



The Corner

by Mike Wilde, Legal Counsel

A young associate entered my office today and reminded me that the Chinese symbol for crisis is actually made up of the symbols for danger and opportunity. This was no doubt his way of telling me that he had some bad news to share, but that he also thought we could turn it around into a positive. I guess it is commendable that my associate knew the value of delivering a possible solution when delivering otherwise problematic information.

This danger and opportunity duo made me think of so many things that I work on when representing PEA. Many of the work challenges that our members face are first viewed as a negative, but as time goes on the same situation often becomes a great opportunity. This is often the case with routine performance complaints. An employee might get a surprise notice that his or her performance is not meeting expectations. Shortly thereafter I'll likely get a call about a possible grievance or whether I can sit in on a performance improvement plan (PIP).

Nobody likes being informed that his or her work is not up to par. But when the issue is investigated a bit closer, we often learn that there has been a breakdown in communication. The supervisor might have unspoken expectations and the employee often was misunderstanding his or her role. A performance improvement plan that might follow the initial complaint routinely requires periodic face-to-face meetings between the employee and the supervisor. If these meetings are openly respectful to everyone then they create rich opportunities for supervisors to communicate clearly and for employees to ask questions or express their concerns.

It might almost sound Pollyannaish, but performance complaints can be great opportunities for employees to find great job satisfaction once the air is cleared. Professional communication has a way of doing that. Another good example is the recent health insurance crisis our PEA members faced in the School District. You likely know that the teachers union threatened to pull out of the School's health insurance plan, which would have left most of the other employees with much higher premium plans. This was certainly a negative.

But as things unfolded there were several very positive developments that came from this apparent trouble. First, the teachers eventually delayed their decision. Second, PEA's school members began talking, working together and rallying around a very important condition of employment. Third, this concerted effort seemed to improve our member solidarity in the Schools. Fourth, the labor management committee on health insurance will likely take on a much greater importance in the months and years ahead.

The examples could go on and on, but it is probably better to just remind one another that every cloud has a silver lining – at least – and perhaps even an eventual rainbow. On the other hand, my scant research informed me that the Chinese alphabetical character for crisis is *not* the same as the characters for danger and opportunity. So this linguistic faux pas will no longer be used around my office. Yet we all became a bit smarter for the opportunity to learn from this error too. That was the upside.

Mission Statement

The Professional Employees Association is dedicated to bargain, administer, and enforce labor agreements in a responsible, prudent, and lawful manner for the overall improvement of members' working conditions, with emphasis on general advocacy, education, and communication.



PEA Stewards & Executive Committee Dinner & Meeting

• January 8, 2020

5:30 pm

Joseph's Grill

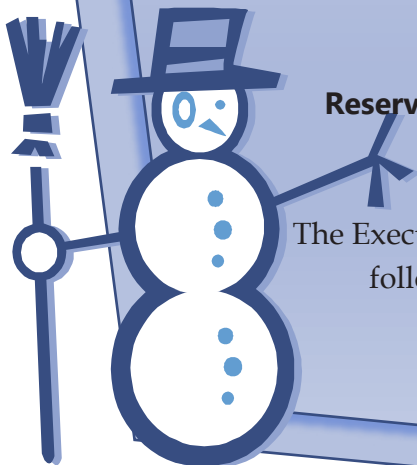
140 South Wabasha • 651-222-2435

Dinner selections will be made from Joseph's menu and include a non-alcoholic beverage of your choice.

AGENDA:

1. Greetings & Introductions
2. Legal Counsel Report
3. President and/or Vice President's Report
4. Committee Reports
 - a. Treasurer
 - b. Personnel
 - c. City Negotiations
 - d. District Negotiations
5. Adjournment of Combined Meeting

Reservations required: RSVP to justine.roe@ci.stpaul.mn.us



The Executive Committee will hold a short meeting of the board following the adjournment of the combined meeting.

FAQ about PEA

by Regina Eroll, President

Shortly after starting your position with the City or the School District you received a packet of materials and an invitation to join PEA as a member. Many of us have the same questions:

Q: What does the union do?

A: The union, specifically PEA, is an organization of workers dedicated to protecting members' interests and improving wages, hours and working conditions for all. It all started when we became a collective bargaining unit. An employer is required to bargain in good faith with a union and each collective bargaining unit, but they are not required to agree to any particular terms. Through negotiations agreements are made and a collective bargaining agreement is signed (our contract). A collective bargaining agreement is negotiated agreement between PEA and the City or School District that sets terms of employment for members of PEA including wages, hours, conditions, vacation, sick days and benefits. After the collective bargaining agreement is signed, an employer can't change details of the agreement without PEA's approval. The collective bargaining agreement lasts for a set period of time with PEA monitoring to assure the employer abides by the contract.

Q: What if they don't abide by the contract?

A: If PEA believes there has been a breach of the contract, PEA can file a grievance, which may be resolved through arbitration.

Q: Who do I contact if I have a question, or concerns?

A: Your first person to contact is your steward! Chances are your steward knows the answer to your question, or will find an answer for you. Your steward will bring issues to the Executive Board and brief the board of what is going on. The board meets monthly and discusses how PEA will proceed with assisting the member this includes talking to our Legal Counsel. You should only go to a PEA's Executive Board Member (not PEA Legal Counsel) if your steward is not available, if you feel you are not getting the assistance needed, or you as the steward need assistance yourself. You can find out who your steward is by going to peaonline.org click on the "about" tab and then click on find your steward.

If you are a steward you need to be known and available to your assigned members.

Q: Why should I be a member?

A: Only members can vote and bring business to the floor, so strengthen your collective bargaining unit and participate in making decisions with your peers on important issues that affect your career; become a full participant in your collective bargaining unit by becoming a member.

Q: What am I voting on?

A: Unions work like a democracy. They hold elections for officers who make decisions on behalf of members. Elections are held annually at the fall general membership meeting (usually in October at Mancini’s), which all members are invited to attend. Members also need to vote on our contracts and other important issues that may affect our contract, such as health insurance. Additionally, when a steward position opens members of that represented group may have to vote if there is more than one person interested in being a steward.

Q: What if I want a position on the Executive Board?

A: Any member who meets the requirements that are listed in the by-laws can run for any elected position. Every year before the fall general membership meeting a notice goes out to all members letting them know about nominations and elections and gives the information needed on what to do.

Q: What if I want to be a Steward?

A: Any member who meets the requirements that are listed in the by-laws can be a steward if or when an opening occurs. If a member is interested in becoming a steward they should contact the Personnel Chair.

Please remember this is YOUR union and membership, so get information, get involved and help make a difference. Also, help to hold your Executive Board and Stewards accountable.

For more information visit our website at <http://peaonline.org/>

PEA members working for SPPS

Contract negotiations are tentatively scheduled to commence in mid-January. Please begin thinking about this upcoming process and how it affects you and your coworkers. A 10-strong Negotiations Committee has been formed. The committee would very much appreciate hearing from every single member in one way or another as we approach meeting with district HR. Toward that end, a survey will be distributed in the coming weeks to offer one, hopefully painless, way for members to join the conversation. Keep an eye out for an emailed invite to participate in the survey and start talking to your coworkers about how to improve our work as PEA members at SPPS.

Thank you!
Vaughn Kelly
School District Negotiations Chair



PEA CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2020

Wednesday, January 8 Board & Stewards Meeting, Joseph’s (stewards & executive board only)

more dates to be announced soon



Professional Employees Association

CITY OF SAINT PAUL & INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 625

www.peaonline.org

Executive Committee

President	Regina Etoll <i>regina.etoll@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	CAO – 500 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102	651-266-8726
Vice President	Justine Roe <i>justine.roe@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	WATER – 1900 Rice St., 55113	651-266-1628
Treasurer	Beth Ulrich <i>beth.ulrich@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	PED – 1400 City Hall Annex, 25 W. 4th St., 55102	651-266-6689
Secretary	Sara Nurmela <i>peanewsletter@gmail.com</i>	HREEO – 280 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102	651-266-8974
Personnel	Julie Kraus <i>julie.kraus@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	CAO – 400 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102	651-266-8776
School Negotiations	Vaughn Kelly <i>vaughn.kelly@spps.org</i> <i>peanegotiations.spps@gmail.com</i>	1930 Como Ave., 55108	651-744-1682
City Negotiations	Joe Musolf <i>joe.musolf@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	PED – 1400 City Hall Annex, 25 W. 4th St., 55102	651-266-6594

Staff & Others

Legal Counsel	Mike Wilde, Esq. <i>mike.wilde24@gmail.com</i>	545 7th St. W Saint Paul, MN 55102	612-227-8425
Member Outreach & Education Coordinator	Jeremy Berger <i>jeremy.berger@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	645 Randolph Ave., 55102	651-228-6257
LMCHI (City)	Karin Anderson <i>karin.anderson@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	CAO – 700 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102	651-266-8765
LMCHC (SPPS)	Charlie Colvin <i>charles.colvin@spps.org</i>	1930 Como Ave., 55108	651-744-6309
Newsletter	Sara Nurmela <i>peanewsletter@gmail.com</i>	HREEO – 280 City Hall, 15 Kellogg Blvd. W., 55102	651-266-8974
Webpage www.peaonline.org	John Larson <i>john.larson@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	Libraries (SPPL) – 90 W 4th St., 55102	651-266-7044
Mailing Address	Professional Employees Association	PO Box 7333 Saint Paul, MN 55107-0333	

Stewards

DSI & Police	Brian Balfanz <i>brian.balfanz@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	367 Grove St., 55101	651-266-5531
Fire, Emergency Management, CAO, OFS	Patricia Lammers <i>patricia.lammers@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	367 Grove St., 55101	651-266-5455
Libraries	Peter Borgen <i>peter.borgen@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i> <i>PeterBorgenUnionSteward@gmail.com</i>	Highland Park Library, 1974 Ford Parkway, 55116	651-695-3700
Libraries	Kathleen Conger <i>kathleen.conger@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	George Latimer Central Library 90 W 4th Street, 55102	651-266-7000
Libraries	Therese Scherbel <i>therese.scherbel@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	George Latimer Central Library 90 W 4th Street, 55102	651-266-7048
OTC / HREEO	Luke Vang <i>luke.vang@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	600 City Hall Annex, 25 W. 4th St., 55102	651-266-6789
Parks & Recreation	Mary Henke-Haney <i>mary.henke-haney@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	1100 North Hamline Ave., 55108	651-248-6500
PED	Sarah Zorn <i>sarah.zorn@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	1100 City Hall Annex 25 W. 4th St., 55102	651-266-6570
Public Health	Sue Butler <i>sue.butler@co.ramsey.mn.us</i>	555 Cedar St., 55101	651-266-1321
Public Works	Bill Vos <i>bill.vos@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	900 City Hall Annex, 25 W. 4th St., 55102	651-266-6113
School District	Jim Engen <i>jim.engen@spps.org</i>	360 Colborne St., 55102	651-767-8346
School District	Brianna Nyquist <i>brianna.nyquist@spps.org</i>	1930 Como Ave., 55108	651-744-1807
School District	Jerry Skelly <i>jerry.skelly@spps.org</i>	360 Colborne St., 55102	763-422-9624
Water	Sarah Brown <i>sarah.brown@ci.stpaul.mn.us</i>	1900 Rice St., 55113	651-266-1635