

The St. Paul Union Advocate

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For union homes in Ramsey, Dakota, Washington and Chisago counties

September 2023

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Organizing Report

Allina clinicians seek union vote

Doctors and advanced practice providers (APPs) at Allina Health primary and urgent-care clinics filed for a union election this week, seeking to become the nation's largest private-sector union of clinicians.

The election would cover about 550 clinicians working in over 50 facilities across the region, according to organizers with Doctors Council SEIU, Local 10MD.

Allina physicians and APPs – licensed health care workers who are not physicians but perform many of the same duties – said in a press release that they are unionizing to gain more say over their working conditions,

which right now are dragging down “patient care, professional practice and personal well-being.”

“As health care providers, we are committed to delivering the highest quality care to our patients, but we cannot do that when we are overworked, understaffed and unsupported,” Dr. Matt Hoffman, a physician at Allina’s Vadnais Heights clinic, said. “By forming a union with Doctors Council SEIU, we can better advocate for the resources and support we need to provide safe, effective and compassionate care to our patients.”

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Dr. Liz Koffel, a physician at the Allina Health Richfield Clinic, spoke about clinicians’ union drive outside Abbott Northwestern Hospital.

Union Advocate photo

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Tuesday, Nov. 7, 2023

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Ward 5: Hwa Jeong Kim
Ward 6: Nelsie Yang

Saint Paul School Board
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Yusef Carillo, Carlo Franco, Erica Valliant



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Connecting union members in Ramsey, Washington, Dakota and Chisago counties.



Science Museum employees Karilyn Robinson (L) and Sophie Wang celebrate the return to work of six workers, including Wang, who were unlawfully laid off by the museum in March. Union Advocate photo

A WIN FOR MUSEUM WORKERS

Science Museum forced to reinstate union organizers laid off in March

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

The Science Museum of Minnesota Workers Union celebrated a victory last month, winning reinstatement of six union members – including five members of the union’s organizing committee – laid off in March, just two months after workers voted to form their

union with AFSCME Council 5.

Now, union members hope the victory at the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) will provide momentum at the bargaining table, where they are fighting for a first contract with job-security language that could have prevented the museum from targeting layoffs at union leaders in the first place.

“That’s something that will not be happening when we have a union contract,” SMMWU member Natalie Naranjo said during a lunch-hour rally outside the museum Aug. 10. “We are going to get a discipline process, grievance policies and security from not being at-will employees.”

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

Biden rule change likely to boost wages on infrastructure projects

By Mark Gruenberg
PAI Union News Service

The nation’s building trades unions are cheering new regulations for the almost-century-old Davis-Bacon Act – regulations that the Biden administration says will raise pay for union and non-union construction workers, cover more tradespeople under prevailing wage laws, and tighten oversight of construction contractors who flout them.

The rule changes, announced by the Department of Labor Aug. 8, set prevailing wages for federally funded construction projects, a sector of the economy expanding greatly under the Biden administration.

The key change is to undo Republican-engineered prevailing wage rates that reduced both how many construction workers Davis-Bacon would cover and the levels of “prevailing wages” set in each specific geographic area for each construction craft.

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Inside

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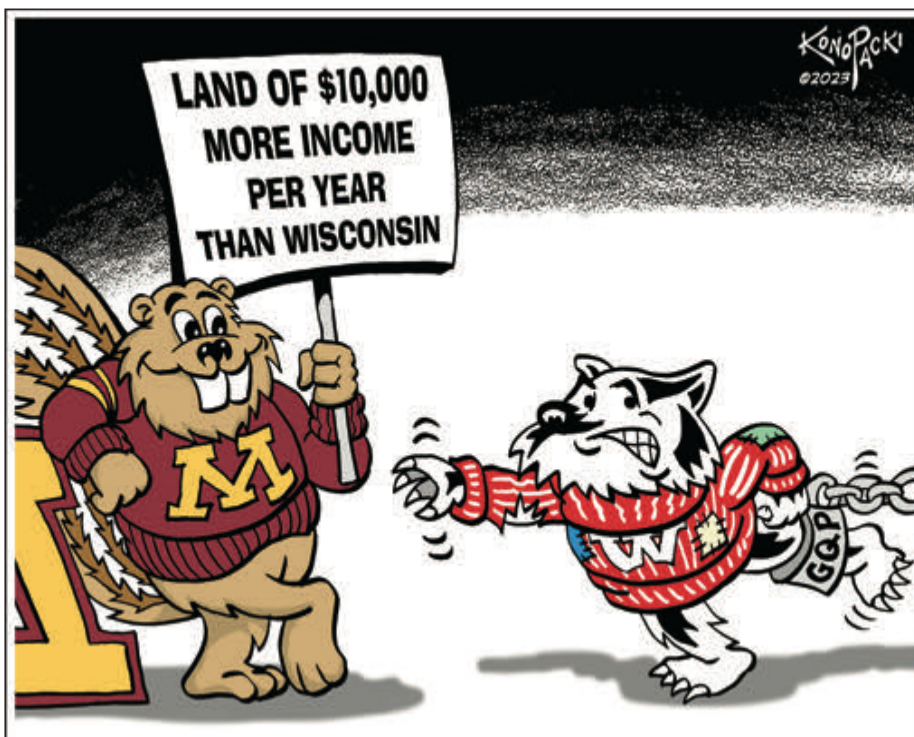
Unions Give Back

Labor relief funds help Hawaii wildfire victims

Devastating wildfires in Hawaii left over 100 people dead and many others without homes. Rebuilding will cost billions. Many union members are among those affected by the fires, and the AFL-CIO is encouraging donations to two union-focused relief funds.

Hawaii's labor community has created a fund to support union families impacted by disasters. Local unions interested in donating should send a check to Hawaii Employees Lifeline Program, attention Cathy Lederer, 888 Mililani Street, Suite 501, Honolulu, HI 96813.

Alternatively, local unions and union members can donate to the nationwide Union Community Fund, which will provide support to Hawaii wildfire victims, by credit card at go.aflcio.org/relief.



Labor Voices: Kera Peterson

Let's make this Labor Day about solidarity

In the runup to Labor Day each year, the news media typically checks in on the state of the union movement. This year is different and public attention has been on union members all summer long. Striking actors and writers have brought a halt to U.S. film and television production. Teamsters took UPS to the brink of the nation's largest-ever strike at a single, private-sector employer. And workers continue to join together in areas of our economy where unions have not traditionally had a strong presence, like coffee shops, bookstores, video game production companies and other tech firms.

Run a quick search for "Solidarity Summer" or "Hot Labor Summer" on social media, and you'll get a glimpse of the union activism sweeping the nation right now. Regardless of which hashtag you prefer, it's an exciting time to be in our movement. Unions enjoy unprecedented approval from the public, especially among younger Americans. A recent report declared Gen Z "America's most pro-union generation." At companies like Amazon and Starbucks, young workers are bringing new energy and creativity to the fight for better treatment on the job and a fair share of the ever-growing profits their labor creates.

But you don't have to be in Hollywood or New York to be a part of the excitement. Solidarity is alive and well this summer in the Twin Cities, too. Union members are flexing their muscles at the bargaining table across Minnesota, and our labor federation, which brings together close to 150 local unions in the east metro area, has been proud to support many of their contract campaigns. After holding "practice picketing" at UPS facilities across the metro, Teamsters are now voting on a tentative agreement that includes historic wage gains of at least a \$7.50 per hour over the next five years. And because labor volunteers helped elect pro-worker candidates to the Minnesota Legislature last fall, union members who work for the State of Minnesota have new contracts that will raise wages by 10% over the next two years.

With union members making gains like that at the bargaining table, it comes as no surprise that local workers in non-union jobs are looking to join together and bargain contracts of their own. Hundreds of health care workers,

"Solidarity is as simple as talking to friends, family or co-workers about the ways being in a union has improved your life."

– Kera Peterson



baristas, museum workers and call center workers have formed unions in the last year alone. They are seeking the higher wages and better benefits that we, as union members, know comes with collective bargaining. But they also want a seat at the table in decisions that affect their working conditions. Sometimes that means having a say in staffing and workload levels at a call center or retailer. For 550 physicians and other advance practitioners at Allina Health clinics, who filed for a historic union election last month, it means a say in how they provide care for the patients who rely on them.

As union members, we stand on the shoulders of the working people who fought – and sometimes paid a high price – for the rights and benefits we enjoy today. That's what Labor Day is about. It's also why we can't let our fellow workers stand alone when they are forming new unions or fighting for fair contracts. Solidarity is more than just a hashtag; it's signing a petition for our union siblings, it's joining them in the street, and it's never, ever crossing a picket line. It's also as simple as talking to friends, family members or co-workers about the ways being in a union has improved your life. Give it a try this Labor Day! And on behalf of the Regional Labor Federation, we wish everyone in our union family a happy and safe holiday weekend.

– Kera Peterson is president of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, which publishes *The Union Advocate* newspaper. The SPRLF brings together nearly 150 local unions representing over 50,000 union members who live or work in Ramsey, Washington, Dakota and Chisago counties.

Learn more about the federation and its work online at stpaulunions.org.

Letters

- Send letters to: 353 W. 7th St., Suite 201, St. Paul, MN 55102
- Email them to: mmoore@stpaulunions.org

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Labor Events

Week of action targets non-union developers

It's been over a year since local worker-advocacy groups asked prominent developers to sign onto the Building Dignity and Respect Program, an initiative to combat systemic labor abuses on non-union construction sites, particularly in the multifamily residential sector.

But so far, developers like Yellow Tree, Solhem and United Properties – firms that have often done business with subcontractors with a history of workplace violations – have refused to sign on.

To ramp up pressure on the firms, Twin Cities worker center CTUL plans a week of action beginning Sept. 7 and culminating with a 4 p.m. march Sept. 12. Locations will be shared closer to the event dates; follow ctul.net or the organization's social media feeds for details.

Learn more about the Building Dignity and Respect initiative and sign onto a petition calling on local developers to get on board at tinyurl.com/UA-BDR.

Visit the Labor Pavilion at the MN State Fair

Every day during the Minnesota State Fair, the Minnesota AFL-CIO will offer a fresh lineup of family-friendly programming at the Labor Pavilion, putting a spotlight on the work union members do in our communities.

The Labor Pavilion is located at the corner of Dan Patch and Cooper near the Snelling Avenue entrance.

Programming at the pavilion typically includes demonstrations, contests, giveaways – including the popular Minnesota AFL-CIO fanny packs – and opportunities to sign onto affiliate unions' issue campaigns or learn more about union careers. Union musicians will perform each day at 5 p.m.

Check mnaflcio.org for more programming information.

Retirees plan statewide assembly Sept. 22

The Minnesota State Retiree Council, AFL-CIO, will hold its biennial conference Sept. 27. The assembly will feature guest speakers, a review of gains made for seniors during the 2023 state legislative session, election of officers and discussion of the work ahead during the 2024 election cycle.

The event, which will take place at the Sheet Metal Workers Local 10 hall in Maplewood, is open to representatives of retiree organizations affiliated with the state council. The deadline to apply for credentials is Sept. 22.

Learn more and view the convention call at mnretired.org, or call 651-227-7647, extension 121.



Members of St. Paul Firefighters Local 21 showed up to Mayor Melvin Carter's budget address Aug. 10 in union gear, raising awareness of their campaign for a fair contract with the city. Union Advocate photos

St. Paul Firefighters pressure Carter to settle contract

By Michael Moore
Union Advocate editor

After surpassing 200 days without a new union contract, St. Paul firefighters appealed to the public for support at a pair of events last month, including a demonstration at Mayor Melvin Carter's budget address.

Local 21 of the International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) also held informational picketing Aug. 2 for the first time in decades, after a vote by membership. Firefighters are prohibited by law from striking, and the picketing, which drew support from off-duty members and dozens of community supporters, did not impact firehouse staffing.

Firefighters are seeking pay increases that will make the St. Paul department – one of the busiest in the state – competitive with others in the metro area. The union has seen 89 members leave in the last five years,

"Our members are getting burned out," Local 21 Secretary Kyle Thornberg said. "They're getting sick and tired, and they can leave to make more money other places with a lower workload."

But the city has refused to put meaningful wage increases on the table unless union members give up layoff protections in exchange, according to Local 21, which represents over 450 firefighters, EMTs and paramedics in St. Paul, including both sworn staff and non-sworn staff who handle lower-acuity service calls.

The city is looking to change contract language, union President Mike Smith said, that requires any layoffs in the department to impact non-sworn staff first.

"We can't get past that to get to the wages," Smith said. "Every time we've met with them, the wages have gone down."

Union members worry that a change in layoff rules could result in cuts to the number of sworn firefighters on staff –



Firefighters Local 21 President Mike Smith (L) laid out the union's position for St. Paul Mayor Melvin Carter before the mayor's budget address.

cuts the department cannot absorb.

"Non-sworn firefighters cannot do the job of a sworn firefighter, but sworn firefighters can do the job of non-sworn firefighters," Smith said.

According to Local 21, city firefighters are on pace to surpass the 62,000 calls for emergency services they received last year, and nearly a third of the city's fire and ambulance companies are making over 4,000 service runs per year, considered by industry standards to be an extremely high call volume.

"They're at capacity, and we continue to be stretched beyond capacity," Thornberg said. "We have more higher-acuity calls. Structure fires aren't going down. We need additional sworn-firefighter staffing in addition to (non-sworn) staffing."

After failing to reach an agreement in bargaining and in mediation, the city and Local 21 planned to enter arbitration in late August.

In a tense interaction before his

budget address at the Highland Bridge development Aug. 10, Carter attempted to reassure about 40 firefighters, dressed in their union shirts, that his administration was committed to a fair settlement. The mayor also acknowledged Local 21 members in his speech, which laid out plans to invest nearly \$9 million into public safety this year, including one-time aid from the state.

"I see you, and I am as eager as you are to resolve your contract," Carter said. "Our city team remains willing to negotiate in good faith, and we look forward to resolving all of these issues in the coming weeks."

Thornberg said he appreciated the mayor's remarks, but after 200 days without a contract, firefighters are running low on patience.

"Look, we have the best of the best," Thornberg said. "Our firefighters do not shy away from work, but we're at capacity. We're breaking. There's no more left to give."

Unity, progress guide Minnesota Building Trades' agenda at convention

By Catherine Conlan

Labor World editor

DULUTH – Unity and progress were the main themes during the Minnesota Building and Construction Trades Council state convention July 27-28 in Duluth, as politicians addressed and mingled with delegates.

Gov. Tim Walz made a stop at the convention as part of a regional tour before he stopped by the ribbon-cutting at Essentia's 942,000-square-foot, \$900-million-plus replacement for the St. Mary's Medical Center.

"It's a massive investment for Duluth, and it's always important to keep in mind that at any point there are always sisters and brothers still fighting for a fair shake," Walz said.

Steelworkers Local 9460 and the Minnesota Nurses Union held informational rallies at the new facility the day after the governor spoke.

Walz highlighted the construction projects that the Legislature was able to deliver on after the DFL won its trifecta last fall, with Labor's help, and reminded the audience about who had done the delivering.

"Thank you for coming to the State Capitol with a unified voice and holding firm with what needed to be done there," Walz said. "[Legislative members] better be delivering on collective bargaining and wages, that's what supporting unions members is all about.

"You might get good people, but then find out they're right-to-work or didn't support the bonding bill or the workers bill, and it's like a damn barbecue where someone doesn't bring anything. You've got to bring something to what we're doing."

Walz drew a parallel between Labor and the DFL.

"Labor has been laser-focused on delivering for members, and you have my commitment that we'll



Delegates to the Minnesota State Building and Construction Trades Council's 2023 convention gathered in Duluth July 27-28. The council unites craft unions that represent 70,000 tradespeople statewide.

photos by Vincent Muzik/Fair Contracting MN

continue to work for you," he said. "When I'm with other governors, we talk about how Minnesota is a union state, always was and always will be."

Other political leaders pointed to how they had worked together to deliver wins for workers, such as with Rep. Dave Lislegard's (D-Aurora) bills covering unemployment for furloughed workers at Northshore Mining and improving refinery safety.

"In Northeastern Minnesota specifically, with (DFL Sen. Grant) Hauschild and Lislegard, we did pretty good," said Rep. Roger Skraba (R-Ely).

Walz's barbecue comment could have applied to Skraba, who did not support the Omnibus Jobs, Economic Development, Labor and Industry appropriations bill as amended by the state senate before passage.

Keith Musolf, a St. Louis County commissioner and a business agent at Ironworkers Local 512, urgently echoed the need for union members to get active in local politics.

"City councils, county boards, school boards, townships, the list goes on — anywhere there is construction, get involved," he said. "This is one spot we can all have an impact on with the proper adjudication of administration in local government."

Duluth City Council member at-large Arik Forsman, who is endorsed by both the Duluth Building Trades and Duluth Central Labor Body in his run for reelection this year, spoke about the need for permitting reform, another common theme among speakers.

"We're watching billions of dollars of investment fly over our state, and we have work to do," he said. "That work falls on your shoulders. They'll listen to you above all else."

Senate Majority Leader Kari Dziedzic (D-Minneapolis) spoke of the historic legislation passed in this last session that will have long-lasting effects because they were addressing long-overdue priorities — "your priorities," she said.

"We passed a bonding bill, which I call a bonding bill on steroids because it included so many long-awaited projects," she added. "We've got historic investments in education, infrastructure, transporta-



Gov. Tim Walz addressed Building Trades delegates. He thanked unions for their support in passing a historic infrastructure jobs package last session.

tion, childcare and worker protections. We did that with a one-vote majority in the Senate. With your backing, we knew we had to stay together."

Keynote speaker Mark McDermott, an economic justice and labor educator, continued the theme of unity in his address.

"There are still 27 states with right-to-work legislation," he said. "I think of Minnesota as an island, and if corporate Minnesota and some of their friends here could figure it out, they'd do it too."

McDermott echoed Walz's comment about touting Minnesota to outsiders.

"As I've been going around the country, I say we need to learn from Minnesota to push more progressive pro-labor agendas," he said. "Let's remember in 2010 when Scott Walker was elected (governor of Wisconsin) and organized labor was not united. First, they went after the teachers, then public employees and then the Building Trades, and they're all still suffering 13 years later after that devastating defeat."



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Labor Department strengthens prevailing wage laws as federal infrastructure funds begin to flow

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The new rules, likely to take effect after a mandatory comment period, “return to the definition of ‘prevailing wage’ used from 1935 to 1983 to ensure prevailing wages reflect actual wages paid to workers in the local community,” according to the Department of Labor. And those rates would be periodically updated “to address out-of-date wage determinations.”

The top change is if at least 30% of a geographic area’s workers in a construction craft earn a particular wage, it would become the “prevailing wage” for workers in that craft on all federally funded construction.

Under the Reagan-era rules, the prevailing wage was the wage paid to at least 50% of all workers. If no rate covered more than half of the workers, the “prevailing wage” was “a weighted average” of all wage rates for all construction workers in that craft in that area.

In practical terms, that meant non-union contractors’ wage rates could drag down everybody’s wages. The 30% rule fixes that.

The new rules also expand coverage to incorporate rural counties – where contractors typically pay less – with nearby metro-area prevailing wage rates, as long as the plurality of covered workers toil in the metro areas. And workers on federal projects that stretch over multiple geographic areas, like an interstate highway, would all be paid at the highest prevailing wage rates for their crafts.

As a result, wages are likely to increase for rural workers, whether they’re building a highway, extending a commuter rail line or installing broadband.

The final rule also includes new anti-retaliation provisions, meaning more enforcement options and stronger protections of worker rights.

Laborers (LIUNA) President Brent Booker called the updated Davis-Bacon rules “landmark and historic,” adding that they will benefit millions of construction workers. Sean McGarvey, president of North America’s Building Trades Unions, praised the Biden administration for restoring Davis-Bacon “to its original intent after it has been watered down over the last 40-plus years.”

“This ruling is a win for all construction workers, both union and non-union, for good and fair contractors, and for America’s taxpayers,” McGarvey added.

That includes workers who toil not just on traditional construction projects – building roads, subways, airports, bus lanes and the like – but also more-modern infrastructure, such as solar panel arrays, broadband and retrofitting structures to cut carbon emissions.

Vice President Kamala Harris unveiled the new rules in a ceremony in a Philadelphia union hall, flanked by Acting Labor Secretary Judy Su and several union leaders, including Electrical Workers (IBEW) President Kenneth Cooper.

“The final rule reverses Reagan-era changes that weakened the law’s original intent – ensuring federally funded or assisted projects support good-paying local jobs for local workers,” Cooper said. “For the past 40 years, a single, low-wage contractor could depress wage rates on federal contracts. This rule change will allow construction workers to gain ground they lost in the 1980s, increasing the wages of millions and preventing low-road contractors from undercutting the workforce.”

“It is proof, once again, that union members are at the heart of the Biden-Harris administration’s efforts to rebuild America by restoring the middle class.”



Have a safe and happy Labor Day!

Photo: LIUNA members advocate for safe and skilled refinery workforce standards at the State Capitol.

This Labor Day, we recognize the sacrifice and contribution made by workers who keep our families together and build stronger communities.

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Teamsters who work at UPS held “practice picketing” at the company’s distribution center in northeast Minneapolis in July, part of the union’s nationwide mobilization that led to a historic tentative agreement with the company. Teamsters Locals 638 and 120, representing UPS workers across Minnesota and the Dakotas, planned the event.

Union Advocate photo

Teamsters claim big win with 5-year pact at UPS

By Mark Gruenberg
PAI Union News Service

The Teamsters claimed a big win on July 25 when, within hours of bargaining restarting for the first time in three weeks, UPS agreed to a five-year tentative contract with the union.

The pact gives workers substantial raises, elevates many part-time jobs to full-time and effectively kills the hated two-tier wage system at the nation’s largest package delivery company, which employs 340,000 Teamsters.

“We’ve changed the game,” union President Sean O’Brien exulted.

Had bosses not settled, UPS would have forced the workers to strike and cost their own company hundreds of millions of dollars a day.

Had the union been forced to walk, it would have been the largest private-sector strike against a single company in U.S. history.

“The union went into this fight committed to winning for our members,” O’Brien said. “We demanded the best contract in the history of UPS, and we got it. UPS has put \$30 billion in new money on the table as a direct result of these negotiations. It will go into the pockets of our members, full-time and part-time.

“We’ve changed the game, battling it out day and night to make sure our members won an agreement that pays strong wages, rewards their labor, and doesn’t require a single concession. This contract sets a new standard in the labor movement and raises the bar for all workers.”

Teamsters planned to hold voting on the tentative agreement at sites across the country through Aug. 22.

The union’s large bargaining committee, which included rank-and-file reps from the 176 Teamster locals with UPS members, unanimously endorsed the tentative agreement. The union credited strong solidarity and strike preparation, plus increased militancy

from rank-and-file members as factors prompting the firm’s honchos to yield.

“Our hard work has paid off from those members and leaders negotiating for more at the table to my sisters and brothers building a credible strike threat around the country,” negotiating committee member Brandy Harris of Local 174 in Seattle, a part-timer, told the union. “Our union was organized and we were relentless.

“We’ve hit every goal that UPS Teamster members wanted and asked for.”

One of those goals, air conditioning in all new UPS vehicles starting Jan. 1, will result in UPS replacing each car and truck in the fleet. All current vehicles immediately get two fans and air vents in their cargo compartments.

Other contract details include:

- Raises of \$2.75 per hour in 2023, and \$7.50 more per hour over the five years. The average top rate for full-time drivers will top out at \$49 hourly, up seven dollars.

- Current part-timers get an immediate hike from \$16.20 hourly to \$21, plus longevity increases of \$1.50 per hour.

- So-called “22.4 drivers,” all part-timers, would be immediately reclassified as full-time package car drivers, ending the two-tier wage system which saw them start at much lower rates.

- No more forced overtime on Teamster drivers’ days off.

Congratulations poured in from other unions and pro-worker politicians.

“This contract creates new jobs, secures essential protections, & raises wages for ALL workers, including part-time,” the AFL-CIO tweeted. “@Teamsters secured this TA through relentless organizing and a credible strike threat that woke @UPS UP! When we fight together, we make history together!”



SOLIDARITY!

We need it now more than ever



A message from the members of Local 1005

Allina clinicians seek union to ‘properly advocate for the needs of our patients’

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The decision to unionize, according to organizers, came after months of discussions among Allina health care providers about common concerns like safety, moral injury and eroding professional agency. Dr. Katherine Oyster, who practices family medicine in Cottage Grove, said the goal is a more collaborative, sustainable health system.

“Voting to unionize gives us in primary and urgent care the opportunity to, en bloc, work collaboratively with Allina leadership to re-center our patients as the focus of our work,” Oyster said. “It would give us a seat at the table where practice-changing decisions are made so we can properly advocate for the needs of our patients.”

“It gives us an opportunity to decrease provider burnout/moral injury with the ultimate goal of keeping us happily providing care with Allina for many years to come.”

If the National Labor Relations Board grants their petition for an election, Allina primary and urgent-care clinicians will become the second group that includes Allina physicians to vote on union representation this year.

Mercy Hospital physicians voted in March to join the Doctors Council, but Allina challenged the eligibility of some employees to join the bargaining unit. The NLRB has yet to rule on the appeal.

Meanwhile, nearly 800 frontline workers across Allina’s hospital operations

in the Twin Cities – lab technicians, nursing assistants, dietary aides, mental health workers and dozens of other classifications – have joined SEIU Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa in the last two years. And nurses at Mercy Hospital’s sexual assault unit recently filed for a union election with the Minnesota Nurses Association.

In addition to its track record of rocky labor relations, Allina has come under scrutiny after a New York Times investigation revealed that the provider routinely denied non-emergency care to patients with higher levels of medical debt, raising ethics concerns.

Among their reasons for seeking a union, Allina clinicians cited “moral injury caused by the pressure to prioritize productivity and profit over patient needs and values and from a lack of support and resources to provide high-quality care.” The list also included:

- Patient safety concerns due to understaffing and inadequate resources.
- Limited input and decision-making power in matters affecting patient care, provider safety and professional autonomy.
- The erosion of the clinician-led model of care and the threat of corporate influence on medical decision-making.

Clinicians who spoke at a press conference Aug. 16 emphasized that they decided to take collective action only after repeated attempts, individually, to work with management on these issues.

“We’ve been asking for ways to



“We see unionization as the path forward in health care,” Dr. Matt Hoffman said during a press conference outside Abbott Northwestern Hospital. Union Advocate photo

improve care for our patients, and we’ve repeatedly been told no,” said Dr. Liz Koffel, who practices out of the Allina Richfield Clinic. “We’ve been told, ‘Stop emailing.’ We’ve been told, ‘There will be no meetings.’ And I have been told to go someplace else if I think it might be better someplace else.”

Hoffman said the organizing drive resonated with an increasing number of clinicians who feel frustrated that health

care decisions are increasingly being made “by people who have never seen a patient,” whether that’s insurance companies or health care executives.

And Hoffman expects that frustration will resonate with other professionals – in the Allina system and beyond.

“We see unionization as the path forward in health care,” Hoffman said. “We really see this as the future of health care.”

LABOR DAY GREETINGS

To all our union brothers and sisters and their families



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Union wins first Labor Board charge, pledges to hold museum accountable for \$7 million state allocation this year

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Naranjo worked in the Science Museum’s IDEAL Center, an equity-focused professional development organization, until March 14. That’s when the museum laid off 11 workers, including nine union members, without bargaining or providing SMMWU with financial information to justify the layoffs.

Three workers were called back to work within a month, but SMMWU had to file charges of retaliation and unfair labor practices with the NLRB to win reinstatement of the remaining six, which included Naranjo and four other organizers who led the successful drive to form the union of over 200 Science Museum workers.

Having to go through the NLRB process was, for union members, particularly disheartening, given that state lawmakers allocated \$7 million to the Science Museum as part of the omnibus



Supporters from the Minnesota Historical Society union, AFSCME Council 5 and the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation joined Science Museum workers’ union rally on the first day back for six workers unlawfully laid off in March. Union Advocate photo

environment, natural resources, climate and energy finance bill.

Union members reached out to

local lawmakers for clarification after sensing that management was trying to muddy the intent behind the allocation. The law explicitly directs the Science Museum to use the \$7 million for “debt reduction, rehiring and retaining employees, supporting employee contracts, and diversity and inclusion training and outreach.”

Naranjo said union members intend to hold the museum accountable, both in terms of retaining the workers recently reinstated – the museum has already begun arguing it has no work for them, she said – and language during contract negotiations.

“We know our employees are not being paid what they should be, especially when our CEO is making over \$400,000 per year,” she said. “We have people making \$15 per hour.”

Meanwhile, if the illegal layoffs accomplished anything, it may have been making the bargaining unit more unified than ever.

Sophie Wang, another organizer who was laid off from the IDEAL Center, said she could feel the solidarity as she returned to work Aug. 10. SMMWU held a welcome-back gathering in the morning before celebrating the reinstatement with supporters from the labor community at noon.

“It’s exciting to be back here with my co-workers again,” Wang said. “And I’m grateful to our union for making this possible, for holding the museum accountable for committing unfair labor practices.”

Julie Bleyhl, executive director of AFSCME Council 5, said SMMWU’s first NLRB win “may be the first of many” as



Members of the Science Museum of Minnesota Workers Union reinstated last month included exhibit designer Ryan Givens (L) and two staffers in the museum’s IDEAL professional development program, Sophie Wang and Natalie Naranjo (R).

bargaining with the surprisingly anti-union employer moves forward.

Other AFSCME members, including workers from the Minnesota Historical Society – who recently finalized their first union contract after over a year of bargaining – pledged their support for as long as the collective bargaining process takes.

“We’re here to send a message to those folks inside the museum who made the choice to lay off workers,” MNHS worker Kyle Imdeike said. “When you mess with our union siblings, you can expect resistance and you can expect solidarity for those workers. We are here to show St. Paul is a union town.”

Sen. Jim Carlson & Rep. Liz Reyer Strong leadership for Minnesota’s labor community



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- Understands education is the cornerstone of a strong workforce
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Prepared and paid for by Friends for Jim Carlson, 1247 Carlson Lake Lane, Eagan, MN 55123 and Liz Reyer Election Committee, P.O. Box 21746, Eagan, MN 55121.

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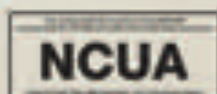
Thai Thai Street Food
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Street Eats Grill
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Labor Q&A: Robyn Gulley

New regent wants a university that works for everyone



Robyn Gulley

State lawmakers this year restored labor's voice on the University of Minnesota Board of Regents after a 12-year absence, appointing two women with union ties: Minnesota Nurses Association President Mary Turner and Robyn Gulley, a longtime union organizer turned educator for the Minnesota AFL-CIO.

While Turner, in addition to experience as a labor leader, brings health care expertise to the board at a pivotal moment for the U's medical program, Gulley brings academic chops and a working-class perspective to public service.

Gulley holds master's degrees in public policy and social justice, and she taught as an adjunct professor at the U from 2011 to 2018. Later, she helped found the New Brookwood Labor College, an independent, non-accredited school dedicated to educating union members. Gulley also serves on the City Council in West St. Paul.

Less than three months into her six-year term as a regent, Gulley reflected on the opportunities and challenges ahead in this interview, edited for length.

UA: Why do working people deserve a voice in oversight of the U of M?

RG: I was part of the faculty organizing committee when I was an adjunct, and we were trying to form a union. I felt then – and I continue to feel this way – that there are so many people who make the university go every single day, but they have very little job security and are paid piecemeal for their work.

I gave 100% when I was working with my students, but I still had to have other jobs. I know a lot of the faculty at the university give 100%, but they're only there 25% of the time. That leaves big gaps in the university when the students need extra support. I think I was there for five years without getting a single raise, and the pay was not great when I started. There wasn't any sort of accountability on pay; probably 90% of the time my paycheck wouldn't come when they said it would. There was nowhere to go.

I want us to be better than that because it makes it very difficult for people to stay and be part of growing and building the university. We're talking about people who are deeply dedicated to their work.

UA: So, working conditions at the U are also students' learning and living conditions?

RG: Absolutely. And it goes for our hourly workers as well. When we cut off summer work, when we don't give them any way to get hours in certain parts of the year – all these things really impact the way that

people can invest themselves in the university.

And at the end of the day, that shows up in the student experience in some really big ways. At the end of last year, we were hearing from students who couldn't get food from the cafeterias in their dorms because there just weren't enough people to prepare it. How do we expect them to live and learn on campus if they don't have a way to access food easily?

UA: What role can regents play in making the U a better employer?

RG: What I'm finding is that we don't have easy ways to engage with a lot of decisions that are being made at the college and department level. So at the regent level, what I'm trying to figure out is, how do we create some accountability on these things, and policies that will support the people who make the university run every single day?

UA: Aside from making the U a better employer, what factored into your decision to seek a spot on the board?

RG: I deeply love the university. It's an incredible place, and every single time I have the opportunity to interact with people from other places in the university – places that I haven't worked – I'm just blown away. There's so much happening at the university that will have an impact on how we do things as a state way into the future. All over the university, people are figuring out how we do things better, how we do things more sustainably and how we create the future we want to see. It is mind blowing.

I deeply believe that education is something we do for our entire society and not just for individuals. I think it's really important for people to be able to study and research and learn about the things they get excited and passionate about, but at the end of the day, if we haven't educated the next generation of doctors or nurses or lawyers or teachers, then we will all suffer because of it. It's up to us to invest in education because it is our future.

That shows up in everything I do – from being a regent to being an educator at the AFL to running the labor college – I believe everyone can benefit from education and teaching and learning. And I believe that we all benefit when people are engaging in deeper thinking and learning about new ways to do things, how to do things better, to do work they are excited and passionate about.

UA: The U has such a sprawling presence, both

geographically and in terms of its operations. What's your approach to better familiarizing yourself with an institution you're now charged with overseeing?

RG: We are very fortunate to have a great professional staff in the Board of Regents. There is a six- to nine-month-long onboarding process, and it culminates with actually visiting all of the campuses in the university system, talking to faculty and students and staff. The other part that is less formal but has been really important to me has been engaging with unions at the university and hearing from faculty and staff about things that are impacting them and how we can support them. I can't necessarily intervene in every situation, but I can take those conversations and incorporate them into the way that I'm thinking about decision making at the university.

UA: Public schools are finding themselves under increased political scrutiny – their curriculum, issues related to free speech, investments in diversity, equity and inclusion. You're on the board as a result of a political process. What is this moment like? And where do you draw the line when it comes to the influence of ideology or politics in the board's work?

RG: I don't do this work because I subscribe to an ideology. Every decision that I make, I try to make it in the best interest of the university, and for me that means in the best interest of every single person who is part of or benefits from the university. I'm not in any way beholden to any single person or ideology or party. I deeply believe in the importance of making this the best institution that it can be for the greatest number of people, and making it an institution that really benefits Minnesota as a whole.

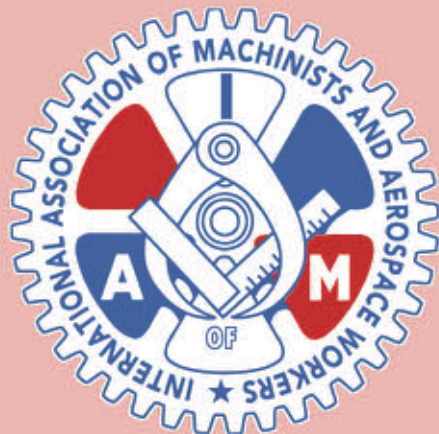
Higher education has a way of creating this sort of feeling that it is about the individual or about helping people lift themselves up – and it creates this kind of elitism. I so strongly believe that education is for all of us, and it benefits all of us. That is my ideology.

UA: You're wearing a lot of hats. What keeps you invested in the work?

RG: My four kids are the thing that drives me to come out every day and do this work because it matters so much to me to try to make things better for them and for everyone – for the broader society and for the next generation.

Happy Labor Day!

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-Jim Gleb, President-



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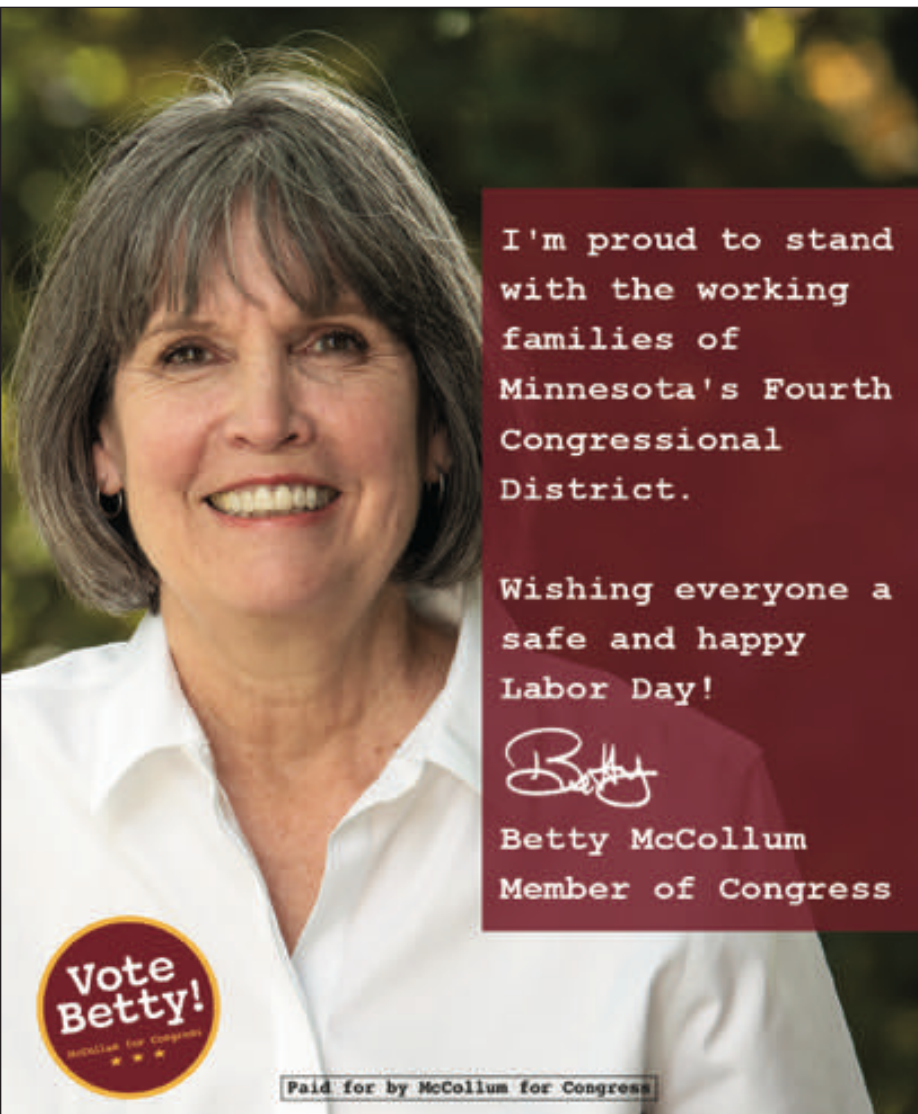


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IUPAT District Council 82 wishes all union members a happy Labor Day.

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Happy Labor Day!

Sending best wishes to our union family for a safe and happy holiday.

Machinists District Lodge 77

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On Labor Day, let us remember the men and women that have fought tirelessly for Workers Rights.



United We Stand

Happy Labor Day!

– A message from the Saint Paul Building & Construction Trades Council.

Lyft and Uber threaten to cut service in Minneapolis over minimum wage plan

By Max Nesterak
Minnesota Reformer

Lyft says it will stop service in Minneapolis if the City Council passes an ordinance that would set minimum pay rates for Lyft and Uber drivers as well as establish new standards on discipline and termination.

In a letter to City Council President Andrea Jenkins Aug. 15, a Lyft executive said the company supports minimum wages for drivers, but that the rates proposed in Minneapolis are too high and would ultimately lead demand to plummet.

“The proposal before you is bad for drivers, bad for riders, and inoperable,” Lyft’s Chief Policy Officer Jeremy Bird wrote. “It could turn rideshare into a luxury service, despite the fact that most Lyft riders in Minnesota have an annual household income approximately 17% below the state median.”

Lyft also sent a warning to riders saying it would shut down operations in the city and urged riders to send emails to their council members.

Uber sent a notice to riders on Monday warning them that the ordinance would leave them “no choice but to greatly reduce service” and could shut down operations completely. An Uber spokesperson said the company plans to only provide luxury services.

The threats are just the latest salvo in what has become a tough political battle that started at the Legislature last spring, when DFL lawmakers passed a bill raising driver wages. Uber threatened to cut off most service in Minnesota, and Gov. Tim Walz issued his first and only veto of the bill.

The City Council were scheduled to vote Aug. 17 on the ordinance, which would set minimum pay rates at \$1.40 per mile and 51 cents per minute — which would increase with inflation — and at least \$5 per ride.

Drivers say they currently earn around 58 cents per mile and 14 cents per minute on average. The rates for each trip can vary greatly with no explanation, which is a source of constant

frustration for drivers.

The city ordinance, which would take effect Jan. 1, would also set new rules on how the companies may discipline and terminate — or “deactivate” — drivers. Drivers say the companies will kick them off the apps with no recourse, leaving them saddled with debt for cars they purchased to drive for the companies.

In an Op-Ed published this week in the Star Tribune, the ordinance’s authors said the warnings from Uber and Lyft are exaggerated and part of their playbook to kill unfriendly regulations.

“Multibillion-dollar corporations like Uber and Lyft have lobbyists and PR departments who drum up fears that basic workers’ rights will cause the sky to fall,” Council Members Robin Wonsley, Jamal Osman and Jason Chavez wrote.

The companies say the proposed Minneapolis ordinance would jeopardize riders’ safety by making it impossible for them to keep off dangerous drivers.

The ordinance requires transportation network companies to provide drivers with five days of advance warning before all deactivations. Drivers would be able to request a reconsideration meeting, which would have to happen within a week, otherwise the companies would have to reinstate the drivers.

For a deactivation to be upheld, the companies would have to show that it is more likely than not that a violation occurred. The ordinance also requires the companies to reconsider deactivations going back to 2021.

In Lyft’s letter to Jenkins, the company said it would have to reach out to victims of violence or sexual abuse going back three years.

After vetoing the Uber bill, Walz created a task force made up of drivers, company representatives and other stakeholders to propose legislation next year. The state Legislature is poised to pass a bill that could preempt the city law in a matter of months.

— *The Reformer is an independent, nonprofit news organization published at minnesotareformer.com.*

Happy Labor Day from Local 563!

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Construction and General Laborers' Union Local 563

www.local563.org

MINNESOTA STATE ASSOCIATION OF LETTER CARRIERS (MSALC) OF OVER 5,000 UNION MEMBERS WISH TO EXTEND OUR GREETINGS TO ALL UNION BRETHERN CELEBRATING THE LABOR MOVEMENT ON THIS LABOR DAY.



Minnesota Building Trades plan Yellow Ribbon Ribfest to benefit military families



The Minnesota Building Trades’ inaugural “Yellow Ribbon Ribfest” promises families “an afternoon of BBQ, music and patriotic fun” Sept. 16 at the 34th Red Bull Infantry Division Headquarters in Arden Hills.

Proceeds will benefit programs to support military service members, veterans and military families.

New or experienced cooking teams are invited to join the rib-

smoking contest.

Additional plans for the day include an Army National Guard and labor career fair, a military ceremony and flyover, a beer and refreshment tent, ribs, music and more.

For more information, visit www.facebook.com/mnbuildingtradesribfest.

Labor News in Review

AFTER THREATENING STRIKE, KOWALSKI'S WORKERS WIN RAISES

After strike votes at local grocers earlier this year resulted in contract gains for union members at Cub Foods and Lunds & Byerlys, members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 663 who work at six Kowalski's stores in the west metro took a strike vote of their own before settling a contract last month with raises of between \$2 and \$4 per hour over the next two years.

Kowalski's workers voted overwhelmingly to authorize their leadership to call a three-day strike beginning July 28. Instead of picketing, though, the bargaining unit of over 600 union members was preparing to vote on a two-year agreement that, in addition to raising wages, will increase the company's 401(k) contribution and expand access to the retirement benefit.

The contract, which workers voted to ratify the following week, also moves toward pay equity for all members and will maintain their current contribution levels toward health insurance.

Kim Cizl, a member of the bargaining committee from the Hennepin Kowalski's deli, said UFCW members are "strengthening our union one contract at a time."

"I'm excited we secured pay equity for all union employees, because it allows the work environment to feel more fair and just, and that's important to me," added Aidan Lindon, deli specialist at Eden Prairie Kowalski's.

UFCW Local 663, based in the west metro, negotiated with grocery chains this year. East metro union members, represented by UFCW Local 1189, will begin bargaining in 2024.



Workers at an Oakdale call center show off their petition for a union before marching on their boss Aug. 2.

CALL CENTER WORKERS GO UNION

Workers at Rove Pest Control's call center in Oakdale marched on their boss with a union petition Aug. 2, demanding recognition of their bargaining unit and representation from Local 7250 of the Communications Workers (CWA).

The call center's eight customer service employees cover Rove's operations in five states, including Minnesota. They are organizing for higher wages, better health care benefits and increased time off.

Workers also want a clearer definition of their job duties from the employer. In addition to scheduling appointments and responding to customer feedback or complaints, call center workers recently were told they must clean the bathrooms at their workplace, accord-

ing to Local 7250.

After delivering their union petition, Rove call center workers rallied with representatives of the CWA and the broader labor community. Later in the day, workers formally filed for a union election with the National Labor Relations Board.

"Like many workplaces across the country, these workers began self-organizing and approached our union for support," Local 7250 reported on its social media account. "We are proud to know these cats - and have their backs!"

FAIRVIEW-SANFORD MERGER OFF, UNIONS RELIEVED

Health care union leaders expressed relief after leaders from M Health Fairview and South Dakota-based Sanford Health called off a planned merger July 27.

Nurses, health care workers and patients had raised several concerns with state regulators and lawmakers about the proposal to merge the health systems, warning it would likely increase costs and limit access to health services for patients, threaten jobs and working conditions for workers, and consolidate even more corporate control over the health care system.

Mary C. Turner, president of the Minnesota Nurses Association, said unionized nurses were relieved at the news that Sanford and Fairview were abandoning the merger.

"Since the merger was first announced, nurses have expressed deep concerns that a merger between these two healthcare giants would lead to the loss of healthcare access across Minnesota, but especially throughout our rural communities," she said.

A newly appointed member of the University of Minnesota's Board of Regents, Turner added that the merger also "threatened the future of health care in our state" by threatening to turn over control of the U's teaching hospital to a health system based outside the state's borders.

"This news is a big win for Minnesotans who want our state to be a leader in providing world-class health-care for families in our state," said Jamie Gulley, President of SEIU Healthcare Minnesota and Iowa.

"By standing up in opposition together as patients, health care workers and community supporters, we were able to stop this corporate consolidation that was bad for patients, bad for workers, and bad for Minnesota."

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 15)



Let's get together, union members!

The St. Paul Regional Labor Federation's local labor assemblies bring working people and retirees together to exchange ideas and take action on issues that matter most in their communities. Assembly meetings are open to all union members who live or work in our four-county area.



www.stpaulunions.org

Chisago County Assembly
September 25, 6 p.m.
To register for the Zoom meeting,
email cnocerini@stpaulunions.org

Dakota County Assembly
September 14, 7 p.m.
Dakota County United Educators,
6950 West 146th St., Apple Valley

Ramsey County Assembly
September 25, 6 p.m.
Saint Paul Labor Center,
353 7th Street West

Washington County Assembly
September 27, 6 p.m.
Washington County Gov't Center,
Stillwater.

Happy Labor Day!

Wishing you and your family a safe and happy Labor Day from Roofers & Waterproofers Local 96!

Roofers & Waterproofers Local 96



Happy Labor Day, union members!

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Locals 64, 650, 911, 1000, 1067, 1175, 1177, 1292, 1614 & 1976.

BURNSVILLE BARISTAS SEEK UNION

Starbucks workers at the Nicollet and Grand store in Burnsville filed a petition with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) Aug. 16 to unionize with Starbucks Workers United. In a letter to Starbucks CEO Laxman Narasimhan announcing their organizing drive, workers explained that their decision “is not a stance against Starbucks as a brand or its leadership; instead, it stems from our deep commitment to the company’s missions, values, and its continued success.”

The Burnsville baristas are joining a nationwide movement of over 8,500 Starbucks workers organizing for better working conditions, fair wages and consistent schedules. If a majority of the store’s staff votes to join Starbucks Workers United, an affiliate of the Service Employees (SEIU), the Burnsville location would become the seventh in the metro area to unionize.

“While working as a barista, I’ve seen so much – from other partners being unable to pay their bills due to a lack of hours and wages, to partners that have been there for years leaving the company from becoming burnt out from the stress of it all,” said Cassandra Hagen, a barista and organizer in Burnsville. “What I want to see is for Starbucks to not only hear our concerns but make meaningful change towards fixing these issues, because we make Starbucks – and what the company is – possible.”

“Baristas shouldn’t need to rely on tips, or a second job to make ends meet,” shift supervisor Abril Mendoza added. “We deserve a livable wage from Starbucks, and they can, without a doubt, afford to give us our fair share of the company’s success that wouldn’t be made possible without us.”

Locally, unionized Starbucks include: St. Paul (300 Snelling Ave. N), Roseville (2305 Fairview Ave.), St. Anthony (3704 Silver Lake Rd.), the Mall of America, Edina Industrial Blvd., and 47th and Cedar in Minneapolis.

LABOR MOVEMENT BACKS PLANNED PARENTHOOD WORKERS



Minnesota AFL-CIO President Bernie Burnham offered support on behalf of Minnesota’s labor movement to over 440 Planned Parenthood workers on the one-year anniversary of their decision to form a union with SEIU Healthcare MN and IA. The union is still negotiating its first contract – and fighting back against an intimidation campaign targeting elected union leaders at the reproductive health organization’s North Central States chapter. “Over 90% of your membership voted to form a union one year ago,” Burnham said. “It’s time to get this settled.”



Welcome back, students and SPFE members!

We are proud to continue to work side by side with our colleagues and our community, helping support the schools St. Paul families deserve.

St. Paul Federation of Educators Local 28 is affiliated with Education Minnesota, the American Federation of Teachers, the National Education Association and the AFL-CIO.



HAPPY LABOR DAY

From

Rep. Peter Fischer - House Dist. 44A

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Prepared and paid for by Fischer for Representative, 2443 Standridge Avenue, Maplewood, MN 55109

Wishing a happy and safe Labor Day to all workers!



Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers Local Union 1 MN/ND/SD

www.bac1mn-nd.org

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- Sara Lee buns & bread, Ballpark buns (Bimbo Bakeries USA)

Labor History

'Organize' was the watchword of St. Paul's first Labor Day celebration

By Dave Riehle and Peter Rachleff

Special to The Union Advocate

Editor's note: Peter Rachleff, co-founder of the East Side Freedom Library, introduces and reflects on this article written by Dave Riehle, a local historian and now-retired member of the United Transportation Union (UTU), for The Union Advocate's Labor Day issue 25 years ago.

For more than 140 years, St. Paul workers and unions have come together to celebrate their history and their solidarity by observing Labor Day.

This year, the East Side Freedom Library invites you to meet on Saturday, Sept. 9, from 5 to 8 p.m., on our beautiful front lawn at 1105 Greenbrier St. The event will include food, music, updates on union organizing and contract campaigns, and community building.

While we may be young in the scale of the history of the local labor movement - we are celebrating our 10th year of operation - we know that we stand on strong shoulders. In the following article, originally published by The Union Advocate in September 1998, local historian Dave Riehle brings to life the history of Labor Day and connects it to the traditions that live on today. - Rachleff

One of the buildings demolished in downtown St. Paul this summer stood on what had once been the location of a union hall in the mid-1880s. As the gray limestone blocks of the original foundation were pulled down, a metal box about the size of a book tumbled out and fell in the dust. Fortunately, it was rescued by an alert construction worker. Inside was a handwritten report of several early labor events,

including Minnesota's first Labor Day celebration on Monday, Sept. 7, 1885.

Well, it could have happened that way.

The following account is based largely on stories printed in Twin Cities daily newspapers. This was twelve years before the Union Advocate was founded, and if the St. Paul labor movement published any report, it has not survived. The minutes of the Trades and Labor Assembly for August 14, 1885, which have survived, briefly record that the committee had secured grounds for the celebration at Cottage Park in White Bear Lake and that the railroad fare from the Union Depot was 50 cents for adults and 25 cents for children. The newspapers, who were eagerly following the progress of a resurgent labor movement, sent their reporters along to capture the scene for their readers and thus for us too, more than a century later. Unless some lost diary does turn up, these short articles, written to be forgotten the next day, are now a unique and irreplaceable record of our first Labor Day.

"Unity" was on everybody's lips as the mighty movement of the Knights of Labor swept across the country, holding out the promise of uniting all workers, skilled, unskilled, black and white, male and female, into one great organization. The 1885 minutes show that the Assembly had even set up an "amalgamation committee" to discuss the merger of the St. Paul and Minneapolis central bodies. The Trades and Labor assembly itself reflected this impulse. It was made up of "trade" unions like the carpenters, printers, plasterers and cigar makers, along with locals of the Knights of Labor composed of boot and shoe workers, railroad machinists, streetcar employees and many others.

Only three years before, the first Labor Day in

America had been celebrated in New York City, as over 10,000 workers marched at the call of the Central Labor Union. Two months after that, in November 1882, local unions met in St. Paul to found the Trades and Labor Assembly.

Where would you hold a celebration to bring together the St. Paul, Minneapolis and Stillwater labor movements? (Stillwater was a booming industrial and logging town in those days, with its own trades and labor assembly). White Bear Lake was the obvious choice. At that time a nationally known summer resort (Mark Twain wrote about it in his "Life on the Mississippi"), with pavilions, amusements, hotels and summer homes, it was conveniently located at the junction of railroad lines from all three cities. Passengers could disembark at Lake Shore Depot, just across from the present day White Bear Shopping Center on Highway 61, and walk over to Cottage Park, about where the present day Lions Park is located.

The call went out, issued by Jack McGaughey, "the one-armed ex-soldier, the scholar, the poet, the true representative of the laboring classes," as a Hastings newspaper described him. McGaughey was the state organizer (known as the "Master Workman"), for the Knights of Labor, a railroad brakeman who had lost an arm in an accident on the Minnesota Eastern Railway several years earlier.

"Organized labor," McGaughey proclaimed on behalf of the Knights, "is called upon to demonstrate to the drones of the Northwest, lawyers, bankers, rum-sellers and professional politicians, who produce

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 17)



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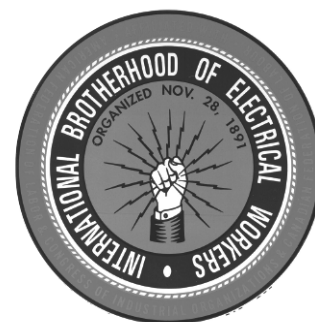
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HAPPY LABOR DAY!



International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local 23

HAPPY LABOR DAY!

A MESSAGE FROM

CEMENT MASONS, PLASTERERS AND SHOPHANDS LOCAL 633

OF MINNESOTA, NORTH DAKOTA & NORTHWEST WISCONSIN

312 Central Ave. #376, Minneapolis, MN 55414
612-379-1558 - www.local633.org

AMERICA'S OLDEST BUILDING TRADES UNION, EST. 1864



(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 16)

and legislate for themselves.”

“They have denied us the right to organize,” he said. “Therefore, we call upon you to defy them; that you will organize; that you have organized; that the day of your deliverance is approaching! Join in our ranks in celebrating the day.”

The call for defiance was not idle rhetoric. Labor Day was not a legal state or national holiday. The working week was Monday through Saturday. “The Trades and Labor Assembly,” McGaughey wrote, “proclaims the first Monday in September to be Labor’s Annual Holiday. Leave your benches, leave your shops and attend the picnic.”

There were no paid holidays then. So what, McGaughey asked. “A day spent with us is not lost; it is merely one day’s labor deferred; for while we are away the work lies idle and it requires one day longer to complete the task. Therefore, swell the great army of peace and production on Monday, Sept. 7. You are one of the spokes in this great wheel of progress and your absence will weaken the wheel by one member.”

And so they did. All estimates agree that about 3,000 attended. The mayors of St. Paul and Minneapolis issued proclamations approving the celebration, and the employers did not attempt to oppose it.

Finally, the great day came, “dawning,” the Pioneer Press said, “with rather inpropitious skies and with indications of mini, a description that may be familiar to contemporary Labor Day celebrants. At about 7:00 am. Thomas Scorra, an organizer of the celebration, left his home at 705 Conway Street, one of five narrow row house apartments clustered in a wood frame building. After a short walk to Third and Maria, he met his friend and fellow shoe worker, James Morrow, leaving his residence at 370 Maria Avenue.

Since the streetcar line to Dayton’s bluff would not be completed until November, they walked along 3rd Street towards downtown, heading for the Union Depot. This was a familiar route for Scorra and Morrow, active members of Local Assembly 2832 of the Knights of Labor. They worked for the Minnesota Shoe Company at 5th and Rosabel (now Wall St.) and took this route six days a week. The company used the union label and “ran a strictly K of L shop,” the Assembly minutes tell us.

The first St. Paul train left the Union Depot at 8:10 a.m. loaded with hundreds of passengers and the members of the Metropolitan band, riding in coaches or on flat cars rigged up with temporary seats and canvas covering. The train pulled out of the depot and toiled up the steep grade alongside Phalen Creek, creeping by Hamm’s brewery before picking up speed as it neared Lake Phalen. The train passed the railroad’s shops at Gladstone, rolling along on level track through is open country. It slowed as it approached Minneapolis and Duluth Junction, just past Goose Lake, and pulled into Lakeshore Station about 9:30

a.m. The second St. Paul train followed about two hours later, arriving just after a train arriving on the Minneapolis line had pulled through the junction and delivered 500 more. Many came with their families. Soon, thousands thronged the park.

“The excursionists first gathered in the pavilion at Cottage Park, where the Metropolitan band discoursed,” the St. Paul Globe’s reporter wrote. A reporter from the Minneapolis Tribune complained that the weather had not improved, with “a sharp wind blowing from the lake under a leaden sky, from which not a ray of sunlight fell.” The picnickers wrapped coats and shawls around themselves and did not seem dismayed. About 11:30, Jack McGaughey appeared on the grandstand and announced that “wishing you all the greatest pleasure at this, our first union festival, I take great pleasure in introducing to you Mr. Richard Griffiths of Chicago, who through his kindly and indefatigable efforts in behalf of the order, has gained a national reputation.”

Griffiths, one of the central leaders of the Knights, had organized shoe workers following the end of the Civil War, and was truly a compelling speaker. He was 60 years old, and according to the Tribune’s reporter, whose disappointment in the weather seemed to darken his spirits, “a rather aged gentleman.” There was no disagreement among the reporters, however, that Griffiths had a large, attentive and enthusiastic audience, as he denounced monopoly and child labor, and called upon labor to unite and organize, expressing the hope that Minnesota would take the lead.

After the speeches, the celebrants adjourned to the picnic grove and opened their heavily laden lunch baskets, or visited the lunch counters of the Ladies Aid society. At 2 o’clock the group repaired to the grandstand to watch the advertised footraces, sparring matches and baseball games. After the boxers had gone four not very exciting rounds, referee John Sterritt, an African American Knight from Minneapolis, ended the match with a decision, and the ball game began. The St. Paul team, which seemed to be dominated by blacksmiths, boilermakers and apprentices from the Jackson Street railroad shops, defeated the Minneapolis team in five innings and went on to another win against the Stillwater team. Dancing resumed at the pavilion until it was time for the trains to leave.

Jack McGaughey left on the train to Minneapolis at 7:10 p.m. Tom Scorra and Jim Morrow (and perhaps their families), along with other organizers of the day’s events like Ed Harroun and Frank Casserly, two 24-year-old printers who were serving as president and secretary of the St. Paul assembly, boarded the last St Paul train at 7:35 p.m. It would be dark when they got back, and the presses and shoe machinery would start running early the next morning. But it had been a glorious day. One of them told a reporter that the gathering would do more to cement the ties between the different crafts than a year of union meetings and labor conventions.

They were young and life stretched out in an unbroken vista ahead of them. Who could not believe that this explosive new labor movement would create a better world for the workers, where each cooperated for the good of all, and probably even before they reached middle age?

Life turned out to be more complicated than that. But Labor Day still matters, because the labor movement matters, and its job, still unfulfilled, always lies ahead. Peter McGuire, the young carpenter who proposed the first Labor Day in 1882 said, “No festival of martial glory or warrior’s renown is this; no pageant pomp of warlike conquest, no glory of fratricidal strife attend this day. It is dedicated to Peace, Civilization and the triumphs of Industry. It is a demonstration of fraternity, and the harbinger of a better age, a more chivalrous time, when labor shall be best honored and well rewarded.”

Information on the celebration came from the Sept. 8, 1885, issues of the St. Paul Globe, Dispatch, Pioneer Press and the Minneapolis Tribune. Other information was gathered from the 1885 and 1886 St. Paul city directories, Rascher Insurance maps and the minutes of the St. Paul Trades and Labor Assembly at the Minnesota Historical Society, as well as visits to some of the sites mentioned in the article. The rail lines from St. Paul, Minneapolis and Stillwater to White Bear Lake were all functioning as late as the 1980s, and some segments remain today.


Thomas Scorra and James Morrow later changed crafts and went on to organize the Retail Clerks Union. Morrow, a state leader of the Knights of Labor, was elected the second president of the Minnesota Federation of Labor. Frank Casserly became a state factory inspector. Ed Harroun later edited the St. Paul Labor Echo for a short time. Jack McGaughey became a deputy state labor commissioner and then a salesman for a flour mill.

There were no records found of female activists connected with Labor Day 1885, although they were surely there, and John Sterritt was, according to one reporter, the only African American present that day.

Labor Day became a national holiday in September 1894. President Grover Cleveland signed the legislation just two months after he sent in federal troops to crush the Pullman strike. — Riehle

While historians and movement elders like Dave Riehle keep the stories of our past alive, a new generation of workers are bringing new industries and employers into the movement. Just look to the Minnesota Historical Society, the Science Museum of Minnesota, Half Price Books, Trader Joe’s, Starbucks and the University of Minnesota graduate employees. They are writing new chapters in our history.

Let’s bring the past and the present together to make an even stronger foundation for the future. Express your solidarity on Saturday, Sept. 9, from 5 to 8 p.m., at the East Side Freedom Library. — Rachleff



Labor Day greetings to all union families!

Iron Workers Local 512

Happy Labor Day to all Union Families



IATSE Local 13 - Stagehands, Wardrobe, Wigs, Hair and Makeup



Minutes of the Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation

JULY 12, 2023

The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation met in regular session on the above date and was called to order with the Pledge of Allegiance by President Peterson at 6 p.m. Board members in attendance were Beedle, Edwards, Engeldorf, Gale, Guertin, Hoerth, Hoppe, Madden, Markham-Kocurek, McNamara, Michelson, Peterson, Ryan, Sansom, Schmidt, Slattery, Tastad-Damer, VanDassor, and Vanderport. Excused were Beissel, Gibbons, Hill, Seath, Varco and Wynn. Absent: Luneburg.

President Peterson read the Code of Conduct. She will go over the Code of Conduct at the beginning of each meeting. The Code states: The AFL-CIO is committed to providing an environment free from discrimination and harassment. We ask all meeting participants to embrace our values of equity and equality and conduct themselves in this meeting consistent with those values. The RLF meetings that are held the Second Wednesday of the month will have a designee as the first point of contact for anyone who thinks they have experienced discriminatory, harassing or otherwise unacceptable behavior. President Peterson has assigned two designees as points of contact that will be announced at the start of each meeting. We urge you to contact him/her if you have any concerns. The designees are Bunny Engeldorf, Secretary-Treasurer and Perry Schmidt, Vice President.

CREDENTIALS

Credentials were received from CWA Local 7201. President Peterson administered the Oath of Obligation to those new delegates and alternates in attendance.

COMMITTEE ON POLITICAL EDUCATION (COPE) MINUTES JULY 12, 2023

COPE met in regular session on the above date and was called to order by President Peterson at 5 p.m. Board members in attendance were Beedle, Edwards, Engeldorf, Gale, Guertin, Hoerth, Hoppe, Madden, Markham-Kocurek, Mayer, McNamara, Michelson, Peterson, Ryan, Sansom, Schmidt, Slattery, Tastad-Damer, VanDassor, and Vanderport. Excused were Beissel, Gibbons, Hill, Krey, Lohmann, Naseth, Seath, Varco and Wynn. Absent: Luneburg.

Items to come before this board included:

- President Peterson reported that the Ramsey County Labor Assembly screened Saint Paul City Council candidates for Ward 1, 3 and 7 and recommended no labor endorsements at this time; screening candidates for Saint Paul School Board will be at the next meeting. Please participate if you are interested. Filings close in August, and they may receive some requests from suburban schools.

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$250 CONTRIBUTION TO RAFAEL ORTEGA, RAMSEY COUNTY COMMISSIONER DISTRICT 5.**

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$250 CONTRIBUTION TO DAVE PINTO, HOUSE DISTRICT 64B.**

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO**

Labor supports United Way Action Day



Union members were among more than 5,000 people who volunteered or donated in support of Greater Twin Cities United Way's 2023 Action Day. Volunteers helped stuff 43,000 backpacks with school supplies Aug. 3 at Target Field in Minneapolis. GTCUW's partner organizations will help distribute the backpacks free of charge to area students heading back to school this fall. The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation's nonprofit arm, the Labor Studies and Resource Center, has a decades-long partnership with GTCUW. Union volunteers at Action Day included (L to R) Kim Maurer, Postal Workers Local 7019 president; Dave Hallas, United Steeworkers; Connie Beissel, Postal Workers retiree; Brian Nocerini; Colleen Nocerini, RLF political organizer; Claire Zupetz, Twin Cities Musicians Union and OPEIU Local 12; Erica Dalager Reed, AFL-CIO Community Services liaison; Kera Peterson, RLF president; Bill Wessinger, Letter Carriers retiree; and Tom Quinn, Stagehands retiree. Other labor volunteers included Machinists Local 1833 retiree Mary Sansom and an eight-person crew from the Teamsters Service Bureau.

submitted photo

MAKE A \$250 CONTRIBUTION TO DFL SENATE DISTRICT 55.

There being no further business to come before this board the meeting is adjourned.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES JULY 12, 2023

The Executive Board met with those same members present who are duly elected to this board.

Items to come before this board included:

- **PRESIDENT'S REPORT:** President Peterson reported on transfer of funds to Pipefitters Credit Union Savings Account, Labor-Red Cross Blood Drive, Greater Twin Cities Action Day at Target Field, parade application has been submitted for the RLF to have a marching unit in the upcoming Labor Day Parade at the Minnesota State Fair, staff negotiations, United Way funding for the St. Paul Labor Studies and Resource Center and the addition of other fundraising opportunities.

- **M/S/C TO TRANSFER \$100,000 FROM THE RLF CHECKING ACCOUNT TO THE RLF SAVINGS ACCOUNT.**

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO**

MAKE A \$500 CONTRIBUTION TO THE EAST SIDE FREEDOM LIBRARY.

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO BE A BRONZE SPONSOR AT A COST OF \$500 TO THE HEAT AND FROST INSULATORS LOCAL 34 110TH ANNIVERSARY GALA.**

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$500 CONTRIBUTION TO THE LABORERS' FAMILY FUN-RAISER AND PICNIC.**

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$500 CONTRIBUTION TO THE MINNESOTA BUILDING AND CONSTRUCTION TRADES COUNCIL'S RIBFEST.**

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$350 CONTRIBUTION TO THE USA'S 13TH ANNUAL ROOFERS TWIN CITIES SPORTING CLAYS SHOOT.**

- **M/S/C FOR THE RLF TO MAKE A \$250 CONTRIBUTION TO THE MINNESOTA AFL-CIO FOR STATE FAIR PROGRAMMING.**

- **ORGANIZING: UPDATES/CAMPAIGNS:** AFSCME, Postal Workers (APWU) Local 7019, ATU Local 1005, Machinists (IAMAW) Local 1833, IATSE Local 13 and Teamsters Local 120 gave updates on their organizing activities.

There being no further business to

come before this board, the meeting adjourned.

REPORT OF THE TREASURER

Secretary-Treasurer Engeldorf reported on the financial status of the Federation as of June 2023. The report was accepted as read.

REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

- Michael Madden reported on behalf of the Chisago County Labor Assembly. We will be purchasing and delivering school supplies to the Chisago County teachers. Our next meeting will be on the fourth Tuesday of the month via zoom at 6:00 p.m.

- Staff reported on behalf of the Dakota County Labor Assembly. We are seeking money for our school supply fundraiser for children in Dakota County whose families need help. The screening process will start later this summer. Our next meeting will be the second Thursday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in person.

- Brian Beedle reported on behalf of the Washington County Labor Assembly. We continue to work with FARE for ALL and Valley Outreach. There are volunteer opportunities avail-



Official notice regarding SPRLF endorsements

The Saint Paul Regional Labor Federation, AFL-CIO, may consider recommendations for labor endorsement in upcoming municipal and school board elections, as well as endorsement of school funding referenda at the regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 13, 2023.

For more information, or to learn more about the endorsement process, call 651-222-3787.

able please go to their website. Our next meeting will be the fourth Wednesday of the month at 6:00 p.m.

- Martin Hoerth reported on behalf of the Ramsey County Labor Assembly. Thanks to everyone who came to our last meeting to screen for Saint Paul City Council in Ward 1, 3, and 7. We are in the process of setting up screenings for the Saint Paul School Board. Our next meeting will be on the fourth Wednesday of the month via zoom at 6:00 p.m.

PRESIDENT REPORT

President Peterson reported on GTCUW Day of Action, Labor Day Parade, participating in union actions, potential school board screenings – any member in good standing can participate.

STAFF/LABOR LIAISON REPORTS

- Colleen Nocerini, Political Organizer, spoke about the Minnesota AFL-CIO Union Member Candidate Program and the collection of money for the CCLA and DCLA.

- Erica Dalager Reed, AFL-CIO Community Services Liaison, reported twenty units of blood were collected at the Labor-Red Cross Blood Drive held on June 27 with five first time donors. We have been looking for twenty volunteers to help build backpacks at Greater Twin Cities United Way' 2023 Action Day at Target Field and the Saint Paul RLF marching unit in the upcoming Minnesota State Fair Labor Day Parade.

There being no further business to come before this delegation, the meeting adjourned.

Submitted by,
BERNADINE ENGELDORF
Secretary-Treasurer

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