

SEIU Local 517M E-Former - March 2015 Edition

Lead, Unite, Fight – Win For the 99%!

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Training Conference Prepares Leaders for the Year Ahead

In late February, our stewards and leaders gathered to learn about the newest tools available to them, refresh existing skills and network with each other to share best practices for enforcing contracts and winning at the bargaining table. Attendees were welcomed by newly elected State Representative **Vanessa Guerra** (D –Saginaw) who shared her story and her thoughts on the year ahead in Lansing.



Members focused on learning negotiation tactics with a focus on skills that will help us gain the best possible contracts this year. Skills discussed included, bargaining preparation, contract campaigns, and a focus on standardized language for union leave time and other best practices.

Breakout Sessions a Hit with Stewards and Leaders

Each industry of our Local had an opportunity to meet and focus on specific issues. These breakout sessions are helpful so that each unit can spend time laser-focused on its own issues in addition to the training they receive in general sessions.

School units discussed best practices for dealing with the Right to Work law, strategies to help members communicate “face-to-face” with each other about the union – especially new members to educate them on the union and its programs and benefits. Members also focused on the importance of reminding all their unit members to read and understand their contract.

Local government units brainstormed different ways to engage members around contract bargaining, including ways to survey members and strategies for starting contract campaigns well in advance of the expiration date of a contract. Different members from other municipalities shared their ideas on how to set up committees to find New Solutions to budget

constraints during bargaining using the City of Saginaw's chapter as a model for finding efficiencies and creative revenue enhancements. Stewards also learned ways to reach out to other community groups who may share a common interest in our New Solutions plans.

State Employee Units worked together to prepare for bargaining this year – including bargaining survey development.

The second day of training included numerous speakers and presenters that discussed organizing tactics, the New Solutions program and current communications strategies.



The main topic on the second day focused on preparing a case for arbitration. Members were divided into groups and given sample contract language and facts for three separate scenarios. The groups worked on the union's oral argument before an arbitrator. The groups presented the oral arguments they came up with in front of a panel of

actual arbitrators that were brought in to hear the cases and provide the members with feedback as to what arbitrators look for. Members who participated enjoyed the real-life examples and the chance to learn from arbitrators who hear actual cases.

The major point of the exercise was to understand that in order to win at arbitration you have to do the work all the way back at the initial grievance stage with proper review, investigation and preparations.

Members Recognized For Their Union Service



Three members were recognized for their service to the membership at the 2015 Leadership Development and Communications Conference.

Bob Smrek, a transportation technician with the State, was recognized as the Technical Unit Steward of the Year for his past and present work as a steward and unit board member.

Ray Clover, a bus driver who is retiring from Grand Haven Schools at the end of this school year, was recognized for his 19 years of union leadership and the 14 years he has served on the SEIU Local 517M Executive Board.



Roberta Oldenburg, an aide from Saginaw Public Schools, has grown in her union activity over the years and has risen into the role of steward. She was recognized for her growing involvement in many facets of representation and activism.

ACA Enrollment Event Helps Cover Saginaw Families!

SEIU leaders and members in Region 1 partnered with Enroll America, National Action Network, and A. Philip Randolph Institute to host a community health insurance enrollment event at the Saginaw SEIU hall on February 7th. This day-long event featured a press conference with SEIU Leaders joining Congressman **Dan Kildee**, 95th District State Representative **Vanessa Guerra**,

Saginaw City Councilwoman **Annie Boench**, Saginaw County Commission Chair **Michael Hanley**, and other local elected officials. Professionals assisted families with the enrollment process for health care insurance through the Health Insurance Marketplace or through Healthy Michigan.



68,366 Michigan Residents Sign-up for Health Insurance through Exchange

In its second year of existence, 68,366 people in Michigan were able to get health insurance through the federally-run marketplace. This increases the number of people insured through the exchange to 340,905. This success is part of a multi-year effort by SEIU and our members to advocate for working people by creating a health care system that works for everyone.

Technical Unit Rep Retires



Technical Unit Labor Representative **Dennis Streeter** retired this past February. Dennis was a technician with the Department of Public Health before coming on staff with Local 517M in 2000 when UTEA merged into Local 517M. We wish Dennis the best in his retirement, and thank him for his service to the membership.



Taking over for Dennis is **Kevin Karpinski**. Kevin's involvement in union work began with his work as a local union leader & business representative in the airline industry with the International Association of Machinists & Aerospace Workers (IAMAW). Kevin then worked as a Contract Administrator for the Clerical-Technical Union of MSU (CTU-MSU). He most recently worked with the Michigan Education Association (MEA) as a UniServ Director. Kevin will handle the Technical Unit contract administration from the Lansing office.

Right to Work: Wrong for Michigan, Wrong for Wisconsin

Despite the fact that Right to Work laws have a negative effect on working people, the governor of Wisconsin is seeking to make Wisconsin a Right to Work state. This action comes on the heels of passage of the same law in Michigan in 2012.

SEIU President **Mary Kay Henry** issued the following statement in support of our sisters and brothers in Wisconsin:

"This terrible legislation hurts families and it hurts the economy in Wisconsin. Governor Walker and his out-of-touch allies in the legislature have dealt a blow to working families.

This is part of a 40-year attack on the ability of working people to join together to raise pay and improve working conditions. We've seen corporations gain more and more power while they limit the power of their employees. This ongoing attack has thrown our economy out of balance, and families in Wisconsin and across the nation are the ones paying the price.

When working people lose the right to unite, it means lower wages and fewer benefits for all working people.

States with these 'no rights at work' laws have wages that are 12 percent lower than those in other states. They have fewer residents with health insurance, higher poverty and infant mortality rates, less investment in education and higher workplace fatalities than other states.

All working families deserve a fair shot at having a good life. Unfortunately, it's clear that Gov. Walker is siding with greedy CEOs and wealthy special interests and against families that work hard to make ends meet."

Fight for 15

The following article is reprinted from www.seiu.org and explains why the 'Fight for 15' is a fight that will help all working people including members of 517M. The article is dated December 5, 2014.

On April 15th the D15 campaign will hold a major event to continue our fight in Michigan. For more information, visit www.april15.org.

[This Washington Post headline](#) marked out what was special about Thursday's fast food strikes, as fast food workers came together with home care, airport and other groups of workers across the nation.

After two and a half years working at a Minneapolis McDonald's, **Guillermo Lindsey** is struggling to support his young family on just \$10.20 an hour. About five months ago, he became a leader in the Twin Cities Fight for \$15, part of a growing national movement that has elevated the debate around income inequality in the U.S.

Yesterday, in Guillermo's second strike, he spoke to the crowd gathered in "his" McDonald's, "I'm part of a growing movement fighting for \$15 and the right to organize a union without retaliation. I work hard. I deserve a living wage so I can take care of my family and afford a stable place to live. I need sick days so that if I am too sick to work and serve food I can take a day off without my boss saying he's going to fire me. I joined the Fight for \$15 and a union so we can all start living, not just surviving."

But even before Guillermo had joined the Fight for \$15, **Shaquonica Johnson**, a 38-year old home care worker and single mother of two teenagers in Minneapolis, was in the middle of her own struggle for higher wages and a union.

Shaquonica first heard about the Fight for \$15 while she and **[her fellow home care workers were organizing their union](#)**. Even though she was busy, going to fast food and Walmart worker actions seemed the obvious thing to do, she said. "Are we not all tied together? They need a living wage to support their families. I need a living wage to support my family. They need paid time off. I need paid time off. They want respect and dignity. I want respect and dignity. Anyone who is fighting for those things, I will support them."

Yesterday, once again, Shaquonica was there in the early morning hours to support the striking fast food workers. "When I heard Guillermo speak about having to go to work when he's sick, I knew exactly what he was talking about. I don't have a boss who is telling me I have to go to work or lose my job, but I have to go to work no matter what. I just can't afford to lose a day of work. The day after I had a hysterectomy, I checked myself out of the hospital and went to work because if I didn't, my kids wouldn't eat the next week."

February Text Contest Winners

Congratulations to the winners of the February e-former text contest. The five winners chosen at random were: **April Lazzaro, Mark Sanchez, Daryl Gotham, Margaret Szajner and Keith Szyniszewski.**

March Text Contest

Our monthly text contest allows five winners to receive \$20 gift cards. **To enter, text "517M" to 30644 to take a quiz about the E-Former.**

This month's question:

What is the name of the campaign fighting for a higher minimum wage in Michigan?

- A) Minimum Wage Now!
- B) D15
- C) Raise the Wage
- D) D1010

The contest is an opt-in contest, meaning that we will only text you if you like to participate.

Calendar of Upcoming Union Events for March, 2015

March 4 – Executive Officers Meeting
March 10 – HSS Saginaw RICC Meeting
March 12 – Steward Training for Scientific and Engineering and Technical Units
March 14 – Steward Training for Region 2
March 19 – HSS Unit Board Meeting
March 24 – HSS Unit Grand Rapids RICC Meeting

For more information on the above events, consult our on-line calendar at:
<http://www.seiu517m.org/events/month/>

The monthly subscription for the E-Former is included in your membership dues payment and is intended for members in good standing of SEIU Local 517M.



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