

# Health Insurance contentious and complicated

By Molly Malecki

The most difficult aspect of negotiations, so far, has been the Health Insurance issue. Almost daily some aspect of the issue changes. A bright-green *Table Talk* was sent out explaining the “interim” health plan. The next week a different “interim” plan was proposed. Two days later that plan ran up against a brick wall. And we are just talking about the “interim” plan.

What is an interim health plan and why is it necessary. Our insurance benefit is part of our contract. But the County Benefits Department has to begin an open enrollment for health insurance for all employees in November. But until our entire contract is ratified (voted on and approved by all members, and approved by the County Board ), they don’t know what to tell employees the cost will be. So they have to come up with an “interim” plan. This will cause there to be two open enrollments: one enrollment in November for the “interim” plan and one in January, 2006 for the new health plan for most of 2006.

The members of the local will have to vote on the interim health plan on November 1st at the Local Membership Meeting at the Ridgedale Library at 7:00 P.M.. The interim that the Table Team has tentatively approved will be less costly to the employees than the one described in the *Table Talk*. By “less

costly,” I mean as far as premium is concerned.

The union negotiations Table Team will continue to work on the final health plan for 2006 and 2007. The negotiations team is working to keep the single premium fully paid by the employer and keep the employees’ premium contribution for family coverage as low as possible. But there will be new expenses associated with the new plan. There will be some higher co-pays; there will be co-pays where there didn’t used to be co-pays. The *Table Talk* explained how the cost of health insurance is skyrocketing nationally, and it is not reasonable to expect that each of us will not incur more expenses. The negotiating team is trying to minimize the cost to the most people. It cannot be the same for everyone; some will have to pay more because of their medical situations or their choices. People will have the option to choose clinics or hospitals with lower co-pays.

Please continue to check our web site <http://www.afscme2822.org/> for updates. We have put the “interim” health insurance proposal on the Web site. Plan to attend the Membership Meeting at the Ridgedale Library at 7:00 p.m. to vote on the interim health plan and to be further updated. It is important that you attend the meeting to find out what is happening with the Action Team and the Strike Team, also.



## November Membership Meeting

Tuesday, November 1  
7:00 p.m.  
Ridgedale Library

December Membership Meeting  
Tuesday, December 6  
7:00 p.m.  
Brookdale Library

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

## Delta Dental

By Ann Baird  
Delta Dental Trustee

In case you are not aware, we have a dental plan through AFSCME. It is called the DELTA DENTAL TRUST. We have had this plan since 1985.

Recently, this plan has been completely updated. The plan is now self funded which will improve the operation of the plan and lower administration costs.

With this plan you are entitled to cleanings twice a year/x-rays once a year free of charge. Peridontics, endodontics, oral surgery, basic services plus more are covered up to 90% with a small deductible of \$25.00 a year. Delta will pay a maximum of \$1500

(Dental continued on page 2)

(Dental continued from page 1)  
per person per year.

As part of this update, we have been able to change the enrollment year from June-May to a calendar year that will coincide with the county open enrollment. By now, you should have received a letter with a membership enrollment form from AFSCME. In red letters on the envelope it states IMMEDIATE RESPONSE REQUIRED. This is very important. In order to insure continued coverage, you must complete and submit the form. If you are re-enrolling, with the change in "enrollment year", you have a once in a lifetime opportunity to have two yearly maximums in a 15-month period. October to December will count as one "year." The only catch is that you MUST complete an enrollment form.

In completing this form, part F "Group Enrollment. Information" referring to employer should be left blank. The employer in this case is AFSCME. Whether you've never signed up before or have been utilizing this policy for years, you MUST, I repeat again, MUST complete a form. It makes no difference if you are re-enrolling or enrolling for the first time. Completing the form and submitting to AFSCME (not Delta or Hennepin County) no

later than Nov. 9, 2005 is the only way to insure continued or new coverage on January 1, 2006. Coverage will be by calendar year beginning January 1, 2006. If you have not received the letter/form by the end of October, please contact Cindy Pince @ 651-287-0564. Forms can be mailed using the envelope that accompanies the enrollment form or faxed to: AFSCME Council 5, Dental Trust 651-455-1311, or scan and e-mail the form to: [dental@afscmemn.org](mailto:dental@afscmemn.org). There will be access to an enrollment form on the AFSCME Council Web site: [www.afscmemn.org](http://www.afscmemn.org).

If you miss this enrollment period, there will not be another one until open enrollment for coverage year 2007, unless you experience a qualifying event such as marriage, birth or loss of coverage.

Recently Delta has changed the issuance of member cards. These cards are no longer obtained through AFSCME. To obtain a new card contact Delta directly @ 651-406-5900 and follow the voice prompts.

**Remember—**  
DO NOT FORGET NOV 9! If you do, you will NOT have coverage on January 1, 2006.

## Picket Captains wanted

Last time we negotiated our contract, we settled for a poor deal in large part because we were not ready to strike. Let's not let it happen again!

When most people think of a strike, they think of pickets. The picket committee has been busy planning and coordinating already. Picket sites have been determined.

The next step is to recruit picket "captains" to help organize the substantial army of people who might be striking. This will involve attending one sixty - minute (or so) training and being assigned a group of 10 to 20 people to coordinate, schedule, cheer on, etc. It's not a huge commitment, but it is a very important one.

If you will help, please contact Steve Martinetti at 612-596-9328, the chairman of the picket committee for locals 34, 552, 2822, 2864, and 2938, during your break or non-work hours.

## Good and welfare

A member recently wrote: "I noticed for the first time that vacation donation requests were in the last issue. Can I submit one for the next issue for a co-worker? In HSD, the Centralized Imaging Unit, in Century Plaza, we have a worker, and fellow union member, named Jean Nelson, id # 991306701 (there is another Jean Nelson at HCMC, thus the id # is necessary for donations). Jean has been out of work since June 27, undergoing radiation therapy and chemotherapy for a brain tumor. She really needs any vacation donations that anyone in our union can contribute. Jean is a well liked, well respected, hard working staff member of the CIU. Thanks much."

If each of us would donate one hour, it would help Jean through a really difficult time.

The way to make vacation donations is easy and only takes a few minutes. On the Hennepin County Intranet site, click Employee Services, Forms, Human Resources Forms, under Vacation Donation Authorization click see interactive version, click Vacation Waiver Donation and Authorization form, enter your I-Notes sign on, fill out form. When you click "Select Recipient" enter the name. Sign and submit.

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## Midwest School for Women Workers

By Claudette Moran

This was my second opportunity to attend the Midwest Summer School for Women Workers. It was held in East Lansing, Michigan this year.

One motto that I carry with me goes like this, "Don't anticipate. Just participate." That, in a nutshell, is how the weekend went for me. It was even more fun to have Jennifer McNair and Zanona Anderson come along as well. The conference had the flare and musical talent of Motown, along with the camaraderie and spirit of what a union means to all of us.

My class was on leadership. We were in larger groups this time around, and thus, formed a solidarity circle.

Through our solidarity circle, we shared our struggles and triumphs while we created a foundation of leadership skills throughout our lives.

As a solidarity circle, we were to also create a skit to share with the larger group about the struggles of every day life. Our skit was regarding a single mother bringing her ill child to various medical facilities to resolve an asthma attack, and on top of that, not having health insurance. In a nutshell, our solidarity group stated that "we are sick and tired of being sick and tired." We ended it on a positive note with karaoke for all, and that included men and children too.

# Council 5 Convention

By Lynn Stetler

These are remarks that I made at the first annual AFSCME Council 5 convention in Duluth, Minnesota on October 7 and 8, 2005. The remarks were prepared in support of a resolution put forth by the University of Minnesota Clerical Workers Local 3800, which was amended to making a donation to the Duluth Local of AMFA and the Minneapolis/St. Paul Local 33. After about 20 minutes of debate, the resolution was defeated. It was very disheartening to hear most of the very negative discussion, but we felt that we may have gotten about 20% of the vote.

My remarks:

My name is Lynn Stetler, representing Local 2822, Hennepin County Clerical and Related Unit. Has anyone in this room not been affected by Northwest Airlines? I know I have—for me, the support of this resolution is very personal. My husband is one of those AMFA mechanics on strike. He has worked at Northwest Airlines for 25 years through good and bad times—including take-a ways, wage concessions, useless stock options and two previous strikes. I'm here today asking my AFSCME brothers and sisters in Council 5 to support this strike and the brothers and sisters on this picket line. They are in the fight of their lives and need our help.

The Council 5 Resolutions Committee has decided not to support this resolution and distributed a document yesterday to back their decision. I read with interest this correspondence between the IAM and AMFA. You need to hear some facts that dispute the IAM's response. I'd like to ask you a question—would you vote for an agreement that was put together over scotch and cigars with the CEO of your company and your union president? That's what happened with the IAM in 2001. Some people like to talk about AMFA coming in and raiding the IAM after what occurred in 2001. This insinuates that mechanics were forced to switch representation. The truth is they had a democratic election-and AMFA won. And the workers won because they got a labor

agreement that they all had input on and voted on. Why show hostility towards a group that exercised their right to vote? This hostility towards other union members is very upsetting to me. WE like to refer to each other as sisters and brothers and we talk a lot about solidarity. I embrace that notion. But where is the dignity and respect for these workers?

If this company is successful at busting this union, who is next? Not just other airline unions are at risk. We all are. All unions are under attack. Everyone is watching to see what will happen with AMFA and Northwest Airlines.

We need to stand together for all workers. All striking workers deserve our support. Please vote yes on this resolution to support AMFA. No matter what color your t-shirt or the letters on your jacket, we are all union members who believe that an injury to one is an injury to all. Thank you.

**Editor's note:** Local 2822 has made a financial donation to the benefit fund of the Minneapolis AMFA members to help them provide meals for those on the picket line.

## AFSCME Council 5 Inaugural Convention

By Molly Malecki

As I anticipated the First Annual, Inaugural, Convention was an exciting, energetic event. (If you didn't have energy, you didn't belong there.) On all three days, events began at 9:00 or 10:00, and the delegates were given box lunches, and the activities ran through lunch until 6:00 to 7:00.

The only politicians asked to speak were potential gubernatorial candidates. Governor Pawlenty respectfully declined to address us. Those who did address us were Mike Hatch, Steve Kelly, Kelly Doran and Becky Lourey. All of them are very interesting; we will all have to do our homework to learn more about each of them.

Those attending from our local were Zanona Anderson, Julie Axtel, Ann Baird, Nancy Crouse, Dawn Klingman,

Neng Lor, Claudette Moran, Lynn Stetler and me.

The highlight of the convention was the announcement that the clerical workers at HCMC are now members of Council 5. That is nearly **six hundred** new members. AFSCME has been trying to organize those workers since 1979, but with the new efforts and resources of Council 5, the job is finally done. Council 5 is working diligently to organize childcare workers in Hennepin, Ramsey and St. Louis counties and is having good success.

I could go on and on, but I will let the others who attended, write about their "highlights."

## Scholarship time

School's back in session, so it's time to think about scholarships again. The AFSCME Family Scholarship Program for 2006 has been announced. Under the program, thirteen scholarships of \$2,000 each will be awarded to the winners, selected from the applications that meet the eligibility requirements. 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 degree program at an accredited institution.

Applications can be downloaded from the AFSCME Web site at [www.afscme.org](http://www.afscme.org). Applications must be postmarked no later than December 31, 2005.

## Thank yous

From Jan St. Dennis: I want to thank everyone of you that donated me your hours. It has been a very hard time for me with months of recuperating. I will be finally going back to work half days for two months—after being away for 5 1/2 months. I am looking forward to returning. Your generosity was greatly appreciated in my time of need. Again, thank you.

From LaToya Wilson: Thanks to all of my colleagues for donating vacation time while I was on maternity leave. It was GREATLY appreciated, and I look forward to donating to another colleague during their time of need. Once again thank you from the bottom of my heart.

## Local 2822 Officers

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Lynn Stetler	952-847-8569
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Bridget Walker	612-596-8080
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Nichelle DeCora	612-348-8841
Jennifer McNair	612-596-8000
Merry Brigham	612-348-9358
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<b>Good &amp; Welfare</b>	
Heather Clark	952-847-8523
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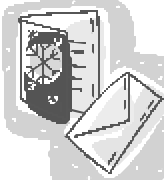
# Bulletin Board

**The New Voice deadline is November 1.** 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

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## Steward's List

Steward	Phone	Department	Location
Zanona Anderson	763-245-8308	MHP	A.Y. McDonald Bldg.
Julie Axtell	612-348-6186	Service Center	Gov't Ctr. Service Ctr.
Nichelle DeCora	612-348-8841	CFASD	Planning and Development 23 <sup>rd</sup> Floor, Gov't Center
Mary Dwyer	612-596-7894	HSD	Health Services Building
Jody Goers	612-596-8080	Sheriff	Jail
Walter Hanson	763-569-3683	Service Center	Brookdale Service Center
Janet Keefe	612-348-2564	EA/FAD	Century Plaza - 3rd Floor
Angela Hallquist Mangen	612-596-2100	Service Center	Eden Prairie Service Center
Jennifer McNair	612-596-8000	Sheriff	Jail
Lisa Shephardson	612-287-7069	HSPHD	1007 W Broadway
Lynn Stetler	952-847-8569	Library	Ridgedale Library/CTS, Collection Management
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:

**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.