

Day on the Hill 2009

Sixteen members of Local 2822 chose to take vacation time or special leave without pay to have their voices heard at the Capitol in St. Paul on a freezing March 11. They joined with twelve hundred other members of AFSCME Council 5 from all over Minnesota to express their concerns to their legislators and to the governor. The message was to encourage the legislators to have the courage to fairly raise the revenue needed for us to continue providing vital services to the citizens of Minnesota.

Our priorities, when speaking with our legislators, were to create a strong economy for the **common good:**

- Sustain funding for quality education, transportation, health and human services.
- Restore aid to local governments to stabilize property taxes.
- Raise revenue fairly, including fair taxes on persons earning more

than \$250,000.

- Protect and create good jobs to jumpstart the economy.
- Stop privatization that threatens the quality of public services.
- Move toward affordable health care for all Minnesotans.

One attendee, Daryl Arola, convinced several legislators, including Rep. Jeanne Poppe, to remove themselves from authorship of a bill to privatize fish hatcheries.

The following are observations from a few of the Local 2822 members who attend Day on the Hill:

Lynn Stetler, president Local 2822, libraries

It is always great to head to the State Capitol for AFSCME Day on the Hill on what always seems to be a cold and windy day in March. This year was no exception. I arrived believing that most of the out-state attendees would not be there due to the

previous day's snow-storm. I was glad to be proved wrong. Attendance was great.

One thing I noticed right away was that there was a big change in the appearance of the crowd—a much younger group was also in attendance this year. I especially noticed it at the rally in the Rotunda. I was on the second floor and looked up and down and around the circle and was delighted to see many faces younger than my own my middle-aged mug. I spoke to a few first timers who were very excited to deliver our message of **For the Common Good** to their legislators.

Our Capitol Building is a wonderful building, and there are many committed legislators who support us and many who don't. The beauty of this day is that we get a chance to spread our message, and the legislators are required to hear it. AFSCME rocked the Rotunda—and that is always a good thing.

(Day continued on page 2)

April						
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		

April Membership Meeting

Wednesday, April 1
7:00 p.m.
Central Library

May Membership Meeting

Wednesday, May 6
7:00 p.m.
Ridgedale 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>

"Labor is prior to, and independent of, capital. Capital is only the fruit of labor and could never have existed if labor had not first existed. Labor is the superior of capital and deserves much the higher consideration."

— Abraham Lincoln,
message to Congress
12/3/1861

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Dirk Shot, membership secretary, libraries

I met with legislators and mainly learned that if we get everything we want, including taxes raised, we will still be short. And there will be cuts. I took a workshop on the budget process which was very informative. The governor is a roadblock to increasing revenue to mitigate the budget crisis. Democrats in the house do not have the votes to override a veto by the governor. The stimulus will not do much to help beyond the current biennium. Some legislators are also entertaining the idea of sales tax on clothes.

Molly Malecki, vice president, service centers

One of the most important things

stressed to those of us attending Day on the Hill was how important it is for everyone to contact their legislators and let them know their concerns. Yes, we were all there one day, but we need to continually get the message to them. We need to be aware what is going on in the legislature and how our legislators are voting and let them know how we feel and why. As stated in the beginning of this article, one AFSCME member got his legislator to take her name off of a bill. We can't expect every legislator to know the ins and outs of every bill that is proposed. So we have to be alert and let them know when something is wrong.

My representative, Debra Hilstrom, has introduced a fifty million dollar bill to raise court and related fees. She feels this is something the governor would probably not veto. She doesn't feel that revenue can be

raised by raising taxes as there will not be an ability to override the governor's veto. Three of the four Republican representatives who voted to override the governor's veto of the transportation bill last year are no longer in the House. She feels there is not much incentive for Republicans to do that again.

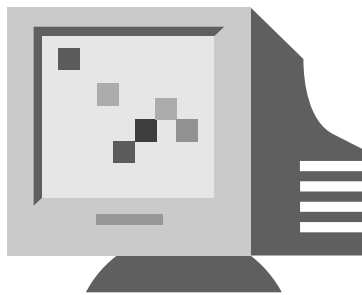
Representative Hilstrom's fifty million dollar bill is a very short step in solving the 4.6 billion dollar deficit that Minnesota still faces. We all need to be paying attention and to encourage our legislators to do what is needed for Minnesota.

You can reach your representative by calling the general number 651-296-2146. The operator will connect you with the correct representative.

What are you looking at?!

No doubt the persons to whom this is directed are not looking at the union newsletter. But maybe you work next to one of these people or are friends of theirs and can somehow get their attention.

Your work computer is not yours. It is given to you to use for **work**. Apparently this is a difficult concept for many. More and more employees are being disciplined for misuse of their county computers. At a time when the county is looking for ways to save money, a really fast one is to fire people for computer misuse. On what basis can the union save those jobs? Nobody ever told them? What is the first key you



hit when you sign onto the computer? You just said you understand the rules. If you don't, then go ask. The county has been pulling employee's hard drives. And everywhere you have been will be found.

For those for whom this is new information, the following is copied from Cliff Robinson's article in the Local 34 newsletter:

There are certain things you cannot do and places you can never go. You cannot look at PORN of any kind at all! You cannot use the county computer to store information about another job or

business that you may have, or use the computer to run another business.

You cannot go to certain web sites, such as the Department of Motor Vehicles, and look up information for which you have no business reason to look up. The same goes for any other web site that contains private information for which you have no business reason to look.

If you're caught spending a lot of time playing on the computer, you can be disciplined – or fired – if that time is work time for which you have been paid. That is considered theft.

Your reservations are waiting

By John Christensen

Are you the type of personality who enjoys intimate, candle light dinners?

Long walks on the beach, pondering foot prints in the sand?

Spending quiet times with those close to you?

Snuggling up in front of a fire?

Sharing special occasions with family and friends?

At this very moment, in St Paul, reservations are being made for you to experience these memorable moments! BUT, you'll NOT be taking pleasure in the planned activities.

Think of the amount of time you'll spend eating your mac & cheese by candle light if you can't afford the light bill.

Enjoying long walks on the beach,

collecting aluminum cans to cash in to help supplement your food stamp allotment.

Huddling together with your family to keep warm, because you can barely manage the cost of heat.

Really, really quiet times at home, because TV and telephone are beyond your budget, and you can't afford to go out.

Sharing endless hours with family and friends in ER waiting rooms, because you've lost your health insurance.

This is what our future looks like as former public employees!

Tim Pawlenty's proposed budget will likely result in Hennepin County discarding 1000 staff.

Don't think you'll be touched by the Governors' plans? Ask Lynn Stetler, who's been with the county for 33 years and recently had her position

eliminated, because of budget cuts in the library. Now she has to adapt to a new work location and different duties that she is not accustomed to.

Ask Cabdirashid Aadam, who was involuntarily transferred from the Government Center to Ridgedale due to budget constraints in the service centers and spends hours weekly, commuting on buses from his home in Minneapolis,.

Unless we raise our voices above the level of a squeak, telling those in St Paul, who are making decisions to gut funding for public services that we do that are needed and valuable, we will be leading diminished lives in a diminished society.

If you ever wanted to share your thoughts with those who serve the **common good** in elected office, this might be your last chance to let them know the importance of the **work you do**
FOR THE COMMON GOOD.

Your personal e-mail address, please

As part of the executive board's plans to begin negotiations, it would be helpful to have the personal e-mail addresses of as many members as possible. There may be occasions when the negotiating team needs to contact as many members as possible in a very short time, when it would take too long to get a *Table Talk* out. And there may be issues that would not be good to send through county e-mail (see article "What are you looking at?!").

Please send your personal e-mail address, name, department and work

location to this personal e-mail address: Mmafscme2822@aol.com and we will set up a data base to keep you informed on the negotiations process.

Unpaid leave

The Star Tribune reported on March 4, 2009 that "Hennepin County department directors will have to take three days of unpaid leave in 2009 to help relieve the county's budget crunch." This is a 1% pay cut for them. There are thirty department directors. Three hundred and ten managers are also being asked to take voluntary unpaid leave.

The county board froze their salaries

at last year's levels.

Various departments throughout the county are also asking employees to take Special Leave Without Pay. Jill Alverson, the Director of Taxpayer Services needs 11,000 hours of Special Leave Without Pay from her department's employees to achieve her 2009 budget goals. She wrote, "This option is an important tool for our department and the county in reducing our expenditures and saving jobs."

At this writing no guarantees have been made that taking SLWOP will save any jobs. This is a conversation the union and the employer have to have.

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:

Dirk Schot
East Lake Library
Mail Code 760

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 April 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.



Editor: Molly Malecki

Circulation & distribution:
Annette Tiedens

Local 2822 Officers

President	Lynn Stetler lstetler@hclib.org	952-847-8569 Cell:763-245-8285
Vice president	Molly Malecki molly.malecki@co.hennepin.mn.us	612-543-0272
Treasurer	Walter Hanson walter.hanson@co.hennepin.mn.us	612-543-0272 Urgent: 612-543-0270
Recording Sec.	Jeanne Whetstone jwhetstone@hclib.org	952-847-5455
Co-chief Steward	Theresa Smith theresa.smith@co.hennepin.mn.us	612-596-0826 Cell: 763-267-2077
Co-chief Steward	Marilyn Bell mbell@hclib.org	612-630-6702
Membership Sec.	Dirk Schot djschot@hclib.org	612-630-6552
E-Board at Large		
	Neng Lor neng.lor@co.hennepin.mn.us	612-596-1660
	Ann Baird ann.baird@co.hennepin.mn.us	612-543-0272
	David Salmon dsalmon@hclib.org	612-630-6464
	Genae Nicole genae.nicole@co.hennepin.mn.us	612-543-3366
Delta Dental Trustee	Ann Baird Ann.baird@co.hennepin.mn.us	763-549-3498
Good & Welfare	Heather Clark hclark@hclib.org	952-847-8523

Steward's List

Steward	Phone and e-mail	Department and location
Theresa Smith Co-chief Steward	612-596-0826 Cell: 763-267-2077 theresa.smith@co.hennepin.mn.us	Human Services & Public Health Health Services Bldg
Marilyn Bell Co-chief Steward	612-630-6702 mbell@hclib.org	Library Nokomis Library
Janna Carlson	612-596-1660 janna.carlson@co.hennepin.mn.us	Service Center Maple Grove Ser. Cntr.
Walter Hanson	612-543-0272 Urgent: 612-543-0270 walter.hanson@co.hennepin.mn.us	Service Center Brookdale Ser. Cntr.
Neng Lor	612-596-1660 neng.lor@co.hennepin.mn.us	Service Center Maple Grove Ser. Cntr.
Genae Nicole	612-543-3366 m.g.nicole@co.hennepin.mn.us	MHP Grain Exchange Bldg.
Dirk Schot	612-630-6552 djschot@hclib.org	Library East Lake Library
Kathy Sell	612-543-0060 Kathleen.I.Sell@co.hennepin.mn.us	Service Center Ridgedale Ser. Cntr.
Lynn Stetler	952-847-8569 Cell: 763-245-8285 lstetler@hclib.org	Library Oxboro and Penn Lake Libraries, Collection Management
Velva Stewart	612-596-0722 velva.stewart@co.hennepin.mn.us	MS MHP Grain Exchange Bldg