

## The contract is approved

By Molly Malecki

The final hurdle of the 2006-2007 contract was cleared on Tuesday afternoon, December 13, 2005 when the County Board voted to approve the contract that Local 2822 members voted to ratify with a better than 95% approval. This is being touted as the best contract in seventeen years. Several of the commissioners raved about how great Hennepin County employees are and what a good contract this is and how much they appreciated us. The vote by the commissioners was unanimous.

The terms of the new contract were mailed to all full-share members. They are also listed on our Website: [www.afscme2822.org](http://www.afscme2822.org). As soon as possible our whole contract will be on our web site, and it will also be on the Hennepin County Labor Relations Intranet site. Anyone who would like to have a paper copy of the contract should contact an officer or steward, who will have some when they are printed.

The success of this contract negotiations has to be credited to a lot of factors. The biggest one was the horrible contract we had last time. People were willing to get mobilized. They were mad. The AFSCME Unions began with the Building for a Better Contract Campaign; our local surveyed members through the Council 5 phone bank—there we found out how mad people were and that they were willing to take action, to strike. Thus the Action Team and the Strike Team came to life. People showed up at rallies. They contacted the commissioners. They talked to each other. We also have to acknowledge the support of many of the commissioners who felt we deserved more. The negotiating teams dug our heels in and stood our ground from July to November 14, but it was the action and support outside that really made this contract happen.

This is what UNION is all about!

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## Contract negotiations: A first-timers point of view

By Jennifer McNair

I have worked for the county for approximately 21 years and this was the first time I participated in negotiations. "It is never too late to learn" is my motto.

When I asked Local 2822 president Molly Malecki what it would entail to participate in negotiations she stated that "first you need to be on the Master committee and then the Table Team. It will take a lot of time and commitment on your part". Molly gave me a very truthful answer. I debated about it, most of the debate was with my other half but I prevailed and went for it.

I started out on the Master Committee and was selected for the Table Team. The Master committee consisted of members from each of the six AFSCME locals at Hennepin County (HCMC locals did not participate this year). The Master Team met and decided, as a whole, what our proposal to the employer would be. I learned here that it IS okay to agree to disagree. At the beginning of the Master Committee we all put down what we wanted to go into the proposal. There were about 20 items from all the members, and from there we were required to reduce that number by half. It took a lot of explanations and debates to get to that

(Contract continued on page 2)



### January Membership Meeting

Tuesday, January 3  
7:00 p.m.  
Southdale Library

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

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

## Thank you

The following is typical of the thank-you notes that were received by members of the Master, Table, Action and Strike Teams. Some members of those teams received flowers, candy and hugs by grateful union members.

Hi Lynn!

I'd like to thank all my union brothers and sisters for voting yes (and for their prior support at rallies & through phone calls, etc.) But the lion's share of my thanks goes to the negotiating team for the many weeks and months they put in to this effort, but most especially for that last 36-37 hour session where they hammered out the final agreement. Thank you for sticking it out, even when the outlook seemed poor, the offer(s) from management were unfair or outrageous, and prospects for a fair agreement appeared dim. Thank you for all your hard work! You are my heroes! –A grateful Librarian

(Contract continued from page 1)

point, but we did it. The decisions of the Master Team became our proposal to the employer.

From there the Table Team took over. This is when negotiations began, July 18, 2005. At the negotiations meetings the AFSCME business agents sat across the table from the Management Team, and the rest of the Table Team sat in the audience chairs. If a Table Team member wanted to make a comment or bring some information to the Business Agents, we wrote it down and passed it on to them. There was a lot of give and take during this time between our Table Team and the Management Team. I had no clue all that went on behind closed doors. This was one of the major learning experiences of my life. The Management Team had issues that they brought to negotiations. After a lot of hard work, the items we could resolve, for instance, a major reduction in retirement benefits and major changes to the insurance for part-timers, got resolved (in our favor). If I had not participated I would never have known all these other things happened.

When we finally got to the main issues of negotiations, wages and insurance, a me-

diator from the Minnesota Bureau of Mediation Services was scheduled to come in, because there was no budging from either side on these issues. This part was quite interesting. We had two sessions with the mediator; one ten hour session on November 7 and a twenty-seven hour session beginning at 9:00 AM on November 14 and ending at noon on November 15. At this point the AFSCME team and the employer were in different rooms. The mediator went back and forth between the rooms and listened to the explanations and conveyed messages and proposals. I thought the Table Team sat and waited a long time for responses from the Management Team. I would hate to have that job.

We worked many long hours to get a fair contract. I walked away feeling like I did a good job, but the thing I was to find out is "you can not please everyone and do not take it personally." This is very hard for me to do.

So my final statement to all is, "get involved", because if you don't, you really only have a little information on what really goes on, and the knowledge you will gain sure puts a different perspective on things.

## Wellstone Memorial

By Lynn Stetler

Neighborhood House, a settlement house and multi cultural community center on the West Side of St. Paul has been selected by Congress to be the living Memorial to Paul and Sheila Wellstone. A letter from the International Union of Operating Engineers is promoting having one of the meeting rooms in the new facility be a "Union Labor Room" because of the Wellstones' commitment to the labor movement.

At our December membership meeting, the members approved a \$1,000.00 donation to Neighborhood House for the "Union Labor Room". After the Wellstones died on October 25, 2002, our local approved making a memorial donation. But we didn't know what would be the best place to make a donation. We thought there might be an official site for donations. As it turned out, just as the Wellstones were involved in many projects and had many interests, memorials were set up for a variety of projects. So while we sent a small donation to the making of the Wellstone documentary, and we sent some of our members to Wellstone Action Camp for training, our Local never made a donation in Paul and Sheila's name to an organization that we felt represented them. And we wanted to.

When we received the letter from the Operating Engineers Union about the Paul and Sheila Wellstone Center for Community Building our members felt we had found an appropriate memorial.

We also learned that The Kresge Foundation had made \$650,000 challenge grant to Neighborhood House Capital and Endowment Campaign for the Wellstone Center.

This new facility will provide meeting and gathering space for cultural, artistic, social, educational, performance, recreational, and civic activities for people of all cultural and economic backgrounds. It will also serve as an education and training center with on-site programming and distance learning. There will also be shared space for other organizations to provide increased access to their services.

The members at the December meeting felt this was a fitting organization to make a donation to the memory of our good friends Paul and Sheila Wellstone.

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## Annual Dues Increase

By Walter Hanson

With the start of the new year come many things, one of them is a dues increase. This year (2006) dues will be increase a \$1.85 for a full union member who works 41 hours or more per pay period to \$34.35 per month. If you are a full union member working 40 hours or less per pay period that means an increase of \$1.39 to \$25.92.

If you are a fair share member, you will have a prorated increase calculated by Council 5, and you should have received a letter explaining that in the month of December.

Don't we need to vote on this? No, because it is what is called the "Minimum Dues Increase" as calculated by AFSCME International Union. Our local's constitution allows for the "Minimum Dues Increase" to be done automatically. If we wanted a larger increase, that would have to be voted on.

Over the last couple of years, dues have gone up because both the International and Council 5 sought large dues increases to cover new activities. It appears that neither the council nor the International will be seeking new dues increases. So hopefully next year the increase will be less than a dollar.

If you have any questions feel free to contact me, Walter Hanson, Treasurer

### Council 5 grows

In October nearly 600 clerical workers from Hennepin County Medical Center joined AFSCME Council 5. It was announced this past week that 420 child care workers have joined our ranks.

St. Louis County took a bold step forward when commissioners voted December 13 to partner with a union of providers to improve child care. It's a powerful partnership with 420 licensed providers in St. Louis County who are represented by Council 5.

# Council 5 Convention highlights

By Neng Lor

AFSME Council 5 Inaugural Convention held on October 6, 7, and 8, was the first AFSCME Convention I have attended. I'm grateful and extremely thankful the president of local 2822, Molly Malecki, gave me the opportunity to be present. It was a great learning experience for me; in fact I would consider it a great leap from knowing almost nothing about the union to becoming an appreciative member of AFSCME PEOPLE. It was surprising yet disappointing for me to see that I was probably the only Asian-American male and the small number of young union members who attended. Brothers and sisters of AFSME are considerably generous, they kept an open mind and welcomed me even with the little knowledge I have; do not be afraid or shy to be involved. It doesn't take much to be involved. In fact, you're involved right now; you just need to take a little action to get hyped up. My encouragement is for union members to participate in local meetings, at the least as a start, if possible. It's the best way to get information first hand.

I sat down with the brothers and sisters in small groups and listened as they spoke about their concerns. Simply the situations they encounter are quite similar to what we all are facing and they are if what we all can accomplish together. I volunteered for door knocking; we went to about twenty homes encouraging AFSCME members to vote for AFSCME endorsed candidates. I attended the rally in front of Duluth's City Hall, which was stimulating. Brothers and sisters clearly demonstrated their support and dedication and together we sent a message to the [St. Louis County Commissioners](#), we want dignity and respect!

Statistically, union members are likely to receive more in wages and benefits, which are hard worked for, than non-union members. For many years AFSCME and workers from Hennepin County Medical Center worked hard together trying to organize a union for HCMC clerical employees. As a result of dedication and determination, mission was accomplished, AFSCME proudly presented HCMC's 550 plus strong members on October 6, 2005. AFSCME and AFL-CIO do more than just fight for your

well earned wages and benefits. During the tragedy of hurricane Katrina, union members volunteered to aid the victims of the storm.

Local 2822 even contributed to mechanic workers from NWA. With more active union members, much more can be accomplished.

By Dawn Klingman

It was exciting being able to participate in the inaugural convention of the new Council 5 in Duluth. I was interested to see what changes this would bring from our old Council 14 conventions in Bloomington. Much of the convention was quite similar to what we have had in the past. The major difference was the diverse population of state, county, and city employees. This diversity brought a wealth of input into discussions and brainstorming sessions.

We talked about ways that Council 5 can help locals in organizing and education. I learned of a Health and Safety committee that looks at workplace issues. I was asked if I had any concerns in these regards at Hennepin County. All I could think of at the time was moldy carpets and mice. Boy did their eyebrows shoot up! So I need to find out whether we have a Health and Safety Committee here at Hennepin County. If we don't, we should be starting one up.

We got the news hot off the fax machine about our new brothers and sisters at HCMC clerical units joining our ranks that Thursday afternoon. What an extra special gift that news was to the convention! AFSCME is looking at organizing the family child care providers in Hennepin County, Ramsey County and St Louis County.

I laughed as the International President Gerald McEntee complained about the 30 degree temperature in Duluth, thinking "we moved the convention from February to October so it wouldn't be that cold!" But that's Minnesota for you!

By Claudette Moran

The top 3 highlights of the convention for me were, the rally for St. Louis County workers, gubernatorial and congressional

candidates coming to visit, and media relations training.

First off, with box lunches and sodas in hand, we rode buses to the St. Louis County Courthouse to rally in support for the St. Louis County employees as they started new contract negotiations. With one TV station camera crew, two St. Louis County commissioners and Eliot Seide, at their side, we cheered them on for better wages and health care benefits.

Second, we received visits from Attorney General Mike Hatch, Becky Lourey, Kelly Doran, and Steve Kelly Each gave their history and view points on why they want to be our next governor. However, during our individual group meeting, Senator Becky Lourey, DFL from Esko MN came to visit with us as well. Senator Lourey is actually from Little Falls, Minnesota originally, which is my hometown. So, that was nice to finally meet her, and hear her speak about her goals for our state if she is elected as our next governor.

Last, but certainly not least, I went through media relations training, which was taught by Jennifer Lovaaen who is the Council 5 Communications Coordinator. She did a Power Point presentation on developing a media relations campaign, and Journalism 101. She also divided us into four groups in order for us to find a topic that stated our mission and identified our goal, and to prepare for an interview. It was very informative.

## Sad stories

During what should be a joyful season, we have two tragedies to report that have happened to our members. Both of their homes were destroyed by fire.

Charlita Holley lost her home in October. If anyone wants to send any type of contribution to help her, it can be sent to Lori Veen at 612-348-9839. Her mail code is 962.

Demitris Freeman, who works at Century Plaza recently lost her apartment and all of her belongings. She and her children are living in a shelter.

The Hennepin County Intranet Bulletin Board usually has information on how you can help these members.

## Local 2822 Officers

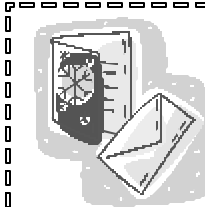
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# Bulletin Board

**The New Voice deadline is January 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 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:  
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Julie Yakin	612-348-6186	Service Center	Gov't Ctr. Service Ctr.

## 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:

**Bridgette Walker**  
Jail, Mail Code 905

Name \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

Mailcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I'm especially interested in:

I want to sign up as a full member.