

Negotiation's planning: An early start

Now that the election is over, the union activists at Hennepin County had to fill the void. (They don't know what to do with free time). The Hennepin County Policy Committee convened a group of members from most of the AFSCME locals to begin planning for the next round of negotiations. After all, our contract is up in December **2007**. Eleven members of Local 2822 attended the meeting to start thinking about what role they want to take in the next successful contract campaign.

By most accounts our last contract was successful. We fought off take-aways like single members paying a health insurance premium, part time employees paying part of the health care, and losing stability pay. We got a substantial raise. None of that was a gift from the employer. We were united; we showed our power; and management knew we were ready to take serious action.

various levels of joint efforts and cooperation up to and including a potential merger of the County and Minneapolis library systems be proposed. The resolution was approved at the 11-07-06 County Board meeting, "A Committee on the Future of Libraries" was established.

There are many issues to consider with this resolution, but the bottom line for all concerned locals is job security for all union workers. Council 5 Executive Director, Eliot Seide has met with Commissioner McLaughlin to express this concern. Locals 2822, 2864 and 99 will continue to meet and explore concerns and solutions to this issue.

That was last year. We don't get to rest on those laurels. We have to get ready for the next onslaught of take-aways and to increase the respect for the work we do, which hopefully will result in reasonable, livable wage increases. We all know that health insurance will be a major issue. It will be a bigger issue than it was last time.

It is not too soon for members to let the officers of this local know how you would like to help, or, at least, that you want to help. In the next few months we will give you lots of opportunities. Remember, you are the union. There is not some magical group that descends on the county and gets us a good contract. It is the efforts and work of all union members.

Vacation donation request

Joan Haraldson, an OSIII in Resource Services at the Library, is asking for vacation donation. Her husband, Darrel, a former Hennepin employee, is seriously ill, and has been hospitalized for over a month. He is looking at a lengthy recovery when he finally gets home and Joan will be the main caregiver.

Making a vacation donation is very simple 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. The details of how Vacation Donations work are listed at the end.

December Membership Meeting



Tuesday, December 5
7:00 p.m.
Brookdale Library

January Membership Meeting
To be announced

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

Future of libraries Hennepin/Minneapolis

By Lynn Stetler

Members of AFSCME Locals 2822 and 2864, which represent library workers in Hennepin County libraries, and members of Local 99, which represents most of Minneapolis Public Library workers, have begun to meet as a result of a recent resolution brought forward by Hennepin County Commissioner Peter McLaughlin.

Commissioner McLaughlin's resolution stated that the Minneapolis library system has had declining local government aid revenues, which has caused the Minneapolis library system to be underfunded, which has caused library hours to be reduced, and that all county residents should have good library services. He proposed that a committee of six be created to study these issues. And he recommended that by February 1, 2007 potential solutions, including potential legislative solutions, that might include

Election success

Thank you

By Molly Malecki

Working families in Minnesota and America have to feel that the election of November 7 was a triumph for them.

I want to acknowledge the members of Local 2822 who gave of their time to help make this happen. Thank you to Ann Baird, Neng Lor, Nancy Crouse, Lori Berzins, and Keven Larson for working numerous phone banks. Thanks to Walter Hanson and Ann Baird for doing a literature drop with County Commissioner Stenglien. And a special thank you to those who took a day off work on election day to Get Out The Vote: Neng Lor and Nancy Crouse. These folks can all be proud that they had some part in bringing our values back to government.

The following appeared on the Council 5 Website, AFSCMEMN.org, with a picture of Neng:

Neng Lor of Local 2822 was one of 200+ volunteers who made more than 30,000 calls to persuade and get voters to the polls. AFSCME volunteers filled phone banks in Albert Lea, Austin, Brainerd, Duluth, Faribault, Mankato, Minneapolis, Moose Lake, Red Wing, Rochester, South St. Paul, Windom and Worthington.

Our energy and political expertise are credited with making the difference in many tight races. Nearly all of our PEO-PLC-endorsed candidates won with just a few casualties, most notably Mike Hatch for governor.

Here are some of the highlights:

1. Pro-public service legislators took back the MN House by picking up 19 seats
2. Pro-public service legislators got stronger control of the MN Senate by picking up 6 seats
3. The transportation amendment passed for better roads and transit
4. MN led the nation in voter turnout with 3 in 5 eligible voters casting ballots
5. Tim Walz helped shift power in the U.S. House with a surprise win in

the 1st CD

6. Worker-friendly representatives took back the U.S. House by picking up 27 seats
7. Worker-friendly senators took back the U.S. Senate by picking up 6 seats
8. Voters rebuked Bush, the war, and the right wing by electing Amy Klobuchar
9. Roughly 75% of union voters supported union-endorsed candidates nationally
10. Union households accounted for 1 out of 4 voters nationally

Minnesota voters sent clear messages that support our workers' agenda. Voters said it's time for change; education, health care and transportation matter. A solid majority of voters rejected the extreme, right-wing partisanship of Minnesota's Republican legislative leadership that led to gridlock at the Capitol.

For complete election results, visit: <http://electionresults.sos.state.mn.us/20061107/>

VMOs grow the union

By Neng Lor

Curious about what your union is doing? How it benefits you? Well, something that interests me and hopefully just might do the same for you is the task of a Volunteered Member Organizer (VMO). VMOs are a vital group in our union. The VMO program was established in 2001 and consists of dedicated representatives that believe in and supports worker's rights, and "dignity and respect." Its participants are staff members of AFSCME and union members who are taking lost time from their jobs. Those taking lost time are paid by the union just as their current employers would pay them.

VMO's purpose is to construct the expansion and strength of the union. The union's reason to expand is to keep its strength. The idea for keeping strength is to defend what unionized workers campaigned hard for. And to keep the strength the vision is being deployed externally from work places, hoping to reach unorganized workers so they can receive the same benefits, or perhaps more. VMOs visit workers at

home and at work, speaking to people about the importance of having a union. VMOs work to permit unorganized workers to have the benefits and the luxury of union representation. That way when they do get to the bargaining table they'll have the charisma to tell their employer the hard work they do and what they believe they're worth.

The world goes through dramatic changes all the time and most of the time it's done while you're asleep and have no clue. So, be aware, there are private contractors who want to out-source your job and politicians who want to take away your right to bargain for a fair wage and beyond that, some want to end the every little union activity in your work area.

So, how does the union fight back and stand ground to defend your simplest morals? One way is building! Building or recruiting comes from the help of VMOs by helping unorganized workers join our union. But even building is difficult; there are organizations that will stall and even deny unions from organizing. If unions aren't allowed to build and private contractors keep on outsourcing jobs and the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) stalls or denies workers from joining or forming a unions, as they already have, it will cause harm in the worst way. With union representation at its smallest number, labor is back to square one; when, where, and why workers vigorously formed National Labor Union (NLU) in 1866, the first national labor federation ever in the United States. It created possible ways for other organizations to improve working conditions, such as fighting for eight hour day work shifts. And do keep in mind it was fought for, **not given**.

Visit www.afscme.org for more information on VMOs.

Delta Dental Enrollment

The deadline for submitting **changes** to or enrolling in the Delta Dental plan is December 1, 2006.

If you have any questions, please contact Chris Domeier at 651-287-0520 or Cindy Pince, Delta Dental Plan Administrator at 651-287-0564.

AFSCME Council 5 Convention

By Lynn Stetler

One of the things I liked best about the Council 5 convention is the ability to network with others. Through my work in organizing a hospitality room in Duluth last year and working with the Northwest Airlines Solidarity Committee, I have come to know and respect members in Local 3937 and Local 3800, both from the University of Minnesota. What a great group of people—very committed to social justice and responsibility, and committed to growing their locals. In fact, Barb Bezat, President of Local 3937 accepted the award this year for Local Union Development. It is great to see the passion in the hearts of others. Like our local, they had many fair share members, and figured out how to engage these members to become full dues paying members. I'm hoping to get more information from Barb and her local to help us engage our fair shares.

I also had the privilege to meet Margaret Anderson Kelliher, the new Speaker of the Minnesota House of Representatives. I could feel at the first handshake that she was up to the task of the demanding work this next session at the state legislature.

Thanks to the local for sending me to this convention.

Retirement Workshop at convention

By Nancy Crouse

At the AFSCME Council 5 Convention, I attended a dynamic seminar on retirement. The workshop blew me away. I recommend that every county employee, not walk, but run to your nearest state or county retirement seminar and take it yourself. The power point presentation was short, to the point and fabulous by Dave Bergstrom from MSRS and John Paulson from PERA. They were extremely knowledgeable with anecdotes, jokes and wise cracks along the way.

The discussion focused on the three legs of retirement income: pensions,

Social Security and savings and savings plans.

They discussed how to calculate your pension amount and when you should apply for your pension. They discussed what things to consider at retirement time, like your severance package and what you can do now to increase your financial well being before you retire.

The laws have recently changed regarding IRAs and 401Ks. It is imperative in order to get the most out of your pension system to keep up with law changes and the advantages these may give you. What you do now will affect your future. Take a retirement seminar now!

An injury to one

By Keven Larson

The Council 5 convention provided many opportunities for engaging and enlightening encounters. Aside from the chance that it afforded to meet savvy, committed AFSCME members from across the state, and to learn from their varied experiences and viewpoints, what I found most useful was the workshop entitled "Building Solidarity," conducted by Deborah Rosenstein from the U of M Labor Education Service.

As a starting point for discussion, it began with the maxim, well known to all labor activists, "An injury to one is an injury to all." Members then discussed the many ways that exclusionary behavior undercuts union goals and solidarity—which is an essential feature of any successful union action. Efforts to divide and exclude are as old as the labor movement itself. These have included a variety of actions, from excluding classes of people from union participation, based on race, gender, etc., to excluding individuals, based on personal relationships. Such efforts have always weakened unions. Expanding awareness of such divisive behavior, discouraging it, and preventing it, are key to union strength and solidarity.

Just a thought. . .

From Lori Berzins, co-chief steward

"WELCOME BROTHER STEVE" –
"THANK YOU SISTER LISA"

Huh?! Sounds kind of corny, doesn't it? That's what I thought the first time I was exposed to AFSCME members addressing each other in this manner. However, I have come to realize it is an endearing title given as a sign of hope and solidarity. Although most union gatherings are not conducted with such formalities, this was a respected tradition honored at both of the recent AFSCME conventions I have been fortunate enough to participate in.

Many valuable American traditions are fading, but, thank goodness, AFSCME keeps on fighting! AFSCME believes strongly in the traditions of organizing, together as a team, to gain power in attaining and securing fair compensation and respect for all hard working persons.

We must not forget the roots, accomplishments, and the blood, sweat and tears put forth by labor union members before us (yes, there has actually been blood shed). Our recognition and rights are things that we, and generations before us, have had to fight for.

I urge you to seek out a friend or family member from an earlier generation who may have been a member of a labor union. Ask them about their experience. I would bet they remember the use of the endearing address of Brother or Sister.

Now, of course, we would all look pretty silly addressing our co-workers as "Brother..." or "Sister..." but, we must realize we all do have an AFSCME bond. Human bonds of all natures require nurturing to grow strong and healthy. We must realize the benefits and value of this bond we all share. I find it sad and discouraging that this bond we all share is nearly invisible in most of our worksites. We need to take part and show our strength and solidarity! Our local is very large and our potentials rely on your participation!

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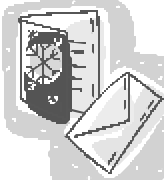
Bulletin Board

The New Voice deadline is December 5. 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. 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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Walter Hanson	763-569-3683	Service Center	Brookdale Service Center
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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.