

## Constitutional amendments including progressive dues to be voted on at October meeting

At the Local 2822 Membership Meeting on October 6 at 7:00 PM at the Brookdale Library there will be several constitutional amendments to be approved. Most of the proposed amendments are housekeeping in nature. Many things have changed since 1990 when the constitution was last updated, and the intention is to do these updates. All constitutional amendments have to be submitted to the International Union and be approved by the International President.

The amendment that is not housekeeping is the one re-

lating to progressive dues. As stated in last month's newsletter, we are required by the International constitution to change to the progressive dues system. At this time the Local 2822 Executive Board is recommending the progressive dues be 1.4% of a member's gross wages. For some members this will be an increase in dues. For other members it will be a significant decrease. The best opportunity to discuss this issue and learn more about it would be at the two upcoming membership meetings—September 1 at 7:00 p.m. at Ridgedale Library or at the October meeting.

One question that arose from the last article was whether the dues would be calculated on overtime. It seems that at this time APEX is not able to figure out how to do otherwise. Local 34 is working on this issue as they have had progressive dues for some time.

All of the constitutional amendments can be seen on our Local 2822 website <http://www.afscme2822.org>

Of course, if you have questions, please call an executive board member.

## AFSCME Council 5 and Minnesota AFL-CIO Conventions

The week of September 26 through October 2 will be a busy one for union activists. The Minnesota AFL-CIO convention will begin on Sunday, September 26 and end on Tuesday September 28. AFSCME Council 5 convention will begin on Thursday September 30 and end on Saturday, October 2. Both conventions are at the Bloomington Sheraton Hotel.

The highlight of the AFL-CIO convention will be the election of the president. This will be a contentious race as the current president Shar Knutson has opposition. AFSCME Council 5 is backing Shar. She is the first

female president of the Minnesota AFL-CIO, and she comes from AFSCME. She is a consensus builder and has proven that while she was the president of the St. Paul Regional Labor Federation. Local 2822 is allowed seven delegates to this convention.

Election of officers will also be held at the Council 5 convention. This does not expect to be contentious. But many important matters will be dealt with including workshops on retirement and union history and union building. Local 2822 is allowed many more delegates. The executive board will later recommend how many delegates to send to the convention.

Both conventions will have a strong political flavor. The election of the right governor and legislators is going to be key to keeping the working men and women of Minnesota working, and especially the public sector workers (us). These conventions will help steer these campaigns to winning in November.

Anyone interested in being a delegate to either of these conventions should attend the September membership meeting or let an officer know to put your name in for election. The officers phone numbers and e-mail addresses are on the back of this newsletter.

September						
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		

**September Membership Meeting**  
Wednesday, September 1  
7:00 p.m.  
Ridgedale Library

**Special order of business:**  
Election of delegates to the AFL-CIO convention and to the AFSCME Council 5 Convention

**October Membership Meeting**  
Wednesday, October 6  
7:00 p.m.  
Brookdale Library

**Special order of business:**  
Vote on changes to Local 2822 Constitution including the vote on Progressive Dues

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



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

**Happy Labor Day!**

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## Midwest School for Women Workers

The annual School for Women workers was held this year at the University of Minnesota's Minneapolis campus from July 28 through August 1. The four day program was open to all working women and focused on sharing experiences and developing practical skills for exercising leadership in the workplace.

Three members of Local 2822 participated in this experience. They are Rita Watson, Marilyn Bell and Tammy Richert. Rita's and Tammy's reports follow.

### We are strong and getting stronger

By Rita Watson,  
County Attorney's Office

From the opening reception with speakers Shar Knutson, Minnesota AFL-CIO President and Liz Shuler, Secretary-Treasurer of the National AFL-CIO, to the closing ceremony by Frannie Franken, there was a resounding unity: we are strong and getting stronger every day.

The main theme discussed throughout the course of the conference was how do we continue to work smarter during these difficult economic times. A surprising statistic is women currently comprise 44% of the labor union workforce. Many women in leadership roles have been mentored or had mentored individuals along the way. In doing so, we must be aware of what has been an obstacle in our past and continue to innovate and network for sensible solutions.

The workshops I attended were, Confronting Inequalities on the Job, Examining the 21st Century Workforce, and Building an Inclusive Union Culture. The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development website at [www.PositivelyMinnesota.com](http://www.PositivelyMinnesota.com) will provide you with many statistics and trends regarding labor market data, economic trends, online data tools and research and analysis services.

The women in attendance were from both non-traditional roles such as carpentry and construction worker to support staff and professionals in the medical field. All told, it was a very spirited, enthusiastic group that were supportive and determined to continue to face uncertainty with gracefulness, their sleeves rolled up, a smile of humor on their faces and peace in their hearts.

### Grown but not changed

By Tammy Richert,  
Call Center

Secretly I didn't want to go; I was resistant. I had heard many things about this class, most good. BUT someone close to me said, "You will not be the same after this class." Wow, really powerful words, and so very true. Looking back now, I can honestly say it was the highlight of my summer.

There were a large number of women in attendance from all across the Midwest region, even a young gal from Canada.

The one thing we all had in common was a strong work ethic and a desire to succeed. It was obvious to me from the start that most of these women were high achievers—not shy to share their opinions.

The first day I attended, we watched a skit on "Breaking the Bubble"—a performance demonstrating how we, as workers, have a tendency to stay within our groups, always pointing fingers, as if to say, "That's not our problem." We are unwilling to question society at large and are unwilling to get involved beyond our "bubble". From that day on we were seated and regrouped with new people to fully experience our classmates on a more interactive level—much more interesting, indeed.

There isn't any way to condense everything I learned into one article successfully. So it is my good intention to write a series of articles to share with interested readers each month. Topics may include, but are not limited to mentorship, stewardship, women and the global economy, "We were There" poetry by Teamster Diane Ersbo, social media—how it can work for us and the hard and soft side of the union.

Thanks for taking the time to read my story. I again am truly grateful for this opportunity and my union, AFSCME, Local 2822.

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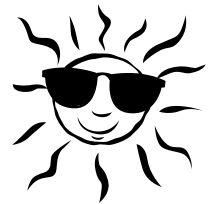
## 95 degrees cool

The fourth Hennepin County AFSCME picnic is going down in history as the hottest. One degree short of the record for that date. But everyone seemed to be having a good time and keeping cool—thanks to the addition of the snow cone machine.

A big "job-well-done" goes to the committee that met and planned the picnic and came through with flying colors. They are Local 2822 members Ann Baird, Becca Niznik, Tammy Richert,

Rita Watson, Karen Nash, John Christensen, Janelle Steinbach and Molly Malecki. Thanks also go to the Hennepin County Policy Committee that approved and supported the picnic and to Anita Urvina who was their representative to the committee. Kudos to those who also stepped up to the plate (more like and oven): Local 2822 members Jeanne Whetstone, Walter Hanson, Lynn Stetler, Aron Haughey, Tonya Bridgeman, Eyde Akerman and daughter and daughter's friend; Local 34 members

Jean Diederich and Sabrina Denson and to our Master of Ceremonies Cliff Poehler.



The 32 inch flat screen TV that was donated by Delta Dental was won by Cindi Nelson from Local 34. Rumor has it that she was very pleased. All the locals donated door prizes, so almost everyone went home with something more than a good meal under their belts.

## Convention tale continues

By Dirk Schot, East Lake Library

On Tuesday June 29th, the entire delegation again arose early to attend a Council 5 caucus at the Boston Convention Center. This was the day for nominations for International Secretary-Treasurer. We heard a speech from Danny Donahue asking for our support for his election as the International Secretary-Treasurer. He spoke of his times as leader of a local in New York and his commitment to building the union through the grassroots efforts of members.

When we entered the main convention hall we could feel the tension as Donahue supporters in blue and Saunders supporters in yellow accosted the delegates with flyers.

Things started to spiral out of control from the time the Minnesota delegation found that several of their chairs had been removed, and the microphone lights lit up across the floor as delegates began asking about clarifications to election rules that seemed inherently undemocratic. Protests were met with scorn from the podium as president McEntee and the acting Secretary-Treasurer Kaso continued to call for order despite the chaos building on the convention floor.

On a calmer note there was a key-note address from Richard Trumka president of the AFL-CIO and a moving tribute to the late Ted Kennedy. There was also a brief tribute to the different generations of AFSCME members, and, of course, there were resolutions.

When it was finally time for nominations for the International Secretary-Treasurer, the fun really began!

First, president McEntee left the podium, entered the Pennsylvania delegation, put on a Lee Saunders yellow shirt, and placed Lee Saunders' name into nomination himself! So much for the International President remaining neutral in an election.

Then came the nomination of Danny Donahue, including a seconding speech by Council 5 Executive Director Elliot Seide. There was a lengthy floor demonstration with Donahue's supporters shouting, "We fight fair!" and "Take off the shirt!" as the yellow clad President McEntee chewed his gum **and watched**.

It did seem, at the end of proceedings on Tuesday, that AFSCME might be facing a permanent split from within. I personally left the floor with adrenaline pumping and a bit of trepidation as I thought to myself that I might be witnessing the break-up of our union. Only time will tell.

-to be continued...

## Phone Banking 101 (I am not a Phoney)

By Rita Watson,  
County Attorney's Office

I'm just the messenger is really what I want to begin saying. It is energizing to accept the calls the computer cycles through not knowing how you will be received. It's communication, communication, communication! While phone banking for Mark Dayton for Governor in the primary, I realized it's all about being heard. In order to be heard, I'd really have to listen. In order for the person to understand what I was saying, they'd really have to listen.

Haven't we become more focused on the written word? Although we can't underestimate the importance of the spoken word can we? One person told me that he doesn't use the phone unless he's the one making the call. Wow, that really made me think. (He did answer his phone to tell me that.) Much to my amazement, most people still answer their phones cheerfully and are inquisitive. I'd like to think I'm a good listener, and that's what it takes to be good at phone banking. You have to let the person you're talking to know that it's important to you what they think. Only then can you convince them you are sincere. I've learned that phone banking is a challenging, personable approach that

makes a lot of difference.

There are plenty of opportunities to volunteer some time to this vocal effort. I'm sure you'll enjoy the element of surprise too.

## Gripes vs. grievances

As officers and stewards of this local, we are often contacted by members who want to file a grievance when they believe that the employer has acted wrongly. Part of our job is to investigate using the contract as our rule book.

As defined in our contract, Article 7, GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE, section 1: "A grievance shall be defined as a dispute or disagreement raised by an employee against the EMPLOYER involving the interpretation or application of the specific provisions of this AGREEMENT." Further, in section 2, "It is specifically understood that any matters governed by statutory provisions, County Human Resources Rules, or departmental personnel rules, except as expressly provided for in this AGREEMENT, shall not be considered grievances under this AGREEMENT."

### So what if there is No Grievance?

Not every employee complaint is a legitimate grievance. After conducting a thorough investigation and consulting with other stewards and local officers, we may conclude that management has not violated the contract, work rules, policies, past practice, etc., or done anything that falls within the definition of a grievance. In these cases, what should the steward do?

### What to do if it's a Gripe, Not a Grievance

- Inform the worker of your conclusion.
- Provide the employee with the opportunity to explain why he/she thinks a grievance should be filed—based on the contract or work rules or other criteria for filing a grievance.
- Even in cases where it might not be appropriate or effective to file a grievance, it is likely that a problem still exists. We will attempt to work with the employee and look at ways to resolve the problem, or discuss the issue with other employees to see if a broader problem exists.
- Work with the employee—and other workers if the issue affects them—to develop an action plan to solve the problem.

*Some information used reprinted from the AFSCME Steward handbook.*

## 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](mailto: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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651-406-5900 or 1-800-862-6042.

Always refer to your group number 538.

### A New Voice deadline is September 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.



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Janna Carlson	612-596-1660 <a href="mailto:janna.carlson@co.hennepin.mn.us">janna.carlson@co.hennepin.mn.us</a>	Service Center Maple Grove Ser. Cntr.
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