

Your union—why unions matter

By David Salmon,
E-Board Member,
Ridgedale Library

Across the span of county departments that Local 2822 covers, ever-increasing workplace stressors are being felt. We've seen the catchphrase "Doing more with less" molt into "Doing less with less", though you'd be hard-pressed to find a worker who feels this sentiment truly governs their respective workplace. And with the threat of more budget cuts looming, there's no clear end in sight--and one can only assume more demands will continue to fall upon workers. Yet despite these everyday pressures to perform, who didn't take a coffee break today? A small thing, but one reflective of a basic respect for workers. And while you were taking a coffee break, you continued to accrue sick leave/pto/vacation at your guaranteed wage--two far more substantial things. Maybe you even used some vacation or sick time today for a doctor's visit, a visit made more affordable by your health coverage. Now some of these things may seem trivial or small. But in aggregate they both have worth and provide a degree of security, and collectively they are what built the middle class. And none of them

were just given to workers or unions. They were lobbied for, bargained for, and fought for, with some being fought over for decades. While right now, there are political and corporate forces which want them back.

Collective voice/ collective bargaining

As elsewhere, the labor movement in the U.S. grew out of workers feeling they had no voice in the workplace. With great concern over the safety of their working conditions, about livable wages, and improved terms of employment--and in the face of fixed opposition--workers organized to pursue a fairer workplace. Here in Minnesota in the 1910s and 1920s many worker organizations grew, and unions began gathering strength as conditions led to increased worker unrest. Many workers sacrificed time, effort, even their own existences, to lead the way to a collective voice for collective bargaining. Ultimately the nationally covered event in 1934 of the Minneapolis Truckers Strike brought home the state of labor in this country. Then it took roughly 40 years more here in Minnesota, with the passage of PELRA (Public Employees Labor Relations Act) in 1971, to move defined state worker's rights into the pub-

lic/governmental sphere. The rights which directly affect you.

Yet even now there are new voices asking for PELRA to be repealed, as the lines are blurred between the private and public sectors. The same voices which offer privatization and globalization as solutions, also speak against you.

Your union needs you

There are important issues to deal with, challenging years ahead. There are political and economic pressures coming together that will be better to face together. Please make a resolution to come to just one union meeting this year. Your union needs you.

June						
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			

**June
Membership Meeting**
Wednesday, June 2
7:00 p.m.
Brookdale Library

**July
Membership Meeting**
Wednesday, July 7
7:00 p.m.
Southdale Library

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

Hennepin County/ AFSCME Picnic

Bright spot in the summer

Sunday, August 8
1:00 – 4:00 p.m.
French Regional Park
12605 Co. Rd. 9, Plymouth

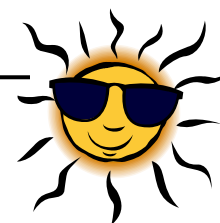
Snow cones, hot dogs, baked beans, potato salad, chips, drinks, activities, swimming area/beach, playground



Door prizes, Magician, Face Painting

Bring a dish to share

Sponsored by
The Hennepin County AFSCME Policy Committee
All AFSCME Locals



E-Board and Steward retreat

By Lynn Stetler, President

Local 2822 Executive Board and stewards spent an afternoon together in April to address some areas of concern to us. We also spent time talking about who we are and who we represent. These leaders work in Human Services Public Health Department, HSPHD, MHP, Service Centers, County Attorney's Office, the Jail and the Libraries. The following are our words to describe ourselves as workers and union leaders. It was a great discussion and time well spent. While we work in many different departments and have many different backgrounds, it was gratifying to see how much we had in common as we shared our values and goals and statements about who we are:

WE ARE: clerical/professional, support staff who enforce the contract, educate our members, involved in the workplace, strive for team excellence, provide quality service, dedicated, front line workers, talented and interesting people, who like to have fun, agitate, do political action in a democratic organization.

WE VALUE: justice, integrity, a good work ethic, protection, fairness, worker welfare, respect, honesty, accomplishment, cooperation, each other and every member, solidarity, knowledge, results orientated and a smile.

OUR GOALS: that every member supports and understands progressive dues, to create an on-line forum with questions and answers, establish health care

savings accounts for retirement, to amend our Constitution, be a dream team and be more visible, improve communication and establish unity for the contract, no layoffs, get 100 new members, to build our local and our leadership, to make members aware and have a sense of pride, to involve and activate members, re-energize our existence, and increase member attendance at our monthly membership meetings.

Times continue to be very challenging for all of us on a daily basis. These are lofty goals but realistic. We can't do any of this without our members' help and support. Let us know what you think about our values and goals.

The county works because we do and we do good work.

Oath of office

By Molly Malecki, Vice-president,
Brookdale Service Center

The following oath of office is the commitment that the eleven Executive Board members of this local have made to the members of this local:

"I promise and pledge that I will perform faithfully and with honor the duties of the office which I now assume in the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. I pledge to fight for a society where all workers can seek economic and social justice through participation in their union and our democracy. I will work for these goals by organizing unorganized workers, mobilizing workers to participate in the political process, and fighting to gain and defend the best possible working standards through contracts and legislation. I acknowledge that it is a privilege to serve in this office and I promise that I will deliver to my successor in office all books...in my possession at the close of my official term."

This is the same oath taken by Council

5 Executive Board members and by the International officers and vice-presidents. Maybe this will help to understand why we do many of the things we do. This is why we are part of a larger organization that hires organizers, why Neng Lor has been a Volunteer Member Organizer, VMO, helping to organize childcare workers. This is why many of us sit night after night at phone banks for candidates or for our issues. That is why we door knock and hand

out flyers. That is why we belong to PEOPLE, the political action fund of our union, to send out flyers to inform members of issues they should be concerned about. That is why some of us sit up all night, contract year after contract year, to get the best possible working standards for our members. Yes, it is truly a privilege to serve and we welcome many, many more of you to step forward and share this privilege.

A wise and frugal government, which shall leave men free to regulate their own pursuits of industry and improvement, and shall not take from the mouth of labor and bread it has earned—this is the sum of good government. – Thomas Jefferson

The labor movement means just this: It is the last noble protest of the American people against the power of incorporated wealth. – Wendell Phillips

With all their faults, trade unions have done more for humanity than any other organization of men that ever existed. They have done more for decency, for honesty, for education, for the betterment of the race, for the developing of character in men, than any other association of men. – Clarence Darrow

International Convention

AFSCME International Convention will begin on June 28 and end July 2, 2010 in Boston, MA. At the May Membership meeting, members elected 5 delegates to represent Local 2822. Those who were elected are Molly Malecki, Dirk Schot, Theresa Smith, Lynn Stetler and Rita Watson. Both Dirk and Rita will be attending their first International Convention. Also elected as an alternate delegate was Tammy Richert, who will attend if a regular delegate is unable to attend.

Each nominated delegate gave a brief speech about why he/she wanted to attend the convention. The general theme was that we are more than a lonesome local sitting out in the prairie in Minnesota; we are part of a much bigger organization and movement. By attending the convention we will have a voice in the direction of the union. And we won't be able to sit back and say, "**They** decided," we will be there and be involved in deciding the direction. Some of the nominees wanted

to be witnesses to history in the making. A new Secretary/Treasurer will be elected, which will pave the way for a new International President. All of this will steer the direction of this union.

All of the delegates will be writing articles describing their experiences and reporting on the highlights.



Visit Local 2822
website:
<http://www.afscme2822.org>

We Beat Back the Pension Attack!

From the AFSCME Council 5 website
May 10, 2010

Editors note: This is one of the reasons we harp on being politically informed and politically active. There is a real threat to our pensions out there, and we have to stay alert. We have to be ready to make that phone call to our legislators when a threat like this occurs. And this is a reason we shouldn't resent our union dues, because some of that money pays for the AFSCME lobbyists who plead our case with legislators and who keep us informed.

Your calls protected public pensions! AFSCME members beat back **Rep. Kiffmeyer's** study to replace defined benefit pensions with defined contribution (401K type) plans. We convinced legislators to remove her study from the **Omnibus Retirement/Pension Bill** and replace it with a fair study that we think will prove conclusively that **defined benefit** pensions are a better deal for workers and taxpayers. **Defined benefits guarantee your retirement income** no matter what happens in the stock market, how long you live, or whether you become disabled. Under a **contribution plan**, workers lose the ability to plan ahead for a comfortable retirement because savings are subject to investment risk and benefits depend on an employee's ability to save. Stay tuned as the pension bill awaits the governor's signature.

Here are some facts about public pensions in Minnesota:

- Public pensions are modest. The average AFSCME retiree has pension benefits of about \$13,000 a year.
- Minnesota's pension systems pay out more than \$2.5 billion, add \$3.3 billion to the state economy, and create 22,500 additional jobs.
- State and local taxes collected on our pensions exceed public employer pension contributions by \$80 million a year.
- 90% of retired public workers stay in Minnesota. That benefits our economy and keeps seniors self-sufficient.
- More than 20% of senior citizens are living in poverty with only Social Security.
- Minnesota taxpayers pay for only 15 cents of every dollar in public pension benefits.
- Most private pensions are 100% employer paid. Our members pay for half of theirs.
- **Defined benefit** focuses on how much is paid to the retired worker. **Defined contribution** focuses on

how much goes into the plan.

- **Defined benefit** plans cost half of what **defined contribution** plans cost to deliver the same benefit due to superior investment management and pooling of longevity risk.

Source: Retirement Systems of Minnesota, "*Measuring the Economic Benefits*"

Editors note again: Are you learning the difference between **DEFINED BENEFIT** and **DEFINED CONTRIBUTION**? There will be a quiz.

Day on the Hill follow-up

By Nancy Crouse, Ridgedale Library

At Day on the Hill this year I went with my buddy to visit our local Minnesota State Senator. After the visit, I received a thank you note from the Senator. A first!!! I have been going to Day on the Hill for at least five years now, and this is the first time that this has occurred, and from a Republican Senator, no less! The star of our union must be rising. We are more important than we used to be in the world of Minnesota politics. Fantastic!

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 President 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."



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Delta Access

651-406-5900 or 1-800-862-6042.

Always refer to your group number 538.

A New Voice deadline is June 2. 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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