CAUCUS REPORT, AND VOTE!, PLEASE VOTE!

Cecily Hodges, President

Allow me to provide a brief, initial report regarding our 2016 Biennial Caucus, which was just completed this past Saturday. There will certainly be follow-up and more in depth reports and discussions, but Caucus 2016 was professional, business-focused, pertinent and successful.

We were visited by AFT Executive Vice President Mary Cathryn Ricker, who spoke to the delegate body, participated in our collective action (which was coordinated with similar actions by AFT Illinois and AFT Connecticut) and visited two school sites in the Anchorage School District.

Delegates and delegate committees considered and took action regarding amendments to the APEA Constitution, reset Goals & Priorities for APEA, considered, amended and passed policy resolutions for APEA, and elected APEA state officers for the next 2 years.

I was flattered and privileged to be reelected to the position of APEA State President. I thank the members and the delegates for their confidence, and I resume those duties with the strongest senses of humility, responsibility, privilege and determination to do all I can do to assist the advancement of APEA, its members and the goals and purposes of our organization.

One of the first and most immediate tasks to accomplish those purposes is to vote in the fast-approaching state of Alaska General Election, Tuesday, November 8th, 2016. The primary elections have dramatically altered the state’s political landscape, and will play a major role in defining how our state addresses the financial shortfalls and challenges we have faced for the past three years and will face for the next several years.

Please listen carefully and thoughtfully to the political debate, to the positions, statements and underlying philosophies of the candidates, and vote for the candidate who best represents your values and best earns your confidence.

If you wish, speak with your APEA-EPIC director and visit the APEA-EPIC website, www.apeaepic.org. EPIC lists their endorsements, which are based upon the candidate’s opinions, attitudes and actions regarding the fair and civil treatment of public employees.
Last week, the Alaska State Supreme Court declared Dean Westlake in House District 40 covering the North Slope the winner with an eight vote margin. Your vote matters.

Early voting starts Monday, October 24th.

For a complete list of communities and information on absentee mailing ballots as well as electronic voting, check out Division of Elections website: https://www.elections.alaska.gov/vi_ea_ev_ip.php

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<th>Location</th>
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<td>October 24th-November 7th</td>
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<td>Anchorage UAA Student Union</td>
<td>Monday, November 7th 8am-5pm</td>
<td>Election Day Tuesday Nov 8th 7am – 8pm</td>
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AHMC LOCAL 6082 HONORS FALLEN BROTHER
By Jen Madsen, South Central Field Representative

AHMC lost a long time union activist and brother, Tim Nelson, in December 2015. AHMC wanted to honor their union brother.

On September 30, 2016, Tim’s memorial was complete. The Local bought and had planted a Maple tree and had a bronze plaque installed at the Anchorage Memorial Park.

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SU Contract Information Meeting
By Brian Penner, South Central Regional Manager

Anchorage SU members gathered on September 26 for a Contract Information Meeting. They heard about the difficulties the negotiators faced during these tough fiscal times and many questions were asked and answered.

Participants were also provided with a Change/Pros-Cons document to further inform their decision making.

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Isabel Groff and the AFT Executive Vice-President Mary Cathryn Ricker enjoying a moment at the 2016 Biennial APEA/AFT Caucus
South Central Member Spotlight: Sarah Christian
By Annie Knight, South Central Field Representative

This month APEA/AFT is thanking Sarah Christian, an amazing supporter of the members of the APEA/AFT Confidential Employee Association. Sarah Christian is a Payroll Technician for the Division of Personnel and Labor Relations, who served on the CEA Board as an At-Large Member, Secretary and President.

She was appointed to the President position in August 2015, re-elected as president for another term in April of 2016 and is still an active member of the APEA/AFT Confidential Employee Association.

Sarah Christian, a twelve year state employee, has spent endless hours serving the membership and recently led her negotiation team through a very difficult bargaining period, with the contract being eventually ratified by the membership. During her tenure with the Board, she served as the Primary Anchorage Central Labor Council member, served on the EPIC Board and is still an alternate for CEA on the HBEC.

Thank you Sarah. You will be missed!

AHMC, Local 6082 New website launched!
By Gene Christian, South Central Field Associate

At its October board meeting, the Executive Board discussed its new website: https://ahmc6082.wordpress.com

The site contains information about the local and important meeting dates. There are also links to the Collective Bargaining Agreement, the Constitution and Bylaws, and the APEA monthly newsletter.

AHMC hopes to have social media pages in the near future and will provide direct links to those on the website as well. Please feel free to stop by and leave a comment!

Photo: (Left to right)
Local 6082 President:
Jim Nitchman
Hap Pierce
Kelvin Bailey
News from the Interior
By Michael Koskie, Northern Regional Manager

SU Negotiating Team Visits Local #4900 Fairbanks

On September 27th, the Northern Region SU had a Contract Information Meeting in the conference room at DOT Peger Road.

APEA Business Manager Pete Ford and the SU negotiating team spoke on the negotiations process and explained the SU contract that was going out to members for ratification. The meeting was well attended and many questions were asked and answered in the process.

The SU bargaining team is to be congratulated for a "job well done" for negotiating in these tough times.

Fairbanks Longtime Local Officer Retires

Fairbanks North Star Borough Employees Association, APEA Local #6125 lost to retirement a long-time activist, Jeff Goldsmith. After over 32 years of dedicated service, Jeff retired on October 1, as the FNBEA's Vice-President of the local, EPIC Representative and an alternate to the APEA Board of Directors.

Jeff was perhaps the most politically active member of the local and could always be seen holding a sign in near freezing temperatures near Election Day. A regular at CLC (Central Labor Council) meetings, Jeff was always present and participating in "turkey giveaways" at Thanksgiving as well as participating in APEA's efforts with "Santa's Clearinghouse" in past Christmas Holidays.

Jeff began his career with the borough in 1984 and worked his entire career in the same department retiring as a Computer Coordinator IV. In retirement, Jeff plans on taking care of some of those projects that his wife Katherine may have waiting and participating in his favorite pastimes of hunting, fishing and photography.

The field office hopes to keep him active in local events and we wish him the best and thank him for a "job well done."
Northern Region Member Spotlight: Shawn Fletcher, Sr.
By Jason Roach, Northern Field Representative

This month the Northern Field Office would like to highlight Shawn Fletcher, Sr., one of our Employee Representatives from the Fairbanks North Star Borough Local #6125.

Shawn is a Maintenance Mechanic 2 for the Borough Public Works Department, and has worked for the Borough since 1985. He’s been a very active member of APEA/AFT, encouraging members to join together, to be active and involved in the Union.

Over the course of his 30 year career, Shawn has been involved in many work projects from emergency boiler swaps to redesigning the heating system at the Big Dipper installing four new boilers.

He is a dedicated worker, father and grandfather who loves to spend time with his family. Shawn also enjoys bowling, golf and riding his snow machines.

The Northern Field office would like to give Shawn a big “Thank You!” for his hard work and dedication to the Union and his community.

ACE Executive Board FY17 Planning Session

On October 1, 2016, the ACE Executive Board spent their Saturday reviewing last year’s accomplishments and planning their goals for this year. ACE plans to move further in the technology age including being the first APEA/AFT Local to have their Executive Board Handbooks all electronic and on a shared server.

The Board chose to continue and expand on the programs they started last year, including a new improved program to ensure each new hire is contacted by an ACE representative.

Left front, clockwise around the table:
Secretary, Corinne McVee
Treasurer, Rachel Molina-Lodoen
President, Dane Sutterfield
2nd Vice President, Beverly Groskreutz
Member at Large (1), Steve Brown
Member at Large (2), Suzette Johnstone
1st Vice President, Eric Simmons
What happens when the employer wants to change job classification(s) when you already have a contract?

Foremost, hopefully one has a good employer and they are providing notice to the union and membership. In this case, the Juneau School District is, and a meeting was established with member leadership. The District presented their initial proposal and discussed their viewpoint. If they had not notified the union, this might be a unilateral action and subject to an Unfair Labor Practice charge.

However, the District met the initial obligation to notify and bargain with the union before making any substantial changes.

The photo represents potentially impacted JESS-IT members gathered at the Juneau union hall for a discussion of what’s next. A multitude of ideas were discussed and considered.

The next step: the union membership will establish a counter proposal to present to the District with their insight. Union staff and member leaders meet with the District to review our counter proposal and continue proposals, if necessary, until we come to a resolution that makes sense for both parties.

Left foreground to rear: Chris Cairns, Michael Eder, Stephanie Gavin, Rich Culver
Right foreground to rear: Greg Collen, Rebecca Daniels, Kristina Derr, Garrett Horton
As I hope is well known by now, SU’s 2016 negotiations situation took a quick change of direction in late September, when the state asked SU to vote the mediated agreement for possible ratification, rather than continue our march to interest arbitration. Having worked very hard on that mediated agreement, and believing that the mediated agreement was probably equal to whatever might emanate from arbitration, we submitted that agreement to a vote of the SU membership.

We counted ballots on Wednesday, 19 October, the day before our Biennial Caucus began, and the package was approved and ratified by the SU membership. This was a frustrating and bedeviling negotiations, as our state’s economy is frustrating and bedeviling, but we do believe that establishing the security of this two-year contact is a smart decision… and we will be back at the table next year, bargaining again for a new contract.

As noted, as soon as we had an SU agreement, we launched into APEA’s Biennial Caucus – the convention where the elected delegates of all APEA’s affiliate member Local Unions meet to review the organization’s work the past 2 years, focus the organization’s work for the next 2 years and elect statewide officers and consider constitutional changes.

This year’s caucus was not only successful, but it was professional, collegial, civil and thoughtful – an excellent and fruitful exercise that helped our organization grow and improve itself. Our state president was re-elected, our Board of Directors has organized itself for the upcoming two years and the delegates provided the Board and staff with direction, focus and support for these upcoming years. We remain an organization prepared to engage the future and advance our causes and issues.

Finally, as we move out of October and into November, we address our choices – there is a national election, but, my goodness, with our state’s financial challenges, look at our local political races and choices! The primary races dramatically changed the Alaskan political landscape, and the potential for change, which must translate into action to address our challenges, is even greater than before, and more robust and rich than previously anticipated.

Be sure to vote on Tuesday, 8 November – election day. You will be selecting the representatives who will, who must, confront, engage and address our state and our community’s challenges.