

Action team takes action

By Mary Dwyer

United To Make A Difference...

is the theme for this year's contract negotiations with Hennepin County. As you probably already know December 31 is when our current contract expires. In the last couple of months all of the AFSCME locals at Hennepin County have been working together, with Council 5 staff, to help ensure that we get the best contract possible, and we'd like your help.

Currently there are three committees that are meeting regarding negotiations. Those committees are Master Negotiation, Action Team, and Strike Committee. Work has begun in all three committees and will continue throughout the year.

The Action Team is working on a series of events to ensure that we get the word out to as many employees as possible, as well as, staying on top of current information so that we can mobilize when necessary. The obvious goal is to negotiate a contract that works well for all involved, but we do need to be prepared in case a strike is in order. The theme "United to Make a Difference" came after much discussion about walking into negotiations in the spirit of cooperation.

Rally on July 18

July 18 begins the kick-off of negotiations, and we plan to hold a celebration rally on the Government Center

Plaza for all to attend. There will be speakers from the County and AFSCME (we promise they'll be brief) as well as entertainment and a chance to talk to union folks to get more information. In the spirit of coming together we'd like to encourage everyone to attend, and we'd also like you to wear either AFSCME green or Hennepin blue that day. We will also be holding a series of brown bag informational sessions from 12:00 to 1:00 p.m. each Tuesday until the kick off event. Please watch your building for flyers.

Contact the president of your local for more information or to find out how you can get involved. Remember that together we can be **United To Make A Difference**.

For more information about the rally feel free to contact one of the planning committee members: Sue Carr, Mary Dwyer, Walter Hanson, or Kela Williams.

August 30th County Board

On Aug 30 the County Board will decide on the maximum property tax levy for 2006. The Action Committee would like a big showing from our union members to encourage the board to levy enough to pay for the programs that we administer and for salary increases. More information will be distributed as we get closer to this day.



**July
Membership
Meeting**
Tuesday, July 5
7:00 p.m.
Southdale Library

Special Order of Business:

On June 28 the County Board will decide on an Early Retirement-Resignation Incentive Program. If they decide to approve the plan, Local 2822 members will have to vote to approve or not to approve it for our members at the July 5th meeting

August Membership Meeting
Tuesday, August 9
7:00 p.m.
Ridgedale Library

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

Delta Dental

Some new hires have been given the Delta forms during orientation but no instruction as to where to submit them. These forms can be sent through interoffice mail to Ann Baird at Brookdale Service Center, Mail Code N710. Or they can be mailed directly to AFSCME Council 5, 300 Hardman Ave S. Suite 2, South St. Paul 55075-2469, ATTN: Cindy Pince. They are **not** to be sent directly to Delta Dental.

Labor Management Health Care Committee

The Hennepin County Labor /Management Committee has met ten times since March 3 to study the issue of health care coverage for Hennepin County employees. This has been an extremely arduous task. Health insurance is extremely expensive and is more so every year. There are many factors to take into account: cost, quality, keeping Hennepin Faculty Associates and HCMC as choices for members, co-pays, and deductibles.

One factor that the committee decided on was to make a Request for Proposals (RFP) to all possible insurers. Health Partners had committed to an 18% cap on this year's premium. Blue Cross Blue Shield did not have such a commitment. The committee asked them for a letter stating what they would be asking for. Their indirect answer was that a 72% increase would allow them to break even. Last year the figure was 61% to break even, and they asked for a 38% increase. It is obvious that whatever increase they would ask for would be expensive beyond most members' reach.

The committee feels that there will be only one insurance provider at Hennepin County in 2006. Blue Cross Blue Shield now has access to Health Partners clinics. The committee is asking that whoever covers our employees also has available HFA and HCMC. The committee is now waiting for a response to the RFP, and then will have the duty of deciding which provider will give us the best cost and quality.

This is the reason that you will not see an insurance proposal in our contract proposal that will be publicized on June 27. The insurance proposal will come later.



Phone bank success

For the first time in Local 2822's history, an attempt was made to contact every full-dues paying member by telephone to survey them about their concerns for contract negotiations. On Saturday, June 4, we achieved that goal. On that day seven volunteers from this local called the last 350 numbers and interviewed fifty members.

Included in the survey was a question that asked members in what way they are willing to help get a good contract. We have a marvelous list of people who are willing to talk with other members, contact County Commissioners or legislators, write letters to the editor, hand out leaflets at work, attend the rally on July 18 at noon at the Government Center, and other activities.

PTO

PTO, Paid Time Off, has raised its ugly head again. But this time it is not for us—the union members. It is a two-tiered plan for non-organized employees. Current employees will be able to add another 480 hours to their severance package; that equals 1280 hours. New hires will only ever be allowed 480 hours for their severance.

The Union has spoken to the Human Resources Board and to a Committee of the County Board opposing this

A big thank you needs to go out to those who answered their telephones and spent time sharing their concerns and volunteering to help get a decent contract. An even bigger thank you needs to go out to the volunteers who drove to South St. Paul after work, on a Sunday and on a Saturday to make contact with our members. A big THANK YOU to Zanona Anderson, Ann Baird, Jane Byrne, John Christensen, Walter Hanson, Molly Malecki, Jennifer McNair, Lisa Shepardon, Lynn Stetler, Jessica Trujillo, and Jeanne Whetstone.

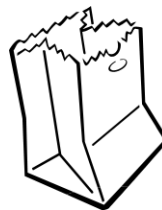
We will be phone banking again as negotiations proceed so that we can keep our members informed. Anyone who would like to help should contact Molly Malecki by e-mail.

plan and asking questions that have not been answered. For example, if a person demotes from one of these PTO positions, how will that be handled, since the union contract does not cover this matter? The union does not generally support a tiered program that eventually pits newer employee against older employees, which this PTO plan for unrepresented employees would do.

No doubt we will hear more about this.

Brown Bag Lunches

The following dates and places are scheduled for brown bag lunches. An Action Team member will be at each of these sites to answer questions regarding the upcoming negotiations. They will also be glad to accept offers of assistance in this upcoming campaign for a better contract.



Look for flyers in your building to announce the exact location of the BB lunch. These are always on Tuesdays.

6/21 Hennepin County Medical Center
6/28 Health Services Building
7/05 Century Plaza
7/12 Government Center

Master Team formulates proposal

The AFSCME Master Negotiating Team of nine locals from Hennepin County began meeting on May 5 to plan the contract proposal that we will present to the employer on July 18. There have been four meetings and the Team feels it has come up with a reasonable proposal considering the fact that we have not had a wage increase in three years.

Unlike previous years, the Master Team will release the proposal to the members before it is presented to the employer. It will be posted on the AFSCME Council 5 web site on approximately June 27. In the past the Master Team has kept the proposal secret until the employer sees it. But this year is not “business as usual.”

Strike Committee

The Strike Committee is getting ready and wants you to start getting ready, too. Individually, we all have to start planning for the possibility of a strike. We need to be setting aside some money. It may be wise to increase your dependents with payroll and put the extra money aside for a possible strike or to help pay taxes next year if there is no strike. Go over your family budget and decide which things are absolute necessities and which things you could live without. Can you pay down your credit card payments? Stop using credit cards. Start stocking up on food each payday (remember Y2K?). Think about other sources of income—part time job.

We want the members to know what we are proposing and offer them an opportunity to ask questions. Questions can be answered at the July 5 Membership Meeting at the Southdale Library at 7:00 p.m. Not included in the initial proposal will be anything about health insurance. Please see article in this newsletter about this issue.

Members who served on the Master Team to formulate the proposal are Zanona Anderson, Ann Baird, Jane Byrne, Walter Hanson, Molly Malnecki, Jennifer McNair, Lisa Shepardson, Lynn Stetler, Dawn Klingman, Nancy Crouse, Charles Stech, Heather Clark, Bridgette Walker, and Julie Axtell.

Dawn Klingman from Local 2822 attended the first Strike Committee meeting. She says that they need 20 to 30 more members. They will be organizing eight committees: a General Strike Committee, a Local Headquarters Committee, a Finance and Hardship Committee, an Internal Communications Committee, a Public Relations Committee, a Strike Kitchen Committee, a Family and Social Committee and a Picket Committee. Anyone interested in participating on these committees should contact Dawn or Jessica Trujillo through the Hennepin County e-mail.

Midwest School for Women Workers

At the June 7th Membership Meeting, three members were elected to attend the Midwest School for Women Workers in East Lansing Michigan in July. They are Zanona Anderson, Jennifer McNair and Claudette Moran.



This summer institute for union women celebrates the solidarity of union women across boundaries of age, race, and nation. It is co-sponsored by the AFL-CIO and the United Association for Labor Education (UALE). The institute brings together 100-200 women for skill building, education, cultural activities, and solidarity events. Highlights include in-depth classes to build leadership skills and knowledge as well as workshops and plenary sessions that examine current crucial labor issues.

Vacation donation

We have a request for vacation donation for Janice M St Dennis, who works in the Maple Grove Service Center. She has exhausted all of her leave and would appreciate our help.

It is very simple to give some time 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,” ask for St Dennis without a period, click recipient, then OK. Sign and submit.

The details of how vacation donations work are listed at the end.



Happy Independence Day!

Local 2822 Officers

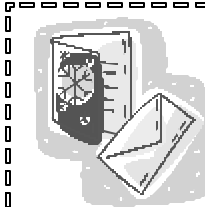
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<i>hclark@hclib.org</i>	

Bulletin Board

The New Voice deadline is July 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,
1-800-862-6042.
Always refer to your group number 538.

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Mary Dwyer	612-348-6001	HSD	Health Services Building
Jody Goers	612-596-8080	Sheriff	Jail
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Lynn Stetler	952-847-8569	Library	Ridgedale Lib./CAB/Collection Management
Jessica Trujillo	612-348-6001	HSD	Health Services Building
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.