



Volume 2 | Issue 5

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MN GUILD NEWSLETTER

NEW! Nonprofit Caucus

We hear you: nonprofit unions have unique challenges and opportunities. We are trying a new committee that we are calling the Nonprofit Caucus. It'll be a space for nonprofit Guild members to share experiences, brainstorm solutions, and network with other units. The first meeting, slated for November, will be about Interest-Based Bargaining.

[Contact Allana](#) if you want to check it out. Just imagine what we could achieve if we strategized together.

Past Practice

Your contract is a living document. In negotiations, the parties cannot capture all of what will happen with employee benefits and working conditions.

Past practice is something that has been part of the culture or expectations for many workplace cycles. The case is often made that it becomes an implied term of the contract.

If during the life of a contract, one party wants to keep the practice and the other party wants to dump it. Can they do that?

Potentially. At least one of two instances must be true: the underlying circumstances have changed; or the employer removes the need for the practice.

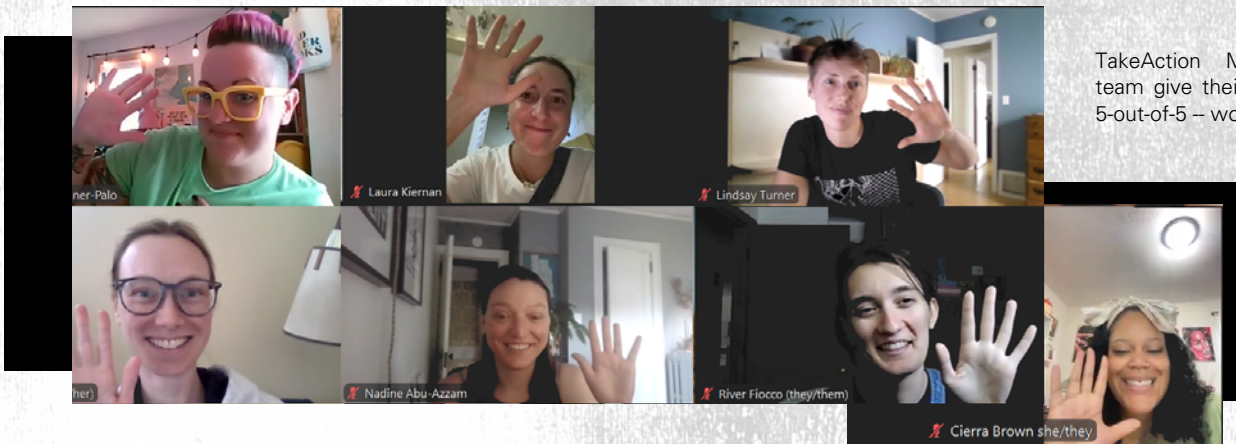


TAKE ME TO THE
**2ND ANNUAL
MN GUILD
PICNIC
HIGHLIGHTS**
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TakeAction MN negotiations team give their new contract a 5-out-of-5 – would recommend!

UNIT UPDATES

TakeAction unit takes bargaining seriously and wins A+ contract

By Lindsay Turner (*TakeAction MN*)

TakeAction MN here, reporting back on what we learned and won through this summer's negotiations!

What we learned: First, Interest-Based Bargaining (IBB), where management and bargaining unit build a list of shared interests (i.e., "retention + burnout," and "employee health + wellness,") and then brainstorm solutions and reach consensus around contract changes really felt right and led to some huge wins! Brainstorming solutions with management led to some collaborative juices and wins. Second, we prepped like hell and it showed. We walked into negotiations, having combed through the contract and with a strong set of proposals and collective assessment of their importance. Third, if we had to do it again, we'd get trained in IBB *before* combing through the contract. It seems like that would have made our prep more efficient and grounded in what to expect from the negotiations space.

What we won: More paid time off, and more money. 3-week paid break at 3 years employment (plus \$1k stipend); a recurring 8 week paid every 5 years of employment (plus \$1k stipend); an additional week paid office closure every summer; paid family, medical and extended leave options; increased paid bereavement leave; more office holidays and personal days. At ratification, the lowest band of salary increased around \$5k, and then all employees except the co-executive directors got a 1-time salary bump of \$5k. Annual salaries increased to 5%, and 401k match increased to 4%.

We won and learned more than just this – [reach out to Lindsay](#) if you want to connect more!

HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE CORNER

By Allana Olson (*MN Guild staff*)

October is **National Disability Employment Awareness Month (NDEAM)**.

Look for red flags in the job positions from your employer. Is it transparent and inclusive in actual requirements for that position? Maybe instead of a driver's license, what it really means is that the candidate must have a reliable car. Will they really be required to "regularly" lift 60lbs?

Speak up if you notice unnecessary barriers that may block the most-qualified candidate from applying or being offered the job.

Remember that employees have the right to "reasonable accommodations" but asking for what you need can be tiring or risky. The support you show to coworkers or potential coworkers can go a long way.

UNIT UPDATES

MN nonprofits near financial distress but nonprofit news isn't one of them

By Bee Howerton (*MinnPost*)

Last month, the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits (MCN) [released a report](#) on the current condition of the nonprofit sector in our state. Nearly 80% of nonprofits reported they have less than 12 months before exhibiting financial distress. This figure has increased dramatically since 2022 when only 47% of nonprofits surveyed said they have less than 12 months on reserve.

MCN identified a few different reasons for this sharp increase in financial instability in Minnesota nonprofits including:

- Increased expenses: Inflation, growing demand for services, and improving staff's salaries were cited as primary reasons for increasing expenses
- Changes in charitable giving: Charitable giving has decreased nationwide and statewide

Here at MinnPost we're definitely seeing these trends play out in our own organization and at other nonprofit newsrooms writ large — giving is down from the exceptional highs of 2020 and people's demand for the independent, thorough journalism newsrooms has increased but so have the expenses associated with producing that journalism.

Despite feeling the pressure of donor retention and increased expenses, we're lucky that many people still prioritize news in their charitable giving and the nonprofit news industry has remained [relatively financially stable](#).

Our donors are certainly feeling the ongoing economic uncertainty associated with inflation, but a common refrain we hear is that people wish they could give more. At MinnPost Festival last month, many of the incredible volunteers let me know that they were volunteering because they appreciated MinnPost but didn't have the resources to contribute financially.

Earlier this month, we finished a successful fall member drive. We give everyone who donates the option to let us know why they donated. One of my favorites was:

"As a fellow journalist, I read and respect the work of MinnPost and am often envious of the in-depth reporting your staff produces. And if there's going to be a statewide news organization I donate to, I'd like it to be nonprofit."

So, while nonprofit newsrooms like MinnPost are feeling similar pressures to nonprofits across the state, it is clear that people are increasingly seeing the value in independent, nonprofit newsrooms and we're hopeful that will continue.

Conflict with Coworkers?

Try Humility

We all know that it's hard to initiate talking to coworkers when you feel hurt by something they've done or said, or guilty for a mistake you've made. The best advice is to approach it promptly, privately, and honestly.

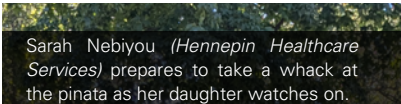
- Know your goal
- Own your part
- Listen to understand
- Look for "and"

Doing something difficult can also be more rewarding. If done right, you'll surprise yourself how smoothly it went, and the weight of emotional strain will be lifted. Often relationships will be strengthened, not just patched. The more you practice, the easier it will be. Good luck!

2ND ANNUAL MN GUILD PICNIC



Fred Melo (*Pioneer Press*) and his son ballast the rope for one team in the tug-o-war.



Sarah Nebiyou (*Hennepin Healthcare Services*) prepares to take a whack at the pinata as her daughter watches on.



This year's picnic was a smashing success. More than 50 members and their families attended, representing 15 different units. Kathryn Carley (*Public News Service*), a former Minnesotan, flew all the way from Massachusetts.



New activities this year included team trivia, a pinata, and a giant coloring poster. The trivia, based on Guild stats and union history, was extra challenging. The winning team got 6 out of 10 right and a TNG cap.



There were 8 raffle baskets this year. Each basket had a theme and description about how the items honor the members of our local. They included prizes that represent the work of Smart Set, the Pioneer Press, FairVoteMN, the Minnesota Star Tribune, RLM Arts, UniteHERE Local 17, UFCW Local 663, and the international NewsGuild. Thanks to everyone who donated items or generated ideas for the baskets!

Since this is only our second annual picnic, we continue to learn and come up with fresh new ideas. The picnic committee welcomes feedback, raffle suggestions, and activity ideas which will make next year's picnic even better!



A group of language interpreters from Hennepin Healthcare Services in front of the new collaborative tapestry/poster coloring project.

UNIT UPDATES

Former Guild President John Myers receives Citizen Recognition Award

By Peter Passi (*Duluth News Tribune*)

Recently [retired reporter John Myers](#) was honored in September by a body he covered for about a decade.

The St. Louis County Board of Commissioners presented Myers with a Citizen Recognition Award, shortly after he stepped away from a 41-year career in journalism, including 38 spent working for the Duluth News Tribune, where he also led the Lake Superior Newspaper Guild as president for six years, steering it through a difficult moment where the risk of decertification briefly threatened the unit.

The NewsGuild Local 8 was one of the first in the nation and withstood a brutal strike, including violence against those who held its picket lines, standing for workers' rights to organize in 1938. The unit joined the larger Minnesota Guild in 2016.

Commissioner Patrick Boyle suggested Myers' retirement was well deserved, after filing more than 10,000 bylined stories for the DNT, a prolific record he suspects will long withstand the test of time.

"You knew that he knew what he was doing, and he made all of us better at our jobs because we knew we had to be at the top of our games to be ready to answer his questions," said Dana Kazel, the County's communications director and a former journalist.



Myers said he came to recognize the intelligence and integrity of county staff, as well as the impact they have on people's lives.

"You realize that beyond the sorts of disagreements that you folks have had politically over here, that county government, at least this county government, runs pretty darn well, and does right by most of the people in the county," he said. "I think that goes to show that good people make good government."

"I don't like reporters, but that doesn't mean I don't respect them," County Board Chair Keith Nelson said. "And I'd rather be respected than liked. To be honest with you, 'like' is fickle and 'respect' is not. And some of the work you've done, I very much respect. Thank you."

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WORKERS, YOU HAVE RIGHTS!



THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR IS HERE TO HELP

NEWSLETTERS ARE A COLLABORATIVE EFFORT. CONTRIBUTORS WANTED!

Are you willing to write a unit update, submit art, draw a comic, or have other ideas for content?

Quieres este boletín en español? The more members that participate, the more this is a project by-and-for the people.