



## October Membership Meeting

**Tuesday, October 2  
7:00 p.m.  
Brookdale Library**

**November Membership Meeting  
Tuesday, November 6, 7:00 p.m.  
Southdale Library**

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

## Scholarships

Many scholarships are available to full union members and their families.

Currently the 2008 AFSCME Family Scholarship is accepting applications. Thirteen \$2000 scholarships will be awarded and they may be renewed.

**Deadline** for application is:  
December 31, 2007

For applications and more information, including eligibility criteria, go to the AFSCME website at [www.afscme.org](http://www.afscme.org)

Other scholarships are available from various union groups. Click links to other unions.

# Health insurance offer

By Molly Malecki

The long awaited, grudgingly anticipated health insurance proposal was finally presented by Hennepin County management to the AFSCME negotiating teams. The employer is proposing a four tier health insurance plan. Tier one will be for single coverage at a premium contribution of \$25.00 a month. Tier two is for employee plus spouse which will be a premium of \$340.49 per month. Tier three is employee plus children at \$260.80 per month. And finally tier four is for family insurance which will cost \$398.45 per month. Currently those with single coverage pay nothing towards premium and family coverage is \$336.36. This is the Health Partners Distinctions plan that we currently have.

The employer is also offering a high deductible with Health Reimbursement Arrangement/VEBA. The employer concedes that this plan is not for everyone. It might be attractive to individuals who are extremely healthy or who have high medical bills. This is an extremely complex program and is being proposed for 2009. More information will follow on this topic. This will be offered along with the current plan.

Table Team members are interested in your feedback on the four tier proposal. Currently the offer on the table is 1.5% raise or \$.22, which ever is greater. The \$.22 would be offered to those making less than \$15.00 an hour. If one got a \$.22 an hour raise, that would be \$8.80 a week or \$17.60 per pay period. Or it would be \$35.20 a month. Now subtract the \$25.00 single insurance premium. That leaves a raise of \$10.00 a month or \$120.00 a year.

The employer feels that \$25.00 a month is a small price to pay; it only costs \$300.00 a year. Compare that to the extra \$120.00 a year you will have jingling in your pocket. Let us know how you feel about this.

Please e-mail Table Team member with your opinion on all of this. You can contact me ([Mmafscme2822@aol.com](mailto:Mmafscme2822@aol.com)), Lynn Stetler ([lstetler@hclib.org](mailto:lstetler@hclib.org)), Alice Kelly ([akelly@hclib.org](mailto:akelly@hclib.org)), Janna Carlson ([janna.carlson@co.hennepin.mn.us](mailto:janna.carlson@co.hennepin.mn.us)), and Theresa Smith ([theresa.smith@co.hennepin.mn.us](mailto:theresa.smith@co.hennepin.mn.us)).

If you are a Local 99 member from Minneapolis Public Library, you can contact Dirk Schott ([DJSchot@mplib.org](mailto:DJSchot@mplib.org)) or Marilyn Bell ([mbell@blackhole.com](mailto:mbell@blackhole.com)).

## 2007 Sandy Berman Award for Social Responsibility in Library Services

The Berman Award Committee is pleased to announce the recipient of the 2007 Sandy Berman Award for Social Responsibility in Library Services. Solveig Nilsen, recently retired librarian at the Ridgedale Library was honored for her lasting contributions to the workplace at Hennepin County Library. The award was established in 1999 to honor Sandy Berman, head cataloger in the Hennepin County Library system for 26 years. It has been presented semi-annually by AFSCME Locals 2822 (Support Staff and Related) and 2864 (Librarians) to a library employee who has made a unique and invaluable contribution to the community-at-large through his or her work in Hennepin County Library.

(Berman continued on page 2)

## Complacent? Who? Me?

By Janna Carlson

“There are people who make things happen, there are people who watch things happen and there are people who wonder what happened. To be successful you need to be a person who makes things happen.” James Lovell (astronaut)

Many years ago a bright eyed, red haired, Irish man from Argentina said to me, “you are a survivor, but if there’s anything that will destroy you it will be your complacency.” He threw it out there--a warning to stay vigilant at keeping my life in working order. My natural defense was to remain grateful and not take good fortune for granted. What a sleepy opiate that way of thinking became. I just wanted to be comfortable, go to my job, do it well, take home a decent paycheck and enjoy my life. I put on my golden handcuffs, buried my head in the sand and settled into smug self satisfaction. I had no fear of any danger that may be there.

I became complacent. Complacency is a natural function of our brain, designed to automatic repetitive tasks. This is how we fill our days. This allows us to unconsciously go about day to day affairs so we can free our attention to be on alert for

*(Berman continued from page 1)*

On a daily basis, Solveig Nilsen was an inspiring example of what it means to be a librarian. She understood that service at the information desk is vital to those who enter our buildings—and that no information request is ever trivial. She recognized that even the smallest request respectfully fulfilled can make a huge difference to someone who may not always be treated with respect elsewhere. She was a fearless, articulate advocate for quality customer service and for improved relations between management and staff.

Ten years ago Hennepin County librarians voted overwhelmingly to organize with AFSCME. As one of the 5 “Founding Mothers”, Solveig was an integral part of that organizing drive and in several contract negotiation sessions.

Three of her most lasting contributions will be that of her continuous membership on the Labor-Management Committee, serving as the local’s first steward and her work on the Library’s Dignity and Re-

danger which we constantly look around for. If nothing happens we settle back and let our guard down.

Then disaster strikes. We are attacked by some outside force. We are in shock. We can’t respond. We are not ready. Then, over and over, man-made and natural disasters continue their assaults on us. We become habituated. If nothing happens directly to us we become lax about our personal security and the security of our family. We take our future for granted. We forget about the future of our children.

“In all life one should comfort the afflicted, but verily also afflict the comfortable and especially when they are comfortably, contentedly even happily wrong.” John Kenneth Galbraith

It is time to pull our heads out of the sand, let go of our smug comfort. We must not merely follow the tame course of our destiny but make the sudden effort necessary to make things right. Become involved on your life. Do the right thing. MAKE something happen!

spect Initiative. In these roles she brought a highly regarded sense of fairness, and an unerring ability to work through difficult, even thorny, tension-filled moments calmly and rationally. Solveig modeled respect and dignity in all her actions long before these concepts became part of the HCL vocabulary.

Ms. Nilsen was presented with the award at her retirement reception on August 24, 2007.

For additional information, please contact Lynn Stetler (952-847-8569) or Gretchen Wronka (952-847-8546).

### Award Committee

Jan DeSirey  
President, AFSCME Local 2864  
Lynn Stetler  
Chief Steward, AFSCME Local 2822  
Gretchen Wronka  
Sandy Berman Award Winner, 2001

## Work now or Bad contract later!

By Walter Hanson

Member Action & Strike Teams

Years ago an oil filter company had a television advertising campaign. The point of their campaign was you could buy their cheap oil filter now, or you could pay for a very expensive car repair later. For us, the members of AFSCME Local 2822, we have the same situation this year.

Local 2822 and the other Hennepin County AFSCME locals are negotiating a new contract right now. The county would like to get a contract that is as cheap as possible for them. We need our members to do some work now so the county doesn't wind up giving us a far more expensive situation in terms of a smaller pay raise or increased payments on health care. What kind of work?



On contract negotiation days wear green, wear the “A Full Service County Made Excellent” stickers. Contact officers, stewards or Action Team members if you don’t have them in your work area.

Talk to your co-workers and tell them why they need to care. An employee who doesn't care is somebody who the employer will think they can offer a minimal wage increase and get away with it.

Join the action and strike committees. Right now we have two very active groups. The Action Team is planning events like the rally that took place on September 18th to try to put pressure on the county to show we are entitled to nice pay raise and a good health care plan. The Strike Team’s job is to show the county come January we are ready to go on strike, if we don't get a good contract offer.

Pay attention to the **Table Talks** and phone calls you might get from the union. They will tell you about up coming events like rallies or other activities. They might ask you to write a letter or phone a commissioner. That type of help makes a major difference!

And one last one. Don't be afraid to say you would go on strike. The union's greatest leverage to get a good contract is to threaten to strike. Management's best hope

*(Work continued on page 3)*

## Are you being questioned?

The following is from the union steward's manual and describes what should happen if you are called into your supervisor's office for questioning. This especially applies if you are the person being investigated.

The list of Local 2822 stewards is on the back of this newsletter. They are also listed on our website, [afscme2822.org](http://afscme2822.org). You may call any steward on the list. We do not have stewards at every work site. And it may take a while for a steward to come to the meeting, so the supervisor may have to wait.

### Weingarten Rights

In a 1975 case National Labor Relations Board vs. J. Weingarten Inc., the United States Supreme Court declared that unionized employees have the right to have a steward present during a meeting with management when the employee believes the meeting *might lead to disciplinary action being taken against him/her*.

Weingarten rights apply during investigatory interviews when a supervisor is questioning an employee to obtain information that could be used as grounds for discipline; the employee has the right to request union representation. These basic Weingarten rights stem from the Supreme Court decision:

1. The employee must request representation before or during the meeting.
2. After an employee makes the request, the supervisor has these choices:
  - a. grant the request and wait for the union representative's arrival;
  - b. deny the request and end the meeting immediately; or
  - c. Give the employee the choice of either ending the meeting or continuing without representation.
3. If the supervisor denies the request and continues to ask questions, the employee has a right to refuse to answer. In addition, the supervisor is committing an unfair labor practice.

Please beware that management is not obligated to inform employees of their Weingarten rights—**employees must ask for them**. Unlike Miranda rights—where law enforcement officers are required to tell a suspect of their right to an attorney, etc.—employees must ask for their Weingarten rights.

## Hmong employees An invitation

By Neng Lor

My name is Neng, and I am a Hennepin County employee—just like you. I am a union steward, E-Board member, and I am also looking for Hmong recruits. It has been a little over three years since I got involved with Local 2822. This will actually be the first contract that I will keep a close report on. Many activists have predicted from previous contracts that negotiations this year would be “no walk in the park,” especially, if there is not much employee participation.

This contract will have its affect on everyone. And if there is no participation, there will be nothing to benefit from it. Here in Hennepin County, there are a great number of Hmong employees and this is why I am reaching out to my Hmong brothers and sisters, to join in on this movement. Because the Hmong are a forceful and large group of minority employees in Hennepin County, participation is vital. It is vital to keep the strength of this union.

For many years, and currently, activists have consisted of mainly white Americans and very few minority groups. There needs to be changes, for we all have benefited from these activists. And because Hennepin County has one of the largest Hmong populations and a large number of Hmong employees, we need to get involved and help to include everyone as participants—to keep the benefits, to keep our jobs. This is also true for all employees.

What does it take to be involved? One, our employer looks at the number of people who participate as full union members—paying the full membership fee. If you're not a full member, think about changing your status. It would cost no more than an additional \$7.00 per month to be a full member, compared to not showing strength and having the employer make you pay a minimum of 25.00 to 50.00 for health insurance. Then from there, we can discuss more about what we can do together.

The Union—our colleagues/coworkers—are trying their best to make sure that we (the employees) keep our heads above water. Without the union, it will be difficult to negotiate—wait, will not be

possible to negotiate with our employers. If we do not act along with our fellow activists, then we are allowing this to happen. And come the end of the contract, it will happen again. What we loose will be impossible to regain.

This is a little taste of why I'm involved and why it's important to be involved. We will be coming around to work sites to talk about this matter. Most important about my position is getting the Hmong peoples' input. I hope to see and talk to people as tensions grow and we approach the end of our contract. If you would like, please feel free to contact me, questions and comments are all welcome. [unionbiz@hotmail.com](mailto:unionbiz@hotmail.com)

## Congratulations to Genae Nicole

Local 2822 is proud, and sad, to announce the promotion of Genae Nicole to a supervisory position in Metropolitan Health Plan. Genae has served as a steward and an At-Large Member of our Executive Board. She was also getting her feet wet as a first time member of the Negotiations Table Team. She will be sorely missed as she did a wonderful job for our local. But we wish her the best in her new career.

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(Work continued from page 2)

in a case of strike is that members continue to go to work. Part of the action we're doing now is to show we're not afraid to strike.

(Editor's note: a strike can only be called if the **members voting on the proposed contract** vote to not accept the offer and to strike.)

So look for that next **TableTalk**. It will offer you some opportunities to help. Or contact the Action Team Chair, Brenda Wood ([cbwoodfamily@charter.net](mailto:cbwoodfamily@charter.net)) or Strike Team Chair, Roy Elliott ([relliotthenncty@yahoo.com](mailto:relliotthenncty@yahoo.com)).

Three rules of work: Out of clutter find simplicity; From discord find harmony; In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.

— Albert Einstein

## Local 2822 Officers

<b>President</b> Molly Malecki <i>Mmafscme2822@aol.com</i>	612-543-0272 Urgent: 612-543-0270
<b>Vice-president</b> Lynn Stetler	952-847-8569 Urgent: 763-245-8285
<b>Treasurer</b> Walter Hanson	612-543-0272 Urgent: 612-543-0270
<b>Recording Sec.</b> Jeanne Whetstone	952-847-5455
<b>Co-chief Steward</b> Theresa Smith	763-245-8308
<b>Co-chief Steward</b> Vacant	
<b>Membership Sec.</b> Ann Baird	612-543-0272
<b>E-Board at Large</b>	
Janna Carlson	612-596-1660
Keven Larson	952-847-5563
Neng Lor	612-596-1660
Vacant	
<b>Delta Dental Trustee</b> Ann Baird	763-549-3498
<b>Good &amp; Welfare</b> Heather Clark <i>hclark@hclib.org</i>	952-847-8523


# Bulletin Board

**The New Voice deadline is October 2.** 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 952-847-8523 or by e-mail: [hclark@hclib.org](mailto:hclark@hclib.org). The request should include the name of the member, the reason for the request and home address, if possible.

With Delta Access, you can find out about your Delta coverage without even opening your mouth. Delta Access 651-406-5900 or 1-800-862-6042. Always refer to your group number 538.

Council 5 Contact person:  
Cindy Pince, 651-287-0564

**Editors**  
Molly Malecki & Lynn Stetler

**Circulation & distribution**  
Annette Tiedens

## Steward's List

Steward	Phone	Department	Location
Theresa Smith Co-chief Steward	763-245-8308	Mental Health	Health Services Bldg (HSB)
Janna Carlson	612-596-1660	Service Center	Maple Grove Service Center
Jody Goers	612-596-8080	Sheriff	Jail
Walter Hanson	763-612-543-0272 Urgent: 612-543-0270	Service Center	Brookdale Service Center
Neng Lor	612-596-1660	Service Center	Maple Grove Service Center
Lynn Stetler	952-847-8569 Urgent: 763-245-8285	Library	Ridgedale Library, Collection Management
Velva Stewart	612-596-0722	MS MHP	Grain Exchange Bldg
Bridget Walker	612-596-8080	Sheriff	Jail

### New to Hennepin County?

If you haven't been approached by a union representative yet, please fill out this form and send to our membership secretary.

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:

**Ann Baird**  
**Brookdale Service Center**  
**Mail Code N710**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Work Location \_\_\_\_\_

Mailcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I'm especially interested in:

I want to sign up as a full member.