A Message of Thanks

This week we recognize that Public Works Agencies and Municipal Highway Crews are part of our essential critical infrastructure workforce. With the impacts of COVID-19 on your workforces this year, we know that there is no better time to say thank you than now.

The exemplary work you perform during extraordinary circumstances is commendable. Please accept my sincere “Thank you” for your dedication and the hard work that you continue to do on behalf of the citizens of the Granite State. The general public should know that you have a strong set of values that you embody every day—those of family, honesty, teamwork, accountability, and always prioritizing the needs of our citizens.

The facts are such; that you report for work, work numerous hours straight, unselfishly, for the citizens of the Granite State. We recognize that you are well trained and seasoned for such expectations, but we also recognize that these have been challenging times.

In closing, I and the Board of Directors here at the SEA/SEIU 1984, “Thank you” once again for the tremendous exemplary effort that each and every one of you have collectively put forth throughout the year.
SEA MEMBERS VOTE TO RATIFY A NEW COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AGREEMENT FOR 2021-2023!

On Thursday, April 22, 2021, the SEA began the ratification process for the new Executive Branch 2021-2023 collective bargaining agreement. Due to COVID restrictions, the SEA conducted a majority of the voting using electronic balloting, which was sent to members through emails. Voting on the new agreement closed on Friday, May 7, 2021. All SEA Executive Branch members had the opportunity to cast a ballot, and the response rate was positive. The new agreement has passed with an 88% approval rating.

The State Bargaining Team has been notified of the vote results and is moving forward with the funding portion of the process. Per NH RSA 273-A:9, all new State employee bargaining agreements have to be presented to the NH Legislative branch through the Joint Committee on Employee Relations. The committee will be scheduling a public hearing on the new contract. SEA members will be encouraged to attend the meeting and contact local NH State Representatives and Senators to support the new agreement.

Please look for further notices as we keep you informed on the progress of the new contract and what you can do to help move it forward.

SB 96 AMENDMENT KILLED

The SEA, along with other unions and advocacy groups, helped kill an amendment to a bill (SB 96) that would have opened the door for public employees to be held personally liable and would have further reduced procedural and substantive due process rights currently owed to public employees under contracts and laws.
In 1964, Martin Luther King received the Nobel Peace Prize, awarded for his work to overturn legal segregation in the South, particularly during the difficult struggles involving police dogs, fire hoses, jailing, and the bombing in Birmingham, Alabama, that left four young girls dead and another blinded for life. The struggle of King and others won passage of the Civil Rights Act guarantees of equal rights in public accommodations, education, and at work.

We still struggle to make those rights real. King felt that to change America's racial inequalities and reduce poverty, we needed something more: union rights.

He resisted powerful people and institutions opposing unions and workers' collective action, especially across racial lines. During the Jim Crow era, a wealthy Texas industrialist, Vance Muse, was a prime architect of so-called “right to work” legislation. His clear purpose was to divide workers so they would have weak bargaining power, ultimately resulting in lower wages, fewer benefits, and compromised working conditions.

Muse made no effort to hide the racism at the core of “right to work.” He declared that if such laws were not passed, “white women and white men will be forced into organizations [meaning unions] with black African apes whom they will have to call ‘brother’ or lose their jobs.”

King argued long and hard to stop these laws. King urged: “In our glorious fight for civil rights, we must guard against being fooled by false slogans, such as ‘right to work.’ It is a dishonest twisting of words with the aim of making a vicious law sound like a good law. It provides no ‘rights’ and no ‘work.’ It is a law to rob us of our civil rights and job rights.”

In 1968, King marched with striking Memphis sanitation workers. Mayor Henry Loeb’s resistance to the simple deduction of dues from a worker’s paycheck held up the settlement of the strike for months. He knew that a union could not function without funds. King was assassinated in that struggle, but the workers finally won the right to union representation and dues checkoff. Wages went up and conditions improved. That’s what unions do.

Dues deduction simply supports worker representation. Once workers democratically vote to form a union, they may negotiate a “fair share” contractual clause that all workers either pay union dues or contribute a transparently calculated fee for the cost of contract administration and representation. In negotiations, the employer can freely choose to accept or reject such a contractual provision. That is unless a “right to work” law denies employers and employees the freedom to decide for themselves what is best for their workplace.

It is not unreasonable to have a rule that everyone who signs up to work in a unionized workplace must pay union dues or a representation fee. No worker is required to join a union, but if workers agree and the employer also agrees, every worker contributes something to the cost of representation. Otherwise, as workers in Memphis knew, they would have no treasury and no one whose job it was to represent them in the workplace. Government should not intervene to overrule these contractual rights.

King spoke out against “right to work.” He said, “Wherever these laws have been passed, wages are lower, job opportunities are fewer and there are no civil rights.” This hurts not only union workers, but everyone. Ever since King’s death, well-funded, nationally orchestrated “right to work” campaigns and related litigation have whittled away at union rights. New Hampshire has long been in the crosshairs of this national effort. The “right to work” drive here is not homegrown but perennially pushed from outside.
New Hampshire employers with existing unions and fair share contractual clauses have implored the Legislature not to interfere with their labor relations. Does New Hampshire really want to succumb to out-of-state pressure to pass an intrusive law aimed solely at unionized New Hampshire workplaces? Dr. King said the civil rights movement stood against such laws because “they constitute an obstacle to the progress of the Negro people and are inimical to the interest of America’s underprivileged.”

Why would New Hampshire embrace a law founded in racism, perpetuating divisiveness, and designed to sow conflict? Someone who does not want to join a union does not have to do so. But it is not right for someone to benefit when other workers pay union dues in order to improve conditions without contributing something to the cost of securing advancement for all workers.

Dartmouth Sociology Professor Marc Dixon recently traced the history of “right to work” laws for the New Hampshire House Labor Committee, saying: “Right to work has been an important tool for organized business. It is a clear way to defund and destabilize a political opponent. . . . The historical record on right to work’s primary use is clear, and it is not the protection of employee rights.”

King said “right to work” laws provide no “rights” and no “work.” The New Hampshire Legislature should reject the misnamed “right to work” in favor of the rights of workers to be well represented at the workplace.

Michael Honey is the author of "To the Promised Land: Martin Luther King and the Fight for Economic Justice" (W.W. Norton), and Haley Professor of Humanities at the University of Washington Tacoma. Honey is also the editor of "All Labor Has Dignity" (Beacon Press) – Martin Luther King’s speeches on labor rights and economic justice.

Gail Kinney is the worker justice minister at the Meriden (N.H.) Congregational Church/United Church of Christ; her Doctor of Ministry work focused on the shared values of faith and labor regarding matters of worker rights and workplace justice.

Commentary: We Must Not Be Fooled by a Slogan
By Michael Honey | Gail Kinney

SEA CONSERVATIVE MEMBERS

SEA Conservatives Are in an Excellent Position to be a Powerful Influence

New Hampshire voters selected Republican candidates to lead the legislature. With a clear majority in the New Hampshire House and Senate, Republicans will take over leadership in both chambers. The takeover means that it is less likely Governor Sununu will veto as many legislative efforts and may allow SEA conservatives an opportunity to move on some of the SEA legislative priorities, not to mention our ability to secure a contract.

Here’s How You Can Help.
1. Join our next Conservative Members Committee meeting on Zoom the second Tuesday of each month at 5:30 PM.
2. Connect with legislators in your district. If you don’t know who they are, you can find them here.
3. Donate to SEAPAC, our Political Action Fund. As little as $1.00 a month helps. The link is here.

For more information or if you have any questions, please contact Mason Petit, mpetit@seiu1984.org.
We are continuing to offer weekly wellness webinars to State employees with Lori Hubbard, RN, BSN. She will be hosting Microsoft Teams webinars in May and June, on Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 12-12:30 pm for the first 4 weeks.

Supporting your Mental Well-being in May followed by Eating healthy and Improving your sleep in June.

They will include brief education on the monthly topic and assist in goal setting to improve your overall wellness.

Each year millions of Americans face the reality of living with a mental illness. In May, we join the national movement to raise awareness about mental health. Each year mental health providers fight stigma, provide support, educate the public, and advocate for policies that support people with mental illness and their families.

For more information, please visit: www.nami.org/Get-Involved/Awareness-Events/Mental-Health-Awareness-Month.
FROM THE DESK OF Rich Gulla

COVID CONFUSION

Last week the country’s top public health agency (Centers for Disease Control) announced a shift in COVID guidance, and the latest changes have left a lot of people with a lot of questions. Fifteen months ago, we didn’t see this pandemic happening so quickly, and we have not expected these changes to happen so quickly either.

The fact remains that it is happening, and we have to be prepared for what comes next, returning to normal. But this “normal” isn’t normal, so what do we do next? If you have concerns or issues you would like to talk about; we’re asking you to reach out to your chapter presidents, stewards, organizers, Me (your union president, Rich Gulla), EAP, or a friend.

Going back to “normal“ will be anything but. It was bumpy and disorganized 15 months ago, and it will be now. The state had no plan then, and it doesn’t now. Agencies once again have been left on their own to figure this out, and with the ever-changing guidance from the CDC changing by the hour, it’s next to impossible to do so.

What can we expect? Expect longer commuting times and more traffic on the roads. Help is in short supply, so the line for coffee in the morning may be longer than you remember. With current CDC social distancing guidelines, you may have to rearrange your office or workstations and exercise patience. While some of us appreciate the speed at which we are going back to “normal,” others are not. So let’s remember to “stay human” towards one another and communicate, reach out to your union, EAP, or a friend. Transitions and change are difficult. It was that way going into this pandemic, and it will be coming out. Together we are stronger.

In Unity,

Rich

Rich Gulla, President SEA/SEIU 1984

FOR COVID RESOURCES AND UNION ASSISTANCE, PLEASE LOOK ON THE LAST PAGE.
HELPING MEMBERS IN NEED

You may have heard that Robin and Sara (O’Sullivan) Lounsbury recently lost their entire home to a fast-moving fire. Both Sara and Robin are longtime SEA members of Chapter 45 and State Employees with Child Support Services.

The photo to the right shows that there was little to salvage. Their insurance agent has said rebuilding may take two or more years. With the lack of rentals or other housing options available, they are currently displaced in a hotel room.

We all hope this will never happen to our family but if it does I’m sure we would all appreciate the help and support.

Small amounts can really help. A GoFundMe page has been set up to assist if at all possible.

Gofundme https://www.gofundme.com/f/lounsbury-house-fire

Thank YOU!

Members out and about in the community

Chapter One member, Dianne Schuett (shown in the picture to the right), was out and about participating in recent community events.

Saturday, May 1 at Maadeers in Pembroke she took part in the Server for an Hour event, which was held by One Fair Wage and several other local organizations, including Raise Up NH, Rights and Democracy NH, and GSOP. The event was held to highlight the importance of ending the tipped minimum wage.
Attention all union members.

Are you an imaginative and creative person who wants to share new skills with your peers in a fun and safe environment? One hour a month is all you need to engage with others and expand your horizons while having a good time. The goal is to improve relationships with different agencies to foster goodwill and positivity.

If you’re interested, please contact Rebecca Ladd at 581-5977 (texting is best) for more details.

Some of the fun things we are already doing include:

- Casino Trips
- Camping trips
- Bookclubs
- Game nights
- Movie nights
- Committee meetings
- Decorating the office
- Planning new and fun adventures
- Motorcycle club
- Holiday parties
- Appreciation BBQ

This committee is a great escape from home life and/or work (but it doesn’t have to be that for you). Join me to learn about your fellow state employees and build on your networking skills.

Campaign For Public Good

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the logistics of the Purple Pages project could not be organized for this summer. However, we have found a great resource for all members: children, foster children, grandchildren, friend's children, etc. to help encourage reading over the summer months.

The Good and The Beautiful is giving away 75,000 books to prevent losing whole generations of children who can recognize or care about literature and learning that is good and beautiful.

Encouraging Reading is what the Purple Pages Project of Chapter 45 is all about, and with the Campaign for Public Good's support, they have been able to provide thousands of books for children every summer. While we come out of the COVID-19 haze, we know it will take quite a while for things to return to normal. To help keep things for your children on track, please check out the link below:

www.goodandbeautiful.com/products/summer-readingprogram/fbclid=IwAR1BPcVnz64jYVcTTDTlyvV3sFoi_7w0zGLszlN97eyA0f51DSlb_BUSA

SEA COMMITTEE MEETINGS

- CPFG meets on the first Tuesday of the Month at 5:00 PM; the next meeting is June 1, 2021.
- Social Activities Committee meets on the first Friday of the month at 5:00 PM, June 2, 2021.
- NH Faith & Labor Coalition meets on the third Wednesday of the Month at 12; the next meeting is on May 19, 2021.
- Clinicians United NH Associate Members Chapter meets at noon on the first Monday of the month; the next meeting is on June 7, 2021.
- Road Race Committee meets the third Wednesday of every month from 5:00 – 7:00 PM, next meeting is May 19 @ 5:00 PM.
- Conservative Committee meets the second Tuesday of each month at 5:30 PM, next meeting is June 8.
SOCIAL ACTIVITIES, BOOK CLUB

The SEA Book Club meets again on Monday, June 7, to discuss their next read, Kristin Hannah's The Great Alone.

For a family in crisis, the ultimate test of survival. Ernt Allbright, a former POW, comes home from the Vietnam war a changed and volatile man. When he loses yet another job, he makes an impulsive decision: he will move his family north, to Alaska, where they will live off the grid in America's last true frontier. Initially, it's a welcome change, but as winter approaches, and Ernt's mental state deteriorates, his wife and daughter find themselves in an increasingly precarious position. Leni and Cora are the heart of what is as much a mother-daughter love story as it is a pressure cooker of a page-turner. Together they reckon not only with the elements but with some bad decisions, born from the stubborn faith that Ernt will somehow be restored to the person he was before the war.

https://kristinhannah.com/books/the-great-alone/

If you are interested in joining the book club we meet the first Monday of the month at 6 pm via zoom, to be sent the link to join, or to be added to our email list please email, dholt@seiu1984.org.

SEIU 1984 ROAD RACE COMMITTEE

The Road Race Committee has scheduled its next meeting for May 19, 2021, at 5:00 PM.

Topic: SEA 5k Planning Meeting
Join Zoom Meeting: https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82985451758?pwd=b3F4cFgyd2syTzNPTWZ5OWxyRm9iUT09

It takes a lot of preparation and many volunteers to make this fun and exciting race such a wonderful fundraising effort for Operation Santa Claus.

The SEA 5K Road Race and Fitness Walk has taken place for over 20 years on April's first Saturday. With the uncertainty of the pandemic, we have moved our race to Saturday, September 18th @ 9:00. This fast, flat, family-friendly 5K loops through the state office park and along Hazen Drive. The SEA 5k is registered online with Millennium Running at RunReg.com.

Online Registration Deadline: Thursday, Sep 16, 2021, at 9:00 AM ET.

Register for the race here: https://www.RunReg.com/sea-5k
Scholarship Opportunities

Apply for a scholarship just for union families!

Union Plus Scholarships help union families with the cost of college.

2022 APPLICATION WILL BE AVAILABLE IN MID-JUNE.

Nearly $5 million in scholarships awarded to union families.
Since 1991, the Union Plus Scholarship Program has awarded more than $4.8 million to students of working families who want to begin or continue their post-secondary education. More than 3,200 families have benefited from our commitment to higher education.

ELIGIBILITY
Current and retired members of participating unions, their spouses, and their dependent children (as defined by IRS regulations). At least one year of continuous union membership by the applicant, applicant’s spouse, or parent (if the applicant is a dependent). The one-year membership minimum must be satisfied by May 31 of the scholarship year. See more details on eligibility in the tab below.

EVALUATION CRITERIA
This is a competitive scholarship. Applicants are evaluated according to academic ability, social awareness, financial need, and appreciation of labor. A GPA of 3.0 or higher is recommended. The required essays can account for up to half your total score. Scholarship applicants are judged by a committee of impartial post-secondary educators.

APPLICATION TIMELINE
Applications are available starting in mid-June, and a complete application must be received on or before 12:00 p.m. (Noon) Eastern Standard Time on January 31st of the scholarship year. Applications received after this deadline will not be considered.

SCHOLARSHIP AWARD AMOUNTS
Amounts range from $500 to $4,000. These one-time cash awards are for study beginning in the Fall of 2021. Students may re-apply each year.
FREE COLLEGE DEGREES PROGRAMS

Members and their families can earn an Associate Degree with NO out-of-pocket cost.

SEIU™ FREE COLLEGE BENEFIT
YOUR COLLEGE DEGREE IN REACH!

Federal, state, and employer grants don’t always cover the full cost of earning a degree online. SEIU is proud to partner with Eastern Gateway Community College and Central State University to help eligible students fill the financial gap. Choose from several online programs offered by Eastern Gateway Community College (EGCC) and Central State University (CSU):

- Earn an Associate’s degree or certificate—for free!
- Complete your Bachelor’s Degree—for free!
- Pay nothing for tuition, fees, or e-books – a savings of at least $20,000!
- Open to eligible SEIU members and their families.


Bachelor’s degree(s) available in Business Administration, Criminal Justice, Education - Early Childhood Education, Education - Intervention Specialist, Interdisciplinary Studies/Humanities.

To learn more, visit https://www.sei umb.com/education/seiu-free-college-benefit.

SEA RESOURCES for COVID CONCERNS

If you have concerns regarding the changes happening related to COVID-19 and need assistance, there are several resources for you below.

SEA/SEIU 1984 President: president@seiu1984.org

Stewards: https://seiu1984.org/membership/your-chapter/stewards/

Chapter Presidents: https://seiu1984.org/membership/your-chapter/

Organizers & SEA Staff: https://seiu1984.org/about-us/staff/

EAP SERVICES: 603-271-4336 or 1-800-852-3345 ext. 4336