



Victory Gram



Meeting Monday, April 4 at 7:00 p.m. @ San Angelo Museum of Fine Arts, 1 Love Street

WHERE WOULD WE BE WITHOUT COLLECTIVE BARGAINING AND UNIONS IN AMERICA?

Unions in America have been around in some form since the late 1700s, though it was not until the 1800s that Samuel Gompers started the American Federation of Labor (AFL); then many skilled craft workers *really* became organized. The Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) was organized in the 1930's for all workers in a given industry by Samuel Gompers and others. The AFL-CIO merger in 1955 was consummated by George Meany and Walter Reuther.

Unions have never been big in Texas. Many reached their heyday after WW II in the petrochemical refineries of southeast Texas and the Gulf Coast. But most workers have benefited from the influence of unions and their bargained contracts. Let's not forget Social Security, Medicare, Fair Labor Standards Act (Wage and Hour Law), child labor laws, compulsory education/attendance and workers compensation. These laws resulted from union efforts to protect workers and their families.

Many people criticize unions because of strikes. The few strikes are a result of management being unwilling to negotiate in good faith. Management must recognize the union as the official representative of the employees in order for collective bargaining to occur.

One hears news almost daily about teachers and public employees in states like Wisconsin fighting to keep collective bargaining rights. Unions and

collective bargaining are the backbone of the public sector middle class in America, but not in Texas, except for a few cities/counties that have voted to allow bargaining for groups like fire fighters and policemen.

Texas law prohibits collective bargaining by teachers. Five other states have no teachers' collective bargaining. The rest of the states either give teachers the right to collective bargaining outright or at least do not prohibit it. Ironically, Wisconsin was the *first* state to give teachers collective bargaining rights. Additionally, only a handful of states give teachers the right to strike.

So where are we going with this? Education in Texas is up for grabs in the current legislative session. States that have collective bargaining for teachers rank high in education expenditures, graduation rates and teacher salaries and benefits. Texas ranks at the very bottom in state tax revenue raised per capita, expenditures per capita and expenditures per student. It takes lots of money to create an educational system we can be proud of, one which will be attractive to businesses.

If Texas teachers were given the right to bargain collectively, that might go a long way toward improving our educational system.

Guest Columnist

Art Rios

President San Angelo TSTA

Other Upcoming Events for Democrats

April 2 - West Texas Coalition of Democrats Meeting

- 1:30pm - 4:30 pm at Jason's Deli, 3167 East University Blvd. in Odessa
- You do not have to be a West Texas Coalition of Democrats member to attend

April 2 - TSTA Day of Action for Public Education

- Teachers, public school employees, parents, students, and community members are invited to meet with Representative Drew Darby and Senator Robert Duncan and show their support for Texas public schools.
- 2:00 p.m. at Kenny Blaney's Village Café, 2100 W. Beauregard Ave.

April 6 - Texas State Employees Union/CWA and Texas Forward Lobby Day

- March, rally, and lobby legislators
- Gather at 11:00 a.m. for rally and lunch at Waterloo Park in downtown Austin
- 12:00 Noon rally at south steps of Capitol
- The Texas AFL-CIO is encouraging broad union attendance at this event

April 30 - West Texas Coalition of Democrats Meeting

- 2:00 pm at The Original Henry's, 3015 Sherwood Way
- You do not have to be a West Texas Coalition of Democrats member to attend
- Free training sessions available for Young Democrats, Precinct Chairs, and on using VAN
- For more info or to sign up for training, contact John Perry at 374-5077 or vp@tgcdc.org

Announcements

The guest speaker at this month's meeting is Greg Duke of the Concho Valley Regional Food Bank.

We will be having a canned food drive this month. Please bring any food items you can spare to help our less fortunate neighbors in the Concho Valley.

Callers Needed

We still need more callers. It only takes a few minutes each month and provides a valuable reminder for our members. Contact Joyce Hubbard at 947-5253 or hubbard07@verizon.net.

2011 Relay for Life

We still need team members for our Relay for Life team. This year's Relay for Life is May 20. FMI contact our team captain Janna Simms at 651-4091 or secretary@tgcdc.org

TGDC Book Drive

We will continue to accept books to donate to the Adult Literacy Council. To schedule pick up or FMI contact John Perry at 374-5077 or vp@tgcdc.org.

The Executive Committee (officers and board of directors members) meets for planning on the Monday following each general membership meeting. Everyone is welcome.

Time — 6 P.M.

Place — Galilee Community Development Corporation
1404 S. Oakes

Contacts

Club Officers

Floyd Crider – President
325-942-8711
president@tgcdc.org

John Perry - Vice-President
325-374-5077
vp@tgcdc.org

Janna Simms-Secretary
325-651-4091
secretary@tgcdc.org

Ivey Mossell – Treasurer
325-944-1137
treasurer@tgcdc.org

Board Members

Perry Flippin
325-212-2272
boardmempf@tgcdc.org

Kay Franks
325-658-1673

Joyce Hubbard
325-947-5253
boardmemjh@tgcdc.org

Mitch Krasny
325-949-7638
boardmemmk@tgcdc.org

Jim Riley
325-947-7434
boardmemjr@tgcdc.org

Ken Stewart
325-658-3131
boardmemks@tgcdc.org



Alt. Board Members

Mohammed Bari
325-482-8800
214-952-4807
altbdmemmb@tgcdc.org

Rennie Hardie
325-944-9411
altbdmemrh@tgcdc.org

County Chairperson

Linda Shoemaker
325-450-0018
325-224-2944
countychair@tgcdc.org

Tom Green County Democratic Club

P.O. Box 450
San Angelo, TX 76902
www.tgcdc.org
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P.O. Box 450, San Angelo, TX 76902