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MN GUILD NEWSLETTER

UNIT UPDATES



Clean Water Guild Goes National: How We Did It!

By James Rodriguez (*Clean Water Guild, Minnesota*)

On April 14, workers at Clean Water Action offices across the country publicly launched the Clean Water Guild — a newly expanded union that brings together our coworkers nationwide under one collective bargaining unit.

This campaign had its roots in our non-union offices. Coworkers in state chapters and national offices without union representation took the initiative to begin organizing and reached out to the Pacific Media Workers Guild for guidance and support. PMWG responded by activating their Member Organizer program — a program designed to embed experienced union leaders from already established units into emerging campaigns.

While the Minnesota chapter of Clean Water Action had been unionized for 22 years, no other state chapter or national office had ever formed a union. This campaign was explicitly designed to change that — extending union representation to every one of our coworkers for the first time in the organization's history.

What followed was not a dramatic, sudden uprising. It was nearly two years of patient, deliberate, sometimes uncomfortable work. Cold calls to coworkers you'd never met; relationship-building across offices with systems that seemed almost designed to keep people from finding one



Labor Bowl MN Guild's 2026 Bowling team: Cedar Humphrey (UFCW 663), Allana Olson (Guild staff), Matt Blake (MinnPost) and (not pictured) Michael Moore (Union Advocate).

another. This is what organizing actually looks like — not a moment, but a practice.

Because Minnesota already had a recognized union, we worked with legal counsel to consolidate all offices into a single unit. Our Minnesota coworkers voted to join forces with our national coworkers, and together we went public with an overwhelming supermajority having signed union authorization cards and a Mission Statement. Management granted voluntary recognition of the Clean Water Guild — and a tripartite agreement among Clean Water Action, the MN Newspaper and Communications Workers Guild, and the Pacific Media Workers Guild — just six days later.

We grew from just over 20 members in Minnesota to more than 80 nationwide. This journey took nearly two years, and that time forged something no timeline could rush — genuine solidarity, deep trust, and a bond that stretches across the country. We now have a strong, resourceful organizing committee ready for what comes next. Our contract campaign awaits, and we are just getting started.

UPCOMING EVENTS

**05
27** **MN Guild Membership Meeting**
Wednesday, May 27 | 6:00PM CT *Virtual*
[Zoom registration here.](#) Special Guest: Hazel Court, a Guild member in the Washington Post Tech Guild, will be speaking about their experience organizing the tech unit at a major newspaper and the state of tech organizing today.

**06
18** **Nonprofit-Labor Happy Hour**
Wednesday, June 18 | 5:30-6:30PM CT
[Urban Growler Brewery](#), St. Paul
Time for nonprofit and staff union members to chat and connect. Partners and patio-friendly dogs welcome.

AFL-CIO NEEDS IN-PERSON VOLUNTEERS

Show our nationwide union siblings a heartfelt Minnesota welcome! Volunteers of all availabilities and capabilities needed for the 30th AFL-CIO convention, hosted in Minneapolis, MN **June 7–10**. Pre-event volunteers are also needed **June 4–6**. Volunteers will be fed! More information can be found [here](#). If interested, [fill out this form](#).

There can be no press freedom if journalists exist in conditions of corruption poverty or fear.

From www.IFJ.org

The International Federation of Journalists reports that 2025 was the deadliest year on record since their reporting began decades ago. At least 129 journalists and media workers were killed in 2025. Far too many are

**still in
prisons for
doing their jobs.**



*Defend the
freedom of
the press!*

1-651-645-9000
newspaperguild@mnguild.org
www.mnguild.org

SAVE THE DATE FOR THE

ANNUAL PICNIC

Sunday, August 23, 2026 | Minnehaha Park, Wabun D

UNITE HERE Local 17 union staff ratifies big Guild contract wins!

By Anders Bloomquist (*UNITE HERE Local 17*)

This spring, the staff of UNITE HERE Local 17, Minnesota's Hospitality Union, ratified our new three-year contract and I am proud of what we have put in place.

During the federal occupation of our state and the brutalization of our members and neighbors, our union kicked into the highest gear we've ever achieved as we aided our members, organized the actions needed to push back, while still maintaining the contract enforcement and member support that we always do. And as soon as the occupation scaled back (but not gone entirely!), we turned around to bargain our next staff contract.

After several cycles there are fewer contract framework items that need changing; most discussion is around pay and benefits. Here are the big changes we achieved this time around:

- Added \$225 per pay period as an auto expense stipend instead of having to track/report miles
- Employer covers 100% premium for health/dental insurance (previously 100% for single and 90% for family)
- Increased the base wage by \$5 per hour with an additional \$1/hr increase annually
- \$4 per hour raise, divided over the 3 years of the contract
- Added 2 floating holidays and extended July 4th days off
- Added Minnesota's PFML with 100% of the premium paid by the employer and Employees will be "made whole" while on leave

Each of these is a massive improvement to our lives which means we can focus even better on improving the lives of our members. I am especially proud of our new auto stipend which will be a direct salary increase while eliminating the type of paperwork that often misses the small trips that still add up. I am also glad to see some floating holidays and a longer July 4th break; our days are long in this job and those moments of rest are dearly needed.

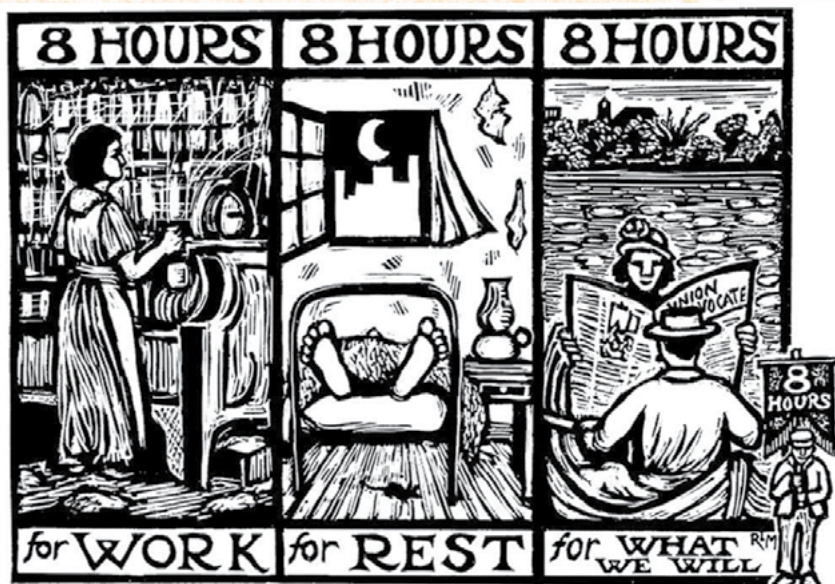


PRE-GAME LABOR NOTES MIXER

The MNGuild/TNG are subsidizing 6 members to go to Labor Notes, but are you ALSO going (through vacation, professional development funds, or maybe your employer is sending you)?

We will be hosting a pre-convention kick-off so Guild members can make friends and find each other when you arrive in Chicago. Let Allana know if you're going so she can schedule a time the first week of June that works best for everyone.

On May 13th, MNGuild's **Language Interpreters** meet with legislators during the last weeks of session to save HCMC from financial ruin.



Popular design by Ricardo Levins Morales and available for purchase at MN Guild shop [RLM Arts](#).

Pushing the bar: the 40 and 32-hour work week

By Ryana Holt (*Hope Community*)

International Worker's Day, otherwise known as May Day, commemorates the 1886 labor strikes and the fight for the 8-hour workday. Labor conditions at the time were oppressive. According to PBS, in 1890, manufacturing employees worked an average of 100 hours per week. Over 12-hour days, no week-ends, and dangerous working conditions without basic rights were not out of the ordinary. Championed by the Knights of Labor, workers rallied under the slogan, "Eight hours for work, eight hours for rest, eight hours for what we will".

On May 1, 1886, hundreds of thousands of workers responded to their oppressive working conditions with strikes across the United States. As still is often the case, those who benefit from exploitation don't let changes happen without a fight. In Chicago on May 4th, police injured many strikers and sympathizers and killed more than four in what is called the Haymarket Riot. Later, others were hanged for their participation in an unfair trial. Though some states and industries secured 8-hour workdays earlier, it was not until 1940 that the 8-hour workday was mandated at a national level with an amendment to the Fair Labor Standards Act.

Even 140 years later, with exploitable exempt status and the pressure to work multiple jobs, we are not out of the weeds when it comes to protecting our time for rest and what we will.

Amidst the struggles, there are also wins to celebrate. Two MN Guild non-profit units have 4-day, 32-hour workweeks. TakeAction MN piloted their 4-day workweek beginning in August 2020 and added to their 2021-2024 contract. Hope Community, through the MN chapter of [WorkFour](#), piloted their 4-day workweek starting in September 2025 that now is permanent. At least two more MN Guild units brought proposals to the bargaining table this year. Although the proposals were whittled down during the process, both units are seeing significant gains in access to flexible time off.

Four-day workweeks, better benefits, or whatever win each unit makes, we honor the labor organizers before us who pushed the bar for a new bare minimum. May we continue that tradition for ourselves and those who come after us.