

SEIU Local 517M E-Former – April 2016 Edition

Lead, Unite, Fight – Win For the 99%!

In this Issue:

Exciting Things Will Be Coming in Your Mail!

Lobby Day 2016 is April 13th!

Legislative Alert – Local Government Pension Changes Proposed

Huge Win for State Agricultural Employment Specialist Members

Volunteers Still Needed for the Quadrennial SEIU International Convention at Cobo Hall

Saginaw Organizes Water Drive for Flint

AFRAM Flint Water Drive

Detroit AFRAM Bowling Fundraiser April 2nd

Technician Lunch-N-Learn Held in Jackson

HSS Reps Working Hard for Union Members

Detroit HSS AFRAM Events 2015/2016

The Hard Working Bunnies Were Ready for Easter

From the Archives: A Lesson in Labor History from the Reuther Library

SEIU Local 517M Golf Outing Slated for August 12th

A Thank You from Art Slabosky

Calendar of Upcoming Union Events for April, 2016

Exciting Things Will Be Coming in Your Mail!

Watch your mail in April for two important and exciting mailings! The first one you will receive will be from SEIU Local 517M. This mailing will contain your new membership card and a report to the membership. You will need this new card to access the exciting benefits that will come from the second mailing that you will receive from SEIU International.

It pays to be a member for many reasons. Not only do you get workplace representation, but also SEIU International has partnered with the National Education Association to expand and enhance our Members Only Benefits program. These expanded benefits include: debt consolidation loans, a discount shopping platform, and travel discounts. These benefits will be rolled out in April. More programs will be added later this year.

Lobby Day 2016 is April 13th!

The SEIU Local 517M COPE Committee would like you to save Wednesday, April 13, 2016 as the day set aside to speak with our legislators in Lansing. Be sure to request that date off so you can attend this vital and interesting event. The Union will schedule appointments for you to meet with senators and representatives. Lunch is also provided for you, the legislators, and their staff. If there are hearings or legislation that is being voted on, you will get a chance to watch the proceedings. It is a great way to be a part of the process that affects all of us – both at home and on the job. April 13th is closer than you think, so



request the time off today! *(Pictured: HSS Grievance Coordinator Denise Edwards speaks with Senator Morris Hood at a past Lobby Day)*

Register now at: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/2016lobby>

Legislative Alert – Local Government Pension Changes Proposed



House Bill 5438 was introduced on Wednesday, March 9th by **Representative Pat Somerville (R – New Boston)** and does not have a fiscal analysis completed as of yet. However, in reading section 2 of the Public Employee Retirement Benefit Protection Act, it is targeted at local government employees only, which is bad enough, but it does not include state employees, school employees or judicial employees. This bill is similar to legislation introduced by Representative Giese several sessions ago that went nowhere. It is principally designed to deal with management in police and fire services, at the local government level, who provide themselves with copious amounts of overtime primarily, in their last years prior to retirement to pad their pension. There apparently is an instance where a local Chief of Police ended up having a pension that paid him more than his salary was worth.

Since its introduction, Local 517M and others have had conversations with Rep. Somerville and his staff to point out the problems we see with the bill including mandatory overtime for nurses, road commission drivers and others that should be included in base compensation.

Representative Somerville recognizes there will need to be amendments to the legislation. While we can't stop the legislation and probably don't want to, if it truly addresses the issue it was introduced to address, we must be hyper-vigilant to ensure our members who are affected by this legislation are not harmed by it. It does not appear to be the intent of the legislation, but we have seen before when legislation starts out one way, it ends up doing even more harm.

The bill was sent to the Financial Liability Reform Committee, chaired by Rep. Somerville. There are currently no co-sponsors to the legislation. We will continue to keep you informed as the legislation moves through the process.

Huge Win for State Agricultural Employment Specialist Members

On December 5, 2015, the State of Michigan Workforce Development Agency terminated the employment of 13 Migrant Service Workers who were represented by SEIU Local 517M. The work was privatized with significant reductions in wages and benefits.

SEIU Local 517M filed a complaint with the United States Department of Labor (USDOL) claiming a violation of a 1998 settlement agreement between the USDOL and the State of Michigan that mandated that State merit-staff employees provide Wagner-Peyser employment services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers.

On February 8th, in a written opinion by the Assistant Secretary of Employment and Training Portia Wu, the State was found in violation of this agreement. The USDOL "...therefore requires that Michigan reopen and hire State merit-staff positions for provision of Wagner-Peyser employment services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers within sixty (60) days."

The power of your union working for you!

Volunteers Still Needed for the Quadrennial SEIU International Convention at Cobo Hall

The 2016 SEIU International Convention is coming to Michigan! It will take place May 19-24 in downtown Detroit at Cobo Center. Thousands of SEIU members from the United States, Canada and Puerto Rico will come and shape the direction of SEIU for the next four years.

With that many members coming into the Detroit area, there is a need for local area members to help guide the influx of members at the airport, hotels and at Cobo Hall during the convention. If you are interested in being a volunteer to work the week of the convention meeting and help arriving members, please fill out the volunteer form using the link below. Volunteer shifts for morning, afternoon and evening range from 4.5 hours to 6 hours each.

Contact Stephanie Teamer at: steamer@seiu517m.org or call her at 313-456-2911 for more information. Please send the completed form to Stephanie using the email above or fax it to 313-456-2915.

If you know of retirees that may be interested in volunteering, please pass this information along to them and they can contact Stephanie for more information. Your spouse and adult children are also welcome to volunteer too! Volunteers will be reimbursed \$.40 per mile. Lodging will be provided if volunteers are willing to work multiple shifts over several days. Volunteers will also be invited to a convention reception at Hitsville USA, home of the Motown Sound.

Convention Volunteer Form: <http://www.seiu517m.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/40/files/2016/02/Volunteer-Form-for-SEIU-2016-Convention.pdf>

Convention Volunteer Flyer: <http://www.seiu517m.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/40/files/2016/02/Convention-flyer-2016-L517M-SE.pdf>

Saginaw Organizes Water Drive for Flint



SEIU Local 517M Saginaw Region and the National Action Network (NAN) Saginaw Chapter are having a water drive for our SEIU Local 517M members who live in Flint. We are asking for Saginaw participation as a whole. You never know when we might be in need of a helping hand. Let's round up as many cases of water as we can and make this happen for our Flint Families!

Water donations can be dropped off at the SEIU 517M Saginaw Hall (1420 South Michigan Ave, Saginaw) Monday thru Friday between 9:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m. now through April 22, 2016. Please call the hall and let them know your expected date and time at 989-797-4243.

We will be dropping the water off in Flint on April 23, 2016. Volunteers will be needed for loading and unloading.

If you would like to make a donation, please make your check out to SEIU Local 517M or you can just drop your cases of water off at the union hall.

If you have any further questions regarding this matter, please contact SEIU Local 517M Region 1 Divisional Vice President **Betty Smith** at (989) 482-4091 or **Jeanette Barnett** at (989) 980- 9065 or **Cirven Merrill** at (989) 529-0055.

AFRAM Flint Water Drive

The Michigan AFRAM State Caucus is accepting monetary donations to help fill a semi-truck trailer with bottled water to be delivered to Flint, Michigan on May 20th.

Please make checks payable to MASC (write Flint Water on the memo line) and mail to: MASC, P.O. Box 02310, Detroit, MI 48202

For more information, contact Andy Johnson at (269) 978-1994 or Stephanie Teamer at (313) 456-2911.

Detroit AFRAM Bowling Fundraiser April 2nd

A bowling party will be held on Saturday, April 2nd at the Renaissance Bowling Center (19600 Woodward Avenue, Detroit, MI 48203, (313) 368-5123) from 4:00pm – 7:00pm. Tickets cost \$15.00 each and include shoes. All proceeds go directly toward leadership training and community outreach projects.

For more information and tickets, please contact one of the following people:

Maria Gilson, President – 313-456-0442; **Raceine McDonald**, Vice President – 313-456-2795; **Antonia Brown**, Secretary/Treasurer – 313-456-2816; **Meagan Miner**, Member – 313-456-2904; **Joey Combs**, Member – 313-456-2911; **Stephanie Teamer**, Sergeant-at-arms – 313-456-2911

Technician Lunch-N-Learn Held in Jackson



The SEIU 517M Technical Unit Labor Relations Representative **Kevin Karpinski** is working with local Chapter Presidents to establish lunch hour meetings in facilities throughout the State that house Technical Unit members. The first program was held at the Cotton Correctional Facility on March 22, 2016. The program is called "Union Lunch-N-Learn" and includes a variety of topics such as latest updates, member feedback survey, new member benefits, Q&A, financial planning and other relevant topics. The local

Chapter leaders determine topics and the sessions will be provided once or twice per calendar year depending on the membership availability and participation.

HSS Reps Working Hard for Union Members

Ellinia Simmons-Gibson, a HSS Steward in Cadillac Place and Liability Examiner 10 in the UIA Tax Office, got a member to rejoin the union after addressing the member concerns and misconceptions about the Union. The member was grateful for Elina taking the time to speak with her and said she was AWESOME!!!

Rabia Keo, a HSS Executive Board Member in Cadillac Place and UI Analyst in the UIA UITDC, helped to retain members that were going to drop by explaining the benefits of union membership and their rights as a union member.

Thank you to Ellinia and Rabia for your hard work on behalf of members and believing in OUR UNION!

Detroit HSS AFRAM Events 2015/2016

The Detroit Human Services Support Chapter of SEIU Local 517M AFRAM has had a busy schedule of events going back to last summer.

August/September - Entire Month School Supply Drive

September 10th - Delivered School Supplies to Christ Child House and Vista Maria

October 6th - Phone banking for Gleaners Double Your Donation Day

October 31st - Halloween Skating Party at Northland Skating Rink (*pictured right: Antonia Brown, Raceine McDonald, Senator Coleman Young II, Joey Combs, State Rep Latanya Garrett Faustina, Stephanie Teamer*)

November - Conducted a Hat/Glove/Scarf Drive all month long.

November 24th - Helped distribute Thanksgiving Baskets with AFL-CIO.

December 15th - Phone banking for Gleaners Double Your Donation Day

December 18th - Packed gift bags for the Toys for Tots Christmas giveaway

December 19th - Helped distribute Christmas Food Baskets with AFL-CIO

December 23rd - Delivered Hat/Gloves/Scarves to DRMM/Genesis House

January 29th - Phone banking for Gleaners Double Your Donation Day

April 2nd - Bowling Party at Renaissance Bowling



The Detroit HSS AFRAM Members are: **Maria Gilson**, President; **Raceine McDonald**, Vice President; **Antonia Brown**, Secretary/ Treasurer; **Stephanie Teamer**, Sergeant-at-Arms; **Joey Combs**, former President and current HSS President; and **Megan Miner**.

The Hard Working Bunnies Were Ready for Easter



The Easter Bunnies at the Saginaw Unemployment Office have been busy! The two teams donating the most toys and candy for the children at the Underground Railroad were: 'Kuhl and the Gang' with 1513 items; and second place went to 'The What Evers' with 1348 items. (*Pictured 2016 Bunny Team l-r: Rosanne Seeman, Kathy Collings, Sandi Galonska, LeShunda Whitson, Laurie Patrick, Leanne Hertzler, Tammy Symborski, Melody Watson, & Ronda Brandimore*)

The Bunnies bought and filled 142 baskets for the children of the families who stay in Saginaw's domestic violence shelter. There were 29 babies, 45 children aged 2 to 4-years-old, and 68 children who

were 5-years-old or older. The toys and baskets were specifically purchased and filled with the age and gender of each child so each one will feel special on Easter morning. For the 8th year in a row, this activity has been an ongoing labor of love and commitment from the Saginaw Unemployment workers to the youngest and most vulnerable people in our community.

From The Archives: A Lesson in Labor History from the Reuther Library as We Prepare to Host the SEIU International Convention

SEIU's First Convention

By Gavin Strassel, SEIU Archivist



SEIU came into existence at its founding convention on April 23, 1921 (originally called the Building Service Employees International Union). After failed starts and jurisdictional disputes the previous decades, building service workers were able to join forces to create an international union. Representatives met in Washington DC, and eight officers signed a charter of affiliation with the American Federation of Labor. *(Pictured Left: BSEIU's original charter, naming the original eight officers and signed by Samuel Gompers, labor icon and founder of the AFL.)*

Still, BSEIU stood on shaky ground. Five of the seven charter locals had less than 150 members, finances were minimal, and opposition from real estate interests sought to smash the vital Chicago local. Despite these towering obstacles, a janitor's union was overdue and BSEIU grew rapidly in the following years. Membership rose from 2,900 to 9,400 by the second convention in 1922, and locals jumped to 40 from the original 7 by the third one. Larger achievements and more influential decisions occurred at later conventions, but the founding meeting marked a massive leap of faith by building service workers in their self-worth. *(Pictured Right: Founding board members at the first BSEIU convention, 1921.)*



Gavin Strassel is the SEIU Archivist at the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs at Wayne State University, the official repository for SEIU and the largest labor archives in North America. If you are interested in performing research with the SEIU collections, please contact Gavin at strassel@wayne.edu.

To learn more about SEIU and Michigan labor history click here: <http://reuther.wayne.edu/index.php>

SEIU Local 517M Golf Outing Slated for August 12th



The annual SEIU Local 517M golf outing will be held on Friday, August 12, 2016 at the Wheatfield Valley Golf Course in Williamston. The 4-person scramble will start with registration at 8:00 a.m. and shotgun start at 9:00 a.m. Registration cost is \$240 per foursome. The registration form and information is available at: <http://www.seiu517m.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/40/files/2016/03/Golf-outing-flyer.pdf>

A Thank You from Art Slabosky

Art Slabosky, a retired steward from the Scientific and Engineering unit was given a certificate of appreciation for his years of service to the Local as a Steward during this year's Steward Training in February. Below is a letter he wanted to pass on to the membership:

Thank you, SEIU, for this recognition of my service as a Union Steward these 12-or-so recent years. Frankly, my work on behalf of employees subjected to discipline has been more rewarding than the work that I have done officially for the State. I'm sure that many of you have routine jobs with little or no variety of tasks.

The most popular image of a steward is their action on behalf of an employee. The steward can save an employees' job or reduce their discipline. Less recognized is that union discipline procedures protect the organization and taxpayers too. It's like this: a supervisor in a public agency does not lose money if they unfairly suspend or dismiss an underling. Therefore, they can suspend or fire an experienced employee for a bad reason, and THEY do not lose; instead the people lose a good employee. It's not always because of malice; supervisors themselves are not necessarily knowledgeable of the rules. If they get rid of a productive competent employee over some minor misbehavior, THAT is costly. Only the union is there to prevent the public from losing out because of bad supervisors.



So I was proud of my steward duties. The system that protects public employees likewise protects the public.

Yours,

Art Slabosky

Calendar of Upcoming Union Events for April, 2016

April 2: Detroit AFRAM Spring Bowl and Roll

April 6: East China Member Meeting

April 11: Scientific and Engineering Unit Board Meeting

April 13: SEIU Local 517M Lobby Day at the State Capitol

April 14: Technical Unit Board Meeting

April 22: SEIU Local 517M Executive Board Meeting

April 26: HSS Lansing DHHS Unit Meeting

April 26: School and Local Government Region 1 Board 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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