

Progressive dues coming our way

By Walter Hanson

Over the next couple of months you will be hearing about a change to our dues structure to progressive dues. We are required by the International Constitution of AFSCME to change to progressive dues by January 2011. This will require an amendment to the Local 2822 constitution by a vote, probably, in October. Here are some questions and answers on progressive dues.

How will progressive dues be different than the current dues structure?

Currently every full dues paying employee is paying the same dues rate, \$40.55 each month if he/she works over 40 hours, and \$30.41 if he/she works 40 hours or less per pay period. Under progressive dues everyone will pay a percentage (yet to be determined) of their gross salary in that pay period. The percentage will probably be about 1.5%. The formula will be computed for fee-payers on progressive basis also.

If everybody pays the same formula how is that progressive?

What is progressive is that lower paid workers will pay less dues than higher paid workers. The key is that while the formula is the same for

all workers it will impact members differently. If two members, for example, earn \$18 per hour and one works 60 hours every two weeks versus the other who works 80 hours, the dues will be less for the 60 hour worker. The same principle applies if two employees work 80 hours every two weeks but earn different wage rates.

Why now?

As stated above, at the 2008 International Convention a constitutional amendment was passed to implement progressive dues in all locals as of January 2011. The Council 5 Executive Board also voted that all locals in Council 5 implement this change by 2011. Local 2822 Executive Board has been working on rolling out this plan to our members. Hennepin County's Human Services Local 34 has had progressive dues for several years now. And it is compatible with the APEX Payroll system, wherein dues will be taken out of each paycheck. The impetus to do this now is that if we don't decide how we want to implement this and we don't have it done, the International will impose a 2% progressive dues structure.

What do you mean by dues rate? What will it be? How will it be determined?

Council 5 calculated what Local 2822 needs to collect to continue with the same income needed to operate this local. This calculation is quite a moving target with people leaving our local and new people being hired—with jobs not being filled. The rate they calculated is about 1.5% of gross pay.

What are the benefits of this new system?

- Employees who work fewer hours and/or earn lower wages will pay less in dues.
- Dues will be divided over two paychecks every month instead of one.
- There will be less need for requests for dues increases as dues will increase as salaries increase.
- It will be fairer as it will be progressive, i.e. based on ability to pay rather than regressive where everyone pays the same amount regardless of their wage or income. The lower paid workers should not have to pay the same amount as the higher paid workers.

If you have more questions, please try to attend future membership meetings where this will be discussed in further detail.

August						
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	31				

August
Membership Meeting
 Wednesday, August 4
 7:00 p.m.
 Minneapolis Central Library

September
Membership Meeting
 Wednesday, September 1
 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>

Tipped workers

From the AFL-CIO weekly "Just the Fax" regarding pay for tipped workers:

"Minnesota's Department of Employment and Economic Development reports the state median wage for servers is \$9.36 per hour. It's also important to remember that most servers can't get 40 hours of work a week and only a small fraction get health benefits."

Ready to Fight, Ready to Lead

How I spent my summer vacation

By Lynn Stetler, President
Hopkins Library

I recently returned from the AFSCME International Convention held in Boston, MA. Your local sent 5 delegates and you will see more articles on our experiences. We all used personal time to attend this conference. My thanks to the local for sending me.

Let me tell you—the convention was hard work with long days. We began each day early—over 3500 delegates plus alternates, guests and retirees representing 38 councils and 2059 locals. We poured through nearly 80 resolutions on topics from privatization, political action, employee free choice, FMLA, supporting full funding of libraries and more. And there was one constitutional Amendment relating to progressive dues.

We met with other members who do work similar to our own. A highlight for me was talking to the President of Local 1526 representing library workers at the Boston Public Libraries. I also heard stories from libraries in New York, LA, Seattle and across the country facing large layoffs and drastic cuts to services. I am thankful that while we are facing difficult times at Hennepin County with major funding shortfalls, we are not experiencing these same measures.

We heard many speakers and tributes with an especially moving tribute to Ted Kennedy and a speech from his wife Vicky. Sen. Kennedy always worked tirelessly for Labor.

There was a large rally in Boston Commons and a march to the Government Center with a cry to protect jobs and services.

The theme of the convention was Ready to Fight, Ready to Lead. And fight we did. There was an election for the number two spot at the International, that of Secretary-Treasurer. There were two candidates with very different backgrounds and philosophies vying for the post. Both the leadership and the convention delegation were deeply split on who they were supporting. There were long speeches, harsh

words, demonstrations, whistles, and a lack of civility both on the floor and at the leader's podium. It was very difficult to watch and observe the lack of solidarity between brothers and sisters of AFSCME. When the final votes were tallied, over 1.3 million votes, Lee Saunders won by a margin of 4000 votes. This election seems to me to reflect what's happening across the country on the political front. So the challenge will be to unite our own union, and indeed, be Ready to Fight, Ready to Lead TOGETHER.

I enjoyed the opportunity to spend extensive time with Molly Malecki, Theresa Smith, Rita Watson, Dirk Schot, and our brother from Local 552, Pat Guernsey who was the solo representative from his local. We managed to share lots of laughs and stories throughout our week in Boston. I had a chance to extend my vacation after the convention's end and spent time with family in Rhode Island. It was a time to relax and reflect.

There is much work that needs to be done at the local level—many issues at stake. I came away from the convention re-energized to work on behalf of Local 2822.

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

Two first International Conventions

By Dirk Schot,
Membership Secretary
East Lake Library

Hello Brothers and Sisters,

This is a "partial report" of convention highlights from the 39th AFSCME International Convention in Boston. And what a convention it was!

First, we arrived early on Sunday morning, and after checking in at our hotel, we took the continuously running shuttle bus over to the convention hall to register. We received backpacks containing pens and resolution booklets and other AFSCME paraphernalia. The atmosphere was already charged on Sunday, before the actual start of the convention, and you could feel the excitement building. After we registered we were approached by some-

one from our Council 5 to ask us to join in giving out stickers and fliers for our candidate that we were supporting for the Secretary-Treasurer election. So we headed back to the hotel to turn in early so we could be at the convention hall at 7:30 AM Monday.

On Monday, the 2822 delegation gathered early at the convention center to start handing out stickers and fliers for our candidate Danny Donahue. We met up with some of the other Minnesota delegates and began to talk with other delegates as they entered the convention hall. But no sooner had we started than security showed up and told us to move. This was the beginning for a long week of political games played at the convention between the establishment supporters of a rival candidate (Lee Saunders) and the members of the Donahue campaign. The rival candidate's supporters had large inflatable bats that they were also handing out in the same location, and they continuously used them throughout the convention to beat together and wave in the air.

After we were out of our stickers it was time to enter the convention hall and find our seats. The tables for the Minnesota delegation were split and placed towards the back of the convention hall. Yet another slap due to the support of council 5 for Donahue.

The convention kicked off on Monday with a keynote address from the President Gerald McEntee. To say that the address involved rather "colorful" language would be no exaggeration. I was a bit underwhelmed by McEntee's speech as it sounded more like an angry, bitter half-crazed grandfather with bad dentures telling you to get off the lawn rather than an inspiring address from the International president.

The other keynote address came from the retired former Secretary-Treasurer Bill Lucy. It was quite exciting to hear a good speech by one of the earliest activists in AFSCME. Not only was he involved with the labor movement but he was also actively involved in social activism from civil rights to supporting boycotts in South Africa to oppose apartheid. One of

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(Convention continued from page 2)

my favorite quotes dealt with Lucy talking about how they had stood up for AFSCME members in a dispute with a local mayor and he said how it was always fun to "Jack up the mayor!" from time to time. After a warm reception for Mr. Lucy from the delegates, the convention stood in recess until the next day and we retired to the hotel to pick up our council 5 t-shirts for Tuesday.

To be continued....

Convention summary

By Rita Watson, Executive Board
County Attorney's Office

Every moment was memorable, and the pervading tone was one of anticipation for each candidate hoping to succeed Bill Lucy, retired International Secretary-Treasurer. The candidates had made their positions known prior to the event and weren't as vocal as all of the delegate

supporters.

The tribute to Bill Lucy was extraordinary, as well as all the guest speakers related to the healthcare program and various awards presentations. Senator Edward "Ted" Kennedy's widow, Vicki, gave a heartfelt talk on the late senator's sentiments about the labor union and its purpose.

We voted on seventy-two resolutions and one amendment. I really appreciate and have much gratitude for all that AFSCME put into the convention and the welcoming of its delegates. It is definitely astounding when you think in terms of the nearly 1.6 million AFSCME members that we were there to represent. When you are in the arena that contains so much contribution and talent, it was at times overwhelming, but also humbling and inspiring

I attended a special caucus that focused on Administration / Finance. A discussion entitled: Busting the Myths About Public

Service Workers. The four myths presented were:

1. That we make too much money;
2. We have too many benefits;
3. Our pensions are bankrupting the state and local governments, and
4. That unions have too much influence in politics.

We all know these statements are unreasonable. In my opinion, the best way to dispel these unsubstantiated beliefs is to continue to work with the highest standards and contribute to the efforts of electing the officials that are in positions to enact legislation. If you want a job with a purpose, you have to make an investment. Whatever you put into your purpose is ultimately what you will derive. Let's make our union even more effective for ourselves and the persons that will eventually become our successors.

A woman's' place is in her union

By Rita Watson, Executive Board
County Attorney's Office:

Recently I attended a presentation sponsored by the Labor Education Service entitled New Directions in Leadership: A Discussion with Women Union Officers. The keynote speaker was AFL-CIO President Shar Knutson. Also presenting was a panel of women union officers; Tee McClenty, Executive Vice President, SEIU Healthcare MN, Michelle Sommers, President, ATU Local 1005, and Denise Specht, Secretary-Treasurer, Education Minnesota.

Shar Knutson, emphasized the importance for us to recognize that each of us has the capacity to become a leader by bringing others along. We need to take risks and challenge ourselves by asking questions, finding a network and becoming educated. There are many areas that your talents and skills can be utilized within your local.

Each of these leaders took that leap of faith and put in the extra effort to make their positions better. And as a result were recognized for their interest and enthusi-

asm by achieving the status their positions offer. We all have the ability to do that, and in the process will ensure that the union is strengthened because we are all visionaries creating a more balanced and effective workforce. Activism is one of the surest ways for women to excel in the workforce. By getting involved in the election process, we are able to have a direct result on who is elected to the positions that represent all issues affecting women workers. Some interesting facts:

- Unionized women earn 30 percent more than non-unionized women.
- Union workers have more paid leave and are more likely to have health insurance.
- Union workers are more than three times more likely to have defined benefit pension plans.
- Union workers have 28% more paid vacation than non-union workers and are 50% more likely to have paid personal time than non-union workers.

Keep your eyes open and your ears tuned for the next opportunity that you can be-

come involved. Your time and talents will improve your work and the work of those who follow in our footsteps.

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



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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:

Dirk Schot
East Lake Library
Mail Code 760

Name _____

Job Title _____

Work Location _____

Mailcode _____

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Always refer to your group number 538.

A New Voice deadline is August 4. 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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