

Reflections on the Year 2008

By Lynn Stetler, president

One of my co-workers and I were talking the other day about how quickly the year had gone by. We commented, that is exactly what our parents and grandparents had always remarked. Well, I have just lamented my 33rd anniversary of working at Hennepin County Library, and I have never seen a year like 2008—and maybe it is a good thing that it flew by so fast.

In January, we celebrated one of our best contracts in years resulting in a general wage adjustment of 2.25% or \$.3375/hour, whichever is greater, and 3.4% for those at the maximum rate. In addition, we won an additional .5% to the lowest paid job class in the bargaining unit, Public Service Assistants.

Throughout the year, AFSCME leadership worked on Labor/Management committees in many departments, held meet and confers, and met with County Administrator Richard Johnson regularly to discuss work rules, Dignity and Respect, Health and Safety, and other issues of importance to Hennepin employees.

And when we realized that the budget process for 2009 was going to prove very difficult, we concentrated on that. AFSCME leadership met with all the commissioners to inform them that the era of doing more with less was over and the county needed to learn to do less with less. We encouraged them to have the courage to set the levy limit recommended by County Administrator Richard Johnson. We were disappointed that the levy limit they set fell short, and thus will make the coming year that much more difficult.

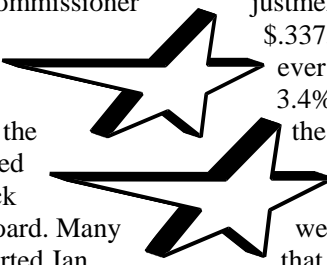
Last fall, we began to work to get political candidates elected who would be labor friendly, especially at the local government level. Specifically, Local 2822 made monetary donations to the campaigns of Commissioner Randy Johnson and to Jan Callison, who was running for the seat being vacated by Linda Koblick on the county board. Many of us also supported Jan Callison by door knocking with her and by doing literature drops. Both Callison and Johnson were endorsed by Council 5, and many phone calls were made on their behalf to our members.

We were successful in these races and look forward to working with these folks as we face some unprecedented challenges in 2009.

Many of us sat through the county budget hearings and wore green to show that AFSCME was in the house. And while labor's presence is lamented as being diminished in many parts of country, AFSCME is an important voice being heard in Hennepin County. We see this in the increased number of meet and confers, and the improved relationship and welcome involvement with the Human Resources Department in updating and changing human resources rules.

And I must mention that the best news is that we will receive a general wage adjustment of 2.25% or \$.3375/hour, whichever is greater and 3.4% for those at the maximum rate effective 1/05/09! Are we lucky or what that we negotiated a two year contract before the economy went sour?

Happy holidays to you and best wishes for 2009.




January						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	13

January Membership Meeting
 Wednesday, January 7
 7:00 p.m.
 Ridgedale Library

February Membership Meeting
 Wednesday, February 4
 6:30 p.m.
 Golden Valley Library

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

 Visit Local 2822 website

<http://www.afscme2822.org>

Thought for 2009

"Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek." – Barack Obama

Jeanne Whetstone honored by Minnesota Library Association

Local 2822 Recording Secretary, Jeanne Whetstone was recently honored by the Minnesota Library Association / Support Staff and Paraprofessional Interest Section as the 2008 Una Lamb Paraprofessional of the year. The following are excerpts of the speech describing Jeanne's accomplishments.

"Jeanne is a true star in the MLA/SSPiN universe..."

"Jeanne Whetstone has worked for Hennepin County Library System since June 1973. In her 35 years of service she has worked as a page and clerk at the Southdale Library in Edina, an Intermediate clerk in Technical Services Processing, a library assistant at Excelsior, Westonka, and St. Bonifacius libraries, and as an Associate Librarian on the Children's Readmobile and at the Excelsior, Plymouth, and Golden Valley Libraries.

"Throughout her career, Jeanne has been known for her friendly and positive attitude with both customers and staff, her flexibility in being willing to change her schedule to fill in for co-workers requiring leave time, and for

her willingness to do any necessary task that will result in the high quality customer service that people expect of Hennepin County Library System.

"Jeanne's primary responsibility in her current positions is to help customers at the Information Desk. She also completes collection maintenance tasks, assists with eye-catching circulating book displays, and maintains lobby publications. During summer 2008, Jeanne facilitated the South Lake Minnetonka One Book, One Community book discussion of No Talking by Andrew Clements for children in grades 4-6. Jeanne initiated and has coordinated the Excelsior Library's *Paws to Read* program, to the delight of young customers and the shaggy volunteers. She has taught customers computer skills in Internet Labs and assisted colleagues with programs such as Hot Reads, Guys Read, the Girls Only Book Club, and book talks at senior residences. Jeanne has performed storytimes for and driven the Children's Readmobile in vehicle fairs for several communities. These past two years she has assisted with the HCL Teen Volunteer Recognition event and a Ridgedale Library author event.

"A longtime member of MLA, Jeanne has donated her time to MLA Conference registration for many years. If she's not working behind the registration desk... you'll probably see her working with the conference's silent auction. Her organizational skills have not only benefited us during the conference, but also in the past years as she helped document and downsize the Association's office and files. She has been a member of SSPiN since its inception. She has volunteered countless hours as a reviewer for the Voluntary Certification Program. Jeanne is always willing to help.

"She is always willing to smile and laugh. She does nice things for everyone. She is considerate, hard-working and does most of this work without pay and on her own time.

"Her nominators and co-workers say it so well:

"I am pleased to call her a colleague, a friend and an excellent library staff member."

Congratulations, Jeanne!

"Minimum" dues increase

With the start of the new year comes the famous (or infamous) "minimum" dues increase. The monthly increase for full dues paying members in 2009 is \$1.50 for full time employees (a person who works 41 to 80 hours a pay cycle) and \$1.13 for a part time employee (a person who works 40 hours or less per pay cycle). Fee payers (those who don't pay full dues) will get a letter from Council 5 explaining their increase, which is approximately 85% of the member's fee.

Yes, a \$1.50 sounds like a lot. This amount is calculated by the AFSCME

International Union Constitution based on contract raises throughout the country. The bulk of this increase is directed to AFSCME Council 5 for the services that we receive including but not limited to our Field Representative's salary, handling of grievances, training of officers and stewards, organizing new members. Another portion goes to the AFSCME International which provides specialized trainings, support for organizing, and legal counsel.

For those people who are wondering why didn't we vote on this, our constitution allows us to do the minimum dues

increase automatically. A larger dues increase would have to be voted on by the membership.

To put this dues increase in perspective, the lowest paid employee will be getting \$.3375 per hour raise in January or \$54.00 per month. The \$1.50 dues increase is slightly more than four hours per month of the pay raise in 2009.

If you have any questions, please direct them to AFSCME Local 2822 Treasurer Walter Hanson. His e-mail address is on the back of this news letter.

Meet Janna Carlson, Membership Secretary

Someone once told me, “You know, you’re really quite a “MEL.” Oh ya? So what is a “MEL”? For everyone’s information a MEL is someone who hangs out at Mel’s Garage, Mel’s Grocery, Mel’s Bowling Alley, Mel’s Pool Hall, and Mel’s Kitchen. You get the idea. Well, ya, I guess I qualify for that. I’m just a Melish sort of person. But how great would Superman be if there were no Clark Kents?

This Mel graduated from St. Cloud State during the last Great Ronald Reagan Recession. There were no jobs to be had anywhere. Not even as a waitress. Since I had to eat and have a roof

over my head I had to take a job at the Metrodome selling peanuts and beer on Commission. Glamorous? Yes? Not really. There is nothing like the perspiration that goes into carrying warm waxy cups of beer up and down those endless steps.

Long story short., Hennepin County was glamorous to me after that neck breaking career. So when they offered me a job, it was the first “real job” I had ever gotten close to. Benefits? I didn’t even know I had them. All I knew was that I had a paycheck I could count on. I signed my membership card to local 2822 on my first day and have been a

loyal, if not active, member ever since.

I became active in the union to pay back some of what I had taken over the years since I had become a member. I realized what a somnambulant (sleep walking) demon non-involvement is. How did I get so old and know so little about something so important to my life? The answer totally eludes me. Is it because I’m a MEL? Possibly. But now I am an involved and informed MEL. We MELs of the world need to step forward and become involved so we don’t give all the other MELs a bad name. Who knows, one of us may actually be Superman.



What do you know about your union’s history?

- 1932** Small group of white-collar, professional employees in Madison, Wisconsin, fearing they would lose their civil service jobs to **political patronage**, formed the Wisconsin State Employees Association (WSEA), which would later become Council 24 (Wisconsin State Employees Union).
- 1934** Similar employee associations emerge in 19 states: they become AFSCME in the AFL under the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE).
- 1935** AFSCME is granted a charter by the AFL: Arnold Zander is chosen as AFSCME’s first International president.
- 1955** AFSCME membership passes 100,000.
- 1961** President John Kennedy issues Executive Order 10988, legitimizing collective bargaining for federal employees and creating a favorable atmosphere for all public employees.
- Mid 1960s** More states pass collective bargaining laws; AFSCME’s demands for **respect for public workers become linked with the civil rights movement** and progressive groups that protest economic, racial and social justice.
- 1968** Sanitation workers in Memphis strike for union recognition and against the city’s discriminatory practices; Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. marches with the striking workers and is assassinated; the city agrees to recognize the workers’ union, AFSCME Local 1733.
- 2008** AFSCME has 1.4 million members.

Who we are

AFSCME’s 1.4 million members provide the vital services that make America happen. With members in hundreds of different occupations—from nurses to corrections officers, child care providers to sanitation workers—AFSCME is the voice of the dedicated workers who take care of America, and is a leading advocate for all working families.

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
Mail Code N728

Name _____

Job Title _____

Work Location _____

Mailcode _____

Phone _____

I want to sign up as a full member.

I want to sign up for Delta Dental.



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.

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

A New Voice deadline is January 7.

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.



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