April was a whirlwind of work and activity at APEA! We opened the month with an organizing blitz – with the assistance of AFT staffers, AFT activist members from Connecticut, New York, Maryland, Illinois, Kansas and Colorado and our own APEA staff and activist members, we conducted an internal organizing blitz in Anchorage and the Valley with magnificent results!

During the course of “blitz week”, training was provided to all the participant activists, who then visited 792 members during 4 evenings of home visits; conducted 47 separate worksite meetings, attended by 249 members; and held a noontime rally in support of the SU Negotiating Team, which was bargaining in a ground floor conference room at the Atwood Building. It was an outstanding week of fellowship, solidarity, building our union and engaging our membership.

With barely a week’s recovery, and catching-up on regular work from the blitz week, APEA staff presented our annual Alyeska training program to APEA member-activists. Classes included Union 101, Employee Rep Training, Workplace Bullying, Rock & A Hard Place: Union & Politics in the Workplace, along with a variety of half day classes regarding effective meetings and communications between members.

2018 Alyeska was a resounding success, and we thank Brian Penner, Carrie Flenaugh, Jackie Bennett, Annie Knight, Jenn Madsen and Gene Christian, of the Anchorage Office; Jason Roach, of the Fairbanks Office; and Joel Hill and Gabriel Hargrove, of the Juneau Office, for their excellent work and training presentations to an engaged and interested student-member attendees.

If plans work as designed, there will be meaningful and active follow-up of both the blitz and the training, so please stay involved and committed to helping your Local Unions and APEA progress and strengthen their ability to assist and represent you and your co-workers.
Governor’s proclamation signing for Public Service Recognition Week and State Employee Recognition Day

Earlier this month, APEA Board of Directors Vice-President and SU member Michael Lund was invited to participate in the signing of the Governor’s proclamation for Public Service Recognition Week and State Employee Recognition Day.

Lund, who also serves as the SU Northern Region Chapter Chair and as an SU Employee Rep, joined Department of Administration Commissioner, Leslie Ridle and several others for the signing.

Public Service Recognition Week is recognized May 6-12, 2018.
State Employee Recognition Day is recognized May 9, 2018.

Fairbanks Field Office and APEA say goodbye to Al Agee

By Michael Koskie, Northern Regional Manager

After over sixteen years of service to APEA, Al Agee recently retired from his Administrative Assistant position in the APEA Northern Field Office. Al, who has a lifetime of service to his country, state and community originally retired after 21 years with the Air Force. He went on to work for the State of Alaska (DOT). Al then came to APEA over sixteen years ago, originally just planning to help out for a couple of weeks. His friendly, demure, uncanny ability to have all the right answers, as well as his ability to make the best coffee in the state, will be missed by everyone who had the opportunity to know him.

Al and his wife Brenda intend to stay in the Fairbanks area close to their grandchildren. Al also intends to get more involved in community and charitable causes. Al was honored at a dinner April 20th put on by APEA with special guest Business Manager Pete Ford dropping in for the occasion.

Not to let the “Agee tradition” be lost at the APEA Field Office in Fairbanks; one of Al’s sons, Adrian, has been hired as his replacement. Adrian realizes the “big shoes” he has to fill but has shown that he is up for the task.

The Fairbanks Field Office including Michael and Jason as well as the area Local Officers and Employee Reps will certainly miss Al, and wish him “GOOD LUCK”
Workplace Bullying Training Was A Success!
By Anne Knight  Southcentral Field Representative

Have you ever been bullied or witnessed bullying in the workplace? If you have, you are not alone! Last month, APEA offered a one-day training on Workplace Bullying. We had twelve (12) members, representing six (6) locals, in attendance. The training focused on defining Workplace Bullying and how it differs from illegal / unlawful disparate treatment based on the protected classes. Some of the topics included how to recognize when someone is being bullied, identifying the type of bullying that is happening and most importantly, how to stop it from happening in the Workplace.

The reviews received were amazing and additional training has been requested.

At this time, there is talk of taking this training ‘on the road’, so if you are interested in attending this class, please contact Annie Knight at aknight@apea-aft.org or Gene Christian at gchristian@apea-aft.org.

Using your health insurance benefits to keep you well
By Brian Penner, Southcentral Regional Manager

Many of us only think of our health insurance when we need to go to the doctor. What about using it with the goal of visiting your doctor less frequently? A recent study showed that only 25% of employees make use of all the preventative care benefits offered by their employer. Another study found only 33% of employees participating in employer provided health promotion programs. A lot of this is due to lack of trust in benefit providers, the complexity of benefits and the difficulty understanding the options. These reasons can be barriers to achieving good health but most employers are working hard to make it easier. Keep an eye out for employer sponsored wellness programs, health fairs, financial incentives, gym discounts and technology tools which can help manage chronic health problems.

April CEA Member Spotlight
Michelle Sweet

Michelle has been with CEA since April of 2014! Fitting that she is our April Spotlight Member!

She came to CEA as an HR Tech II for the Anchorage DOT Shoreside Payroll Team. She promoted to her current position, HR Consultant for DNR, in August of 2015 and says she loves the management consulting side of HR.

Michelle was born and raised in Alaska. She has lived in Sitka and then moved to the Anchorage area in the mid 80’s. She is married and has two children; a son who is 19 and a daughter who is 13 and a large furry child named Odin. Odin is a 2 year old Great Dane, so you can imagine the fun with him!

If you are into high level geek activities such as gaming or fandoms, you may find yourself in the company of Michelle as she is into those as well as being an avid movie addict. In her free time, she enjoys digging into historical novels and documentaries.

Michelle says she enjoys working with CEA and feels incredibly lucky to be working with high caliber HR folks in such an amazing department.
For many APEA staff, AFT staff and volunteers, April 7th was the start of a very busy but exciting week in Anchorage. After months of planning, 6 groups, made up of locals and their colleagues from around the country, rallied together to kick off the Member Organizing Blitz.

Detailed planning went into the Blitz. Team 4 (L) and Team 1 (R) are shown here working on Charting & Mapping.

AFT staff members Stuart Savelkoul (Below L) and Igor Kagan (Below R) on tactics and strategies.

A Rally was held on the steps of the Atwood building. Members from around Anchorage joined in to send a loud message! Our brothers and sisters from the GGU also came to lend their support. A great example of solidarity that day!

Team 1, led by APEA Field Rep Jason Roach, conducted five worksite visits with DOT to discuss SU Negotiations and the Supreme Court case Janus v AFSCME.
Member Engagement in with the Supervisory Unit

By Joel Hill, Southeast Field Representative

In early April, member activists gathered to share contract negotiation information, field member questions/concerns and provide information regarding the upcoming Janus decision. Members participated from Anchorage – South Central Region, Fairbanks – Northern Region and Juneau – Southeast Region. Additionally, we had assistance from our brothers-sisters from the lower 48. We are all impacted and share similar issues/problems.

In one week we knocked on many doors with valuable one on one conversations, as well as holding close to 50 worksite meetings. The activity aided your negation team and helped during the mediation sessions with the State.

If your Local is having a meeting, participating in an event or doing something that you would like to share, please let us know and we will post it here.

Ballots are out for the SU Contract Ratification vote. Ballots will be accepted until the close of business on Tuesday, 29 May, 2018. Every vote counts so please remember to cast yours!

**Family Health And Safety Fair - Wheel-O-Rama And Kids Bike Rodeo**

**02 JUN 2018**

10:00AM - 2:00PM

Family Health And Safety Fair - Wheel-O-Rama And Kids Bike Rodeo

**ALL FREE:** Wheel-O-Rama Safety Fair related to wheeled vehicles APD with roll-over simulator and more.

**AFD; Public Safety Helicopter; Carlisle Commercial Truck; AK Trucking; blood mobile and more.**

**ALSO Kid’s Bike Safety Rodeo Speedway Cycle mechanics - You must bring kids bikes and helmets to participate.**

Alaska Regional Hospital - BLDG C - Parking Lot

2741 DeBarr Rd Anchorage, AK 99508
Employee Rep Training

By Anne Knight  Southentral Field Representative

Twenty-two (22) members from seven (7) different Locals attended the week-long Employee Representatives training last month. This year’s class was very diverse, with seasoned Employee Representatives, new Employee Representatives, members interested in becoming an Employee Representative and others whose Locals do not have Employee Representatives – Yet. This diversity added a new dimension to the training by providing “hands on” experience with topics such as, First Friend - Best Friend, 10-Minute Meetings, New Employee Orientation, Investigations and Grievances.

The course focused on what the role is of the Employee Representation within their Local; how they become an Employee Representative; and their importance in being the face and often the voice for their Local when dealing with members’ concerns and issues. Throughout the week, the participants were provided tools and reference materials and the opportunity to breakout into groups to discuss and practice different scenarios.

Employee Rep Corner

By Cindy Spanyers, Legislative Liaison

One of APEA/AFT’s top priorities has been to ensure our members can have a secure retirement which suits their needs, especially those with long-term goals. This year, HB 83 was introduced to provide pension choice and after several hearings it passed two committees. Constituent input and outreach is invaluable in the legislative process. Several APEA/AFT members testified including Chris Cairns, with the Juneau Education Support Staff (JESS), who spoke before the House State Affairs Committee in April.

Cairns, who works in IT for the Juneau School District, explained how the Defined Contributions Retirement Plan (DC) impacts classified staff. About half the staff have one to six years of service and are enrolled in DC while the rest have 15-20 years of service and enjoy the certainty of a Defined Benefits (DB) which was repealed twelve years ago. Cairns observed that when staff reach the five-year point and can collect the full vesting amount, people often take their contributions and leave for better opportunities just when they are fully competent in their field.

“In my opinion, retaining staff is the key to doing more with less,” Cairns testified. “In the current budgetary environment that is very much a challenge. It takes time to develop the skills for positions unique to school districts,” Cairns continued. “Constant turnover means additional time recruiting and training and less time for brainstorming and innovation.” Cairns’ testimony resonated with members of the committee including comments that it was positive to hear from “folks in the system.”

While the legislation passed out of this committee after Cairns’ testimony, the session ended before it could be evaluated further.

Congratulations Chris Cairns to Cairns who was just elected as President of JESS, pictured with one of the bill’s co-sponsors, Representative Chris Tuck.

Representative Chris Tuck and JESS President Chris Cairns
TENTATIVE AGREEMENT IN SU NEGOTIATIONS

The SU Negotiating Team has reached a tentative agreement with SOA for a new, 3 year agreement, which would cover the period 1 July 2018 – 30 June 2021.

In the current labor environment, any contract is important because it does provide the protection and clarity of a contract, but, like most contracts in the current environment, it isn’t an agreement that will move people to a “victory dance”!

We all know the state’s financial situation, and the reticence of the Legislature to consider anything that involves cost or expenditure. It is true that there is no traditional COLA or wage increase in the tentative agreement. We were, however, able to return SU to a 40 hour work week, with the proportionate earnings increase associated with those additional work hours.

Years ago, during the “first oil crash,” SU and other state employee groups reduced their work week from 40 to 37.5 hours in order to help the state save money. Since then, SU leadership and negotiators have been seeking the opportunity to return to a 40 hour work week, with the increased earnings associated with that additional work. Through the years, many interested members have regularly asked about returning to a 40 hour work week. It’s not a raise, we know, but it is increased earning, it is more money and it is increased retirement. That opportunity became available during this negotiation, and it became the basis upon which the Negotiating Team believed it could improve earnings and working conditions for all of SU.

Support is not unanimous. The team knew there would be some SU folks who would not be pleased with the change, but the team believes there is widespread support for the concept and believes that, in general, resumption of the 40 hour week, with proportionate increased earnings, are good and valuable things for most of the SU membership.

Ballots were mailed on Monday, 7 May – they must be returned to an APEA Office by COB Tuesday, 29 May. Regional Information Meetings were held during the noon hour in Juneau on Monday, 14 May; in Anchorage on Tuesday, 15 May; and in Fairbanks on Wednesday, 16 May. Negotiating Team members are available to discuss the tentative agreement, and the negotiations, if members wish.

The Negotiating Team does recommend that this tentative agreement be approved by the membership.