

Hello again sisters and brothers! Here it is June already! Where did spring go?

8th Annual Golf Outing

The 8th Annual AFSCME Local 1668 Golf Scramble is in the books. We had a record number of teams this year with 26! Every division was represented once again as well. We had a great day and a great time! Thanks to everyone who came out to spend some time with your union family! It sure is nice to get together from time to time for reasons other than work or politics! Congratulations to the Oswalt team, this year's winners with an awesome score of 18 under par! Now that is some good shootin!

Convention Delegates return

Your delegates also just returned from our International Convention. We sure had a busy week! Your delegates represented you on the floor of the convention during the business of our great union. We went through dozens of resolutions and a few proposed constitutional amendments. The members of AFSCME also elected a new IU President and Secretary/Treasurer. Both races were hotly contested, but I am happy to announce that both candidates that Council 25 and your Executive Board voted to support were victorious! Our new International President is Lee Saunders and our new IU Sec/Treas is Laura Reyes. Brother Saunders was previously the IU Sec/Treas, having been

elected to that position at the last convention. Sister Reyes was a local President from a home health care workers local in California. It sure was fun to see our democratic process in action! As I said, both elections, as well as some of the resolutions and amendments were debated quite a lot on the floor. There were very passionate arguments on both sides of most, and the debate was quite heated at times. But that's the great thing about our union, we have debate, we have differing opinions, and we feel strongly about our convictions, but ultimately we let the democratic process play itself out. And when all the shouting is done, we stand together again as AFSCME brothers and sisters.

Good News on the Petitions!

I have some good news on the petitions! On June 14, the full 28-member Michigan Court of Appeals declined to convene a special panel for the purpose of overturning *Bloomfield Charter Twp v Oakland Co Clerk*, which means Public Act 4 will be placed on the November ballot as a referendum with a possibility of being overturned by the voters! This decision, however, is subject to appeal by the supporters of PA 4 and may well be appealed to the MI Supreme Court. Regardless of any future outcomes, we should all be proud of our efforts to Stand Up for Democracy! Thanks to all that

helped with this effort!

More good news: not long ago, more than double the necessary signatures were turned in to the Secretary of State's office to place the constitutional amendment to protect collective bargaining rights on the November ballot! This is great news! If approved by the voters this fall, this will guarantee our rights to have a union, and undo many of the laws that were enacted recently attacking us.

Although both of these are major hurdles we have cleared, the race is not over. We still need to work diligently to get the message out on both issues. Collecting the signatures was the easy part, now we need to concentrate on building support with the voters on both issues. Your union will be calling on your once again to volunteer some time on this. We will need many boots on the ground to do things like distribute yard signs, phone banking and distributing literature. We need to step up and get these things done. We can't quit now. There are many people out there, with tons of money, that will be working against us! But we can win! They did it in Ohio. We can do it here. But it takes all of us together. Many hands make light work. If we all give a little time, we can stop these attacks once and for all! So please consider helping yourself by helping your union. A couple hours a week can make a huge difference if we all take part. Please call the union office if you want your name on the list of people we can contact to help Stand Up for Democracy and Protect our Union! Thanks!

In solidarity, Dennis

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Union Meetings are every first Thursday of the month Next meeting will be **August 2nd 2012 at 4:00p.m.**

E-board meetings are every third Thursday of the month next meeting will be **JULY 19TH 2012 and August 16th 2012 at 4:00p.m.**



The Newsletter can be found online at: www.afscme1668.org and facebook.com/afscme1668

AFSCME LOCAL 1668
3625 DOUGLAS AVENUE
KALAMAZOO MI 49004
269-381-1668

Vice President's Report

"The Importance of Voting on November 6th"

Hello everyone

Once again the Golf Outing Committee out did themselves this year. Everyone one had a wonderful time. The weather was perfect not too hot and nice and breezy. I would like to give thanks to everyone who helped and for going through the ritual of making sure the outing was a success. Special thanks go to Bryan and Dennis for all the time and effort you put into this event every year.

The Importance of Voting on November 6th

As you probably know by now the petitions we were circulating around and having everyone sign was to get on the November 6th's ballot of this year the chance to amend the constitution. It's to give everyone the right to organize and bargain collectively with their

employers. If we succeed with the vote everything that has been done thus far will be null and void. So please go out and vote this November. Look here is what we don't want: 1) We don't want our benefits taken away, 2) We don't want our wages cut; and 3) we don't want our work places too dangerous to work in. And let's not forget how we can't afford 'Right to Work' for less so if we don't get out and vote this November what 's been happening to the working families will be even worse if we let them get away with what their doing and get another term. It's nothing but a ploy to make the rich richer and the poor poorer. They are after the Unions because the Unions are fighting for the right for a descent

wage for good benefits and a safe work environment. That's not much to ask is it?



We don't want to own the world, we want to share it

Enjoy the Summer

Well everyone continue to have a safe and happy summer and if you are not enjoying this beautiful weather and being outdoors. Then please take the time to go out and relax

In solidarity,

Valerie Armstrong VP

Chief steward's Report

It seems that half the summer has come and gone already and we haven't had time to do anything to enjoy it. The Bargaining team continues to make good progress and we hope to be done with negotiations by the August 12 expiration date. There is no doubt that your bargaining team has been working hard to bring you the best contract they can. We have a really great team of people who are dedicated to bringing you the best they can. Their diligence is appreciated and not unnoticed by the leadership of this local.

Speaking of diligence, I just want to thank Mark Robinson who has been working very hard to make sure our Dining Services employees' work opportunities are fulfilled and done so within the contractual bounds to the

best of our ability. This has no doubt being a difficult year for us, with all the curve balls they keep throwing at us. We continue to meet the employers needs while trying to fill every job we can. There have been a few grievances filed this year, but we continue to make progress. Some of the changes we have encountered have been difficult for us. We have actually had to force people to work, and force people to work on shifts they don't necessarily want to work. This has to be done though. We have to protect what little work we have, so if that means you are the least senior and you are forced, just know that, that is all more of guarantee that you will have a job next summer. We have to step up and meet these challenges now. We are the best for the

job. We have to get it done.

Dennis, Willie Mitchell, Sylvia Cotton and I went to the International Convention last month. We were very excited to be a part of history in the making, at the international level. We had the opportunity to cast votes for our local and at least a dozen other locals, in the election of our new President and Secretary Treasurer. This new leadership spent a great deal of time talking about the struggles we have in Michigan and how they plan to help with our battles. They were not the only ones who spoke of MI and the battles we face. Just about every speaker we had, had something to say about us. The Vice President, Joe Biden, Nancy Pelosi and even Ed Schultz, from the Ed Show was there.

Chief Steward's Report, Continued

ATTENTION

Blue Cross Blue Shield of MI changed our group numbers and issued new cards to all employees in the plan. Be sure to update your information with your Physicians!

“You provide the safe neighborhoods, you provide the good schools, you provide the school lunches, you provide the day care centers, you provide the hospitals, you provide the roads, you provide the ability of people to live a decent middle-class life. We owe you!” said Vice President Joe Biden. He went on to thank AFSCME and said, **“You’re not in this fight because of your job. You’re in this fight because you care about the families that live next door.”**

Ed Schultz said, **“Everyone knows unions are the last all of defense against the flood of corporate influence in government.”**

Our new International President, Lee Saunders stated that **“We are mad as hell, and for AFSCME, that means we are taking action!” “We are not backing down in any state, city or neighborhood...we won’t back down!”**

We voted on some, 76 resolutions (out of 84). We passed a few constitutional amendments, two of which decreased the starting salary of the new President and Secretary Treasurer, and one to postpone the implementation of a progressive dues structure until January 2017.

We also had the opportunity decide many, many, many, appeals to the Judicial panel.

We attended some classes and a caucus on Higher Education. I was asked to present at this class, utilizing the skills I learner earlier this year, at the Faces and Voices training I sent to by the International. This was a great experience for me, as it gave me more confidence to speak in front of a room full of strangers. Yet I was speaking about things that are happening right here at our University. I was able to share, much like we do at CUCC, with other employees, from other Universities, although this crowd was a more diverse group of people from dif-

ferent areas within their University. We had Maintenance and other service staff, secretaries, librarians, instructors, and management, all represented by AFSCME. It was very cool to share the opportunities we have, to share this type of information within their own campuses and within their states, much like we do. It is good to hear how others are handling similar situations or have had to in the past. While we are so far apart, we really have the same issues facing us. I shared with the group, the legislative update form our AFL-CIO MI website that shows just how we are under attack here in MI. How the Legislature continues to try and strip us, the working class, of all our rights. They want to take away our rights to vote and collectively bargain among other things. They want us to pay more and get less, and when that is not enough, they want to tax the poor and give it to the corporations.

All in all, we were well educated and well informed of all the happenings, not only in our state, but across this country. We elected a new set of leaders, who vow to fight with us and for us. We had a little fun too. Thank you for sending us and entrusting us to represent you at the International level. We come back to Michigan, refreshed and ready to fight on for the good of our Local, this Union and this state.

So next time you go to down to the locally owned grocery store, or that little mom and pop restaurant or downtown to a little locally owned business or an art fair..... Remember to say something to them about where you work or that you are paying for something with Union bargained wages. Wear your Union t-shirts. Most small business people think we are just greedy people who want to take more than our fair share and more than we deserve. We are the ones who put our money back into the community. We have never asked for more than we deserve. We usually have to fight or give

up something else to get it. When the constitutional amendment appears on the ballot, we need to have people in our corner, outside of organized labor. We need our friends, neighbors and communities organizations to understand that we want to PROTECT ALL JOBS! We are good people that just want to make things better for all people! Not just the big corporations. If we have enough money to pay our bills and put food on the table, we all do. If we have a little extra to spend, then we spend it in our community, which helps small businesses. So, all I am saying is when you walk into that little coffee shop on the corner, mention to the sales clerk, I need a cup of coffee before my Union meeting, or I have to get a quick bite to eat before I have to get back cleaning those classrooms or mowing that soccer field at WMU. Put a smile on the face of the people who make WMU happen!

Hope you had a wonderful Independence Day and enjoy the rest of your summer! Be safe and wear that sunscreen and drink lots of water in this ridiculous heat!

Solidarity forever!

Kathi

Vice President Joe Biden, in his speech to AFSCME:

“You’re not in this fight because of your job. You’re in this fight because you care about the families that live next door.”

The 61st Michigan State AFL-CIO Community Service School

Audi and Will's most excellent Black lake Adventure

This was a very interesting and rewarding experience.

The school started off Monday evening with the opening session that detailed the upcoming weekly events. Each speaker emphasized the fact that our state and our country were at a pivotal point, and it was up to labor and the unions to take back our state and country. Petitions for various referendums were made available.

Tuesday and Wednesday morning were equally informative.

They included lectures from; Bob Cramer, Mi State AFL-CIO Community Services. Karla Swift, MI State AFL-CIO President; Tim Laskowski, Priority Health (Health Care Update); Derrick Quinney, MI State AFL-CIO he spoke on Workplace Health & Safety Dave Dobbie, American Federation of Teachers he spoke on the State of our Schools/AFT; and Will Fisher, National AFL-CIO theme for all was Now is the time for labor and union voices to be heard, through actions and at the ballot box.

The Workshop sessions in-

cluded:

Community Services; Workman's Comp; Advocacy Training; DHS/MI Benefits Access (how to navigate the Computerized system); Social Media Tools; Union Label; Public Speaking.

The entire week was very informative. The Community Services Labor Liaisons should be commended for coordinating such an educational and enjoyable week.

The balance between the two were perfect!

In solidarity,
Audi and Will

Sylvia Cottons Thoughts and reactions on the International Convention

JUNE 18TH 2012

THIS IS SERIOUS HISTORY IN THE MAKING. 75 YEARS OF HISTORY; PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY TREASURER ELECTIONS; AND THE 40TH INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION! IT IS AN HONOR TO BE HERE THANK YOU LOCAL 1668 FOR NOMINATING ME TO COME AND REPRESENT OUR LOCAL!!!!

June 18th 2012

“WOW !!!! this AFSCME Convention is so AMAZEING every state is here too represent there UNION in SOLIDARITY!!!! WOW I really can't put it into words how the Energy is flowing in this Convention and what Unions are All about. It's about fairness and who we are WE ARE THE Middle CLASS; THE 99 PERCENT Who GET's ACTIVE and GETTING involved; REMEMBER Afsme :WE MAKE AMERICA HAPPEN

JUNE 20TH 2012

“WE ARE HERE, IN LOS ANGELES CA , REPRESENTING LOCAL 1668 AND OTHER LOCALS FROM MI AT THE AFSCME INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, IN THIS HISTORIC 75TH YEAR. THANK YOU TO ALL THE DELEGATES WHO ARE HERE, MISSING THEIR FAMILIES AND CO-WORKERS TO HELP MOVE OUR UNION FORWARD IN 2012!”

June 19th 2012

“Nancy Pelosi is in the house the Minority Leader in Congress WOW ! Vice President Joe Biden will be here tomorrow!!! I am so Honored to be here.”

JUNE 21ST 2012

ITS ELECTION DAY !!!!

CONGRATULATOINS PRESIDENT LEE SAUNDERS AND SECRETARY- TREASUERER LAURA REYES!!!!!!

*****It's Raffle ticket time*****

If you would like to purchase raffle tickets for the Organized Labor/United Way Kick off and food drive, event, please contact Kathi Babbitt at 269-381-1668. (see info on next page) They will be for \$5 each or 5 for \$20 again and some of the prizes include a 50+ in flat screen TV and gaming system, and sporting event tickets.



2012

**Organized
Labor/United Way
Kick-off and Food Drive
Saturday, August 18, 2012**



BINDER PARK ZOO



Oak & Maple Pavilions at Binder Park Zoo

Noon to 4:00 p.m.

LUNCH/GIVEAWAYS/RAFFLE DURING THIS TIME



Please bring non-perishable food items to the Pavilions to receive
FREE lunch and Zoo admission for your family.

(Up to 2 adults and 4 children - \$5 for each additional person.)

**GREAT DOOR PRIZES!
50/50 DRAWINGS!**

Awesome Raffle Prizes! Lots of Family fun!

AFL-CIO • AFSCME Local 1668 • BCTGM Local 3G • BCTGM Local 66G • CWA Local 4123 • HRDI
RWDSU Local 374 TEAMSTERS #7 • UAW REGION 1C • UFCW Local 951 • USW 2-1010
Union Counselors • United Way of the Battle Creek and Kalamazoo Region



This 8th annual AFSCME Local 1668 Golf Outing was made possible by the generous contributions of the following area vendors and businesses. Please take a moment to thank them if you get the opportunity!

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Making WMU happen for 50 years!!!!