



Volume 3 | Issue 10

March 2026

MN GUILD NEWSLETTER

NO KINGS

UPCOMING EVENTS



03/25

MN Guild Membership Meeting

6:00-7:00 PM CST | Wednesday, March 25th *Virtual*

[Register here.](#) All members are encouraged to attend and vote on the [Bylaws update.](#)

04/02

Steward Training NewsGuild

7:30-9:30 PM CST | Every other Thursday, April 2nd – April 30th

Virtual [Register for each session separately.](#) For all experience levels. Each module focuses on different core steward roles.

04/10

Minnesota Guild Nonprofit-Labor Caucus

1:00-2:00 PM CST | Friday, April 10th *Virtual*

Meet members from other nonprofit and staff unions and make change that matters to you. Meets quarterly on the second-Friday. [Zoom link.](#)

04/14

Winning a Strong Contract Parts I & II Labor Notes

6:30-8:00 PM CST | Tuesdays, April 14th & 21st *Virtual*

Cost \$15 - [Register here.](#) Workshops cover how to build a successful contract campaign and harness the power of membership to win the strongest possible contract. Best for people with some bargaining or organizing experience. Bring your coworkers!

04/16

One-on-one Organizing Conversations CWA District 7

7:00-8:15 PM CST | Thursday, April 16 *Virtual*

1-on-1s are an essential tool of organizers and surprisingly challenging to do well. Get trained or refresh your skills. [Zoom link.](#)

HHS Union Coalition Press Conference, Day on the Hill

Hennepin Healthcare (HHS), the county's level one trauma hospital and surrounding clinics, is facing a funding crisis that may cause hospital closure or almost certainly [additional layoffs](#) that may affect our members.

We are joining the coalition of unions at HHS to advocate [in favor of HF3333](#) which would allocate some of the ball-park tax to pay for Hennepin County healthcare facilities.

HCMC Language Interpreters: please join us **on Tuesday, March 24** at the State Capitol for coalition meetings with legislators to share your perspective and move this bill toward passage.

It is imperative that we stand with our union siblings to avoid disruption to patients care, loss of some 7,000 jobs, and cascading strain to nearby hospitals.

UNIT UPDATES

The NewsGuild-CWA joined class action suit with ACLU of Minnesota against DHS, ICE for violations of First and Fourth Amendment rights

This lawsuit, [TINCHER v. NOEM](#), asked the court to halt ICE's attack on First and Fourth Amendment rights on behalf of ordinary people. Over 100 community members – including some Guild members – have submitted personal declarations that recall government intimidation, aggression, and violence against people documenting, protesting, and witnessing ICE activity.

The case was originally filed in December 2025 and updated in February to include five additional plaintiffs including TNG-CWA. The NewsGuild's affected members include photojournalists [Mark Vancleave](#), currently at the AP but formerly of the Star Tribune, and St. Paul Pioneer Press' John Autey.

You can learn more about the case [from the ACLU](#) or read the [TNG-CWA press release](#).

The Minnesota Guild also represents lawyers and front-line staff at the ACLU of Minnesota who are covering and supporting this case as it works its way through the court system.

Members stand firm:

MN Guild blocks PNS management's maneuvers

The Guild fought back against management's attempts to circumvent the union contract at Public News Service (PNS).

On February 3, PNS announced that it would be reducing staff to cope with a looming budget deficit. Under our contract, management must offer a voluntary severance package before layoffs can occur. We pushed for - and won - a better package than the minimum required by the contract.

Only one member took the voluntary severance deal, and management laid off two members. PNS tried to short the

MEMBER UPDATE

Eustaquio's son gives update about ongoing ICE detention

In the last few weeks, agents of Operation Metro Surge have drastically [drawn down](#) their presence in the state. Our members are returning to a kind of normalcy and reassessing resources after an exhausting and expensive few months.

But there's a big hole at CTUL where Eustaquio used to be.

Since his arrest on January 9th, ICE has detained Eustaquio Orozco Verduco, a husband, father, and organizer. On March 10, a judge denied his bond request, and he remains in custody in New Mexico. Over 6,000 people have signed a [petition for his release](#), and an online fundraiser brought in nearly \$18,000 in donations. To its credit, CTUL has continued to pay his wage while their organizer remains in U.S. custody.

Michael Moore (St. Paul Union Advocate) got the chance to sit down with Eustaquio's son, Gerardo Orozco Guzman, who attended the State of the Union address with Rep. Ilhan Omar. Michael was very moved by what he learned.

"[Eustaquio] calls to check in on us and tell us he's OK, but with every call he does sound more dejected," Guzman said. "He recognized, I think, that people who he's met in detention have been there way longer – eight or nine months, if not longer. As time goes on the tone of his voice is not the same, and noticing that change, it's heartbreaking to say the least."

You can read the full article on the [Union Advocate's website](#).

two laid-off members by several weeks of severance by claiming that its February 3 announcement started the 30-day layoff notice period required by the contract - even though the notice stated, "we are not guaranteeing that there will be layoffs for sure."

We are making sure that the two laid-off members receive every penny they are due under the contract.

**YOU ARE THE UNION. YOUR PARTICIPATION GIVES US THE TOOLS WE
NEED TO FACE THE CONTINUED OPPOSITION OF BOTH COMPANIES AND POLITICIANS.
PLEASE PARTICIPATE IN THE DEMOCRACY THAT IS YOUR UNION.**

Kelly Blaiser's lasting impact

By Candace Lund (former MN Guild executive officer)

Past and present St. Paul Pioneer Press employees and MN Guild members mourn Kelly Blaiser's sudden death on February 14, 2026.

Kelly probably would not have described herself as a leader, and she never sought attention. But for so many people in her professional and personal life, she was the solid and reliable person who could always be counted on to help others, even if it meant she had to put herself in uncomfortable positions. In other words, a fantastic leader.

In her over forty years working at the Pioneer Press, Kelly was a steady advocate for her coworkers. Throughout her career, she served as a union steward and unit leader. She introduced herself to every new coworker in the Advertising department to welcome them to their union and offer support. She was the person her department coworkers called whenever issues arose. She sat in difficult disciplinary and performance meetings to offer union representation. She was the contact person whenever a coworker was involuntarily terminated.

Kelly represented her coworkers during every contract bargaining cycle in anyone's memory. At the negotiating table she fearlessly pushed the employer's representatives to improve pay, benefits and working conditions for her coworkers. As the ownership sought to squeeze more work out of fewer employees nationwide, Kelly took it personally every time concessions or layoffs were implemented.

Kelly found time between her family commitments and softball schedules to serve in leadership within the MN Guild, where she fought for the interests of members from all workplaces represented by the local. As treasurer of the union for over twenty years, she understood the importance of maintaining members' trust through transparency of finances, and she was deeply involved in drafting the annual budget and



tracking income and expenses each cycle. She volunteered hundreds of hours on weekday evenings attending meetings of the finance committee, the representative assembly, executive committee and full membership of the local.

Reluctantly, Kelly agreed to serve a term as MN Guild president when no one else volunteered to take on the vacant position just before the COVID pandemic. She was not comfortable leading meetings under parliamentary rules, but she persevered and she stuck with it because she had made the commitment. She was happy in 2022 to hand the gavel to the MN Guild's current president Nick Woltman.

After a lifetime of serving others, Kelly had plans to enjoy a long and easy retirement, but her time was cut short.

Her union advocacy built a stronger MN Guild, and members continue to benefit from the tough, important work she did, which often went unrecognized.

The MN Guild will share information about a celebration of life slated for this summer when it becomes available.

MN AFL-CIO COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIP

The Minnesota AFL-CIO will be awarding **five \$1,000 scholarships** to five recipients.

Four will be granted to graduating high school seniors who are union members, or the dependents of union members for college or community college in Minnesota, and one to a student attending a trade school.

The application and eligibility requirements are [available here](#). **Application deadline is May 1st.**

Contact Jessica Martin at 612-666-7106 or jmartin@mnaflcio.org with questions.

Note: This is different than the [Joe Beirne scholarship](#) that we advertised in the last newsletter. That deadline is April 30th.

The people own their power at #NoKings

On March 28, union members will unite nationwide to deliver a clear message: America belongs to the people, not greedy billionaires or those who govern through fear.

Workers are struggling to afford health-care, groceries, and rent because the Trump administration has prioritized tax breaks for billionaires over crucial support programs. The wealthy are working to dismantle union contracts and undermine our right to organize.

MN Guild executive officer, Debbie Prokopf (center), and Theo Bilski (UNITE HERE Local 17, left) were arrested as part of a nonviolent direct action against Target.



MN Guild member's activism helps neighbors through rebranding activity

Organizer Brandon Long (*Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative*) took his passion for soccer, Minnesota, and the ICE resistance movement to make friends and support the community. Brandon co-founded the [Rebel Loon Project](#) which replaces the target logo on Minnesota United jerseys with the "rebel loon"— a very popular symbol during Operation Metro Surge.

If consistent with your values and professional obligations, we encourage you to [join a #NoKings event on March 28th](#) near you.

We deserve strong union contracts, affordable healthcare, secure retirements, and safe communities. It's time to ensure the rich pay their fair share and stop rewarding corporations that squeeze workers.

People's power is our strength. When the powerful try to intimidate us, together we rise up and make our power known.



GOOD AND WELFARE Brother David La Vaque

Legendary hockey reporter David La Vaque (*Star Tribune*) was recently diagnosed with a genetic neurodegenerative condition known as Leukodystrophy. Barely a month after celebrating his 50th birthday, his health has declined so rapidly that he was recently admitted into hospice. Community support (like [KARE 11's story](#)), [donations](#), and jokes have helped David and his family through this difficult time. Our heart is with you, David, and to that end we offer you this stupid joke:

Q: What can you catch from scared hockey players?

A: Chicken pucks.