

tell your story

CHRISTINA'S CORNER

CHRISTINA L. CLARK, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



My Story

When we talk about how to grow MSEA, we always say: "tell your story." Sharing true life examples of why MSEA is important to you is the best way to persuade others to join this great union. I realized recently that I should follow this advice myself and tell some of my story.

Why do I work for the union? I don't come from a union family. In fact, my self-employed brother and management-position sisters poke at me about how happy their employees are without a union. But the fact is that my siblings treat their staff fairly and pay them a living wage and benefits. And that is exactly why I believe in unions - because not every employer will treat their staff as my siblings do.

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2010 MSEA CORE TRAINING "Who You Gonna Call?"

As a unit leader, you get questions every day about what is happening in your building, what is happening in the classroom, contract language, district policies, possible discipline scenarios and more. Come to the 2010 Core Training to find out "Who You Gonna Call?" when faced with these and many other questions!

November 12-13, 2010 - Mankato
November 19-20, 2010 - Bemidji

Information will be sent to unit leaders in September. All full members are welcome, but unit leaders and building representatives are especially encouraged to attend. Remember to **Save the Date!**

2010 AUGUST RALLY What Kind of Leader Are You?

With scenic Ruttger's Bay Lake Lodge as our setting this year, MSEA leaders registered in record time for the 2010 August Rally. Fifty-one members from 21 school districts attended the two-day workshop designed to enlighten, educate, challenge and entertain!

Every leader has a preferred method of accomplishing work and everyone brings their unique style to a team. By understanding how different styles work together, leaders can learn to play to each other's strengths while overcoming their weaknesses or blind spots.

Tuesday afternoon, seasoned workshop facilitator Miriam Vaughn-Lee educated members on characteristics of the four main leadership styles (Dominance, Influence, Steadiness & Conscientiousness). Each participant then took the DiSC® assessment to identify their own natural leadership strengths and challenges. Miriam's experience, honesty and humor allowed for an open exchange of opinions and ideas while dealing with topics that can occasionally be difficult to broach. Members jumped in with both feet and came away better informed and with a few new friends as well.

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clockwise from top: SuAnn Byrd, Minnetonka; Dorothy Stobaugh, Nan Peters and Diana Vogt, Rochester; Lynn Jansen MSEA staff

The Minnesota School Employees Association (MSEA), is a growing union which recognizes the dignity of the individual worker and the power of the organized body. It is a democratic union directed by its membership, and fiscally responsible to that membership. Through an empowered membership and a professional staff, MSEA provides the highest level of representation and service in the State of Minnesota.

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Field Rep John Rostad

2010-11 SCHOOL YEAR

Board Meetings

September 25, 2010
October 30, 2010
December 10, 2010
January 22, 2011
February 26, 2011
March 26, 2011
April 8, 2011
July 27, 2011

MSEA full members are encouraged to attend Board meetings which are held in the MSEA St. Paul office. Contact MSEA for instructions and directions on entering the MSEA building on weekends in order to attend a meeting.

DUES TASK FORCE

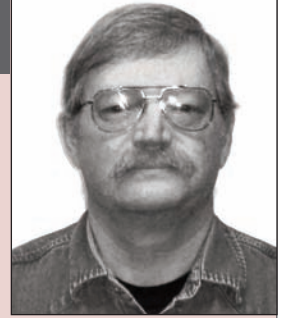
Review Completed

The MSEA dues task force met several times during the 2009-10 school year to review our current dues structure and explore whether we could find a way to make it more equitable while also maintaining the same amount of dues revenue overall. The task force included members MJ Hanson(Board of Directors), Kim Lennartson, Evan Mapes(President), and Diana Vogt(Treasurer), with support from staff members Lynn Jansen and Christina Clark.

MSEA uses income-based categories for calculating dues. The most significant issue the task force identified was that nearly 1/3 of our members are in a single dues category. The task force researched several ways to change the categories and “redistribute” members into different, new or modified categories.

In the end, however, the task force concluded that none of the possible options would improve the system enough to justify making a change. The dues task force therefore recommended to the MSEA Board of Directors that the MSEA dues structure remain the same for now. Having finished its work, the task force has now disbanded. MSEA thanks the hardworking members of this group for its significant and important work!

FROM THE PRESIDENT



Where DID the summer go?
As I am writing this, there are only two weeks of summer vacation left before a new school year begins.

In this newsletter I am going to talk about one very important issue and come straight to the point: Schools, and as a result members, are facing the same financial problems that we have been facing for years now, **inadequate funding.**

As I have been talking with members, one of the universal concerns is that there is not a lot we, as school employees, can do about funding. I have to say: “YES THERE IS”. With this being an election year, it is very important for every member to understand that we can and do have an opportunity to do something about school funding. It is critical that we as members take a very close look at where people running for public office stand on school funding and school issues.

From local school boards to state offices to federal offices, we need to elect people that understand the importance of adequate funding of our schools, and the important role schools play in our future. So please, for our children and grandchildren, for our schools and for our jobs - vote for and support candidates who will support our schools.

In Unity,

Evan Mapes
MSEA President

MN 54th Food Service Conference Aug 8-11, Rochester Mayo Civic Center



The Minnesota Food Service School Nutrition Association has over 2,500 school food service professionals working hard to help children by advancing school nutrition programs in our state. The four-day annual conference attracts between 800-900 food service employ-

ees and is packed with a variety of workshops, speakers, exhibits, awards and social events!

Little Falls members **JANET PETERSON** and **LORDEEN SOWADA** helped MSEA Field Representative Don Gilbertson staff an informational booth on August 10th during this busy conference.

MSEA believes our members are an important resource in getting the MSEA message out. No one is better at sharing our message than MSEA members themselves! Thanks again Janet and Lordeen for giving so generously of your valuable time! Over 400 Food Service Employees visited the MSEA booth!!! The \$100 drawing was won by **Kimberly Behrens** from the Anoka food service unit, which MSEA has proudly represented since March 2003. Congratulations Kimberly!

conversions

GOT FAIR SHARE?

Reach Out This Fall

Units that have 100 % full membership keep MSEA strong – especially at the negotiations table. Are you bargaining now? Are you able to tell the school district team that everybody in your unit is a full member of MSEA and eligible to vote on whether to ratify a contract?



The beginning of the school year is a good time to reach out to longstanding fair share members and tell them your story – tell them why joining as a full member is important and worth it. This year, MSEA is mailing a special invitation to each returning fair share member. The invite reminds them that the additional 15 % that full members pay is more than paid for by MSEA's set of member benefits, from scholarships to life insurance to discount coupons. And it emphasizes that the most important benefit is the right to vote on the contract and in leadership elections. A membership application with a postage-paid return envelope is included with the mailing.

Do you know some coworkers who have simply never bothered to join MSEA as a full member? Who probably don't even realize that they aren't members or don't think that it matters? Who might treat an MSEA envelope as junk mail? Remember – your unit receives \$10 for every fair share fee payer who converts to full member status. So take a minute and talk to just one or two of these folks. Tell them your story. Ask them to take a look at their invitation and become a full member. Your contract depends on it.

CHRIS SCHAEFER, FIELD REP

WARROAD SUBCONTRACTING

(A tale of woe, action and triumph!)

part one - the woe

A long time ago (7 months to be precise) in a school district (Warroad) far, far away (over 400 miles from St. Paul) contract negotiations began in the usual manner. After the District settled their teachers' contract, MSEA began to negotiate our new (2009-2011) contracts. MSEA represents all non-certified staff in two contracts – the Drivers/Mechanics and Everybody Else (cooks, paras, secretaries and custodians). Negotiations proceeded normally for the first two meetings but at the third meeting the District informed both groups that they were investigating sub-contracting to eliminate all custodians, drivers and mechanics. This threat led to great woe and apprehension as MSEA members contemplated the loss of jobs, benefits and pensions.

part two - the action

Faced with such an imminent threat, MSEA members sprung into action. We made sure 10-15 members attended every school board meeting. Members began to talk with school board members as well as family, friends and neighbors. MSEA scheduled membership meetings to keep all members informed and empowered. And, most importantly, we studied the issue of sub-contracting in order to formulate a strategy. We concluded that it would be impossible for the District to sub-contract after school started. Therefore, MSEA adopted a strategy of delay. When the District attempted to schedule a special Board meeting for the purpose of accepting sub-contracting bids, we informed the District that they had not given adequate notice of the special meeting, thereby delaying the special meeting by 10 days. By July our strategy was paying dividends as the District dropped the idea of sub-contracting the custodians.

part three - the triumph

As we entered into mediation the District continued to pursue sub-contracting the Drivers/Mechanics unit and offered us a buyout, which the group rejected. We showed no fear, and continued to push the District to negotiate a contract with our group. By the end of the 2nd mediation meeting the District blinked; they offered us our jobs if we would agree to give up all health benefits. We took their less than generous offer back to our group for a vote and it was rejected unanimously on August 11, 2010. On August 12 we learned that the District was dropping the idea of sub-contracting - it was too late to accomplish before school started. Victory! However, our victory is only temporary. We must remain vigilant as the threat of sub-contracting may re-appear next year in Warroad - or in your District!

MSEA NANCY CRIPPEN EDUCATIONAL SCHOLARSHIP

MSEA awards ten \$500 scholarships to full members and/or their dependent children seeking post-secondary education each year.

Nancy Crippen served as MSEA's Executive Director from 1986 until her death in 1996. Nancy's commitment to education was demonstrated through her service on the Worthington, Minnesota Board of Education and her dedication to bettering the working conditions of classified school employees throughout the public school system in Minnesota. Nancy herself had attended graduate school at the U of M and taken classes at the Hubert Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs, while her husband, Gary, served as an appellate-court judge on the MN Court of Appeals. Nancy and Gary passed on to their seven children the value of education as each of those children went on to receive various levels of higher education degrees. This scholarship was named in her memory to honor Nancy's strong belief that "our children are our future and we must teach them well."

APPLICATIONS MUST BE POSTMARKED OR FAXED TO MSEA BY MARCH 1st EACH YEAR.

Mail: 190 E 5th St, #750
St Paul MN 55101

Fax: 651-297-6814 or 888-329-6732
Phone: 651-227-3623 or 800-622-0289(toll free)

APPLICANT _____ ISD _____

MSEA MEMBER NAME _____ RELATIONSHIP TO MEMBER _____

ADDRESS _____ HOME # _____

CITY/STATE/ZIP _____

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTION _____

FIELD OF STUDY _____

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE RULES and PROCEDURES

1. The Scholarship committee will be comprised of two members of the Board of Directors and three members at large.
2. Scholarship recipients must be MSEA members or their dependent children.
3. Committee members and/or their dependent children are eligible for the NCES.
4. Scholarship shall be chosen by random selection.
5. Ten \$500.00 scholarships will be awarded, three for MSEA members and seven for dependent children of MSEA members seeking post-secondary education.
6. If MSEA does not receive enough eligible applications for each type of scholarship, the scholarship(s) will be awarded to an applicant of the other group.
7. Incomplete applications shall not be considered.
8. Scholarships will be announced each year at the Delegate Assembly.
9. Award money will be distributed upon proof of payment for educational courses.
10. Recipients must claim their award for expenses incurred during the current academic school year (Sept.-Aug.) or within two years from the date of notification of the award.

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Growing up in Colorado, this fact was proven to me by the first union battle I ever witnessed. Although Cesar Chavez was in California, his compelling organizing campaign to boycott grapes and lettuce stretched across all the western states. Now he was someone who could effectively tell his story! I couldn't believe the working conditions of the farm workers - pesticides, long hours, searing heat and poverty-level piecework pay. I helped a tiny bit by leafletting the local Safeway grocery store in support of the boycott. After five years of relentless work and many setbacks, the union finally won its first contract, and Chavez was my forever hero. I still don't buy grapes.

Student Activist

From that point forward, I wanted to work for a union. I asked the guidance counselors why "labor unionist" or "union organizer" was never a choice on those career surveys they made us do. I remember Mrs. Craig telling me to choose "business" instead. I laughed then, but I guess she was right - labor unions are a business!

In high school, a few of us organized students to support our teachers when they were on strike. We called ourselves "PLEASE" (Protect Littleton Educators And Students' Educations). We brought hot chocolate and coffee to the strike line, attended court hearings, and wrote letters to the editor. Our presence earned some good media attention for the union!

Here and Now

Nearly 20 years later, I joined the staff of Minnesota's teacher union. Now, yet another 20 years later, I am part of the MSEA. I still feel the collective trauma of the farm workers and the "keep your eyes on the prize" attitude of the striking Littleton teachers. I put these feelings to work as MSEA fights subcontracting threats, unfair management decisions, and stagnant wage rates. I hope my work will bring some relief, hope, and security to MSEA, its members, and its future members.

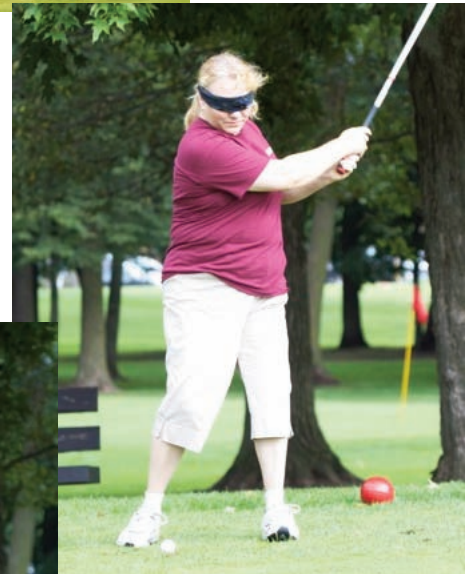
What's **YOUR** story? Tell me at: christina@msea-mn.com.

¡ Sí, se puede!
Christina



Team members Laurel Long (Detroit Lakes), Cheri Pearson (Moorhead) and Field Rep John Rostad successfully "negotiated" the golf course activity.

The next morning, members put what they'd learned the day before to the test during a team golf activity that required them to work together through various challenges. Although a bit unconventional, everyone jumped into the exercise with both feet, regardless of their



previous golfing experience. The activity gave members the opportunity to recognize different leadership styles within their teams and required them to try out their newly-acquired communication techniques to accomplish their goals. And the best part was they had a great time doing it!

It was rewarding to see members learning a little bit more about themselves while getting to know each other in the process. We hope each leader left with new insights on how to work with their co-leaders and unit members throughout the upcoming school year. Thanks so much to all those who attended; we hope to see you back again. We'd also like to encourage those who did not attend to seriously consider joining us next year!

[august rally quotes]

- "The speaker kept you engaged, thinking and wanting to participate!"
- "I enjoy working hands-on, so golf was a blast! Was nice getting to know new people too."
- "This training was the best; there wasn't anything I didn't like!"



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St Paul MN 55101

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NEWS & NOTES

Local Budgets Due November

Units with local dues must submit their 2009-10 End-of-Year Budget and 2010-11 Projected Budget to MSEA by **November 1st**. After December 1st, MSEA may withhold payment of local dues from any unit not in compliance. (MSEA Treasury Code of Standards)

Election 2010

Don't forget to vote on November 2nd!
Polls open from 7:00 AM - 8:00 PM.

Want to find out if you are registered to vote?

<http://mnvotes.sos.state.mn.us/VoterStatus.aspx>

Where is your polling place? Find it at:
<http://pollfinder.sos.state.mn.us/>

Need an absentee ballot?
<http://www.sos.state.mn.us/index.aspx?page=211>

Voting in any type of election, from local elections to Presidential primaries, provides an important way to voice your opinions regarding elected leaders and overall policies. Be sure to make it a priority!



MSEA \$2000 Life Insurance Benefit Coverage for Members on Medical LOA

The Board of Directors updated the MSEA General Policy and Procedure Handbook in March 2010 with the following language:

Section I. B. 4. i: *Conditions/Clarifications regarding administration of MSEA's life insurance benefit on behalf of the member or another person.* When the MSEA receives written notice that a member is on an unpaid medical leave(due to the medical/health needs of either the member or another person) at a time when such member's coverage by the MSEA's member-only life insurance policy has not yet lapsed, the MSEA will take the steps necessary to continue the member's coverage until such time as the member either returns to work with his/her employing school district or ceases employment with the employing school district.

History/Rationale: MSEA depends primarily on school district offices to keep us informed of members going on and off of a leave of absence. Please help us maintain our records by notifying Lynn Jansen when you take a leave of absence and once again when you return to work. (lynn@msea-mn.com)

did you know?