By Mark Gruenberg

SEIU, Teamsters pull out of AFL-CIO

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New Labor Day tradition begins at Bayfront

After a walk-through of Bayfront Festival Park last week with Junelle Boe of the City of Duluth’s Park Department, Alan Netland and Yvonne Harvey are certain it’s the best new home possible for the Duluth AFL-CIO’s Annual Labor Day Picnic.

“It’s perfect,” said CLB President Netland. “It’s got everything we need right down to indoor, accessible bathrooms to lots of electrical outlets.”

Picnic Chair Harvey said the area is huge but can be intimate. “We’ll have the opportunity to have a lot of things going on at once and have room to grow,” she said. “We’d like to involve more of our coalition partners in the picnic so they can show our members what they’re all about.”

Mayor Herb Bergson had suggested last year that the picnic, which will be celebrated for the 117 year as far as can be ascertained, would have a better venue and chance to expand if it moved from Park Point to Bayfront. The picnic had been held at Fairmont Park since the 1890s. The last year it was held there was 2000 as it moved to Park Point in 2001 to alleviate parking and mobility issues for seniors. Those concerns will be able to be handled even better at Bayfront.

Harvey said the all-volunteer effort is taking shape as the logistics of the new location are factored-in. “The biggest problem, as it is every year, is finding enough volunteers and raising enough money to provide free food and refreshments to crowds that may exceed the numbers in the recent past.”

“Our need some new young blood to come forward and get involved,” Harvey said. “We welcome new ideas and new energy.”

One of the things that is being worked on for Bayfront is expanding the opportunity for more music. Members of Musicians Local 18 have played old-time favorites for free for years. Feelers are going out in the community to entice other local performers as well.

Volunteers, especially those with pick-up trucks, are needed to help with any number of tasks in making the picnic work for thousands. If you can help in any way call Yvonne Harvey at 728-1779.

Last year donations to the picnic fell short by $2,000 and Netland said the Central Body can not pick up the tab. This year donations are down $2,000 from last year. Try saying “What? No Beer?”

Donations should be sent to Central Body/Labor Day Picnic, Room 110, 2002 London Rd., Duluth, MN 55812. Any size donation is welcome.

Who dat union?

The hardcopy publication “Organizations Affiliated with the AFL-CIO” is no longer published in that format. It is now available electronically through the federation’s website at www.aflcio.org/aboutunions/unions.

Mesothelioma support group

The mesothelioma support group will hold a meeting Tuesday, Aug. 2nd at 5:30 p.m. at the Incline Station, 601 W. Superior St., Duluth.

Meetings are open to anyone interested in learning about the asbestos-related disease.

For more information contact Floyd Paaso at 525-2208 or visit www.marf.org.

Peter Norgren wins scholarship

Peter Norgren plans to own his own plumbing business someday. First he has to become a plumber and he’s on his way in that regard with the help of a $1,000 Donald Pilla Memorial Award scholarship from the Minnesota AFL-CIO.

His dad, Chris Norgren, a member of BBEW Local 31 and a journeyman lineman with Minnesota Power, said Peter "was really tickled to get it and really appreciates it.” Peter will attend Wadena Technical College in the fall. The Norgrens live in Sandstone and it isn't too often that scholarship winners are from this region. Winners are picked by lot and all recipients demonstrated academic excellence and understanding of the value of union membership. The Minnesota AFL-CIO and Union Plus scholarships are open to union members and their families. All winners plan to attend a college, university, technical or community college in the fall. The application process for the state scholarships begins in December. You can call the AFL-CIO at 1-800-652-9004 or visit www.mnaflio.org about that time and information will be available to help others with their dreams.

Peter was only eight years old when he started his own firewood business with a local gas station. He started making bundles of wood and eventually it progressed into thousands and thousands of bundles. That plumbing business isn't too far down the pipe.
Sign up now for Labor class

UMD’s class on labor history taught by Erik Peterson, “American Working Class History and Culture: The Struggle for Control,” will be offered Wednesdays from 6:00 to 9:30 p.m. beginning Sept. 8 and ending Dec. 14. The class is held at night to allow full-time workers to attend. A mix of community members and students make for lively dialogue, one of the important ingredients of the class said Peterson. The class can be taken for college credit or continuing education. Cost is $400, with many unions picking up the tab for members who seek help with their tuition. The Duluth Central Labor Body has also authorized a third group.

You can find out more at www.d.umn.edu/~epeters5/Cst1201

Shutdown unnecessary, but, employees notwithstanding, benefits to Minnesota worth it

Editor:
The 2005 legislative session was long, contentious and controversial, but the hard-fought victories for northeastern Minnesota and all of the state’s working people and school children were worth the prolonged battle at the State Capitol. With the special session of the State Legislature finally adjourned and the state’s first government shutdown settled, we believe the long-term effects of the special session will be generally good for the region.

While it wasn’t always pretty, and there were many frustrating moments, the extra work we did in the special session led to wins for this region, for our schools and for working people that we wouldn’t have gotten otherwise.

We started the regular session in January saying we needed to compromise to get things done. Sadly, compromise wasn’t achieved until July and it took an extra two months of special session and the state’s first government shutdown to get the governor and the House Republicans to agree to any compromise, but most of the end product will have been worth it.

Among the biggest accomplishments of the session were:

- More than 10,000 people will be working as a result of passage of the bonding bill.
- More than $3 million for sanitary sewer projects in Aurora and in the central Iron Range district.
- State funds totaling $2 million for the Laurentian Energy Authority.
- Keeping health care coverage for 47,000 working, premium-paying Minnesotans that would have been lost under the governor’s original budget plan.
- Securing nearly $14 million for Head Start, Adult Basic Education and coordination of early learning programs.
- Approval of a $1 increase in the state’s minimum wage this year, bringing the rate from $5.15 to $6.15 an hour, affecting more than 120,000 working Minnesotans. (Rep. Rukavina was the chief author of this bill.)
- An 8 percent increase in the education funding formula, which is the largest in the past 15 years, bringing an additional $525 million to Minnesota schools and giving an average $500 per pupil to northeastern Minnesota schools.
- The taconite offset was eliminated for seven Iron Range cities, providing about $6 million in property tax relief as well as local government aid funding increases for small cities and $45 million in aid increases for cities in general.
- $15 million in IRRRB bond for school repairs.
- Infrastructure money for Iron Range cities.
- We would’ve preferred to get the Legislature’s work done in the regular session and avoided the government shutdown, but the extra time we spent in negotiations allowed for a compromise that means good things for millions of Minnesotans.

There is still important work to be done in future legislative sessions and it is important that the lessons learned from this session carry over to the next session so our work can be done in a timely fashion.

The big disappointment of the session was the governor’s insistence to once again use the property tax and a cigarette tax to fund his budget. Regressive taxation is not the right way to fund government services, but protecting his rich friends and wealthy campaign contributors was obviously more important to the governor than doing the right thing.

And we agree that state employees deserve an apology, as their lives were negatively impacted by this session. The shutdown was the first in the 148 years of Minnesota statehood. The shutdown never should have happened as the final results could have been achieved without the shutdown and the state employees must have felt like pawns in the process.

For more information, we hope residents of our region will take the time to call, write or email. It is an honor to serve northeastern Minnesota at the State Capitol.


This Day In History

from www.workdayminnesota.org

July 27, 1918

United Mine Workers organizer Ginger Goodwin was shot by a hired private policeman outside Cumberland, British Columbia.
Ivins supports Stern, Change to Win, because AFL-CIO too much about turf

By Molly Ivins
AUSTIN, Texas -- Solidarity Forever-oops, make that Solidarity Later.

Organized labor is weak, but unorganized labor is a hell of a lot weaker. That's what's splitting the AFL-CIO. You may think this is none of your business, but if you work in this country, you owe labor a big time. And I'm talking to you, white-collar worker.

This is not about the old stuff -- 40-hour workweek, unemployment insurance, health benefits, safety regs, etc. This is about right now, today. The benefits, safety regs, etc. This is employment insurance, health benefits, 40-hour workweek, unemployment insurance, etc. This is big time. And I'm talking to you, white-collar worker.

You may think this is none of your business, but if you work in this country, you owe labor a big time. And I'm talking to you, white-collar worker.

Just say "No!" to Gallo

A new "No Gallo!" boycott has begun against Gallo of Sonoma, part of America's wealthiest wine-making family. The Gallos pay all their vineyard workers low wages and deny the great majority of them benefits and job protections.

The Gallos were specifically last year by the state of California of illegally trying to get rid of their workers' union, the Cesar Chavez-founded United Farm Workers.

Now the UFW invites people of good will to join their second boycott of Gallo wine in 32 years. Hundreds of farm workers and supporters kicked off the new boycott of Gallo wine June 14 on the steps of San Francisco City Hall. More than 1,000 marched Sunday through the streets of San Francisco.

The Gallos say they have no responsibility for the miserable conditions endured by their vineyard employees because they are "temporary workers" supplied by farm labor contractors. Through "temporary workers" on farms. They are of equal or lesser value: select from your insurance.

Don't Dew the Do (or any Bernick's products)

When Bernick's Pepsi moved into this area from St. Cloud, they busted the Teamsters union. When they built their first complex in Duluth, they built non-union. When the Duluth Airport Authority contracted out the food and beverage facilities to Pedro-Kerv, Inc. and Bernick's Full Line Vending they did not hire any former union workers. UNITE HERE 99 has had an informational picket at the airport because of the union-busting since Nov. 1, 2003.

Please Do Not Purchase Bernick's Pepsi-Cola products

Products include many soft drinks, flavored juices & teas, waters, sports drinks, and mixers. Bernick's website at www.bernicks.com/products has a complete listing of products, or call UNITE HERE Local 99 at 218-728-6861. Bernick's distributes in St. Louis, Carlton, & Douglas counties, from Hinckley up the North Shore. Thank you.

UNITE HERE LOCAL 99
(Includes Hotel Employees Restaurant Employees)

PAGE 4
Howard Waste, the only unionized waste hauler in the area, is expanding its 57-year old commercial service to now include residential hauling, recycling, bulk item disposal, yard waste collection and even Christmas Tree disposal.

Howard Waste has always been locally owned and affiliated with Teamsters Local 346 as the only local union hauler in the Twin Ports.

"We've got 21 members there now," said Teamster Secretary-Treasurer Patrick Radzak, "and they've been a good company forever. They've done a good job of beating the 900 pound gorilla, Waste Management forever. They've done a good job of beating the 900 company forever. They've done a good job of beating the 900 company forever."

Keith Howard is president of the recycling company that was started by his father, Donald, in 1948.

"He started with one truck and picked up waste paper from downtown businesses," said Howard. "He hauled it to Zenith Paper stock & Rag, which was started here by the Segal family in 1906. Dad bought their business in 1970."

Keith and his older brother, Scott, carried on the family business together until Scott retired three years ago. The move to becoming a residential hauler is a huge financial commitment, but Keith said it's worth it because his son, Jason is now company vice president and the third generation of the Howards in the business.

The residential move required the purchase of one new truck, three re-conditioned trucks, carts for customers, three more drivers and more clerical help. "It's a very large investment and we'll just have to see how participation is the areas we'll start up in," Howard said.

In addition to quality curbside service, Howard Waste, in conjunction with WLSSD, provides green waste/yard waste services to private homes from May 31 to October 31. This service offers homeowners a convenient way to dispose of grass leaves, tree limbs and other yard waste.

From December 28 to January 10, Howard Waste will offer free Christmas Tree disposal at no additional charge for customers.

With on-going commitment to the convenience of its customers, Howard Waste also offers electronics recycling, and small and large appliance pick up.

Because the owners and employees of Howard Waste live in the area, they know the importance of giving back to the community. Committed to the community it services, Howard Waste returns a percentage of profits to community clubs and neighborhood organizations through the city's Parks and Recreation program.

Recycling and garbage service will begin August 1 in the following neighborhoods: East of 21st Avenue East: Chester Park, Congdon, Endion, Hunter's Park, Kenwood, Lakeside, Lester Park, and Woodland. Service will be expanding to other areas of Duluth soon.

"We pride ourselves on providing dependable, quality service to commercial and now residential customers," he said. "We strive to be a good neighbor by knowing and supporting our customers, and being watchful for problems on our routes."

You can call Keith Howard at 628-2388 to find out how to sign up for all your waste and recycling needs by a locally-owned, unionized company.

Unionized, recycling pioneer Howard Waste going residential for trash service

Say "no" to Wal-Mart for your back to school supplies

Child labor violations. Sex discrimination. Low wages. Lousy benefits. All from Wal-Mart--a company that rakes in $10 billion a year in profits. Wal-Mart needs a real education in how a rich company should treat its workers. Working families are going to protest against Wal-Mart this year. An internet campaign sponsored by the AFL-CIO is asking that you help send that message to Wal-Mart CEO Lee Scott at http://www.unionvoice.org/ct/w7zdGGY1XPgO/

There are hundreds of reasons to pledge not to buy back-to-school supplies at Wal-Mart this year:

• The world's largest retailer is setting a standard of low wages, poor benefits and worker abuse that working families cannot accept: the Wal-Marting of America's jobs.

• Wal-Mart has huge fines for child labor law violations, reportedly making kids younger than 18 work through meal breaks, work very late and even work during school hours. Several states have found Wal-Mart workers younger than 18 are operating dangerous equipment, like chainsaws, and working in such dangerous areas as around trash compactors. (The New York Times, 1/13/04; The Associated Press, 2/18/05; The Hartford Courant, 6/18/05)

• Wal-Mart pays poverty-level wages and fails to provide affordable company health insurance to more than 600,000 employees. Wal-Mart tops state lists of employers whose workers must rely on taxpayer-funded health insurance programs like Medicaid. (Wal-Mart annual reports; Business Week, 10/2/03; state reports)

• Wal-Mart pays women nearly 40 cents less an hour than men. Wal-Mart pays women nearly 40 cents less an hour than men. (Wal-Mart annual reports; Business Week, 10/2/03; state reports)

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• By demanding impossibly low prices, Wal-Mart forces its suppliers to produce goods in low-wage countries that don't protect workers. A worker in a Honduran clothing factory whose main customer is Wal-Mart, for example, sews sleeves onto 1,200 shirts a day for only $35 a week. (Los Angeles Times, 11/24/03)

• Wal-Mart can afford to do better. Wal-Mart--America's largest private employer--raked in $10 billion in profits last year. CEO Lee Scott landed almost $25 million in total compensation last year alone. Wal-Mart has no excuse for its behavior. Help educate Wal-Mart by clicking on the link below to send Scott your pledge not to buy back-to-school supplies at Wal-Mart: http://www.unionvoice.org/ct/w7zdGGY1XPgO/
DuPont Teflon may contain carcinogen

WASHINGTON (PAI) -- A draft report from an Environmental Protection Agency science advisory committee says that a key ingredient that DuPont uses to make teflon, perfluorooctanoate, is “a likely carcinogen” for humans.

The report, released in various news reports in July but not adopted by the agency yet, escalated DuPont’s problems with "ICE" your cell phone for help

An internet campaign encouraging people to enter an emergency contact number in their mobile phone’s memory under the heading ICE (In Case of Emergency) has rapidly spread as a consequence of the terrorist attacks in London. ICE allows rescue workers to contact a designated relative/next-of-kin in an emergency situation.

Simply select your person to contact in case of emergency, enter them under the word ‘ICE’ and the telephone number of the person you wish to be contacted. For more than one contact name ICE1, ICE2, ICE3, etc.

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Expertise

What does health plan expertise mean for Taft-Hartley Funds? It means making dollars work harder for Fund members. It’s negotiating better network discounts. It’s developing innovative health management programs to improve member health and lower claims costs. It’s understanding and meeting member needs. It’s having a track record of more than 70 years serving Minnesotans. And it’s what has helped Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota earn the trust of over 90 percent of Taft-Hartley Funds to deliver health plan benefits for their union members.

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Local student project needs funding to preserve stories of WWII veterans

November 11, 2005 will mark the 60th observance of Veterans Day since World War II ended. More than 36 million lives were lost in that war, and surviving WWII veterans are dying at the rate of over 1,000 per day. Within 10 years you will have a very difficult time finding a living WWII vet. Many of them are our parents and grandparents.

Mike Martin, a member of the Duluth Federation of Teachers at Central High School, wants his students to connect with some of the surviving veterans, and record their stories for posterity. The "Stories of Service" program will be part of a national effort to remember and record the service and sacrifice of what is called "America's Greatest Generation."

"We want to give students a chance to work on this multi-faceted media project that will put them in touch with seniors who did so much for this country and the world," said Martin.

What the students will do, if the project can get funding, is interview veterans and create 3 to 5 minute stories that will be compiled on DVDs. The project has worked well in other areas of the country and can be seen at www.stories-of-service.org. "Wouldn't it be great if we could get area World War II veterans' stories down and run a continuous video of them at the Veterans' Memorial Hall," asked an obviously excited Martin. He has been given the okay to develop a Service Learning Digital Media Lab at Central and to develop a curriculum for the students. With little publicity he has received many names of veterans to contact for their stories. Like most creative educational endeavors it will all come down to getting funding to make it a reality.

Martin, who teaches history and psychology but also works in multi-media, says total cost for basic equipment to complete the project would be about $10,000. After making a presentation to the Duluth AFL-CIO Central Labor Body last week, delegates authorized $500 in seed money to the project. In discussing the donation delegates said not only is it a great way to remember WWII veterans but students will gain invaluable experience with the technology and what they learn from dealing with seniors, many of whom came home to become union members and leaders in their unions. Martin also made a presentation to the Veteran's Hall Executive Board at the St. Louis County Historical Society but says he doesn't want to ask any veteran's organizations to help fund the project.

"I believe that it is appropriate that other groups be the funding stakeholders in this program," he said. "After all, it is our veterans who have sacrificed so much already, and the rest of us should consider ourselves privileged to help memorialize their stories in whatever ways we can."

Martin says he has to have funding in place by September 8, the start of the school year. He is considering other sources for needed donations but would be thrilled if it could be accomplished through unions.

Martin has been given the okay to develop a continuous video of them at the Veterans' Memorial Hall, and record the service and sacrifices. The national WWII memorial that opened in Washington DC April 29, 2004 can be seen at www.wwii memorial.com.

August 15 deadline for unions, officers LM-10, LM-30 reports

By Attorney Tim Andrew

It would be nice to think that the Department of Labor is interested in protecting the rights of working people. However, the Department appears focused on burdening labor unions with regulatory compliance and financial reporting so that unions are distracted from their fight on behalf of working people.

Last year the Bush Administration's Department of Labor required burdensome new financial reporting for labor unions on their annual financial reports. Now, the Department of Labor is increasing the financial reporting obligations of union officers and employees.

A 1959 Federal Law known as the Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act (LMRDA) requires union officers and employees (except those performing exclusively clerical or custodial duties) to report to the Department of Labor certain financial transactions.

For most of the 45 years the LMRDA has been in place, it has been given little attention and raised few concerns. However, in March of this year the Bush Administration’s Department of Labor let it be known that it will begin enforcing the financial reporting obligation of union officers and employees which, if violated, can lead to criminal penalties.

A private sector union officer or employee must report annually to the DOL interests they (which includes spouse and minor children) have in, or income over $25 that they receive from:

• Employers whose employees the union represents or seeks to represent;
• A business which buys from, or sells or leases to, or otherwise deals with, their union or any trusts in which their union is interested;
• Have received any payment of money or other thing of value from an employer or a person who acts for an employer;
• A trust fund reimburses the expenses of a trustee or pays a union officer a salary for performing a service.

Although these are the most common situations, there are a number of perfectly reasonable and legal circumstances in which a trust fund reimburses the expenses of a trustee or pays a union officer a salary for performing a service.

These annual reports are done on what is known as a LM-30 Form. Once filed, they are posted and available for public inspection on the DOL’s website.

For any transaction that occurred in Calendar Year 2004, the reports are due no later than August 15, 2005. In future years, the reports are due 90 days after the end of the Calendar Year.

In addition, trust funds that have employees and have either reimbursed expenses or paid a salary to a union officer or employee have an obligation to separately report the transaction to the Department of Labor on a form called a LM-10.

If you have further questions regarding these issues please give our office a call.

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Minnesota Senate stood firm on many key issues as special session ended


By the time the eight-week special session of the Minnesota state legislature finally adjourned July 13, many frustrated voices — in letters to the editor, on talk radio, and at union meetings — were ready to declare “a pox on both your houses” to the Republican-controlled House and the DFL-controlled Senate.

State employees, in particular, were seething about the eight-day government shutdown that kicked-in July 1 when lawmakers couldn’t even agree to a “lights on” bill.

The 2005 session — and the special session in particular — may be remembered for many things, but voters should remember that it was the DFLers in the Senate and the House who supported efforts to keep state government running. Notably, the DFLers in the Senate used their power as the majority to block Republican Governor Tim Pawlenty’s efforts to slash MinnesotanCare, a health insurance program for low-income workers and working families.

Credit is due to Senator Linda Berglin, DFL-Minneapolis, who dug in her heels and refused to allow the program to be gutted. That took legislative skill — and courage.

Berglin waged a similar fight two years ago, but without equally steadfast resolve from then Senate Majority leader John Hottinger, DFL-St. Peter. That year, as the session’s end neared, labor and its allies in the Minnesota is Watching Coalition were organizing for a final mass event to argue their case to lawmakers. Suddenly, Hottinger was on the news, announcing that he was dropping the fight and agreeing to many of the positions advocated by Governor Pawlenty and the Republican-controlled House.

“Two years ago, Senator Hottinger rolled over and played dead before they even started,” said Louise Sundin, president of Minneapolis Federation of Teachers Local 59. “This year (with Senator Dean Johnson as Majority Leader), they were holding firm for a lot of important things...We can’t paint everyone with the same brush. Our friends were holding firm for a reason.”

Here are some of the highlights of the special session:
- The state will enact a 75-cents-per-pack tax on cigarettes (dubbed a “health impact fee” by “no new taxes” Pawlenty);
- Local municipalities will receive $49 million in local government aid;
- No cuts to MinnesotanCare, the state’s health insurance program for low-wage workers;
- A four percent increase, $800 million in new money, for schools;
- A stop-gap transportation funding bill which includes $46 million for transit, preventing deeper service cuts.

AFL-CIO loses two...from page 1

Dues were also a factor in the Teamster and SEIU pullouts. Hoffa and Stern each said his union sends $10 million yearly in per capita dues to the AFL-CIO. Each pledged to use the money for organizing, instead.

And Hoffa reiterated his previous proposal that the AFL-CIO re-hire half of any union’s dues to those unions that create and engage in strategic organizing campaigns. The AFL-CIO Executive Council rejected that earlier this year. “They said ‘no.’ Their idea is to keep throwing money at politicians. We say we have to grow and in strategic organizing campaigns. The AFL-CIO Executive Council was organizing for a final mass event to argue their case to lawmakers. Suddenly, Hottinger was on the news, announcing that he was dropping the fight and agreeing to many of the positions advocated by Governor Pawlenty and the Republican-controlled House.

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