

INCSO CONTACT



Newsletter of the National Staff Organization

October 2004

Critical issues to be covered...

2005 Winter Advocacy Retreat Grows

Once again, NSO offers one of the most comprehensive selection of training sessions for staff union leaders! The 2005 NSO Winter Advocacy Retreat (often dubbed the "WAR College") will be January 13-15, 2005, at the Sarasota Hyatt, Sarasota, FL. The theme for this year's Retreat is *The pride, commitment, tradition and advocacy to lead, promote, defend and secure the rights of its members.* This year, the opening session on Jan. 14 has been expanded to two hours to cover several critical issues, according to NSO President Chuck Agerstrand (MI). Recent attacks on retiree benefits and health benefits tops the list, according to Chuck. A brochure in PDF format with complete details has been posted on the NSO Web page and can be downloaded www.nationalstaff.org. The Retreat's registration form and Gulf Coast Golf Tournament form area also in PDF format for download off the NSO Web Page. Each participant is required to complete the registration form and must be sent to NSO Secretary Mary Henson (MI) at:

Mary Henson, NSO Secretary
c/o Michigan Education Association
1216 kendale Blvd., POB 2573
East Lansing, MI 48826-2573
517-622-1892 (NSO FAX)

Although NSO has reserved all available rooms at the Hyatt, it is important that participants *reserve only those rooms that are actually*

needed! The block of rooms is reserved under the National Staff Organization. Those who make late reservations may be sent to an 'overflow' hotel and/or charged the rack room rate. Room rates are \$140 single, or \$150 double and will be available Jan. 10-16, 2005. Rooms are available on a first-come, first-served basis, and reservations can be made anytime via the internet by logging onto the NSO Web page for the Hyatt Hotel link. **The cut off date for making room reservations is Dec. 6, 2004.** Reservations problems should be directed to Carolyn Williams, Reservations Manager, Hyatt Sarasota at 941-953-1234, extension 1190, Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 5



The Sarasota Florida Hyatt is the site for the 2005 NSO Winter Advocacy Retreat.

p.m.

Once again, NSO offers the 6th Annual Golf Tournament which is a four-person scramble, beginning 8 a.m. Thursday, Jan. 13. For more information, contact Butch Santicola (PA) at 724-601-0974 or e-mail Butch at Butchnso@aol.com.

As in the past, the Retreat includes a Gulf Coast Buffet. The cost is \$35 before Dec. 10. Information about buffet is included on the registration form posted on the NSO Web page.

NSO Health Task Force Examines Issues of Increasing Concern to Members

The NSO Health Task Force met Sept. 12-13 in San Antonio, TX as health insurance coverage and funding continues to become difficult issues for NSO affiliates. HTF members received an overview of the recent NSO-NEA Labor Management Summit in May. “NSO and NEA have agreed that issues raised at the summit should be investigated further by a study committee consisting of representatives from NSO, NEA and the National Council of State Education Associations. The HTF also discussed the possibility of “health coalitions” to reduce cost. “We should investigate the possibility of joining a purchasing coalition to determine what advantages we can derive from such a plan,” says the report which went to the NSO Executive Committee. Emphasis

should be placed on bargaining language in contracts that will insure the promise of lifetime benefits. The committee recommends NSO Coordinated Bargaining Councils (CBCs) work with affiliates to evaluate contract language and encourage/advise affiliates on ways to fix language deficiencies. The report asks, “How can we ensure that the promise can be maintained to our members and retired staff around pensions and benefits?” The HTF also recommended that emphasis be placed on the health insurance issue before the Winter Advocacy Retreat.



Members of the NSO Health Task Force include (seated, l-r) John Stephens (CA), Linda James (NEASO), Chuck Agerstrand (MI), (standing, l-r) Ruth Ivory (FL), Gary Dryer (MI), Patty Hoffman (PA), Mona Ball (KY), Lee Johansen (MN), Ken Parker (CA), and Jack Flannagan (MA).



NSO’s Executive Committee met Sept. 30 – Oct. 2 in Boston, MA, to handle the business of the national union.

2005 Winter Advocacy Retreat Offers Wide Session Selection

The 2005 NSO Winter Advocacy Retreat offers an unprecedented wide variety of sessions for all levels of union staff experience. This is a brief synopsis of the session. For a complete listing, go to the NSO Web Site (nationalstaff.org).

THE FOLLOW SESSIONS ARE ONE DAY, ALL DAY SESSIONS...

Advanced Grievance Processing (Sessions #202-302)—This session is designed for participants who are knowledgeable about the basics in identification and filing of grievance issues. This session will discuss and identify what needs to be accomplished at each step of the grievance procedure beyond the initial filing and investigation. Please bring a copy of your staff contract.

'Brand New' Advocate (Sessions #211-311)—This grievance training for the 'brand new/just getting involved' for associate staff members is conducted by fellow associate staff members who have "been there/done that" and learned by going through the process.

Organizing to Bargain/Crisis Bargaining in NSO Affiliates (Sessions #212-312)—This session will cover preparing the membership for bargaining with management, covering the period from 18 months right up through a crisis, and investigate possible strategies prior to a staff strike.

Introduction to Bargaining (Sessions #213-313)—Topics covered will include everything from the an overview to writing proposals and counters as well as many other topics.

THE FOLLOWING SESSIONS ARE 2 1/2 HOUR SESSIONS...

Assertiveness and Bargaining...A Powerful Combination (Sessions #105, #208)—Assertive behavior is how you achieve the right balance between your needs and those of others. Assertive behavior is standing up for your own rights in a way that does not violate the rights of someone else.

Bargaining Issues: How to Manage them at the Table (Sessions #103, #309)—This session will review how to manage your bargaining issues in order to achieve an equitable settlement.

Basic Unionism (Sessions #108, #214)—What is a union? How is it different from other organizations? How is NSO different from other unions? Understanding the basic values, structure and history of unions makes us better union members and makes our unions more effective representatives for our members.

Defined Benefit Retirement Plans (Session #106)—Interactive discussion on the basic elements of a sound Defined Benefit Retirement Plan (DB).

Defined Contribution, 401K, and Choosing a Financial Planner (Session #206)—The ingredients of a good Defined Contribution Plan or 401(K) plan.

Developing Strategies for Bargaining Insurance (Session #201)—This session will focus on strategies to employ in bargaining insurance benefits.

Dysfunction in the Workplace: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly (Sessions #111, #203)—This session will expand on previous NSO-sponsored workshops on workplace dysfunction by concentrating more on staff-to staff conflicts; what causes them, how to work through them, how to identify if/when outside assistance is needed. Real-life situations will be used to illustrate skills and techniques.

Post-Employment Healthcare & Pension Benefits: the Changing Landscape (Sessions #113, #304)—This session will provide participants with a better understanding of the issues that impact post-retirement and what is needed to protect and ensure that those benefits are there upon retirement.

Employee Rights (Sessions #210, #305)—This session will examine employee rights, the American with Disabilities Act, harassment on the job and civil rights of employees. Knowing your rights makes for a better work environment.

Ensuring Success for Association Staff Leaders (Session #303)—This session offers tips and strategies for ASO leaders to survive and thrive in a leadership role.

Introduction to Facilitation (Session #114)—This is a workshop for people who wish to improve their skills at facilitating group discussion, decision making, problem solving and other activities.

Keeping Your Union Meeting Focused (Sessions #205, #310)—This session provides a quick course in parliamentary procedures and also suggests helpful ways to make sure that your union members are allowed to participate in a meaningful manner.

Mentoring New Staff (Sessions #209, #306)—This session will provide information on how to develop a staff mentoring program. Mentor behavior, Mentor-Mentee relationship, and guidelines for Mentors will be some of the topics discussed.

NSO Arbitration Awards: The Victories and the Losers (Session #107)—Participants will be presented with actual staff arbitration cases—the

2004-2005 NSO Calendar

Below is the current calendar for NSO events during the 2003-2004 year. Be sure to check the NSO Web page for calendar updates.

*Western CBC Meeting
Oct. 15-16
Cour d'Alene, ID*

*Southern States CBC
October 15-16, 2004
Marriott at Renaissance Center, Detroit, MI*

*Corridor States CBC
October 16, 2004
Marriott at Renaissance Center, Detroit, MI*

*Central States CBC
November 5-6, 2004
Atlanta, GA*

*NSO Winter Advocacy Retreat
Jan. 14-15, 2005
Sarasota, FL*

*NSO Representative Assembly
June 10-11, 2005
San Diego, CA*

winners and losers. The session will review the reasons and causes of the cases.

Organizing Around Possibilities (Sessions #112, #301)—This session will examine how to move the organizational dynamic from “What ifs...” to “how this can become our reality...”

Partners in Advocacy: Gaining Power by Building Solidarity (Sessions #110, #204)—This session will detail a relational organizing and communications program to increase the NSO affiliate’s power to deal with management at the bargaining table and elsewhere.

Practical Tips for Presidents (Session #104)—This is a facilitated discussion on the ways and means of surviving and succeeding in being a NSO affiliate president.

Rx for Confusion: Health Insurance (Session #307)—This session will focus on the basics of

employer-sponsored health insurance programs.

Subcontracting from Within (Sessions #109, #314)— This session takes an interactive look at this issue, and focuses on ways to combat the growing problem through the negotiations process, alternative strategies, and working with existing part-time employees.

Treasurers’ Workshop (Session #101)—Filing of Labor Department (LM-2, 3 or 4) reports; IRS 990s; financial and Labor Department auditing will be addressed in this session. Also learn how to develop an appropriate investment strategy for union assets.

Understanding Just Cause, Due Process, and Progressive Discipline (Session #207)—The principles of just cause, due process and progressive discipline in advocating the rights of members who are subjected to discipline and/or termination of employment; and what constitutes discipline are discussed in this session.

Using NSO Research (Session #102)—This session will provide a practical look at what is available from NSO Research (and NEA Research such as the Huttleston Report, if available).

Your Union and Its Legacy (Session #308)—What does it mean to be a union member today, its responsibilities and commitments? Unions look to change to survive and its changing role to enhance its power relationships with employers. During this period of change, a union must maintain its purpose while providing the leadership and methods to succeed.

**Be Sure to Check
the NSO Web page at
www.nationalstaff.org**



NSO Contact is edited by Bob Mullins.

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NSO Web Page

<http://www.nationalstaff.org>

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