

JANUARY –FEBRUARY 2017

Organizations and Movements

The educator and organizer Myles Horton spoke and wrote about “Organizing Periods” and “Movement Times.” In organizing periods, he wrote, people who want to make a decent world long to be part of a movement but cannot create one so they work with organizations for structural change. “You try to anticipate a social movement . . . You try to figure out what’s going to happen so you can position yourself to be part of it; you do things in advance to prepare the groundwork for a larger movement.” But organizational objectives are limited and, often, Horton observed, we’ll bargain down to make concessions in order to survive.

But when a movement does come along, said Horton, an idea becomes simple and direct enough to spread rapidly. “Then your leadership multiplies very rapidly because there’s something explosive going on. People see that other people not so different from themselves do things that they thought could never be done. They’re emboldened and challenged by that to step into the water, and once they get in the water it’s as if they’d never not been there.”

“A large social movement forces people to take a stand for or against it,” Horton wrote, “so that there are no longer any neutrals. You’ve got to be on one side or the other.” And, “in a social movement, the demands escalate, because your success encourages and emboldens you to demand more.”

I wonder if we’re coming into a movement time. Outrage seems to mount by the hour at President Trump’s crude disrespect for women, his immigrants ban, his anti-labor, anti-public education and Social-Safety-Net privatizing cabinet nominees and so on. Lots of Minnesotans are turning out for marches, demonstrations, “Resist, Unite, Revolt” house parties and legislative hearings to oppose corporate backed anti-worker bills.

But can the energy endure and lead to real institutional change? Only if it’s organized. That seems to contradict Horton’s distinction between movement times and organizing times, but, in fact, as another legendary organizer, Ed Chambers taught, if action doesn’t lead to organization it dies.

That’s our challenge: Not just to ride the wave of outrage, but to work with others to plan, execute and evaluate actions that build real power to take more action for even greater goals.

I think the State Retiree Council is on a good path to meet that challenge. Three initiatives are underway: A strategic planning process, updating and continuing the Safety Net Workshops, and planning for a retiree organizing conference in May. If you want to be part of the movement, working on one or more of these projects is a good way to do it. Whether in organizing periods or movement times, as the Wobblies used to say (probably still do), “The secret of power is organization.”

In solidarity, *Bill Moore*, President

Organize, Organize, Organize!!

The Retiree Council “Retiree Organizing Working Group” met on January 13 and January 27, 2017. Lots of good ideas and thoughtful discussion resulted in plans for a BIG EXCITING EVENT!! – Read on:

A summary from January 13:

Two key tasks are at the base of our work: Recruiting individual retirees to their own union retiree organizations; and recruiting organizations to affiliate with local, regional and state councils.

Finding the retirees is a key challenge. Those trying to recruit retirees for their union organizations need LISTS, LISTS, LISTS. Those of us trying to recruit organizations also need lists, but those are easier to come by.

A specific challenge is involving the new retirees, thousands of people are retiring every month.

A variety of specific ideas for meeting some of these challenges were discussed. Communication is at the heart of all efforts.

A group agreed to meet January 27 to further develop one of these ideas – that the Retiree Council should sponsor a forum on best practices for building powerful retiree organizations.

The January 27 meeting conclusions:

Working group goals are to build our union retiree organizations and to build coalitions with other organizations working on the same issues.

A means of pursuing these goals would be to organize a conference on issues of concern to retirees and their families, including younger generations, and on how to organize retirees for action on these issues.

Potential audience for the conference to be: union retirees and retiree groups; other retirees and retiree groups; social justice groups; intergenerational groups; religious groups; and others.

Possible agenda ideas: share best organizing practices; communications; workshops on a variety of issues and methods; speakers for information and/or inspiration; work on actions to follow-up on the conference.

FOLLOW-UP TO THE MEETINGS
HAS RESULTED
IN THIS ANNOUNCEMENT:

CONFERENCE ON RETIREE ISSUES
AND ORGANIZING

Family Security and Retiree Power in a Time of
Crisis

SATURDAY, MAY 6, 2017
MINNESOTA NURSES ASSOCIATION
345 RANDOLPH AVENUE, SUITE 200,
ST. PAUL, MN 55102

**Keynote speaker:
Robert Roach, Jr.**

President, Alliance for Retired Americans (ARA)

PUT THIS DATE ON YOUR CALENDAR NOW!
PLAN TO BRING YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY!

FOURTEENTH ANNUAL FUN(D)RAISER ON SATURDAY, APRIL 29, 3-7 P. M.

The Fourteenth Annual Fun(d) Raiser of the Minnesota AFL-CIO Retiree Council will be held on Saturday, April 29, 2017, 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

For the first time in many, many years, the party location will be moved. Thanks to the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation (RLF) for making their beautiful new building available. The Fun(d) Raiser will be in the first floor meeting room at the St. Paul RLF, 353 West Seventh Street, St. Paul MN 55102.

RAFFLE PRIZES!!!

There will be seven cash prizes in the Statewide Raffle this year-- **one \$500 cash prize, two \$300 cash prizes, two \$150 cash prizes and two \$100 cash prizes.** Ticket price remains three for \$5. All affiliates should have received the Fun(d) Raiser announcement, a flier and two packets of tickets.

If your affiliate has not received this material, please contact the Retiree Council at 651 227 7647 ext. 121 or 1 800 652 9004 ext. 121. The drawing for these prizes will be held just before the conclusion of the Fun(d) Raiser.

FREE FOOD, PARKING, MUSIC!

All the other traditional aspects of the event remain much the same-- **free food, free parking and live music,** as well as the **hourly raffles** and the **silent auction.**

We still have the huge numbers of hourly raffle prizes. Some gubernatorial and mayoral hopefuls may attend, as well as other public office-holders. And we will all enjoy the incomparable camaraderie of a union party!

HOW CAN YOU HELP??

- Check with your affiliate leaders to be sure your affiliate has made a contribution for this event.
- See if you have some DELIGHTFUL item to donate for the Silent Auction or Hourly Raffles. Homemade edible goodies are always popular!
- Buy your raffle tickets if you have not already made your purchase.
- Organize your friends and family to attend this really fine opportunity for fun and conversation with old and new friends!

If you need more tickets or want to donate, please contact the Retiree Council office at 651-227-7647, ext. 121 or 1-800-652-9004, ext. 121.

Lois Wendt and her large committee of volunteers are busy planning—**Thanks To Them!!**



Saving Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid

Over the past year, the Retiree Council has been presenting educational programs on Social Security and Medicare throughout the state. These workshops were developed by Buddy Robinson of the Minnesota Citizens Federation Northeast. Buddy and the Retiree Council have partnered to make this offering more widely available.

Given the escalating threat to Social Security, Medicare and Medicaid presented by the Trump presidency and Republican Congressional control, the urgency of educating people to understand the importance of these programs has grown. And the “Safety Net” for all citizens will be shredded unless broad coalitions of citizens fight back.

On January 24, 2017, leaders from union retiree groups, ALCs and the NE Citizens Federation met at the Local 49 Training Center in Hinckley as a “Safety Net Workshop Group” to update our approach after the election.

The discussion began with Buddy and the group reviewing the current slide presentation. Buddy will update the slides and distribute to those conducting workshops. This includes a review of the importance of Medicaid to retiree well-being, as most people think of Social Security and Medicare as key to retiree economic security, but we easily forget how vital Medicaid is for seniors in long term care situations.

Faced with this “new reality”, the group moved to discussing action(s) that workshop presenters could ask participants to take including:

Action focused on publicizing the local monetary benefit to businesses and communities from Social Security/ Medicare/ Medicaid.

Highlight the windfall that privatizing would bring to Wall Street, big business bosses, health insurance CEOs, etc.

Get personal stories emphasizing the critical nature of these programs out on social media and to the news media.

Emphasize the message: We want health care, not health insurance!

Focus on intergenerational implications of Safety Net cuts and privatization.

Invite workshop participants to make phone calls to targets right at the workshop.

Ask workshop participants to identify other groups and agree to contact them to see if they would like a workshop or to participate in action on an issue.

Time was spent talking about collaborating with groups and organizations working to protect and advance retirement security. Participants agreed to contact groups having “Days on the Hill” about working together on issues; to ask other groups what issues they are involved with, what actions they plan; to ask if they are interested in working with other groups. The “Safety Net Workshop Group” plans to keep on meeting, sharing information and planning next steps.

YOUTUBE OFFERINGS

The Retiree Council produces short video segments that appear on YouTube. The most current segments feature Machinist Union members talking about the Trans Pacific Partnership.

Available YouTube Segments featuring MN Sec. of State Steve Simon that are so important to the upcoming election:

- “No Excuse Absentee Voting”
- “Early Voting in Minnesota” “Online Voting Registration”
- “Election Day Voting Registration”
- “Promoting Minnesota Voter Participation”
- “Our Vote Is Our Voice” “
- “The Next Generation of Voting Officials”

Produced by the MN State Retiree Council, AFL-CIO/Rodney Anderson and Dan Mikel

Strategic Planning Underway

At their January 25 meeting, the AFL-CIO Retiree Council Board voted to undertake an internal strategic planning process. The purpose is to establish goals and priorities for Retiree Council efforts over the coming years. The process will consider both issues that should be addressed and how to build the capacity to impact public policy decisions on those issues.

The initial step will be for Board members to meet with the consultant in small groups to give input about: the Retiree Council's strengths and weaknesses; the challenges that retirees face at the local, state and national level; the means to address those challenges; and what does the Retiree Council and affiliated organizations need to do to have an impact on the policies identified.

Following the input meetings, a smaller working group will meet with the consultant to develop a planning process. Considering the information from the input sessions and process ideas from the working group, the consultant next proposes a planning process. That process should lead to identifying specific goals and objectives for building the Retiree Council's and affiliates' ability to influence policy, including a timeline and action steps along the way.

A planning team (distinct from the working group) will then work with the consultant to build specific components of a plan.

With the end in sight, the Board receives a draft plan for the Board to consider and propose changes. The consultant anticipates changes coming from the Board. Considering all of that, the goal for completion will be April.

The consultant contracted with is Marcia Avner, an activist with many years of experience in the non-profit sector and well-known to Retiree Council leadership.

State Retiree Council Earns Political Award

The State Retiree Council was among Minnesota AFL-CIO affiliates congratulated, at a volunteer recognition reception in January, for hitting their goals for Labor 2016 volunteer shifts filled.

State Federation President Bill McCarthy presented a plaque to Retiree Council Vice-President Rodney Anderson and Minneapolis Regional Retiree Council volunteer Sande Sevre. Here is part of what the plaque says:

"...Your leadership, partnership, support and actions help achieve our mission – to improve the lives of working families and to bring economic justice to the workplace and social justice to our state and nation."

Members of Retiree Council affiliates completed 434 shifts, from late summer 'til Election Day, writing postcards, phoning and door-knocking for AFL-CIO endorsed candidates in targeted races. Altogether, statewide, active and retired union members worked 4,789 shifts that produced more than 150,000 door-knocks and nearly 37,00 actual conversations with voters at their doors.

And phoning volunteers held more than 10,000 conversations. The Retiree Council postcard campaign produced 7,502 handwritten cards to voters in targeted legislative districts. Election outcomes were disappointing, but it wasn't for lack of effort.

Minnesota labor leader Dave Roe dies at 92

Roe was president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO from 1966 to 1984

By **Randy Furst** Star Tribune



FEBRUARY 14, 2017 — 10:07PM

Dave Roe, an influential figure in Minnesota's labor movement and a former University of Minnesota regent, died Monday. He was 92.

Roe served as president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO from 1966 to 1984 and emerged as a powerful figure in state labor battles and in Minnesota politics. More recently, he was instrumental in the creation of a Workers Memorial Garden at the State Capitol, which honors the state's laborers.

Former Democratic Vice President Walter Mondale called Roe "a great labor leader and an honest and decent citizen."

Roe became a friend and confidante of

state political leaders, including the late Vice President Hubert Humphrey.

Humphrey called Roe the night before he died in 1978. Roe said later that what touched him most was Humphrey insisted on speaking to Roe's wife Audrey. She died last October after 70 years of marriage.

Roe spent a dozen years as a member of the U's Board of Regents, where he was a sometimes controversial force.

He was a frequent critic of embattled President Kenneth Keller, and drew criticism for saying publicly that Keller would likely be forced to quit after an audit questioned the \$1.5 million spent to redecorate the president's official residence. Around the same time, Roe blasted Legislative Auditor James Nobles for placing at least some of the blame at the financially troubled physical plant on the prevailing wages paid to union employees.

Roe had a reputation for being gruff and didn't shy from disagreement. In a 2015 interview on "The Mary Hanson Show," a cable program, Roe said one of his toughest decisions was to keep the state federation's convention from endorsing Democrat George McGovern for president in 1972.

George Meany, the president of the national AFL-CIO had ordered local state union bodies not to back McGovern, Roe said in an interview.

“I viewed Dave as the model of what a labor leader ought to be,” said Pete Benner, former executive director of AFSCME Council 6. “He had this gut-level approach to representing average working people and it just oozed out of him.”



After Roe left the federation, he led a long campaign to create a labor interpretive center and he was disheartened after Gov. Jesse Ventura withdrew money for the project.

Nonetheless, the workers garden was finally completed last year.

At home, Roe was devoted to his wife and children.

“He raised three daughters, all strong independent women,” said daughter Judy Grudem, who worked in the AFL-CIO office. His other two daughters, Nancy Holtz and Susie Olson, also worked in labor union offices. All three daughters live in Apple Valley, as did Roe.

In 1977, when 17,000 taconite mining workers went on strike on the Iron Range and in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula, Roe weighed in on the strikers’ behalf.

Lloyd McBride, international president of the Steelworkers Union, spoke at a strike support rally on the Range three months into the walkout, urging workers to accept a contract that the union leaders felt was inadequate. Roe, who was also a rally speaker, urged the strikers to listen to their local leaders, recalled Joe Samargia, then president of the local at the Minntac plant. “It bucked everybody up,” Samargia said.

Ron Cohen, former research director at the state AFL-CIO, said that Roe was an inspirational leader, but “never one to admit a -mistake.”

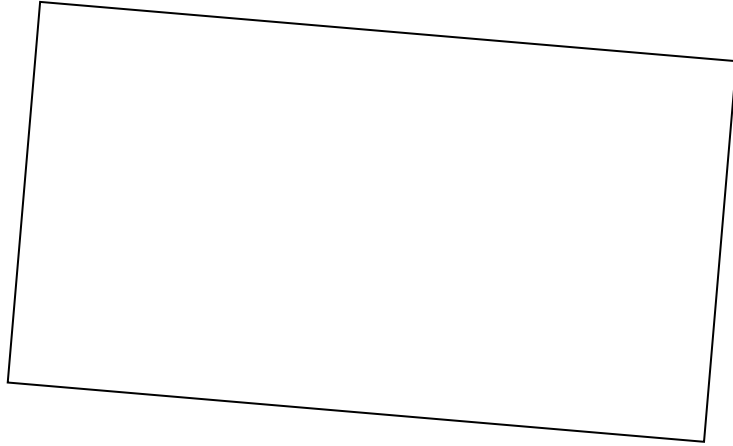
Former Republican Gov. Al Quie said that he met with Roe before being sworn in to ask him how he should govern.

Roe was taken aback. “He said no Democrat ever asked him that,” Quie said chuckling.

“We could be totally honest with each other. He took his position, and I took mine.”

Visitation is Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m. at Washburn-McReavy Edina Chapel, 5000 W. 50th St., Edina. A funeral will be held Monday at 11 a.m. at Mount Zion Lutheran Church, 5645 Chicago Av., with visitation at 10 a.m.

rfurst@startribune.com 612-673-4224



A strong, united voice for Minnesota's retired workers.

E-mail: retirees@mnafcio.org

Fax: 651-227-3801

Phone: 651-227-7647

St. Paul, MN 55103

175 Aurora Avenue

Minnesota State Retiree Council, AFL-CIO

Editor's Note:

This is an informational publication — and is the official newsletter and property of the Minnesota State Retiree Council, AFL-CIO. For information, contact the Minnesota State Retiree Council, AFL-CIO. Address: 175 Aurora Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55103. Phone: 651-227-7647 or toll-free 1-800-652-9004.

Volunteer!

Join our Rapid Response Political Action Volunteers. Contact information below!

Call: 651-227-7647

E-mail: retirees@mnafcio.org

Retiree Bulletin Info:

- President: Bill Moore
- Editor: Martha Johnson
- Layout Editor: Barb Hitzeman
- Staff Writer: Martha Johnson

MINNESOTA
afl-cio
STATE RETIREE COUNCIL

