

Responsible levy—Thank you

By Molly Malecki

A RESPONSIBLE LEVY of 3.97% was approved at the September 14 meeting of the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners by a vote of 5-2.

The AFSCME locals at Hennepin County appreciate the votes of Board Chairman Randy Johnson, Commissioners Mike Opat, Gail Dorfman, Linda Koblick, and Peter McLaughlin. AFSCME members met with most of the commissioners before the meeting on the 14th to make a case for this levy, which was proposed by County Administrator Sandy Vargas

The following is the results of the Hennepin County budget analysis prepared by Michael Messina, Labor Economist, Department of Research and Collective Bargaining Services of the AFSCME International Research Department:

The analysis is based on the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report for the year ended December 31, 2003, the 2004 budget, and a report on the current state budget prepared by the Minnesota Council of Nonprofits/Minnesota Budget Project (8/14/03).

The most compelling observation concerns the impact of the state budget crisis on local governments. Overall, in order to protect public services from more harmful cuts as state aid continues to shrink, the county will need to cover this void with an increase in

property taxes. Supporting details are provided below.

✍ Total state revenue, in the form of general and programmatic aid, was reduced in the county's 2004 budget by \$39.6 million, or 17.5% from the adjusted 2003 budget projection.

✍ State aid accounted for 13.1% of total county revenue in the adjusted 2003 budget. That proportion was reduced to 11.3% in the 2004 budget.

✍ Total aid to counties in the state budget was cut by \$126.7 million, or 31.8% for FY2005.

✍ The state currently faces a projected \$400 million shortfall for the 2006-2007 biennium.

The union knows that this increased levy does not guarantee us a raise in 2006, but it is a step in the right direction. No levy increase would surely have meant no wage increase.

For those concerned that a property tax increase will wipe out even a 1% raise, I did a little math:

I live in a three-bedroom rambler in Brooklyn Center. On my 2004 property tax, the county portion is \$521.21. 1% of \$521.21 is \$5.21.

I make \$18.767/hr X 80 hr/pay period X 26 pay periods = \$39,035.36 per year X a 1% pay raise would be an additional \$390.35 a year.



October Membership Meeting

Wednesday, October 6
7:00 p.m.
Ridgedale Library

November Membership Meeting
Tuesday, November 9
7:00 p.m.
Brookdale Library

For our members who are physically challenged, please let us know if special accommodations are needed.

Dignity and respect communication

Look for a joint communication from the Hennepin County/AFSCME Committee on dignity and respect. The document has been written and will appear as a link to *HC Weekly*, and to the Local 2822 Website. (<http://www.afscme2822.org>) The *HC Weekly* link should have a link to the Hennepin County Diversity, Non-Discrimination and Respectful Workplace Policy, with which we are all supposed to be familiar.

International Convention

By Molly Malecki

Once again the International Convention outdid itself in excitement and challenges and celebration and enthusiasm. There were 3330 delegates from 1748 locals plus about 2000 alternates and visitors at the Anaheim Convention Center for the week of June 21, 2004. The theme of the convention was "AFSCME-In the 21st Century." The message was that if we don't grow and organize, we will become a ghost in labor history.

An important Constitutional Amendment that was passed was to raise the per-capita tax by fifty cents per member per month for a period of 18 months. The main purpose of the dues increase is to increase our organizing efforts and to elect pro-worker federal, state and local candidates.

The convention considered and debated 109 resolutions, ranging from #1 Building Community and Consumer Support for AFSCME Organizing Campaigns to #109 Cesar E. Chavez National Holiday Campaign. The resolutions covered such topics as the crisis in public schools, ensuring universal access to the ballot box, keeping public service jobs at home, affordable prescription drugs, and preserving Head Start. Workshops were held at 7:30 in the morning (that's not a highlight). I attended the workshops on political action and on communication. The communications workshop talked about how we can combat the negative views that the public has about us, public employees. When we negotiate, we often sound self-serving and greedy. We need to form our message on the services that we provide, that we provide quality services, and that everyone in the community should have decent wages and affordable health care.

Here are some sound bites from the

convention: Life and death struggle for labor in 2004. Guns vs. Butter. Take America back from those who send smart bombs on dumb missions. And there ain't no stopping us now. Do not grow weary! Never have so few done so much for so few. Martin Luther King, Jr. recognized the link between civil rights and union rights. What do you want? The right to organize without interference. We want our vote to count. Even the playing field. U.S. is losing its moral authority.

It was an uplifting and invigorating convention. There is a lot of work to be done to build the union and thus our status in the workplace, but there are lots of folks ready to work and do just that. I am thankful that I could be part of this experience.

2004 Berman Award for Social Responsibility in Library Services

The Berman Award Committee is pleased to announce the joint recipients of the 2004 Sandy Berman Award for Social Responsibility in Library Services. Nong Lee and Tammy Pineda, Outreach Liaisons to the Hmong and Spanish-speaking communities for Hennepin County Library, share this year's award for their unique and invaluable work bringing information about the resources of the public library to new immigrants and Non-English speakers. The award was created to honor Sandy Berman, head cataloger in the Hennepin County Library system for 26 years. Presented annually by AFSCME Locals 2822 [Hennepin County Clerical and Related, which includes library staff] and 2864 [Librarians] to a library employee who has made a unique and invaluable contribution to humanity through his/her work in Hennepin County Library.

Nong Lee and Tammy Pineda have done this by organizing bi-lingual computer classes, cultural celebrations, and early literacy programs. They have performed bi-lingual story times and formed connections with day care providers through work on the Children's Readmobile. Both Nong and Tammy have represented the library at resource fairs and social service provider meetings, establishing partnerships and relationships with agencies and underserved communities on the local level, but both have also become involved in advocacy at the national level in a variety of forums. They have spoken to immigrant families about the power of libraries, and listened to those communities tell their stories about what they need from their libraries. They have been instrumental in helping build Hmong and Spanish collections and resources in our libraries and on the web, and in building increased capacity of the library to serve the underserved through their contributions to the library's Diversity Team.

Nong Lee and Tammy Pineda are this year's Berman Award winners because they are passionate and skillful advocates, at every level, for increased access to resources for those who are not traditional library users. The work they do day in and day out honors the legacy of Sandy Berman by insuring that the public library, despite all the high tech toys and innovations, remains basic in the progressive tradition of providing new immigrants, the under-served and the disenfranchised with tools for a better life.

A reception to honor Lee and Pineda will be held at the Ridgedale Library on Friday, October 29. For additional information contact Gretchen Wronka at 952-847-8546 or Lynn Stetler at 952-847-8569. The award committee consisted of Solveig Nilsen, chief steward of Local 2864, Molly Malecki, president of Local 2822 and Sue Tracy, winner of the Berman Award in 2003.

Hurt on the job

By Lynn Stetler

As Hennepin County employees, we are all aware of the fact that we are being asked to do more with less. Less means working in departments that have experienced layoffs, retirements, and job vacancies that are not being filled. We are being asked to do more work with less staff. Budget problems continue in 2004, and 2005 doesn't look much better.

What I really want to discuss with you is working safely. Workplace injuries have increased; worker's compensation claims are on the rise. Our health care providers say we are going to our doctors more often. But many county workers are afraid to report injuries out of fear of retaliation, discipline, or even being fired. If you are injured on the job, you have a responsibility to yourself, and to your employer to do two things: 1) fill out a first report of injury form, and 2) go see a doctor and get your injury examined. Ask your supervisor or your HR rep for this form. It's meant to protect you and the county, not be used against you. If you are afraid or feeling your job is threatened, you might also call a union steward and ask for help. Finally, do your job, do the best job you can, but remember that you are only one person; you can't do the work of two or three. Be well—and safe.



Human Services Department: Support staff input

Three Local 2822 members have been invited to serve on three committees to develop recommendations to the Human Services Executive Team on a support staff structure for the department.

Claudette Moran agreed to serve on the committee looking at current allocation of resources and recommending if/how resources should initially be moved around or reallocated to best meet the needs of the department.

Diane Perkins will serve on the committee making recommendations on classifications of positions. This will not be a PDQ situation, but the committee needs to learn what current staffs are doing for their current areas. Are there changes that need to be made to best meet the needs of the area and the skill set of the staff?

And Janet Keefe will be on the committee making recommendations on standardized expectations for support staff. It is not intended to set rigid standards but more like performance evaluation form.

Vote Nov. 2

There are only about five weeks left to become informed and knowledgeable about the upcoming election. It is every citizen's duty to learn about the candidates and the issues AND to vote.

Here are a few quotes from "Great Labor Quotations" that are applicable:

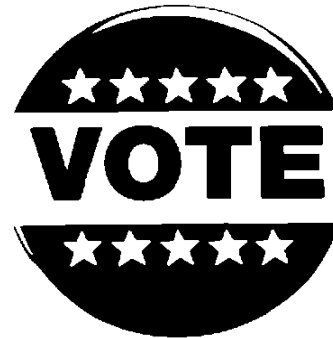
There's a direct relationship between the ballot box and the bread box, and what the union fights for and wins at the bargaining table can be taken

away in the legislative halls.
—Walter Reuther

To wield the ballot intelligently and heroically is the workingmen's last resort; in fact, it is the remedy, which

contends itself to all right thinking men. —Eugene Debs, 1888

Time has arrived when working people should decide on the necessity of united actions as citizens at the ballot box. —Resolution of the AFL, 1886



AFSCME Scholarship

Ten two thousand-dollar scholarships are awarded annually to children and financially dependent grandchildren of AFSCME members. Once awarded, the scholarships will be renewed for \$2,000, each year for a maximum of four years, provided the student remains enrolled in a full-time course of study. The applicants must intend to enroll in a full-time, four-year degree program in any accredited college or university.

To apply, the application can be downloaded from afscme.org. A

print copy of the application materials may be obtained by contacting: AFSCME Family Scholarship Program, Attention: Education Department, 1625 L Street N.W., Washington, DC 20036-5687. Or e-mail: education@afscme.org. The deadline is December 31.

Union members should also investigate other scholarships available through AFSCME and through the AFL-CIO

Local 2822 Officers

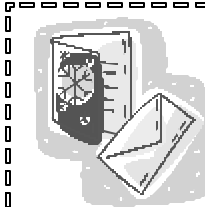
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Bulletin Board

The New Voice deadline is October 6. Articles will be accepted up to and including the day of the monthly Membership Meeting for inclusion in the following month's newsletter. Send your written contributions to Molly Malecki or Lynn Stetler.

Visit Local 2822 Website

<http://www.afscme2822.org>



Help us remember your co-workers with a card. Let us know to send a sympathy card, get well or congratulations. We will send a card, hand-made by E-board member Lynn Stetler.

Contact Heather Clark, our Good and Welfare Coordinator at 952-847-8650 or by e-mail: hclark@hclib.org. The request should include the name of the member, the reason for the request and home address, if possible."

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I want a paper contract

To sign up as a full union member or for Delta Dental Insurance, or to get answers to questions about AFSCME and membership benefits, please fill out this coupon and send to:

Merry Brigham
CSD—110 Bldg, mc1890

Name _____

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I'm especially interested in:

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