

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

From the President 2

Dues Adjustment for 2014 2

Get to Know Your Union: Stewards 2

Member Benefit Spotlight 3

Deciding the 2014 Legislative Agenda 3

Local Gives Back to Members 3

Larry Marquardt Scholarship Available 4

UPCOMING EVENTS

- **AFSCME Council 31 Legislative and Political Endorsement Conference, February 1**
- **Staff Senate Meeting, February 6 at 9am**
- **Solidarity Committee Meeting, February 7 at 11:30am**
- **Executive Board Meeting, February 11 at 5pm**
- **Brown Bag Lunch, February 18 from 11:30am-12:30pm**



www.afscmelocal2887.com

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Negotiating Our Contract

Local 2287's contract with SIUE expired on June 30, 2013. Since then, our Members and Fair Share employees have continued to work while a new contract is being negotiated. The Labor Relations Act preserves the previous terms of employment while contracts are being negotiated, guaranteeing the existing rates of pay and benefits at the time of contract expiration.

The work on our new contract began with the Pre-Negotiations Committee that was formed in June 2012. This committee reviewed the contract to make suggestions on things we wanted to improve, add, or remove. In October 2012, the recommendations of the Pre-Negotiations Committee were given to the Executive Board and a Negotiations Committee was selected.

Our Negotiations Committee

consists of President Anne Hunter, Vice-President Vanessa King, Executive Board Member Vicki Daggett, and our Council 31 Representative Ed LaPorte. The Negotiations Committee represent the Local in negotiations with SIUE. Using the recommendations from the Pre-Negotiations Committee, other state university contracts, and economic studies, they developed a draft contract proposal.

Meetings with HR representatives began in June 2013. Per the LRA, these meetings are confidential and limited to designated representatives. As all items discussed are only proposals and can change at any time, details of what is on or off the table can only be discussed with official representatives.

Once the Negotiations Team and the HR representatives have a

proposal that is mutually agreed upon, that proposal is then brought before the Local at a special meeting. All dues-paying Members are allowed to cast a vote on whether to approve or reject the proposal. Fair Share employees, who receive the benefits and protections offered by the contract, are not allowed to vote on the contract as they only pay "fair share" fees and are not Members of the union. If approved, the contract is then signed by the Negotiations Team and the SIUE representatives.

We renewed negotiations with HR on January 24 after a hiatus for the winter break; the next meeting has not been set. There is no way to determine exactly how long it will take to reach an agreement, however we are hopeful to have an agreement in the next few months.

New President for Local 2887

In December, President Dana Dain accepted a Professional Staff position at the School of Pharmacy. As the position is outside of our bargaining unit, she resigned her office effective December 15. The Local extends our thanks to Dana for her service and wishes her the best of luck in her new position.

Our Local Constitution states

that vacancies in office are filled for the remainder of the unexpired term by vote of the Executive Board. On December 17 the Board convened a special session to fill the vacancy. Secretary Anne Hunter was nominated and elected as the new President for the term expiring in November 2014. The vacated position of Secretary, also expiring in

November, will be filled at the February meeting of the Executive Board.

In addition to the Office of President, Anne has also accepted a position on the University Staff Senate as a Senator and panel member of the Negotiated and Prevailing Panel which will be finalized at the February Staff Senate Meeting.

From the President:

I hope everyone had a great holiday break and has been keeping warm! January has gone by rather quickly, and it hardly seems it has already been a month since I stepped into the role of President.

My primary goal right now is to see us get our contract. We had one meeting in January, and while some progress was made we will need to meet again soon to continue moving forward. I know everyone is anxious to find out about potential wage and

longevity increases, and I hope that we will have a proposal to bring to the membership soon. Our "Green Ribbon Campaign" made an impact before the break, so look for a renewal of it in February.

Beyond that, I am looking at ways to strengthen our Local as we begin a new year. There was a great response to our "Getting to Know You" survey, and I think the information is going to be very helpful to the Executive Board and the Solidarity Committee. As the results are organized, I will be getting that information out to everyone

in some fashion.

I know there are many challenges our Local is facing, and I want to see us meet them and rise above them. There is always work to be done, and it is important to remember that we are facing similar difficulties and frustrations.

If you have questions, concerns, or just need to bounce ideas off someone please feel free to contact me. If I don't have the answer, I will do my best to find it for you.

In Solidarity,
Anne Hunter

Do you have ideas for making our union stronger? Then become more involved in your union!

Join the Solidarity Committee for a meeting on Friday, February 7 at 11:30am in the Third Floor Conference Room of Lovejoy Library (LB3021); food is permitted, so feel free to bring your lunch. This committee helps organize events, seek out new ideas for member communication and involvement, and helps to reach out to potential new members. The committee meets approximately once a month.

If you cannot make the meeting but would still like to get involved, please contact Anne Hunter at anhunte@siue.edu.

Get to Know Your Union: Stewards

Union Stewards are the most visible part of AFSCME, serving as leaders, communicators, representatives, and organizers. All Local Officers are trained as stewards, but any Member can become a steward. Stewards are the cornerstone of the union, and effective stewards build stronger unions.

As leaders, stewards are there to answer questions and help solve problems. They are knowledgeable about our contract, work rules, and policies and provide support to co-workers. As communicators, they serve as a hub of information flowing to and from Members, Officers, Non-Members, and Management.

Stewards represent employees in formal grievance procedures as well as providing informal problem-solving efforts and discussions with supervisors and manage-

ment. They can also act as mediators to solve disputes between members.

As unionized employees, we have the right to have a steward present during a meeting with supervisors and management when the employee believes the meeting might lead to disciplinary action being taken. Referred to as Weingarten Rights, an employee can invoke this right before or during a meeting. Unlike Miranda rights, where police are required to tell a suspect of his/her right to an attorney, employees must ask for their Weingarten rights. Stewards are automatically considered equal with the department representative when acting as a steward.

Approximately twice a year, Council 31 hosts a two-day Steward Training program. The *Stewards in Action* program provides the knowledge and skills to be-

come an effective AFSCME steward. AFSCME also sponsors an Online Leadership Academy to provide free online classes for officers, activists, members, and staff. Class registration takes place at academy.afscme.org or you can contact Education@afscme.org for more details.

Local 2887 currently has 12 trained stewards, and at least two more members will be trained during the next available session. A list of our trained stewards and their contact information is available on the last page of this newsletter as well as on our website.

In the coming months, Local 2887 will be working toward creating a stronger steward program. If you are interested in becoming a steward, please e-mail afscmelocal2887@gmail.com for more information.

Member Benefit Spotlight

American Income Life Insurance Company is a 100% Union insurance company. They provide, at no cost, a group Accidental Death and Dismemberment Benefit for all Members of Local 2887.

AIL currently has over 550,000 AFSCME Members covered under AD&D policies. To date over \$18 million in life, health, and no cost AD&D benefits have been paid to over 16,000 AFSCME members and their families. Benefits are not in competition with group benefits offered

through SIUE and can compliment any insurance policies you may already have. The benefit programs are permanent and portable throughout your lifetime.

In addition to the \$2,500 AD&D benefit, AIL also provides Members with other no-cost benefits. Child Safe Kits provide a way to record vital information, including photos and fingerprints, to assist authorities should a child become lost or missing. Family Information Guides help to eliminate confusion over funeral arrangements, insurance papers, and estate information. Finally, a

Health Services Discount Card provides the entire household up to 60% point of sale discounts on vision care, prescriptions, and chiropractic care.

A letter will be sent to all Members introducing the benefits. A response card will be enclosed with which a beneficiary can be designated.

AIL has a zero tolerance policy regarding overly aggressive behavior and is committed to providing high standards of service. If you have questions, please call AIL at 800-495-1213.

In addition to the benefits listed at af-scme.org, Members are also eligible for discounts through Union Plus at unionplus.org.

Deciding the 2014 Legislative Agenda

Council 31s biennial Legislative and Political Endorsement Conference will be held on Saturday, February 1 at the Prairie Capital Convention Center in Springfield. The conference will decide endorsements for the March primary election, adopt the union's 2014 legislative agenda, and feature workshops on challenges facing our union. Comptroller Judy Baar Topinka will be speaking at the conference as well.

The president and PEOPLE chair from each local union and the president of each retiree sub-chapter are

entitled to vote as delegates. Other local union and retiree subchapter members are welcome to attend as guests.

PEOPLE, the legislative and political arm of AFSCME, is funded by voluntary political contributions from AFSCME Members. No money from dues or fair share fees are used for political activity.

Through PEOPLE, state and federal politicians hear our voice and gives our union the resources to take on corporate interests when they come

out against the interests of working families. AFSCME has also launched major campaigns, including statewide media and advertising, to protect our pension and retirement benefits.

Members can sign up for the PEOPLE M.V.P. program with an automatic payroll deduction by completing an authorization card available from any Local officer. Members who sign up also receive an AFSCME jacket and earn points toward other AFSCME merchandise available through peoplerewards.afscme.org.

DID YOU KNOW?

Local 2887 shares bargaining unit positions available at SIUE through our Facebook page.

Local Gives Back to Members

"Random Acts of Kindness" have been taking place across the country, from buying a cup of coffee for the person behind you to anonymous tips to wait staff. In the spirit of the holiday season, AFSCME Local 2887 provided two \$250 awards to Members in need as a "Local Act of Kindness" before we left for the break.

Members were asked via the listserv to submit in 250 words or less why



the nominee should receive the award. Several entries were received before the December 18 deadline.

To preserve confidentiality and anonymity, submissions were compiled and reviewed for eligibility via the Local's e-mail address. Identifying data was removed before the eligible submissions were given to the Executive Board. Once the Members were selected, the gifts were distributed on December 20.

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Larry Marquardt Scholarship Available

Larry Marquardt was a tireless organizer and union leader who dedicated his life to improving the lives of working people. He was the first executive director of AFSCME Council 31, serving in that position until his death in 1980. In his memory, Council 31 has established a scholarship fund which offers AFSCME members and their children financial assistance for higher education.

Two scholarships of \$1000 each are awarded each school year. The Selection Committee screens qualified candidates and determines eligibility. The committee considers financial need, high school or college grades and class ranking, vocational goals as expressed in the application, and a

300-word essay written by the applicant on why the labor movement is important to workers.



To be eligible for the award, the applicant must:

- Be either a member of AFSCME Council 31 or a dependent child or child living in the household of a Council 31 member or retiree. Membership of one year in good standing is required.

- Be a high school senior or college student under the age of 25 or a Council 31 member of any age who plans to attend school full-time and work toward an undergraduate degree or diploma in an accredited college or vocational school.
- Meet the requirements of the school he or she plans to attend.

To obtain an application, please go to www.afscme31.org and follow the link "AFSCME Scholarships" on the left side of the homepage. Completed applications should be returned to the Council's Chicago office by 4pm on Friday, April 25, 2014.