

AFSCME LOCAL 1668

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President' Report

Hello AFSCME Local 1668! I hope all of you have managed to keep warm these last few weeks. This time of year we all should appreciate our brothers and sisters who work out in the frigid weather keeping our campus' miles of sidewalks clear for our students. What a great job they have done! And thanks to the many members of all divisions who braved the blizzard to come to campus to keep the students taken care of. While most of us were sitting home in our warm homes, they did what needed to be done. Thanks for yet another example of why AFSCME is so great and why it's true when we say "Western works because we do!"

There have been a couple days of special conference since the last newsletter. We met for a total of two days and talked about various issues. The main topics of discussion were the house staff positions and a proposed change in the way monies are paid out when a member separates from the university. We had very meaningful dialogue on all topics, but have not come to any type of an agreement on anything to date. When and if we do, as always we will report to the members. In case you don't know, let me explain the process. If we agree on anything that would re-

quire a change in our existing contract, there are specific guidelines that we must follow. First, any contractual change has to be provided to the members in a written form that will be mailed to each member. Then the same information will be presented at three consecutive membership meetings. At the third of those meetings, the changes will be voted on by those in attendance. This is the only way that our contract can be changed mid-cycle. It is always up to the will of our members, as it should be. Stay tuned for more on these topics and please feel free to call the local office if you have any questions. It is always better to get your information from us rather than from someone in management.

I'm sure most of you have heard the rants by our new governor attacking public workers. He claims that our pay has gone up faster than those in the private sector in the last few years. The important thing to remember is this: Figures lie, and liars figure! The governor did a very generic "study" of wages of both public and private workers in the state of Michigan, and came up with this rhetoric. What isn't making the news is that even he has admitted his numbers are flawed, and

aren't accurate. The news is how the working people in this state are draining the state's resources. We all know that's not the case. Public employees aren't killing the state any more than AFSCME is killing WMU. Let's not allow the new legislature to balance the state's budget on the backs of the working people. Now is the time for all of us to be making our voice heard. We need to be contacting our legislators, writing to the editors, and talking to our neighbors. We need to get the truth to as many people as we can. All of us can do this very easily. You can go to the AFSCME International or the AFL-CIO websites and get all the information you need. They make it easier for us to be heard. And just because we have two Democratic senators currently in Michigan doesn't mean they don't need to hear from us as well. They need to know how much we mean it when we say we won't go down without a fight, and if they don't take care of us, we will elect someone who will next time!

That's all I have for this month, other than to once again thank all of you for what you do to make WMU happen, and to make AFSCME great!
In solidarity,

Dennis

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Special points of interest:

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- Membership Orientation Information
- Computer usage
- Join PEOPLE today

Vice President's Report

Hello Everyone

I hope everyone had a nice closure day. It is so nice to know that our union is a hard working union.

While some of us were at home warm and cozy, our brothers and sisters were out there getting the sidewalks, entry ways and stairs cleaned and ready for later that night. And for those who braved the weather to come and cook for the students, are appreciated. For us to be able to even get a closure day is telling us that our union is strong. As you may know on the news, on the radio, on the front page of a lot of newspapers public service workers are under attack every day. They are attacking our pensions, our benefits, our salaries and even our right to bargain

collectively. They don't see that what we do is vital to the state.

They don't see that we make this state happen, we are the ones who are out there maintaining roads, who care for the sick and elderly, who makes our schools good places to learn, keep our communities safe, and much more.

Here's how you can help, Join AF-SCME'S PEOPLE program we are looking for members to participate in helping us keep our governor on the right path. We have to constantly remind them we are here and we are not a burden on society and we will fight for our rights to fair wages and fair benefits. AFSCME advocates for fairness in the workplace, excellence in public service, and prosperity

and opportunity for all working families.

On February 5th and 6th Judy Rozek and I attended the Women's committee Quarterly Meeting in Ann Arbor, we were fortunate to have a few speakers come and enlighten us on the state of the State. One of the speakers was Jeff Irwin State Rep. from the 53rd district. Also, we had a training on FMLA given by Richard Mack from Miller Cohen, P.L.C Attorney and Counselors at Law. He talked about the updates on the changes of FMLA and how we could help our members.

Valerie Armstrong VP

Chiefs Steward report:

We had a round two of our Special Conference on January 25, 2011. The discussion continued for the House Staff positions as we discussed a possible job description change and upgrade for the House Staff positions. The M-3.3 Gardener positions are not being filled with the next lower job classification and the University's intent to hire externally. This discussion ended with the Director informing us that he would be hiring one M-3.3 from our internal and one external applicant. He understood very clearly that we would be grieving any hiring from the outside for these positions and we have employees internally that have met the qualifications for these positions. We continued discussion on the proposed change to the Payout of A/L and S/L balances upon retirement. We continued discussions about the new FMLA process. We did not reach any tentative agreements. IF any tentative agreements are reached, we will

send a mailing to notify each member of a future membership vote at a future membership meeting.

Steward Elections are wrapping up in all departments. I would like to congratulate and thank every member who participated in this process. I would like to thank those of you who have volunteered to stand up for their co-workers rights! Our STEWARDS are the very backbone of our Local. Without you, we could not accomplish what we do for the rights of our own working families. Congratulations to all the new and returning Stewards and Alternate Stewards. Please be sure to come to the March Membership meeting to be sworn in. Also, watch for information that will be out soon about Steward Trainings. Very excited to see some new names and faces out there, stepping up, I mean STANDING UP for what's right!

The Kalamazoo County Tax Counseling Initiative is up and running again this

tax season. If you are interested in getting your income taxes done and your household income total less than \$49,000 in 2010. Call 2-1-1 after January 6, 2011 to make your appointment. Each Tax preparer is IRS trained and certified.

PLEASE PLEASE PLEASE be sure to pay attention to what is occurring in our state right now. The new Governor has just proposed a budget that could be potentially devastating to Public Workers. We need to be sure that our Representatives and Senators HEAR FROM US, the working people and let them know that we won't stand for what this Governor is proposing! Stay up to date and send letters, make calls, attend Rallies..... Make a Stand!

In Solidarity,

Kathi Cain-Babbitt

P.S. Yep, I got married. J

University Computer Usage

I would like to send just a friendly reminder to my fellow union brothers and sisters on the proper usage of computers and the internet while on the job.

The university has given us a great tool in allowing us to use university owned computers to access the internet and its' website as a source of information and communication.

This has always been a privilege extended to all employees, and with all privileges there are also responsibilities.

The university has a policy, WMUnet Acceptable Use Policy that can be accessed at the following link.

<http://www.wmich.edu/oit/policies/wmunet-acceptableuse.html>

With the proliferation of social networking and gaming sites, most companies along with the university have been monitoring computer usage of all employees since granting this privilege.

There have been "suggestions" sent out to various non bargaining employees to curtail "facebook" time and other activities on the computer while on university time.

The union urges all members to use this tool wisely.

Deepest regards from your recording secretary

Larry LeVan

MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE

Brothers and Sisters,

As you may or may not know, Orientation is now done online instead of in a group setting, held on campus, like it used to be. This has become a problem for Lisa Soule and myself to meet with our new members. I have discussed this with Dennis, Val and Kathi and we have decided the best way to handle this is to have the Divisional Stewards do our

AFSCME Orientation. I've written up some instructions for the Divisionals' and if they would like I'll run through the process with them. I will provide all materials as well as remain our membership representative to payroll and H.R. I would like to thank Phyllis, Margaret, Sylvia and Shar for volunteering to help, but I think this new procedure is going to work well. If anyone has any questions for me about the Member-

ship Committee, I can be reached through Campus mail: Shop 4 Pat Campbell 5324 or e-mail patricia.campbell@wmich.edu.

FYI: contracts are supplied by Human Resources room 1300 in the Seibert Administration building.

Thank you
In Unity
Patty Campbell

Below is just one of the Bills from the Michigan State AFL-CIO LEGISLATIVE REPORT. If you would like to see more information on the Bills being introduced please go to miaflcio.org. There are many many more that will effect the working class "public workers". This is what they mean by "we're being attack" people have got to get involved, we have got to get labor friendly political officers in there lobbying for us and we can't do that by sitting on our !@* butts hoping some one else will take up the slack. This is what PEOPLE does for us. They get the lobbyist in there to fight for us, they get the real facts about us out there for everyone to see. They help **STOP THE LIES**. If You think you can't afford one dollar out of your paycheck now, wait, do nothing and see where the bill below will get you.

We're on the Web
AFSCME1668.org

**Join PEOPLE
today**

HB4124 - HB4128 (EFM Package)

Give emergency financial manager power to:

Terminate collective bargaining agreements.

- - * Override approval of collective bargaining agreement.
 - * Remove elected officials from office and ban them from running for office for 6 years.
 - * Dissolve political structures such as councils, commissions and school boards.
 - * Force consolidation of services in schools, townships, cities and counties.

Thought for the Day:

We may not be able to control events, but we can control our attitude towards them.