

## Planning for new contract to begin

The current AFSCME contracts in Hennepin County end December 31, 2009.

Local 2822 President Lynn Stetler reports that many of you are asking about contract negotiations. In the past years members have been surveyed and Master Teams have been organized. But this year is unlike any year before in the county. We are in a holding pattern with negotiations. We want to see what the state employee's agreement looks

like, and we have some preliminary plans for proceeding with the county. The best place for members to make their concerns heard concerning negotiations is at the membership meeting on May 6 at Ridgedale Library.

It is expected that this round of negotiations will be extremely difficult given the financial problems of the county. So it is imperative that all the members support the efforts of the union. Let the executive board mem-

bers know what your main concerns are. Offer to help make these negotiations successful. Contact President Lynn Stetler with your support and offers of help.

There will be many opportunities to help get the best contract we can. Remember, you are the union. There is not some magical group that descends on the county and gets us a good contract. It is the efforts and work of all the union members that make us successful.

## Holding pattern

By Lynne Stetler, President

Many county employees have been waiting for the axe to fall in their departments. Yes, layoffs and reassignments have occurred, but the overall numbers are much smaller than originally anticipated. Management has made the decision to continue to hold vacancies open to avoid layoffs until it knows how much or how little money will come from the state. Management has also implemented the 10% percent budget reductions in all county departments. As of this writing, it sounds like there will be more serious changes in late summer.

We're also waiting to hear

about having to take mandatory furlough days. County administration is recommending that all employees take 3 unpaid days off by the end of 2009. County board members appear reluctant to mandate this. We agree. AFSCME leaders have been recommending the use of voluntary time off using the SLWOP (Special Leave Without pay) program. If you are able, and can afford to do this, speak to your supervisor. The county board will be making a recommendation on the furlough issue—so if you feel strongly about this, contact your commissioner—always on your own time, on your own phone, or your own computer, not the county's.

(Editor's note: SLWOP is voluntary leave but does not penalize the employee in terms of accruing sick leave or vacation. The employee does not get paid for the time and PERA deductions are impacted. Each department has its own rules regarding the use of this leave. Taxpayer Services, for example, has set a goal for the year for the department. Employees are allowed to take time in hourly increments—for instance going home an hour early—this is tempting as the weather gets nicer. No employee is being forced to take this leave—that's furlough. So those who can afford to take some leave can possibly ward off everyone being forced to take leave.)

May						
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### May Membership Meeting

Wednesday, May 6  
7:00 p.m.  
Ridgedale Library

### June Membership Meeting

Wednesday, June 3  
7:00 p.m.  
Brookdale 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>

*To reach a port we must sail, sometimes with the wind, and sometimes against it. But we must not drift or lie at anchor.*

— Oliver Wendell Holmes

## Some ways to deal with financial crisis

Nancy Crouse  
Ridgedale Library

I went to Day on the Hill in March and had a great time. A lot of people were talking about the financial crisis and hard economic times.

It is now April and we are not out of it yet, maybe not bottoming out until 2011. What to do now that tax time is over? As a former debt counselor at Consumer Credit Counseling of America, I have a few suggestions:

1. Go over your check book and analyze your spending. What did you pay in fixed costs, costs that can be trimmed down, and what can be eliminated? See if you can, on paper, reduce your spending by 10% in 2009.
2. See if you can actually save that

10% in 2009 and use it to pay down bills or put it in the bank or buy food with this money.

3. Much of our over spending is done at Christmas, on gifts and on birthdays. Plan your spending now for these events and see if you can keep your current level or go lower. Send cards instead of gifts as much as you can. Try making your own cards.
4. Frequent yard sales, flea markets, etc. and try to find possible future gifts and bargains.
5. In a year or two, because of all the actions by the federal government, the average guy on the street will see prices jump at the stores particularly at the supermarket.
6. Decide now what big expenses or

repairs you will need to make in the next three to five years: a new car, a new roof, a new winter jacket? Think about having it done now, because it will cost you more in the future.

7. There are coming problems with the wheat supply which will put a great deal of price pressure on food products. Buy now to avoid paying higher prices.
8. Grow a garden.
9. The Minnesota Orchestra is offering a free concert at Orchestra Hall on Thursday, July 9, 2009 at 7:30 p.m. Take advantage of this and other free entertainment.
10. Keep working to trim you expenses. Planning does a lot. Good luck.

## Hear our voice

By Dawn Klingman,  
HSPHD

March marks an extremely important day for public employees, it has hosted the annual AFSCME Day on the Hill. This year it was on March 11, 2009. It was an honor to take a day of vacation to attend and participate in this event, as I have for a number of years now. This is a powerful day to have the voices of AFSCME union members raised loud and clear.

This year was no exception, and the need to be heard was stronger than ever. Public employees did not create this economic meltdown, but in the public eye many would like us to bear the

brunt of it. There are many legislators receptive to our needs. However, in speaking with both my senator and representative, as much as they support us, the deficit is truly devastating. There is talk of increasing the tax rate for those making over \$250,000 per year; increasing both cigarette and liquor tax; and adding a tax to clothing in Minnesota. But even if these were done (imagine our governor approving that!) it would not come even close to balancing the budget. Cuts are coming.

Many are predicting that recovery from this economic crisis is not just around the corner, but is sometime out into the future. And "recovery" will likely mean

a creation of a new "norm." We need to keep our voices heard throughout this journey to recovery and make sure that we have a voice in the new "norm". Please keep in contact with your legislators and commissioner and let your voice be heard. Become an activate participant in our union.

### Reminder: send us your personal e-mail

Please send us your personal e-mail address. The executive board's reason for requesting it is: "There may be occasions when the negotiating team needs to contact as many members as possible in a very short time, when it would take too long to get a *Table Talk* out. And there may be issues that would not be good to send through county e-mail."

Please send your personal e-mail address, name, department and work location to this personal e-mail address:

*Mmafcm2822@aol.com*

and we will set up a data base to keep you informed on the negotiations process.



### Our sympathy to Steve Marincel

Our sincere sympathy goes out to Steve Marincel on the death of his father. Steve is the Field Representative to Local 2822 from Council 5. Steve has represented AFSCME Locals at Hennepin County for over twenty years.

Steve's father was a union activist with the Stagehand Local #13 IATSE, AFL-CIO and was delighted to attend our Hennepin County picnic last summer. He passed away at age 95.

Keep Steve and his family in your thoughts and prayers.

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## Stamp out Hunger Food Drive

The National Association of Letter Carriers will be having its 17th annual food drive on Saturday, May 9. Leave non-perishable food by your door and your mail carrier will pick it up to deliver to the food shelves.

This is the largest one-day food drive in the nation. Carriers collected a record 73.1 million pounds of food in last year's drive. The drive is held annually on the second Saturday in May in over 10,000 cities and towns in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands.

Donations will be collected by more than 1,400 local branches of the 300,000-member postal union and delivered to food banks, pantries and shelters that serve the communities where they are collected. Assisting in the effort are members of other unions.

NALC President William H. Young emphasized that as successful as the food drive has been in the past, it simply must be even better this year.

"Millions and millions of families are suffering—struggling to make ends

meet and put food on the table," Young said. "More than ever food banks, pantries and shelters need our help this year. As families count on them for support, they're counting on us and we must not back off on our commitment."

Young also noted that donations are particularly critical at this time since most school lunch programs are suspended during the summer months and millions of children must find alternate sources of nutrition.

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## Commercials air to make taxes fair

AFSCME, in partnership with the Coalition of Minnesota's Working Families, has launched a powerful advertising campaign to make taxes fair and save public services. Our 30-second spots will air frequently through May 18 during news casts on WCCO-TV and WCCO-AM, and statewide on cable TV and 80 radio stations. In addition, the Star Tribune's 300,000 online readers will get our message and be able to email their legislators about fair taxes. Visit: [www.MakeTaxesFair.org](http://www.MakeTaxesFair.org).

To try to save public services and possibly our jobs: go to [MakeTaxesFair.org](http://MakeTaxesFair.org) and fill in your information, and an e-mail will be immediately sent to the governor and your two legislators. It is so simple—maybe takes a minute. But they need to know that there has to be **FAIR** taxes throughout the state. Don't do this from work or use your Hennepin

County e-mail address.

If the wealthy paid their fair share of taxes, we could afford the public services that Minnesotans want and need. That's why AFSCME is asking state legislators to "Get a spine and raise fair taxes for the common good." For example, \$1 billion could be raised if those who earn more than \$250,000 paid the same percentage as average Minnesotans pay.

A phone survey was done from March 13-17 of 602 Minnesotans who are registered voters. The margin of error is +/- 4.1 percentage points. The following is Voter's reactions to reductions in state services that **might be** considered to address the state budget shortfall: The following percentages are those that were rated "Mostly/Totally Unacceptable":

- 83% Reducing programs and services for the elderly and persons with disabilities
- 76% Reducing funding for public schools
- 74% Making it much more difficult for parents to pursue education or training
- 73% Cutting payments to health care providers, including hospitals and nursing homes
- 69% Reducing or eliminating employment programs that help people get and keep jobs
- 65% Cutting higher education funding
- 56% Increasing fees for families that use state child care services
- 54% Reducing aid for cities and towns.

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## New wave conference

"New Wave" is a new initiative promoted by our International Union to involve young union members and to help them become active in their unions. Statistics show that a majority of the current union activists are older, many nearing retirement. There needs to be a "NEW WAVE" of activists to work with their unions to invigorate them and mobilize them.

We received the following notice from

the International Union:

We want to bring a very important conference to your attention.

AFSCME will hold a national Next Wave conference for local and council activists on June 19-21, 2009 in Chicago. The conference is especially for young activists, age 35 and under.

This is the future of our union. As you

know we will experience many retirements in the next 10 years. Many of these retirements will be our current leaders and activists. We need to be prepared to fill the void by providing tools and connections to get younger members active and ready for future union leadership.

## 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 E-board member 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."



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.

Council 5 Contact person:  
 Cindy Pince, 651-287-0564

**A New Voice deadline is May 6.** 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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## Steward's List

<b>Steward</b>	<b>Phone and e-mail</b>	<b>Department and location</b>
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