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MN GUILD NEWSLETTER

VIRTUAL UNION CLASSES & SCHOLARSHIPS

In [last month's newsletter](#) we told you about the [CWA Joe Beirne Scholarship](#) opportunity (application deadline [April 30th!](#)) and this month we want to let you know about TNG's collective bargaining scholarship on honor of Minnesota Guild's own Bruce Nelson. The scholarship will fund training through the [Cornell University School of Industrial and Labor Relations](#).

Classes are only a 3–5-hour commitment per week for 2 weeks, instructor led, and 100% online. This semester's classes include Bargaining Foundations, Negotiations, Costing, Handling Grievances, and Arbitration.

Local News Guild officers and staff will need to nominate scholarship candidates so reach out to Candace, Allana, Nick, or one of the other officers if you are interested. [Scholarship applications](#) should be submitted at least 2 weeks prior to the start of the class so you'll need to act fast!

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE 2ND ANNUAL GUILD PICNIC

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH 11:00 AM – 2:00 PM

MINNEHAHA PARK IN MINNEAPOLIS

Join us for burgers, family-friendly activities, and prizes!



UPCOMING EVENTS

04
18

"Stripped for Parts: American Journalism on the Brink"

12:10PM | Thursday, April 18th

Screening as part of the Minneapolis-St. Paul International Film Festival Main Cinema (115 SE Main St., Minneapolis). Tickets are \$15

[This film](#) documents Denver Post Guild members' fight against the hedge fund Alden Global Capital to try and save local journalism.

04
27

Retiree Council's 19th Annual FUN(d)raiser, MN AFL-CIO

3:00PM-7:00 PM | Saturday, April 27th

Sheet Metal Workers Local 10 Hall, Maplewood, MN

Free admission, food, music, games, and parking. Silent auctions and hourly raffle that supports the council's political efforts.

05
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MN Guild Membership Meeting

6:00PM-7:00 PM | Wednesday, May 22nd Virtual

RSVP to Marilyn for the [Zoom Link](#)

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WHAT IS WORKER VOICE?

Worker voice is the ability of workers to come together, collectively articulate their demands, and seek better terms and conditions of work. It is a bedrock principle of labor relations. Freedom of association and the right to collective bargaining are core enabling rights that are essential to effective worker voice.

Research shows there are **six key components of effective worker voice**:

1. Elect: Workers must be able to act together to establish organizations and democratically elect the leaders that represent them, free from interference by employers or the government.

2. Represent: Workers need to be informed of their rights, engaged, and mobilized for action. Elected organizational leaders must be fully accountable to their members and responsible for consulting them on key matters.

3. Include: Workers' organizations, including organization leadership, need to be inclusive. These groups should address obstacles to full representation and participation of the diverse workforce in their ranks, including diversity of race, gender, and economic status.

4. Protect: Workers must be protected from retaliation when they speak up, including protection from losing their jobs or facing abuse, including harassment, threats, violence, coercion, and deportation.

5. Enable: Workers need to be given the time and space to organize and engage in their union business and the training and information to fulfill their rights.

6. Empower: Workers must be empowered by labor laws, have the ability to pursue lawful actions to advance their objectives (including strikes), and have access to effective mechanisms to file grievances.

—from DOL's Bureau of International Labor Affairs

UNIT UPDATES

Minnesota ACLU Reaches CBA Through Persistence and Solidarity

By Emily Huemann Xiong (*Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative*)

The ACLU of MN Staff United reached a hard-fought union contract (CBA) that includes major wins for pay transparency and equity – with the lowest paid employees seeing a 14% increase – as well as for vacation and leave policies, workload protections, unit involvement in strategic planning, and increased transparency from the Board of Directors.

I talked with Munira Mohamed who has been part of the ACLU of MN's union effort from the very beginning and provided consistent leadership throughout the long negotiation process. Munira said that at several stages management seemed to not understand why unionizing was so important to staff, believing that simply having new leadership would solve long standing issues inherent to the org. Despite the long journey and significant staff turnover, Munira and other leaders were persistent in bringing new staff along and holding on to this opportunity for the ACLU of MN to address long standing issues and grievances. They pushed management to disrupt the

pattern of giving preference to attorneys and legal work over other roles in areas of work such as community organizing, philanthropy and communications.

Munira said "Yes we're in the courts but we're also in the legislature and in the community and in the streets. Trying to get over that stratified org structure was really hard."

Within the unit, strong solidarity across all roles displayed their seriousness to management, making them impossible to ignore. Munira said it was through their unity that they demonstrated they weren't going anywhere and were able to apply constant pressure. Munira said despite the grueling journey it's all been worth it to achieve the contract wins and create the first union in the organization's over 70-year history, knowing it will improve the lives of employees, improve the organization, and improve the work they can do for the state.

**NEWSLETTERS ARE A COLLABORATIVE
EFFORT. CONTRIBUTORS WANTED!**

Are you willing to write a unit update, submit art, draw a comic, or have other ideas for content?

Quieres este boletín en español? The more members that participate, the more this is a project by-and-for the people.

UNIT UPDATES



Two Print-sector Members Talk Shop and Unions

By Ngoc Doan (*Smart Set Inc*) and Emily Johnson (*MackayMitchell Envelope Company*)

Ngoc: We're both in the print industry, but what do you do more specifically?

Emily: I work in prepress. I've been this field for about 12 years, but I'm pretty young by comparison.

Ngoc: Yeah. I feel like the print industry is considered a "dying" field so not many people go into it. I do everything: prepress, press, bindery. Like you could get a designer to do this work, but it's still a lot of training. It sounds like your position in prepress is more specialized.

Emily: We recently had a member leave for another job. He's been doing this for 40 years - started before computers. There's not a lot of people who can do this job without intense training.

Ngoc: Are you afraid that your employer won't fill that open position?

Emily: No, it's pretty clear that we need another person. I'm worried our employer may hire someone who isn't interested in joining the union.

Ngoc: Oh that's so true. When I used to work at a grocery, I had to join a union but because I was a teenager, the benefits weren't relevant for me. I kind of hated that I needed to pay dues. I can see if your employer is trying to hire someone who may decide not to join.

Emily: Employers can't ask "do you like unions?" I just mean that potential applicants may not understand the need to maintain the union.

Ngoc: Were you nervous about negotiations?

Emily: Not at all. We all knew what we wanted to negotiate over. Candace was also very helpful making sure we asked for more so we could compromise toward what we were really trying to achieve.

Ngoc: Awesome! My experience was different. My employer believes in workers' rights; it was his idea to have us in the union. Our negotiation was

pretty straightforward. That can make it difficult to know how to push for more.

Emily: Our workplace is always trying to maximize productivity. It was important to come to negotiations prepared.

Ngoc: Are you happy with your new contract?

Emily: I am! I think both the employees and employers were happy with the outcome.

Ngoc: I guess it would be too suspicious if the employer was too happy. You would think, "Oh I could have asked for more."

Emily: Yes but both sides did compromise. I think our employer likes having a union.

Ngoc: How so?

Emily: Because they have an idea of what to expect. It's more streamlined and expectations are clear on both sides.

Ngoc: Hmm yeah... just thinking about negotiating only once per contract, every few years. It keeps it kind of simple. Now that you've done a contract negotiation, how do you feel about spearheading the next one?

Emily: I feel pretty confident. No matter what my future holds, I know I want to be in a union. I don't think I could work for another company and not be in a union.



Grocery Store Flowers, acrylic on canvas by Maraya King (*Pioneer Press*)

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE CORNER

Following the success of our Human Rights Committee's discussion of the legacy of Roy Wilkins in February, the HRC is planning to hold a second lunch-hour event in the coming months.

We plan to host a representative of the **Braver Angels** organization for an online presentation of how to discuss human rights issues with people on all points along the political spectrum. We are also shooting for an in person workshop to practice these skills. Braver Angels specializes in this type of workshop.

From their website:

"Our mission is to create the conditions for citizens who disagree with each other to have respectful and powerful conversations across the political divide. We provide speakers to organizations that want to learn about Braver Angels; offer workshops and other kinds of in-person events; hold occasional statewide online events and support local alliances or chapters so people can meet in person."

Braver Angels sprouted from the acrimonious political atmosphere in this country following the 2016 election, and it has grown in the years that followed. You can learn more about the organization from a discussion on [this episode](#) of Minnesota Public Radio with Angela Davis.