

APA Newsletter March/April 2021



MSU APA/MEA/NEA
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Calendar

APA Executive Board
Location TBD
May 11, 2021 | 2:00 pm

[A Word from the APA President](#)

It is Personal

[APA Hosting MEA Financial Services](#)

You are invited to find out how APA/MEA/NEA membership may save you money on insurance.

[APA-Virtual Story Time](#)

Fellow Spartan, Nick Adkins reading two stories, one of which he authored and illustrated, the other he illustrated and authored by his sister.

[Legislative Chair Update](#)

An important reminder about upcoming elections.

[Your Fellow APAs](#)

Meet Fellow APA member Glen O'Neil, Geographic Information Science Specialist.

[Area Representative \(AR\) Spotlight](#)

Meet APA-Area Representative (AR) Kasey Wilson, GIS Professional / Library Assistant

[Calling for Advocates](#)

We want you as an Area Representative! Do you have what it takes?

New Facebook Group for APA Members

Another source for receiving official APA information.

If you know colleagues who are not receiving the APA Newsletter, encourage them to sign up at www.msuapa.org.

A Word from our President

By Martin McDonough, MSU APA President

It is Personal

Have you ever watched a group of birds and how they respond when a bird of prey is nearby? The flock pulls together and forms a larger flock appearing as a single body. The size of that joined unified body thwarts the intentions of that threat. They use their numbers to provide security.

A union is created through a collection of faces, families, and lives. The office building is not the union. The voices of people are the union. When an administration invokes a negative image on a union, they are directly denigrating their own staff. A common misperception is that a union and the workforce they represent are separate entities. The members of that workforce are the vital elements which create that unified body. Thus, they are one in the same. An administration may feel comfortable speaking negatively about a union but imagine how they would be perceived if we simply replace the words “the union” with “our staff”. It becomes very personal. And in turn reflects poorly on the character of the speaker. When the conversation is allowed to continue unchallenged, the speaker is allowed to drive a wedge in the very body that keeps people protected.

The work of the union is to bring members’ collective voices to the table, to equal the size and resources of the others in those conversations and negotiations. A single person has no real influence on practices at MSU but a group with resources and engaged members can bring a balance. The University has already exhibited how quickly they will take from those who cannot or will not stand together. As an example, we reference the recent wage and retirement cuts experienced by our fellow Spartan faculty members and staff. Those cuts were imposed before the situation was completely understood. A collective voice can thwart large-scale attacks on members’ work conditions and benefits.

The members of the Administrative Professional Association (APA) have been true leaders during the COVID crisis. They were already highly skilled and capable of anything they set their mind to. These times only highlight the value each and every one brings to MSU. Many of our colleagues have been on the forefront through their sacrifices while on furlough and lay-offs. Several of those union family members have been away from their jobs for nearly a year. To ask for further sacrifice without truly recognizing their current losses is disheartening. To say they have offered no sacrifice thus far is unconscionable.

When any administration pushes a negative image of your union, they are talking about you and your family. You and your colleagues are the very foundation of that union. There are no positive outcomes when the two are separated. Without members, there is no union. Without the union, there is no security. Those opposed to unions truthfully fear the collective balance it can bring against their power.

APA Hosting MEA Financial Services

By Martin McDonough, MSU APA President

You are invited to find out how APA/MEA/NEA membership may save you money on insurance, investments, and retirement planning and help offset your Union Dues. You will also learn more about the best way to maximize your retirement earnings and investments. Your union protected you against the cuts to retirement

matching suffered by faculty and other non-unionized staff, so you need to make the most of that retirement money. You won't want to miss out!

In this virtual session we will help APA bargaining unit members navigate the road to proper Investment and Insurance management. In the Investment section, we will explore IRAs, 403(b)s, and 457 programs to discover which one might best suit your needs. Concepts of diversification and asset allocation and the importance that each play in an investment portfolio will be explored. Finally, we will help you understand the investment fees, expenses, and charges associated with the different types of investments and how these can affect your return. We will wrap up our session by reviewing our Insurance offerings. Learn about our Home, Auto, Life, Business, and Long-Term Care offerings.

This event is open to current dues paying members and *for this one time only* to those who are not currently dues paying members, but who are interested in learning more about the benefits of membership in the APA/MEA/NEA union.

Virtual Story Time

Submitted by Kandy Slack – APA Membership Chair

In March, the APA Membership Committee organized two different Virtual Story Time events for our members and their families. [Nick Adkins](#), MSU staff, children's author and illustrator joined us to read his book [Sloth VS Turtle](#) on Wednesday the 17th @ Noon and on Thursday, March 18th @ 7pm to read [The Great Big Scary Monster](#).

In addition to reading these stories aloud, Nick also demonstrated how to draw his characters from these two amazing books while encouraging everyone to do the same. All members attending received a copy of the book from the event, which Nick personally addressed to each family and signed!

On behalf of the APA, we extend our greatest appreciation to Nick for being our guest, reading these incredible stories, drawing your characters, and signing copies of your books.





*Pictures courtesy of our own APA Executive Board member, Jamie Lynn Marks with her two kids Willow and Lochlan!

Legislative Chair Update

By Tonya Jamison, Legislative Committee Chair

Dear All,

I hope everyone is doing well. Many municipalities will hold elections on May 4th. I have had some questions about absentee voting. Therefore, I will briefly explain the process.

If you have notified your cities or county/township's election clerk that you would like to vote absentee in future elections, you should have received an application for an absentee ballot. Note, you must complete the application first, and return it to the clerk's office before you receive the actual ballot. If you have not received your application, you should contact the clerk's office via the phone or in-person for a status update. You can now download a ballot application online. See the link below.

<https://mvic.sos.state.mi.us/AVApplication/Index>

If you have your application, I recommend mailing it back no later than the April 17th. After April 17th, I suggest that you take the application into the clerk's office to obtain your ballot. Once you have the ballot, you can vote on the spot or return it to the city or township clerk by 8 p.m. on Election Day. I have provided a link where you can review your voter information and information about absentee voting.

<https://mvic.sos.state.mi.us/Home/Index>

Feel free to contact me if you have additional questions at jamiso20@msu.edu. Remember, your vote is your voice, and you should exercise this right every election.

Thanks,
Tonya

Meet Fellow APA Glenn O'Neil

By Gerlind Kiupel, Communication Committee Member

1. **What is your job title?** *Geographic Information Science Specialist*
2. **How long have you been at MSU?** *15 years*
3. **Have you been a member of the APA the whole time?** *Yes*
4. **What department do you work in, and can you tell me a little bit about what you do?** *I work at the Institute of Water Research (IWR), and focus on hydrologic modeling, geographic information science analyses, IT management, grant development, and building online tools for water conservation.*
5. **What brought you to your job at MSU?** *We moved here in 2005 so my wife could start graduate school in the College of Education. I was fortunate enough to get the job at IWR shortly thereafter, and through MSU's Educational Assistance program I eventually joined her as a part-time graduate student.*
6. **What do you enjoy most about working at MSU?** *Knowing that I am part of an institution and community that are making meaningful contributions to improving our world.*
7. **What do you like to do when you are not at work?** *Ride my bicycle, go on walks with my wife, and defeat my children in driveway basketball.*
8. **In high school I was known for...** *Driving a pink van as the delivery guy for a local flower shop.*
9. **People would be surprised to know I am skilled at...** *Drumming.*
10. **I have...** *zero pets.*
11. **I like...** *all kinds of music... except acapella.*
12. **My favorite area restaurant is...** *El Oasis* **and my favorite dish is...** *Veggie Oasis Burrito.*
13. **My hobbies include...** *biking, hiking, and collecting vinyl records.*
14. **My favorite junk food is...** *Reese's Pieces* **because...** *peanut butter had me at hello.*

Area Representative (AR) Spotlight – Kasey Wilson

By John Resotko, Communication Committee Member

What is your job title? *GIS Professional/Library Assistant*

What area of campus (this refers to the area rep info on the APA website, like, East, South, North, etc.) building and department do you work in? *North, Main Library, Maps*

How long have you been at MSU? *6 years*

How long have you been an Area Representative? *I am currently an AR in training and will be official in September 2021!*

Why is being a member of the Union important to you and what value does it bring? *The solidarity and the mentality that we can always do better for each other. My first union job was as a graduate student in Vancouver, Canada. I remember that one of the unions went on strike and all the other locals made their solidarity known, including the regional transit union which dropped riders off at the edge of campus to help force action from the university. The power and pride these folks had in improving work and life conditions for each other was eye opening.*

Right to work laws make it harder for unions to recruit and maintain members here in Michigan. However, this creates a stronger bond for those of us who are passionate enough to serve our colleagues as Area Representatives. We are dedicated to this work because we see the power and benefit of our collective voice. We will work toward that goal even for the skeptical folks who are not sure we are worth their contributions.

I have directly benefited from the APA's work in the last year where I saw no reduction in my pay or benefits like our non-unionized colleagues. I also benefited in the form of the recently adopted parental leave policy which has allowed me to be home with our first child for 4 weeks to focus on our new family (not how much vacation and sick leave I have banked). Finally, I've benefited from our discount programs through our MEA and NEA affiliation which cut my car and home insurance by ~\$150 dollars per year with better coverage. It also gave me access to discounted, and union made, GE appliances for our new house!

What words of advice do you have for the new hires at MSU? *First, sign the blue card during your HR orientation. I promise it is worth it. Second, get involved with the APA and any other opportunities to volunteer at MSU. Your time here will be more fulfilling. Third, take a walk because there is so much beauty to see on this campus!*

What do you love about working at MSU? *Working at the main library, I am constantly surrounded by the hum of students and faculty generating new ideas and building community. It is a dream to have a small role in growing those relationships and ideas into something that will improve our world or just one person's time in East Lansing. Oh, and working right next to the Red Cedar and Beal Garden is a pretty sweet deal!*

What do you like to do when you are not at work? *I can't wait to watch movies in a theater again, but I've enjoyed exploring older films while we're all home due to Covid. I also love to get outdoors. Most recently, Covid and a close friend have pushed me into cycling which has been a blast!*

The AR's are appointed by the Executive Board and their role is to assist with distributing APA materials and information and to serve as a resource for members. AR's are assigned to a geographic area of campus, so if there is not an AR in your immediate building, you can find one nearby. For a list of AR's go to <http://www.msuapa.org/about/area-representatives-2/>



Calling for all Advocates

Check all the qualities you believe you possess

- You are good at your job & respected by your colleagues
- People ask for your advice
- You have a strong sense of justice & clear principles
- You are responsible
- You are honest
- You are compassionate
- You are a good listener
- You like solving problems as a team
- You put interests of the whole first, ahead of your individual concerns
- You respect group decisions
- You are knowledgeable about MSU and your contract
- You can stay cool under pressure
- You handle stress well

**If you checked 5 or more of the above, your APA-
Administrative Professional Association wants you!**

**For more information on how to get started as an Area
Representative (AR)**

Contact: Pat Hampton at phampton@msu.edu

New Facebook Group for APA Members

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/apacommunications>

Hello APA members,

Your Communications Committee has a new Facebook group that will allow you to have another source to receive official information from your APA Union. This group is now open for you and we are waiting for you to join.

Listed below are a few things regarding the group that will apply to all members.

- You must be a member in good standing to be allowed to join the group
 - If a member drops off our active member list, their access will be revoked
- This group will be informational purposes only; therefore, members will not be able to post to the group, only the administrators will be allowed to post information to the group.
- Some examples of things that may be posted in the group are:
 - Information about upcoming union events, seminars, and activities
 - Information reminders about benefits
 - Important dates related to HR benefits, elections, and calendar dependent events
 - Photos of members at events

Facebook provides metrics on group activity, views, number of members, and other valuable information. These metrics will be used to evaluate the use and effectiveness of this as a communications channel after **6 months** of activity data is collected. In addition, a survey of interest will be sent to request feedback from members. At that time, the Communications Committee will evaluate allowing members to create and submit posts to the group or create a separate group for discussions and questions from members.

Again, the group is now open for members to request membership. Once you request your membership, an administrator will check your membership status with the union. Once that process is completed, we will allow you access to the group.

Our group can be found by searching for **MSU APA Communications Group** in Facebook