

Solidarity Update

December 2005

Alaskans Working for Alaska!

A publication of the Alaska State Employees Association—AFSCME Local 52, AFL-CIO

From Business Manager Jim Duncan:

New Program to Serve Membership

During its September quarterly session in Fairbanks, the ASEA State Executive Board took action to increase the Union's commitment to delivering programs and services that benefit the general membership.

At the meeting the Executive Board created the Member Advancement Program (MAP). The purpose of the MAP is to increase the emphasis on programs and services that will grow and strengthen our membership; promote increased respect and understanding by the public of the work our members do to deliver needed services to the citizens of Alaska; and to improve communication, training, and education with our union members regarding the union's activities and goals.

To help fund these programs a minimum of two (2) dollars per pay period of your current dues is being allocated directly to MAP.

We all know that we live and work in a political environment and that it is important to support legislators and candidates for office who support us. Through the MAP you have the opportunity to help your union have a strong and effective Political Action Committee with the resources to support those who have helped us in the past and commit to continuing to support us and our union's needs in the future.

With your permission fifty (50) cents per pay period of your current dues that is allocated to the MAP can be contributed to the ASEA/AFSCME Local 52 Political Action Committee.

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ASEA/AFSCME Local 52 Business Agent George Zuke speaks with City & Borough of Sitka employees about the benefits of joining ASEA after workers won the right to collective bargaining.

Sitka Campaign Leads to Success

Sitka municipal employees won the right to collective bargaining in the Oct. 4 regular election after a high profile campaign to change the city's labor relations law.

Campaign organizers credited success at the ballot box to a sensible and fair proposal, broad support from city employees, general dissatisfaction among voters with elected local leaders, and the ability of supporters like the Alaska State Employees Association to promote collective bargaining.

"ASEA has been with us from the start," said Shawn McLeod, city grounds keeper and ballot initiative sponsor. "I'm convinced that we couldn't have won this without them."

ASEA became involved in the outcome of the campaign after city employees expressed interest in joining the union after collective bargaining was secured.

"ASEA and City of Sitka employees are a good match," said Business Manager Jim Duncan. "We're actively communicating with the employees to explain the benefits, advantages, and commitment that comes with choosing ASEA as their representative."

ASEA worked closely with the Public Safety Employees Association (PSEA) to raise awareness about collective bargaining. The two unions coordinated canvassing, direct mailings, and newspaper, radio, and TV advertising to promote the benefits of employee contract negotiations.

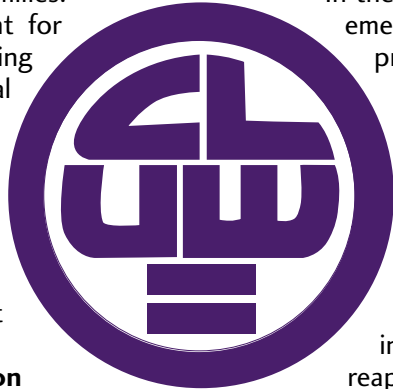
Invaluable additional support for the campaign came from employees already covered by collective bargaining, most notably state employees of the Sitka Chapter of ASEA, teachers of the Sitka Education Association, and AFSCME volunteer member organizers

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Did you Know? A WIC Briefing

The Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) is America's only national organization specifically for union women. Since 1974, CLUW has helped women make a difference for themselves and their families.

CLUW activists fight for the concerns of working women, such as equal pay, child and elder care benefits, affordable health care, and more. If you are interested in learning more about the CLUW you can visit their website at www.cluw.org.



Cancer Prevention

The CLUW has a new program, Cervical Cancer Prevention Works (CCPW), which aims to educate women about cervical cancer, its cause, and the need for regular screening. Cervical cancer is the only cancer for which there is a definitive cause—the human papilloma virus (HPV).

The CCPW program provides information on HPV and cervical cancer through interactive programs such as health fairs and conferences as well as brochures and their website. For more information visit www.cluw.org/cervcancer.html.

Pay Equity

Pay equality, also called comparable worth or fair pay, is a remedy for one type of wage discrimination against women and people of color. It tackles the type of discrimination that occurs when jobs filled predomi-

nantly by women and/or people of color are paid less than other jobs filled primarily by men that require similar levels of skill, effort, responsibility and working conditions.

In the late 1970s, pay equity emerged as one of the most pressing women's rights issues, and AFSCME took the lead in winning higher pay. AFSCME members in San Jose, Calif., staged the first pay equity strike, and AFSCME members in Washington State reaped the benefits of the largest pay equity court settlement to date.

Thousands of other AFSCME members benefited from over half a billion dollars in pay equity adjustments which have resulted from pay equity agreements at the bargaining table, in state and local legislatures, and through political action.

AFSCME International held the 2005 Western Women's Conference in San Jose, California on November 4th to the 6th. (See conference report in this issue.) All the information provided above has been taken from AFSCME's web site www.afscme.org. Please visit the site to get additional information about women issues through the eyes of AFSCME.

Toya Winton

Central Region Seat
Women's Issues Committee

Sitka...

(cont. from page 1)
from Washington and Oregon.

The campaign followed on the heels of a successful signature drive to qualify the collective bargaining ballot initiative for the regular election.

Ballot initiative sponsors collected the signatures of more than 1,000 registered voters.

Up until the election, the City and Borough of Sitka operated under a labor relations system called Meet and Confer. Meet and Confer put the pow-

er to establish labor policies and procedures solely in the hands of the administration, but allowed for periodic meetings with employees.

ASEA is currently organizing city rank and file employees to secure their support for exclusive representation. PSEA already has dues-paying members in the Sitka Police Department but was unable to represent them under the previous Meet and Confer ordinance.

Ballot Prop. 8 implementing collective bargaining for city employees passed 1,486 to 1,331.

News In Brief

State Board Meets

The ASEA/AFSCME Local 52 State Executive Board will hold its quarterly session on Dec. 9 and 10 in the 3rd floor conference room above ASEA Anchorage Headquarters.

In accordance with Article 8.02.A.2. of the Constitution "All meetings of the Executive Board are open to observation by any member in good standing of the union..."

Health Ins. Grievances

The union has filed two grievances against the state that may effect member health benefits.

One grievance relates to the amount of the contribution paid by the state to the ASEA Health Benefits Trust. ASEA believes that the state owes an additional \$7.45 per month per member. The dispute centers around interpretation of the contract language that requires the state's contribution to be a percentage increase from the previous year. The state and ASEA disagree on the calculation of that number.

The second grievance relates to when a new employee becomes covered. The Health Trust notified the state last June that it wanted new members to become covered the 31st day of employment instead of the 1st of the month following 30 days of employment. This action was based on state law, the contract, and the Letter of Agreement that defines the responsibility and authority of the Trust.

Both grievances will be argued before an arbitrator in January. Both have huge economic implications for both parties.

Chapter Bylaws Online

Chapter bylaws have recently been added to the ASEA/AFSCME Local 52 website. Bylaws for all 19 chapters can be found by visiting the union website and selecting 'Chapters' from the main menu. The link to each chapter's bylaws is visible below the chapter name.

Women's Conf. Political Report

The AFSCME Western Region Women's Conference and Pre-Conference Institute were held in San Jose this November. The Women's Rights Department brought together powerful women and men in politics, journalism, and union activism to inspire both personal strength and collective power.

The Pre-Conference Institute: *Strategic Campaign Planning for Building a Stronger Union*, a part of the Women's Rights Department leadership series, was an intensive learning experience that provided us with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to develop and manage campaigns.

During the conference, speakers addressed some seven hundred AFSCME members, almost all women, including the newly organized child care providers of California.

AFSCME President McEntee, Secretary/Treasurer William Lucy, and a panel of AFSCME Vice Presidents discussed the health, wealth, and political strength of AFSCME.

Calif. Rep. Hilda Solis and State Senator Gloria Romero spoke to attendees about their call to serve. Andrea Dew Steele, Founder of Emerge America, moderated a panel of union women holding public office. Ann Crittenden, author of *If You've Raised Kids, You Can Manage Anything*, read from her book.

AFSCME women have the leadership skills and determination to defend every member's rights. Women comprise 57% of AFSCME, and over 60% of ASEA. When union women fight for their rights, they are fighting for their families and advancing their union.

All ASEA members can make a political difference. Every ASEA chapter needs to make the PEOPLE program a priority and needs to vote together on the important issues looming ahead of us. These are your issues and you have no time to waste.

Nadine Lefebvre

Women's Issues Committee Chair

Chapter Report on the AFSCME Western Region Women's Conference

At the pleasure of the Anchorage Chapter, I attended the AFSCME Western Region Women's Conference in San Jose, California on November 4, 5, and 6, 2005.

I attended all the workshops offered, the plenary sessions, and met with other members of the ASEA Women's Issues Committee. I also went to every party, reception, breakfast, luncheon, and other social event I could find.

The conference theme was union women in the 21st century. The three workshops I attended were *Collective Bargaining Challenges*, *Moving the Message*, and *Putting Women at the Top of the Ticket*.

WIC Member Toya Winton and I went to the bargaining session together. Because union members have faced very difficult political and bargaining situations we wanted to see what the latest national strategies were.

They dealt with some tough issues: budget cuts, attacks on member's pay and benefits, declining union membership. Across the country the top three issues were health care, job security (privatization) and pensions.

Moving the Message focused on developing a strong campaign message in the current environment of spin and obfuscation. Expressing the vision and

goals of the group through effective strategies of communication was the aim of the workshop. Define the union and frame the debate for the 90% in middle audience. Keeping on track with consistent messages that express the values of the union membership was stressed. Develop a strong message and repeat it in all the materials. We learned how to focus on moving the middle—not preaching to the choir or arguing with the naysayers—to action, to stand up and to speak out from the worker's perspective.

Putting Women at the Top of the Ticket dealt with the steps to an effective campaign from developing the platform, raising money, and speaking to the press.

They talked a lot about building the union structure with women. These statistics show that women are a major force in the union. And, that women now make up the majority of not only union membership, but also the US workforce. This means women need, more than ever, to be prominent in leadership positions, creating platforms, and building the union.

Many inspiring speakers brought enthusiasm and a message of hope to the conference including the AFSCME (cont. page 4)



Seated, from left to right, Women's Issues Committee Chair Nadine Lefebvre, Anchorage Chapter Representative Penelope Goforth, Anchorage Women's Committee members Toya Winton and Laura Ghormley. Standing, AFSCME Vice Presidents Ken Allen (left) and Greg Devereux.

Advancement...

(cont. from page 3)

By signing the MAP voluntary contribution form you are giving permission that fifty (50) cents per pay period of your current dues can be transferred to the ASEA PAC. **This will not increase your current dues.**

You can get a copy of the voluntary contribution form by going to the ASEA webpage or by contacting a member of the PAC, Union Steward, or business agent. I encourage you to complete and return this form as soon as possible.

Conference...

(cont. from page 3)

president Gerald McEntee, treasurer William Lucy, and the honorables Hilda Solis, US House of Representatives, and Gloria Romera, California Senate Majority Leaders.

They all spoke about the 'Category 5' assault on working people and their families, about the administration's attacks on the basic rights of workers to unionize and be supported by their union pensions, and the shameless pandering to the corporations above the welfare of the workers.

The most poignant speech was delivered by an AFSCME sister and her husband from Louisiana who spent 3 miserable days in a shelter after the wake of hurricane Katrina. She brought tears to our eyes when she told how hungry, thirsty, and disoriented they were. Nearly despairing after losing their home, work, and all their belongings, they were rescued by a group of people wearing the green AFSCME T-shirts. Volunteer AFSCME members like these spent weeks combing through shelters to find union members and provide them with food, water, money and a place to go.

I especially enjoyed visiting with my Alaska union sisters. We shared meals and attended sessions together, comparing notes and sharing ideas. We worked on strategies to bolster the women in our union and to encourage them and ourselves to strive for a stronger voice for women in our state.

Toya, Nadine LeFebvre, and Laura Ghormley were all enthusiastic about the future of the Women's Issues Committee and moving the issues and concerns of the committee forward for the benefit of the general membership.

Inspirational and informational, this conference was one of the best events for women I have ever attended. I want to thank the Anchorage Chapter for this opportunity to learn more about our union structure and aims. I hope in the months to come, as we face the battles ahead of us as public service employees, that my experiences at this conference will help validate the importance of our union to the state and achieve the goals of our union for a better workplace.

Respectfully submitted,

J. Penelope Goforth

Anchorage Chapter Local 52 Trustee and Steward

Member—to—Member

Annual and personal leave can be donated to Local 52 members for use as "sick leave" after sick, annual or personal leave has been exhausted. Recipients must use all accrued sick and annual leave before using donated leave, and unused donated leave cannot be returned to donors. Members can donate leave by filling out a leave slip in the name of the person receiving the donation and delivering, or mailing it, to ASEA/AFSCME Local 52 at 1577 C St., Ste. 201, Anchorage, AK 99501.

The following members need leave donations

Roxanne Dillon, Administration, Juneau
Lanetta Riley, Health & Social Services, Anchorage
Vikki Neal, Health & Social Services, Anchorage
Lani Saceda, Community & Economic Dev., Juneau
Michelle Casavant, Labor & Workforce Dev., Fairbanks
Thomas Zalewski, Health & Social Services, Fairbanks
Jessica Gardner, Health & Social Services, Kodiak
Bonnie Clouser, Transportation & PF, Anchorage
Jeanette Immingan, Labor & Workforce Dev., Nome
Natasha Odom, Community & Economic Dev., Anchorage
Staci Bristow, Administration, Anchorage
Bill Worthy, Corrections, Anchorage
Phyllis Williams, Fish & Game, Juneau
Jennifer Reed, Transportation & PF, Anchorage
Erin Tolles, Health & Social Services, Juneau
Caroline Byford, Military & Veterans Affairs, Juneau
Donna Vinsonhaler, Corrections, Anchorage
Mark Dye, Health & Social Services, Anchorage
Dawn Youll, Community & Economic Dev., Juneau

Solidarity Calendar

Dec. 7 <i>Wednesday</i>	Anchorage Chapter Executive Board Meeting, Atwood Bldg., Ste. 1620, 5:30 p.m.
Dec. 9-10	State Executive Board Quarterly Meeting, 3rd fl. conf. room, ASEA Anchorage Headquarters
Dec. 14 <i>Wednesday</i>	Anchorage Chapter General Membership Meeting, Carpenter's Hall, 5:30 p.m.
Dec. 15 <i>Thursday</i>	Midnight Sun Chapter Stewards Meeting, Fairbanks Union Office, 5:15 p.m.
Dec. 20 <i>Tuesday</i>	Political Action Committee (PAC) Teleconference, 5:15-6:00 p.m.
Dec. 26 <i>Monday</i>	Christmas (observed) State Holiday
Dec. 27 <i>Tuesday</i>	Juneau Chapter Meeting, Juneau Chapter Office/ Teamsters Hall, 12:05-12:35 p.m.
Jan. 2 <i>Monday</i>	New Years Day (observed) State Holiday
Jan. 4 <i>Wednesday</i>	Anchorage Chapter Executive Board Meeting, Atwood Bldg., Ste. 1620, 5:30 p.m.
Jan. 5 <i>Thursday</i>	Midnight Sun Chapter Executive Board Meeting, Fairbanks Union Office, 5:15 p.m.
Jan. 11 <i>Wednesday</i>	Anchorage Chapter General Membership Meeting, Carpenter's Hall, 5:30 p.m.