



November Membership Meeting

**Wednesday, November 5
6:30 p.m.
Golden Valley Library**

**December Membership Meeting
Wednesday, Dec. 3, 7:00 p.m.
Southdale Library**

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

AFL-CIO President Sweeney calls for economic stimulus plan for Middle Class

In a fiery statement released last week, AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney slammed Congress for ignoring the plight of working people. Sweeney said that, "The October 3rd news that the US lost 159,000 jobs last month and 760,000 this year should set off alarm bells about the need to pass an economic stimulus package... It is simply an outrage that our representatives are spending their remaining time helping Wall Street when the clock is running out for working families across the country. The middle class is collapsing."

Our class struggle We must vote

By Janna Carlson

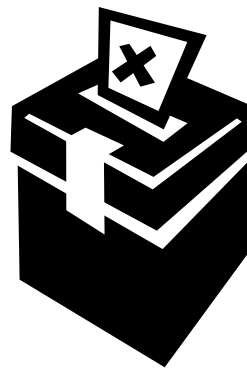
The following is based on an article by Virginia Senator Jim Webb.

What's wrong with this country anyway? Those of us old enough to be aware of this have noticed our society is becoming more like a class based system. There are the very rich, the very poor and the eroding middle class. The elite rich control our lives. The country they live in is not the same as the one the working class and poor live in.

Their kids don't go to our schools and they don't fight in our wars. Their parents control our economy. They own control of the stock markets. They protect their wealth with tax loopholes. They pay their executives 400 times more than they pay their average workers.

We average American workers see a troubling future for "our class". Wages are at an all time low as a percentage of national wealth. Medical costs have risen at least 73%. Half of that cost comes from our pockets rather than from insurance. Forty-seven million Americans have no medical insurance. Our earned pension plans are collapsing in the wake of corporate reorganization. Our jobs are disappearing. If we complain, our jobs are outsourced or given to someone willing to accept less

money. We should be troubled by the arrogance of our leaders. This elitism they express by denying, or outright laughing at, our plight. They consider us the inevitable by-product of the "rough road of capitalism". They say we are not up to the challenge, and we are spoiled by the old notions of corporate paternalism, and that we don't possess the necessary attributes to succeed in American society.



What's troubling about our economy is this separation: the very rich and the rest of us. We worry about the job prospects of our altered future. This economic erosion of the middle class has begun to cause political unrest. We have begun to rebel against the deterioration of our way of life. Let's not be seduced by the dis-

tractions that keep us divided. Let us put aside emotional hot-button issues. Let us be the electorate that holds our government leaders accountable for allowing every American the opportunity to succeed. We American workers have a chance to be heard in this upcoming election. When we go to vote, remember that our government leaders have no greater duty than to confront the growing unfairness in this age of globalization.

Let us choose our leaders wisely. Let us vote for the leaders who will actually work for us.

Let's have some trust - - - - -

By Lynn Stetler, president

I've been spending quite a bit of time in meetings lately with county commissioners, Hennepin local presidents, our own Executive Board, our stewards, our business agent, and other union activists and members, in addition to numerous Labor/Management meetings. As a steward, I also spend quite a bit of time in conversation with concerned members and also with Human Resources. In all these meetings and conversations, there is an important component necessary—trust.

What am I talking about? Here's the definition of trust from the Merriam Webster Online dictionary--assured reliance on the character, ability, strength, or truth of someone or something: b: one in which confidence is placed; 2 a: dependence on something future or contingent. In all these meetings and conversations, I feel it is important to trust and have confidence in

the people with whom I am dealing. As union leaders, we go through training at Council 5 or at our conventions to help us perform our union positions in the best way we can--whether it is Steward training, financial training, or leadership training. These trainings are often rigorous, but they are always beneficial and result in great tools for us to perform our jobs.

The main reason I bring this up in this column is that lately at our E-Board meetings we have been hearing about members telling us that they do not trust us when dealing with a problem or a grievance, or they don't like the advice we give. There is discussion about members calling more than one steward for help--what we refer to as "steward shopping"--in hopes of getting a response they like better. Here's the deal: we all go through the same trainings in our local, we all consult each other and our Business Agent, Steve Marincel, and we all trust each other to do the

best for our local membership.

We've also been hearing from members who believe that if we have good working relations with management and human resources that we are not reliable union leaders and cannot be trusted. We work hard to establish those working relationships on the other side of the aisle because we believe it is to the benefit of our membership. It is discouraging to hear these accusations because I believe that we have a very hard-working and committed group of leaders in our local and in the other county locals at a time of great uncertainty in the county. And I believe that we have earned your trust with the work we have done and continue to do.

Two final thoughts--I've always tried to live by the Golden Rule--do unto others as you would have them do unto you. And in the words of Joe Cocker--have a little faith.

Politics and Power 2008 - - - - -

By Tammy Richert

One of the workshops I attended at the Council 5 Convention was "Politics and Power 2008." And what a politically powerful class it was! How do we get our candidates elected? What are our issues? Concerns? More questions than answers, it seems.

Where is the country headed? How do we convince voters: people, co-workers, groups, students, the elderly, our neighbors, or relatives, the rich and the poor, and everyone in between? Personally, I felt that voters had made their choices by now. But the instructor for the workshop assured us that there are still plenty of undecided voters, who have yet to make up their minds in this important election year. How will the candidates earn your vote?

Here are the top ten critical hot-button issues that we listed in class: war in Iraq, economy, healthcare, environment/

global warming, jobs/wages, foreign policy/nuclear proliferation, education/training, immigration, deficit spending, government bailouts.

So many things at stake, and Americans say this is quite possibly the most important election of our lifetime. Why is that? How did we get here? Can we really turn this country around? What a great social responsibility for our society, for our citizens, and for our children. Will it not take many elections into the future to make a difference? Absolutely, so please grab a neighbor, a friend, a family member, anyone and get out to the polls this November 4, 2008 and VOTE!

We must vote because there is hope for a better America, hope for a better world and hope for a better future for all of US!

Good and Welfare

Local 2822 received the following thank you note from Bruce Scroggins who works at Sumner Library:

"I want to take this time to thank AFSCME 2822 for the wonderful card and your wishes and prayers that are greatly appreciated, by me and my family, thank you one and all." Bruce's brother Rodney Scroggins was hit by a car while bicycling to work. He remains in the hospital with many broken bones and a very long recovery ahead.

Bruce also writes that the Scroggins family has opened an account for those who would like to make a donation to defray extreme costs, as my brother's income has stopped and his wife is in need of any help one would care to give.

The Trust Account: Clyde & Bruce Scroggins, Twin Cities Federal/TCF, 801 Marquette Ave. Minneapolis, MN 55402

Debit card for health care

Added convenience for your Health Care Expense Account – Debit Card

This year, pending official Hennepin County Board approval, you have the added benefit of purchasing an inexpensive and easy-to-use debit card (only \$1 per month) to access your Health Care Expense Account.

Just like a bank card, the Health Care Expense Account debit card contains the value of your annual contribution, so you just swipe the card to pay for eligible medical expenses. With the debit card, you don't have to complete claim forms or wait for a check in the mail. You can even check balances or account details anytime – online or with a quick phone call.

You can use the debit card at participating pharmacies, retail stores and grocery stores—find the huge list of participating retailers online at healthpartners.com/Hennepin. And in most cases, you won't be asked to submit receipts for those purchases. (Don't forget to save receipts for purchases as you may be asked to submit them to verify that your expenses comply with IRS guidelines.)

A debit card makes it even more convenient to use your Health Care Expense Account!

Keep more money in your wallet

Did you know that the average U.S. family of four spends close to \$2,675 annually on out-of-pocket medical expenses, such as co pays, dental work and eyeglasses? If you put that \$2,675 into a Health Care Expense Account, you can save over \$665 in taxes!

When you sign up for a Health Care Expense Account this fall during open enrollment, you elect to put paycheck dollars into an account each pay period in equal installments throughout the year. This money comes out of your paycheck before Federal, State and Social Security taxes are taken out. So every dollar you put in your account is

tax-free. You work hard for your money – and a Health Care Expense Account helps you keep more of it!

Cover a wide-range of expenses

You can use the money in your Health Care Expense Account for a wide-range of out-of-pocket expenses. These items include:

- Co pays (on prescriptions, office visits, etc)
- Over-the-counter items (allergy/sinus, first aid, pain relief)
- Eye glasses and vision expenses
- Dental work
- And more!

Sign up for a Health Care Expense Account and a debit card during open enrollment! Stay tuned for more information!

Council 5 Annual Convention

By Molly Malecki

More than 600 members of Council 5 gathered for the three day, Fourth Annual Council 5 Convention in Bloomington Minnesota. The place rocked with excitement and enthusiasm. We were inspired and revitalized by speakers such as Gerald McEntee, our International President, Al Franken, Iowa Governor Thomas Vilsack and various activists from Council 5. We were encouraged, prodded, poked, and incited to make this election count. We all left the convention with the mission to get the message out to our other members about how important this election is to our well being.

Nineteen members of Local 2822 attended. The convention included workshops, speeches by AFSCME endorsed candidates for public office, passage of twenty-two resolutions, election of officers, meetings of members of the various legislative districts, and the meeting of the Hennepin County Policy Committee. Awards were also given for political, organizing and local union development efforts.

The chair officers of Council 5 were all returned to office: Mike Buesing as president, Judy Wahlberg as vice president, Cliff Poehler from Hennepin County Public Defenders Office as treasurer and Mary Falk as secretary. Molly Malecki of Local 2822 was re-elected from the county sector to the Executive Board. Other Hennepin County employees who were also elected to the E-Board are Jean Diedrich, Pat Guernsey, Cliff Robinson, and Carmen Brown from HCMC.

The Hennepin County Policy Committee also elected officers and voted on rule changes. The Policy Committee consists of representatives of the six AFSCME locals at Hennepin County. The new officers are: Dean Enge, president; Pat Guernsey, vice president; Theresa Smith, secretary, and Wes Volkenant, treasurer, three others were elected to at-large seats. A rule change that was approved has each local president be a voting member of the Policy Committee.

Awesome Convention

By Bruce Scroggins

The Council 5 Convention was an awesome experience and I learned many useful things. District meetings and organizing were the most informative for me.

The general meeting with Al Franken was the best; I hadn't been interested to the point of wanting to hear more from this talented man; I now look forward to working with him in the Senate.

I would say the highlight of the convention was concerned with organizing, and the best part of that was hearing insightful people who have gone through the battles and in turn, offered me, and brothers and sisters, useful, sound practices, in a form that we could together, sound out our questions and then tailor some plans for looking and going forward.

There was much more, but I'll leave it there.

Local 2822 Officers

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Good & Welfare Heather Clark <i>hclark@hclib.org</i>	952-847-8523

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:

Janna Carlson
Maple Grove Service Center

Name _____

Job Title _____

Work Location _____

Mailcode _____

Phone _____

- I'm especially interested in:
 I want to sign up as a full member.
 I want to sign up for Delta Dental.

Bulletin Board

The New Voice deadline is December 3. 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.

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. 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.

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Cindy Pince, 651-287-0564

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