



July Membership Meeting

Wednesday, July 2
7:00 p.m.
Brookdale Library

August Membership Meeting
Wednesday, August 6, 7:00 p.m.
Southdale Library

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

Notes from the President

By Lynn Stetler

Seems like everywhere I go, everyone I talk to is worried—about the price of gas, groceries, kids out of school for the summer, no tax rebate check in the mail yet, seniority dates, hail damage, ERHIP (Early Retiree Health Insurance Program), possible layoffs, merger issues, no respect, denial of vacation, no money for vacation, HCSP (Health Care Savings Plan), staff shortages, not enough time in the day for work and family. There's no shortage of things to worry about—you take it to work, you take it home.

The key is all about balance. That is pretty difficult to do right now.

There are also calls for our opinions. I encourage you to take time to read County Administrator Richard Johnson's message about the state of the county budget—not a bright forecast but impor-

(President continued on page 2)

Your attention, please This can save/cost you money

If you were hired after January 1, 2008, you can stop reading here. You are in the new program.

Everyone hired before January 1, 2008, this applies to you. So pay attention.

You (hired before January 1, 2008) are currently in the **Early Retiree Health Care Program (ERHIP)**. If you do not opt out by August 1, 2008, that is where you will stay. This is your only chance. If you opt out, you will be in the **Health Care Savings Plan (HCSP)**

What is the difference? This will be a brief summary. You must go to the Henepin County Human Resources-Benefits Intranet website to read all the information you need to know. You should try to attend the meetings that have been scheduled around the county—that is on the same website. If you still have questions after studying this, do not hesitate to call benefits and ask them. This is somewhat complicated, and all employees have to make this decision for themselves. Every employee has to do their own math. Of course we don't know what our personal futures hold, so this will take some thinking on each person's part.

The plan we currently have, **ERHIP**, pays the single-employee-premium for health insurance from time of retirement at age 55 thru age 64 (if eligible) until age 65. This is a benefit in 2008 of nearly \$7,000.00 a year.

The plan that new employees have, and that we can opt into, **HCSP**, has employees putting 1% of their gross pay into this Health Care account. After five

years of employment (10,400 hours), the county will contribute \$500.00 each year. After 10 years (20,800 hours), the county will contribute \$600.00 each year. And after 15 years (31,200 hours), the county will contribute \$700.00 each year. This money goes into an investment account that you control. The money in this account can only be accessed after the employee terminates with the county—at any age. And it can only be used for health related expenses, including purchasing health insurance.

The contributions to the **HCSP** account begin with the January 23, 2009 pay check. The county contributions will be made in July of 2009.

The Union and the Benefits Department can not advise anyone on what to do in making this decision. The only clear cut case is: if you are **already 65, OPT OUT!** You have to fill out the form to do so. But if you work past July 2009, you will have what you have contributed so far and the county's contribution when you do leave.

If you do not expect to stay with the county long enough to be eligible for **ERHIP**, opt out. You will have something to take with you for health care expenses. After five years, the county is giving you free money.

This article has been purposely vague. There is too much information to cover here. **Please, investigate this.** Your decision or lack of decision can either save you money or cost you money. You have until August 1. If you don't opt out you will stay with ERHIP.

(President continued from page 1)

tant information. Mr. Johnson encourages us to contact him directly or our supervisor. There are other department managers sending messages as well.

There are information sessions happening all over the county about the Early Retirement Health Insurance opt-out and the HealthCare Savings Plan. At our June Membership meeting, we voted to extend the time frame for making a decision to August 1. Please attend one of the sessions, listen and ask questions—or call HC Benefits.

There are also regular Labor/Management Meet and Confer meetings occurring in HSPHD (Human Services and Public Health Department), Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation, and the Library—teams

tackling tough issues in a collaborative way. I encourage you to find out who are our union members on those teams and give them your input. Dignity and respect work continues in Taxpayer Services, Century Plaza and the library.

There's a lot of hard work being done by our membership on a daily basis—I don't have to tell you that.

The county works because we do—but we need to remember that we can't do the work of more than one person. And when we leave work at the end of the day, more than likely, there is more work waiting at home. Our editor is including information about the County Health-Works program—go to their website on the county intranet for good tips for balancing home and work. And please, remember to breathe!

A look at our contract

By Marilyn Bell, co-chief steward

Not long ago, one of my Nokomis Library coworkers went to an aunt's funeral. Upon her return, she asked if she was eligible for funeral leave, otherwise she was going to use vacation time. Remembering previous contract language for Minneapolis Public Library, two long-time coworkers didn't think funeral leave was applicable.

Was funeral leave applicable in this case? Here's what Article 16 of our current contract says:

The EMPLOYER will approve and administer leave with pay in cases of death in the immediate family for purposes of attending funeral services and absences necessary to make funeral arrangements for the decedent. The degree of relationship is limited to: spouse, parent, step-parent, parent-in-law, children, stepchildren, brothers, brothers-in-law, sisters, sisters-in-law, **aunts**, uncles, nieces, nephews, grandparent, grandparents-in-law, grandchildren, or person regarded as a member of the employee's immediate family. Such leave shall be limited to a maximum of three (3) days (twenty-four (24) compensated hours) per occurrence not to exceed forty-eight (48) hours in any calendar year.

Our coworker was able to use funeral leave after all. And that's a good thing.

Watch for other articles in future newsletters regarding what's in our contract. If you would like to have a paper copy of our contract, contact any officer or steward listed on the back of the newsletter. Our contract is also on the Local 2822 website at <http://www.afscme2822.org> and on the Hennepin County Intranet site under Labor Relations.

International Convention delegates elected

Lynn Stetler, Molly Malecki, Theresa Smith, Odell Sumpter and Tammy Richert were elected to attend the July AFSCME International Convention in San Francisco. The election was held at the June Membership Meeting.

The business of the convention will include election of the International President and Secretary-Treasurer, adoption of amendments to the International constitution, approval of resolutions that will set the course of our union for the next two years. AFSCME's political agenda will also be a highlight. As public employees, politics is crucial to our jobs and to the well-being of the nation. If in doubt about that statement, check with the Hennepin County Human Services and Public Health Department (HSPHD). The cuts that will be taking place are directly related to politics. Why isn't there sufficient funding for the services that our employees provide?

Meet two more E-Board members

Each month we will meet some Local 2822 Executive Board members. This month we will meet a veteran of Local 2822, our treasurer, Walter Hanson and a veteran of the former Local 99 from Minneapolis Public Library, Marilyn Bell.

I am Walter Hanson. I am the treasurer and a steward. I am a Senior Service Center Representative at Brookdale Service Center.

Hobbies: watching sports, trying to be a writer

Previous Jobs: newspaper carrier, window cashier balancer, and janitor

Dream Job: is writer

I became active in the union because I was very worried about a contract years ago.

Something that people are surprised to know about me: I hope I'm such an open book that people aren't surprised.

Goals for the year: Help to keep the union in strong shape, make sure I get all the bobble heads with no problem, and sell something this year.

Now meet **Marilyn Bell.** I am currently co-chief steward and have in the past been a steward, secretary, and vice president. I work at Nokomis Community Library as a PSA. I have worked at least one day at all the city library locations. Not everyone full-time permanent employee can boast that!

Hobbies. I love to travel, both to visit family and venture to exotic (to me) islands. I crochet baby blankets for all the new babies in my family. I do a fair amount of beading. I hang out with friends a lot and enjoy movies at the Riverview, my neighborhood theatre.

Previous Jobs: Before coming to the library, I worked at the University of Minnesota for 26 years.

Dream Job: I'm not sure what my dream job would be, but it most certainly involves children and lots of laughter.

I became active in the union when someone asked me to take minutes at a meeting where the secretary would be absent and folks knew I had typing/word processing skills. That morphed into my being the local secretary for 2 years.

Something that people are surprised to know about me: I teach Sunday school and I play the Native American flute.

My only advice to others: is to have a sense of humor. It's saved many a day for me.

Hennepin HealthWorks and Be Well Center update

The Hennepin County Labor/Management Health Care committee had its first meeting of 2008 on June 5. Topics covered included a review of claims vs. premiums, county demographics, utilization experience, and health assessment results. Local 2822 members on this committee are Dirk Schot, Dawn Klingman and Molly Malecki.

The unions were asked to encourage our members to learn more about the **Well @Work** program, which is a convenient and underutilized benefit that is provided at the Government Center. The following is a description of the benefit prepared by the Benefits Department:

Hennepin County HealthWorks and HealthPartners would like to let you know of some exciting changes at the HealthPartners Well@Work, Hennepin clinic located inside the Be Well Center at the Government Center, southwest street level. The Be Well Center provides both health and wellness services specifically for Hennepin County employees and their adult dependents. All services provided at the Well@Work clinic are **free** to Hennepin County employees! **There is no co-pay for services provided at the clinic.**

Introducing a new Certified Physician Assistant

Gail Hansen, Certified Physician Assistant, will join the Well@Work – Hennepin clinic on June 17. Gail is a full-service family practice provider who has had several years of experience at a busy family practice clinic. In addition to her interest in preventing and managing chronic disease, Gail can also prescribe for and treat patients with acute care needs. In addition to being able to evaluate, diagnose and treat common ailments such as strep throat, colds, gastrointestinal disorders and headaches, Gail can provide ongoing management of chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, allergies, and asthma. Gail works Monday-Friday from 7:30-3:30 p.m. Call 952-967-5060 to make an appointment, or walk-ins are welcome.

Lab Services

If you have a medical condition that requires regular blood work, we can help! Shirley Marshall, Certified Medical Assistant, can provide lab services onsite and even send the results to your personal health record or your primary care physician. Doctor's order for lab is required.

Wellness Coaching

Interested in creating a wellness plan and achieving personal health goals? Richard Bonk, M.Ed., recently joined the Be Well Center as a Wellness Coach. Richard's areas of interest include holistic, complementary and alternative health care, smoking cessation and stress management, but he can also help you attain your personal wellness goals. Richard is available in the Be Well Center Tuesdays and Thursdays from 7:30am to 3:30pm. To make an appointment, call 952-967-5060.

With new faces and new services, the Be Well Center welcomes the opportunity to serve you – stop in and see us sometime! For more information, please visit Hennepin HealthWorks on HC Net.

My Day on the Hill

By Janna Janna Carlson,
Membership Secretary

(Editor's note: AFSCME Day on the Hill is the annual opportunity for the forty thousand AFSCME Council 5 members to have representatives go *en masse* to the Capital to rally and to talk to their own legislators about issues that affect our jobs. Local 2822 sent more than twelve members to the 2008 Day on the Hill in February.)

In short what I learned at Day on the Hill is that the unorganized (non-unionized) sector of our economy is dragging down the standard of living for all Americans. When the membership of organized labor is greater, the standard of living is increased for the non-organized and the organized. Everyone benefits with higher wages and greater benefits. When this number begins to fall off everyone suffers and the non-organized then relentlessly pull down wages and living standards for all workers in our society.

What we need to do as a first step to bargaining for higher wages and to secure our benefits, is to convince our non-members (fee payers, fair share) to step

up to the plate and become members and show solidarity in our bargaining process. This small step increases the bargaining power for all workers everywhere.

What I gained from Day on the Hill 2008 is a new vision for our Local 2822. I see our local moving forward toward a new contract, strengthened by greater numbers and by active participation through our collective communication with worksite leaders, who will communicate each critical phase of the bargaining process with fellow members within their respective worksites. I see no one being left in the dark and each member playing their critical part of the process by staying informed.

I see an informed membership taking responsibility in their workplaces for supporting open communication with fellow members and informing our stewards when problems arise. I see dignity and respect being taken up by our membership and our members recognizing themselves as powerful leaders who will determine a secure, wealthier future for themselves, their children and for all working class Americans.

Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation

A Labor-Management Meet and Confer in the Department of Community Corrections and Rehabilitation (DOCCR) was begun on June 9th. Representatives of the AFSCME locals that have members in that Department participated with management. Those locals are Local 34, Social Services, Local 552, Probation and Parole, and Local 2822, Clerical. Those participating from Local 2822 were President Lynn Stetler and Co-chief Steward Theresa Smith. The Field Representative (formerly known as Business Agent) from Locals 2822 and 552, Steve Marincel, also participated in the Meet and Confer.

This committee would benefit from the participation of support staff who actually work in this department. Anyone interested in participating in these meetings should contact Lynn Stetler or Theresa Smith to get more details. Their contact information is on the last page of this newsletter.

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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:

Janna Carlson
Maple Grove Service Center

Name _____

Job Title _____

Work Location _____

Mailcode _____

Phone _____

- I'm especially interested in:
 I want to sign up as a full member.
 I want to sign up for Delta Dental.

Bulletin Board

The New Voice deadline is July 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.

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.

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