

January-February 2008

## Welcome to 2008!

### STEWARD TRAINING

Learn about the roles and responsibilities of Union Stewards including union building, mobilization techniques and grievance handling

Wednesday, February 6<sup>th</sup> and Thursday, February 7<sup>th</sup> -- 8:30 to 4:30  
Radisson (Hotel) University -- 615 Washington Ave. SE, Minneapolis

We want to invite you to take the Stewards Training we've scheduled for February 6th and 7th, 2008. For some of you it would be a refresher, and you're encouraged to join us.

For those of you who've never taken the training, we'd be delighted to see you there.

Our Local doesn't require that you sign yourself up to be a steward once you've taken this training. We could sure use the help - so we won't discourage you from becoming a Local steward! If you decide you want to become a steward you should rest assured that you would never be sent out to do something you were uncomfortable with. You could be paired up with a seasoned veteran of steward activity whom you could shadow at first - we've done that in the past and it helps new stewards get acquainted with the process.

However - even if you don't think you would want to sign on as a steward right away, the training is a great way to get introduced to contract interpretation, finding what you need in the contract, problem-solving, and one-on-one organizing. The skills and information you take back with you will help you answer questions from your co-workers, and give you a better perspective on workplace issues.

The training is two days long, starting at 8:30 and generally ending around 4:30. (Sometimes the second day doesn't go quite that long.) Plus, the Local will pay for your lost time and travel, and if you are coming into the Twin Cities and have to stay overnight, we will pay for lodging. Ask us for details.

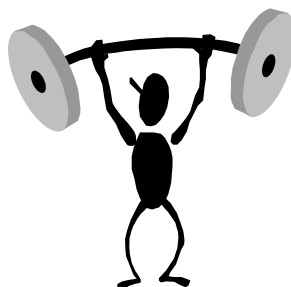
We encourage you to sign up for this great opportunity - Please RSVP by Friday, February 1st, so that we can schedule for food, etc.

Let us know if you have any questions about this - you can call or write:

Ken Holm / 612-296-3727 / [holmx013@msn.com](mailto:holmx013@msn.com)

Jason Iversen / 612-624-6368 / [jasoniversen3937@yahoo.com](mailto:jasoniversen3937@yahoo.com)

Barbara Bezat / 612-379-3933 / [union@afscme3937.org](mailto:union@afscme3937.org)



## Benefits issues

### *John Hancock long term insurance premiums discontinued --*

Some people had their John Hancock long term insurance premiums discontinued when they returned to work after the strike. The premiums should not have been discontinued. If this happened to you and you are still having problems, please contact the benefits dept. at the University and get reinstated. E-mail: [benefits@umn.edu](mailto:benefits@umn.edu) Phone: 612-624-9090. Your paycheck will show double deductions until the difference is made-up.

### *Rx America benefit cards --*

The generic co-pay is now \$8 not \$10. If you recently received a benefits card from RxAmerica and it still says \$10, please contact them about getting a replacement.

### *Frequent fitness discounts --*

Visit the Benefits page: <http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/benefits/index.html> to check out the frequent fitness discount. You could get up to \$20 back on your fitness membership if you go at least 8 times per month.

### *Participate in a wellness program and earn money --*

Again this year you can earn money by participating in a wellness program and/or survey. The benefits page has a link to Health Connections at <http://www1.umn.edu/ohr/wellness/index.html>.

### *Replacement of MSRS allotment (important for strikers within five years of retirement) --*

There was a slight error in our printed newsletter regarding replacement of MSRS (retirement) allotment. You will be charged interest, which is approximately 8.5%. Call the MSRS office, 651-296-2761, toll Free: (800) 657-5757. They will figure out the amount due and send you the forms you need. You will be paying both the University's portion as well as your own.

## Mutual Support Committee update

Over 400 applications were processed and an additional over \$9,000 dollars in gas and food vouchers were handed out.

Fund raising efforts got underway as soon as the strike vote was counted. We received enormous support from Council 5 (generous donations of money, along with the entire support of the strike headquarters, which included the phones, computers, copier, and people), the International, and hundreds of individual donors. The Minneapolis Central Labor Body took some applications to work with, and helped us with fund raising and support efforts.

At the end of 2007, the committee received large donations from Locals 3800 and 3937, along with additional funding from Council 5. At that point the committee made the decision to disburse the remaining funds to the approved applicants who had not yet received any support whatsoever.

We understand how difficult this situation has been. We thank all of you who stayed on the picket line until the very end in our struggle to move the University off it's cemented position on our wages. We thank all of you who waited so long to get something from the committee that would help you with your lost wages.

Thank you,

Kelly Ahern / Chair, Mutual Support Committee (updated, 1/2/08 BB)

## **Safety Survey**

Happy 2008! May it be a SAFE year for all of us! The new year offers us a chance to reflect on the past year as well as to make resolutions to better our lives in the year ahead. So, in an effort to monitor and improve our working conditions, I am asking for your help.

Take a few minutes to examine your work space and yourself, then fill out the attached survey. We framed the questions broadly for two reasons -

1. if you think something is maybe a problem, it probably is; and
2. in order to keep it relevant to all work environments that we use. Return the survey to me or hand it to a steward for delivery to me.

A couple examples of safety issues: One safety issue that I know management is working on is building evacuations. Does your building have an evacuation plan in place? Do you know how you should respond to an alarm (weather, fire, other)? Do you practice the evacuation plan a couple times a year? In the unlikely event of a real fire or other situation, the plan, including all its details, needs to be in place before the event.

Another obvious safety issue that may be impacting you is construction or remodeling. Do you know what you are being exposed to during the renovation? Dust? Asbestos? Mold? Carpal tunnel syndrome and headaches are not the only safety issues we face. By gathering information from many sources we may find a trend that should be addressed by education or by problem solving.

Mary Austin

[Austi006@umn.edu](mailto:Austi006@umn.edu)

6-9462 (TC campus)

## **Good & Welfare announcement**

### **Would You Like to Save a Life and Become an Organ Donor?**

If so, I am in need of a part of your liver! I am Cynthia Hardy, a 55 year old retired AFSCME employee of the University of Minnesota. I have been a member of AFSCME local 3937 for 12 years and also a union steward. I have liver cancer, and am on the liver transplant list. I have two options to receive a liver: cadaver or living donor. The best option is from a living donor. The surgeons at the U of M take part of the donor liver, it is then transplanted into my body. The donor liver will grow back to its original size. There are no long range problems for living donors. The donor will be hospitalized for approximately 1 week. To be eligible to donate, the donor must be between the ages of 18 to 50, with blood type "O", not overweight, and be healthy with no heart, lung, or liver disease. There is no financial burden for the donor, as the cost of surgery is covered by my insurance.

While I am on the transplant list for a cadaver liver, the waiting period could very well prove to be too lengthy. If my cancer progresses too far, I will be ineligible for a cadaver liver.

If you have ever thought about being an organ donor, or would like more information, please call the UM Transplant Center at 1-800-328-5465, then push option # 1, intake/referral line for living liver donor applications. A telephone inquiry will not obligate you any further.

If you decide to inquire about living donation, be sure to mention that you are calling in reference to Cynthia Hardy. As the UM Transplant Unit is extremely busy, if you call and do not get a return call, please call again. They will return your call ASAP. Thanks for your consideration of this urgent request.

Sincerely yours,

Your AFSCME Sister, Cynthia M. Hardy

**Officers of AFSCME Local 3937**

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Medical Area  
(vacant)

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Ron Kubik  
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Outstate  
(vacant)

East Bank  
(vacant)

Crookston  
(vacant)

**ADDRESS CORRECTIONS NEEDED**

We need your help to maintain an accurate list of member names and addresses. If you know of a U of Mn Technical Worker who is not receiving *Tech Talk* please tell us. Call 612-379-3933 or send an e-mail to: [union@afscme3937.org](mailto:union@afscme3937.org) with any corrections (send both old and new addresses.)

**Thank you!**

**HAVE YOU SIGNED YOUR MEMBERSHIP CARD YET?**

This union is run by employees of the University of Minnesota who, like yourself, have thought about the changes they would like to see in their workplaces. This union needs your support if we are going to put these changes into effect. Please take time to make sure you have signed and returned a membership card.

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