHOOL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

mark your calendars!

2005 DELEGATE ASSEMBLY

The 2005 Delegate Assembly has been scheduled for **April 29-30, 2005** at the Alexandria Holiday Inn. Delegates will arrive Friday morning to register at the MSEA booth between 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM. Friday lunch is on your own. The first business session begins promptly at 12:30 PM on Friday, April, 29th.

The 2005 Assembly proudly marks MSEA's 25th year of representing the needs of classified public school employees in Minnesota. And as such, we're hoping to add an extra touch of style to the conference this year.

As the governing body of MSEA, the Delegate Assembly provides members with the unique and important opportunity of guiding the direction and future of their union. Assembly registration forms have already been mailed to all unit chief stewards and are also available through the MSEA office. Delegates and Alternates may also register online at: www.msea-mn.com.

DUE MARCH 1ST:

- *MSEA Delegate/Alternate registrations
- *Sue Ezell Leadership Award (Member of the Year)
- *Unit Newsletter of the Year submissions
- *Nancy Crippen Scholarship applications
- *100% Full Membership
- *Fair Share Conversions

DUE MARCH 15TH:

- *Resolutions submitted to the Exec. Director affecting the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws or dues schedule.

DUE MARCH 29TH:

- *Delegates must call the Alexandria Holiday Inn (320.763.6577) to reserve their room for Friday, April 29th under the MSEA reservation.

- *Resolutions affecting the Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws or dues schedule mailed out to all Delegates, Alternates and Chief Stewards by the MSEA office.

SPRING REGIONALS ARE HERE



Although a couple of Spring Regionals have already been held, most of the meetings are coming up soon! All members are welcome to attend the meetings, however Delegates, Alternates and unit leaders should make a special point to attend their regional meeting. Mark your calendars today!

REG	DATE	SPRING REGIONAL	TIME
1-2	2/19	Bemidji - Bonanza Restaurant 824 Paul Bunyan Dr S Hwy 197	10:30 AM
3	3/5	Fergus Falls - Best Western 925 Western Av	12:00 PM
4	2/26	Willmar - McMillan's Restaurant 2620 S Hwy 71	10:00 AM
5	2/10	Centennial RED High School 4881 101st Ln Circle Pines	5:30 PM
6	2/17	Windom Eagles Club (Golden Wing Rm) 821 4th Av	5:30 PM
7	2/8	Rochester Mayo High School 1420 11th Av SE	6:00 PM

Topics for discussion include:

- *resolutions currently submitted
- *new issues/resolutions from members
- *MSEA Officer/Director positions up for election
- *unit awards and member recognition

This is a great opportunity to network with other members within your region, plus MSEA will pick up the cost of the meal! You can't lose!

EXPENSES: (Paid for all Delegates)

- *Hotel costs for April 29, 2005
- *Friday banquet, Saturday Breakfast, Saturday lunch
- *Lost wages for MSEA contract work
- *Mileage at current IRS rate of 40.5 cents per mile (Delegates are strongly encouraged to carpool.)

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MSEA

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AFFILIATION COMMITTEE

The MSEA Affiliation Committee is being reactivated after a five year break. The Committee is made up of four Board members and four members-at-large with staff serving in an advisory capacity. The purpose of this committee is to discuss and investigate all issues related to MSEA's possible affiliation with another labor union.

To be clear, the formation of this committee in no way signifies that MSEA is preparing to affiliate with another union. The committee does not have the authority to affiliate with another union - affiliation can only occur following a member vote. MSEA's Board of Directors believes that starting the Affiliation Committee now is a prudent step to take to insure that MSEA is prepared for any possibilities that may arise in the future.

We hope to have the committee up and running before the Delegate Assembly. The goal is to study and discuss the issues surrounding affiliation and prepare a report for the 2005 Assembly. Please feel free to contact MSEA President Les Schermerhorn with any questions or comments at:

les-deb@cableone.net
218.233.1035.(hm)

UNION DUES ARE NON-DEDUCTIBLE

Union dues paid to MSEA are NOT tax deductible as charitable contributions for federal income tax purposes. However, they may be deductible under other provisions of the Internal Revenue Code. Questions? Talk with your tax preparer.

****IRS REQUIRED NOTICE****

HELLO ALL!

A great deal has been going on during the last couple of months. The Board has been busy setting regional meeting dates and finalizing the various arrangements for our 25th anniversary Delegate Assembly. What a monumental occasion! The Board is looking forward to it with great anticipation as we hope you are.



I want to take this opportunity to say **congratulations** and **thank you** to the Alexandria Driver/Para unit. The raid by the Teamsters was unsuccessful as the members reaffirmed MSEA as their exclusive representative in a recent election. Once again our members have shown their unity and strength; you should be proud of yourselves! I know I speak for the Board and staff when I say WE are!

A priority of the Board is creating and maintaining a good working relationship with the staff. It is because of this that we have proposed restarting the Labor Management Committee to continue working on Board and staff relations. We are hopeful staff will be open to this idea, as we feel the benefits will be numerous.

We've also been looking closely at our budget and diligently reviewing it line by line to ensure that we are doing everything possible, looking at every alternative, to make sure we remain fiscally responsible to you our members. We need to keep MSEA healthy and secure.

I know many of you have been dealing with changes this year with budget cuts, No Child Left Behind, placement issues and other adjustments. Unfortunately MSEA is no different. The Board has needed to make some tough decisions and undoubtedly there are more ahead of us. MSEA is a member-run union; the Board is directly responsible to you, the members. I can assure you decisions by the Board are made with what is best for you; MSEA remains in the forefront of their minds.

We all are looking forward to seeing and talking with you at the regional and at the Assembly. Stay warm and we'll see you April 29-30th at the 25th MSEA Delegate Assembly!

In Unity,
Les Schermerhorn, MSEA President

Para Consortium News

Make a habit of checking the Consortium website every week. You'll find valuable information to help you perform your daily job including the topics listed below. <http://ici2.umn.edu/para/>

MSEA's website also has a direct link to the Consortium's site. www.msea-mn.com

■ The MN Para Consortium has an opening for one Special Ed. para. Applications are available on the Consortium website.

■ The 2005 MN Para Conference has been scheduled for **April 29-30** in Hutchinson. Registration forms will be available after February 7th on the Consortium website.

■ The 2005 Nat'l Para Conference will be held on **April 28-30** in Salt Lake City, Utah. Minnesota will host the 2006 Nat'l Para Conference.

■ **IDEA** (Special Education) funding was reauthorized by Congress with no additional requirements placed on paras. Some staff development requirements have been in place for many years for special ed. paras, but the requirements under NCLB were not added to IDEA.

■ The AmeriCorps Teacher Corps has great opportunities for paras to obtain monies for college expenses by being a volunteer tutor. More info is available at: www.theMLC.org/teachercorps or you can get there through the MSEA website.

MSEA - A Look Back

This year marks the 25th anniversary of MSEA's first Delegate Assembly. As MSEA reaches this important milestone, it is increasingly important that we look to our history for guidance on the challenges yet to come.

MSEA is a union of classified public school workers, which traces its roots to the Minnesota Association of Auxiliary Personnel (MAAP). MAAP was created by the Minnesota Education Association, a forerunner of today's teachers union - Education Minnesota. MAAP originally represented only teaching assistants and secretaries. In 1980 the decision was made to include all school workers and MAAP left MEA and was renamed the Minnesota School Employees Association (MSEA).

MSEA experienced a rapid growth spurt over the next four years, accompanied by increasing financial difficulties. By 1984, the Delegate Assembly elected to affiliate with the Service Employees Int'l Union (SEIU). Following affiliation, MSEA turned from organizing new units and focused on providing better representation and service to existing MSEA members.

In the summer of 1989 MSEA's Board of Directors and staff drafted MSEA's mission statement. (see inset)

This mission statement has proven to be MSEA's guiding light for most of the last 15 years. In the early 1990's MSEA began actively organizing new bargaining units. In 1995 the Delegate Assembly voted to leave SEIU and MSEA became an independent union once again! By the end of the 1990's MSEA's recently empowered members were experiencing their first serious strikes and contract campaigns.

In the past several years, MSEA has faced new challenges from without (attempted raids by the Teamsters, Operating Engineers and Education Minnesota) and within. In order to prepare ourselves to meet these new challenges, we must direct our focus to the core ideals contained in our mission statement - Growth, Dignity, Member Empowerment, Democracy, Fiscal Responsibility and Professionalism. By understanding our past we are better able to shape our future. By adhering to our mission statement, the next 25 years should be as successful as the last 25 years!

MSEA
MISSION STATEMENT

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MSEA BEATS BACK TEAMSTER CHALLENGE

The Alexandria paraprofessional and bus driver unit voted overwhelmingly to retain the Minnesota School Employees Association (MSEA) as their exclusive bargaining representative in a Bureau of Mediation Services (BMS) election held on January 11, 2005. Out of 155 ballots cast, 110 (71%) chose MSEA while only 44 (28%) opted for Teamsters Local 320. MSEA Associate Director Jeff Sabin coordinated the efforts of numerous Alexandria building reps and members headed by Chief Steward Jill Marquette and MSEA Field Representative Cheryl Rosheim.

It took eight weeks from the time the Teamsters petitioned to represent the Alexandria unit until the votes were counted. During that time, MSEA assessed, educated and mobilized its members while emphasizing not only the history of quality representation but also the benefit of a union that ONLY represents classified school employees.

All of MSEA should be extremely proud of our Alexandria members; the MSEA campaign team conducted themselves with class and dignity. It was a true grass roots effort carried out by a true grass roots, member-directed union.

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NACSE REPORT - November 2004 - By Kevin Fahey, Executive Director

On Nov. 11, 2004, President Les Schermerhorn and myself flew to San Jose, CA for the Board meeting of the National Assn of Classified School Employees (NACSE). That evening, Les met with other Presidents while I met with other Executive Directors and the NACSE Board met the following day.

Unions representing classified school employees in other states face the same problems that we face here in Minnesota. We'd all like to focus our energies on member representation and enhancing public education in the face of a tenuous economy and political climate prone to cuts rather than enhancements. But all too often, independent unions like MSEA are fighting off raids by AFL-CIO member unions with huge international treasuries who have decided to try "steal the organized" rather than "organize the unorganized."

The California School Employees Association (CSEA) spent many years and millions of dollars fighting off raids by other unions. CSEA finally decided to take the power of a 200,000 plus membership and apply for their own AFL-CIO Charter, which they received. They are now members of the AFL-CIO and their President, Clyde Rivers sits on the prestigious AFL-CIO Executive Committee.

Why did they join the AFL-CIO? To receive Article 20 and Article 21 protection. Membership in the AFL-CIO means that no other affiliated union can "raid" your units without receiving sanctions from the Federation. Since their affiliation, CSEA has been free from raids by other unions and can concentrate on their proscribed duties.

What are other states doing? Recently the Utah Association entered into an affiliation with the National

Education Association. Oregon joined the American Association of Classified School Employees (AACSE), which has an affiliation with the American Federation of Teachers (AFT). That leaves the Washington State group (PSE) and Minnesota loosely affiliated with California in the NACSE but without any protection from raids.

CSEA has asked the AFL-CIO to approve an enhanced charter to include PSE, MSEA and other classified school employee associations. This charter would allow MSEA to receive AFL-CIO Article 20 and 21 protections while remaining completely independent. The proposed charter would **NOT** allow anyone from any other state to make decisions for MSEA members.

Jerry Klepner, our Washington DC lobbyist briefed the Board via telephone. The new Congress will have plenty to deal with and there will be major pressures on domestic spending due to the current tax and deficit situation. A major concern is whether or not all paras will have to be certified under No Child Left Behind. Jerry reports that IDEA will be re-authorized, but funding will certainly fall below the federal government's commitment of 40%. The many proposals to reform the Social Security System will be a new issue of emphasis for NACSE. Attempts to privatize Social Security could have an extreme impact on our members. Keep an eye on our web site for Jerry's DC updates.

I think that my biggest surprise with NACSE is that California cannot dominate the organization. Every state association member has one vote. That means that MSEA's vote cast by Les equals the California vote cast by their president. It is truly a confederation of state associations, not of members.