



## Local 3937 members attend Council 5 annual convention in Duluth

AFSCME Council 5 held its 5<sup>th</sup> annual convention in Duluth October 8 - 10th and proudly announced its largest attendance ever with almost 900 attendees representing 100 locals. Local 3937 Officers and several E-Board members attended committee meetings addressing union business and a variety of informational workshops designed to update/educate members about Union activities.

A highlight of the convention was the recognition of **Jason Iverson**, 3937 Vice President of Organizing, who received an individual **Local Union Development Award** for his outstanding efforts in organizing new members for our Local.

The first televised gubernatorial debate of the 2010 race took place at the convention with all 10 DFL candidates in attendance. Republican candidates were invited but did not attend.

All 10 candidates agreed the state must raise revenue to help solve its massive budget deficit of over \$7 billion dollars. For more in depth coverage of this debate check out the AFSCME web site at <http://afscmemn.org/node> and watch the debate online or when it is broadcast on your local public access channel.

Attending the convention is one way to learn about all of the effort and care that go into making our Union work for us. Another way is to check out the Council 5 web site. It is a repository of information about issues affecting our financial and work related well-being. The State Legislative Report Card is well worth looking at if you want to find out how various legislators voted on issues of concern to Union members. Stay informed so that when the time to vote comes you know who has your interests at heart, go to <http://afscmemn.org>

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## Elections are coming---Will you vote?

For many members it isn't a priority election year ---the governor's race is next year -- but to AFSCME members this years' elections are crucial to their jobs. AFSCME represents many state and county employees, among them, Hennepin County defenders and prosecutors, school clerical workers, social workers, technicians, park workers and many more! When you dial any city or county office, chances are the person who answers is AFSCME.

It is important that we elect people to public office who are pro-union and pro-fair treatment of workers.

To find out what races are taking place in your area and who is running go to the League of Women Voters web site at <http://www.lwvmn.org/edfund/Election.asp>

Did you know that AFSCME has screening committees who talk to any candidate who asks to participate in the screening process? Pro-AFSCME candidates are endorsed and members who reside in these candidates areas are sent a card informing them of the AFSCME endorsement.

**Please vote on November 3<sup>rd</sup>!** Your Union brothers and sisters need our Help!

If you would like to volunteer to phone bank, door knock or do other important tasks to help elect pro-union candidates contact Jody Ebert or Jon Grebner at the Council (651-450-4990).

Jody Ebert  
Local 3937

## Are you being bullied?

What is bullying? Very simply, bullying is a form of harassment perpetrated by someone who is in some way more powerful, physically or socially, than a weaker peer. ([www.sciencedaily.com](http://www.sciencedaily.com))

There are 4 essential elements to bullying: The behavior is aggressive and negative and is carried out repeatedly. The behavior occurs in a relationship where there is an imbalance of power between the parties involved. The behavior is purposeful. ([www.sciencedaily.com](http://www.sciencedaily.com))

Workplace bullying includes all types of interpersonal harassment and psychological violence. Few of these behaviors are currently illegal unless you are a member of a protected class. Sometimes bullying behavior is so covert and subtle that it is hard for a responsible and hardworking employee to understand that they are not to blame for the poor treatment they receive from a supervisor. Yes, 73 % of workplace bullies are supervisors. (2007 national survey by Zogby International).

A new study from social scientists at the UC Berkeley and USC found that bosses who feel inadequate or have low self-esteem are more likely to bully. "By showing when and why power leads to aggression, these findings are highly relevant as abusive supervision is such a pervasive problem in society," said Nathanael Fast, assistant professor of management and organization at USC and lead author of the study. (<http://esciencenews.com>)

The anguish of bullied employees forces them to pay with their health--both psychological and physical--and that affects them, their co-workers and their families.

Those who view bullying in the workplace and do not take action are accepting a share of the responsibility for any future abuse. Witnesses of bullying behavior should be encouraged to report any such incidences. Antisocial behavior such as bullying is less likely to occur when it is understood that the organization does not tolerate such behavior and that the perpetrator is likely to be punished.

### Watch for Common Bullying Behaviors

- false accusations of mistakes and errors
- exclusion and the "silent treatment", shunning
- withholding resources and information necessary to the job
- use of put-downs, insults, and excessively harsh criticism
- unreasonably heavy work demands
- yelling, shouting, and screaming
- behind-the-back sabotage and defamation

Bullying is an unsustainable employment cost, in terms of lowered employee health and morale, increased use of sick time and increased turn over. Look beyond personalities as causes to see how the workplace culture and environment make your organization prone to bullying. Ask your work unit or department to commit to correcting and preventing it. Leadership sets the rules and establishes the culture. Bullying could not exist without either the explicit or tacit approval from employers. Employers are in charge and are responsible for the problems that exist within.

When employers and the Union get together to tackle this silent epidemic the American workplace will not be a source of ill health and poor management that contributes to the high cost of doing business in the U.S. "Psychologist Michael H. Harrison, Ph.D., of Harrison Psychological Associates, quotes a recent survey of 9,000 federal employees indicating that 42 percent of female and 15 percent of male employees reported being harassed within a two-year period, resulting in a cost of more than \$180 million in lost time and productivity."

(<http://orlando.bizjournals.com/orlando/stories/2002/03/18/focus1.html>)

Check out what [Opra.com](http://Opra.com) has to say about bullying :

<http://www.oprah.com/article/health/wellnessandprevention/20090922-orig-workplace-bullying/2>

Priscilla Pope

Local 3937

## Don't Forget Your Rights!

If you are ever asked to meet with management, and you have a reasonable belief it may be disciplinary in nature or may lead to discipline:

**Prepare Yourself/Protect Yourself -- Call a steward!**

- You are entitled to a fair and objective investigation.
- You have the right to have a steward with you at the meeting(s).
- You are entitled to privately confer with a steward before making any statements or answering any question in the meeting.
- You have the right to question any of management's evidence or proof of misconduct, including witnesses.
- You are entitled to present your side of the situation.

Don't put your job, your reputation, or your peace of mind on the line. **Contact your local union whenever you have a question or problem involving your workplace.**

All employees are entitled to prior notice of what constitutes misconduct. There must be substantial evidence or proof of misconduct to justify any discipline. Work rules are to be fair, reasonable, and work-related. Rules, orders, and penalties must be equally applied to all employees in the unit.

The progressive disciplinary steps outlined in the contract must be followed. Employees may challenge contractual violations, including disciplinary-related ones, through the grievance process.

You can call Ken Holm, our Chief Steward, whenever you have a question about your workplace: 612-296-3727

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## Have you Heard?

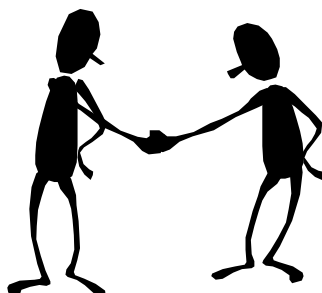
AFSCME is hard at work preparing the next generation of union leaders. This summer, nearly 600 members, age 35 and under, met in Chicago for our union's first national Next Wave Conference. Sixty young activists from Council 5 enjoyed three power-packed days of activism, strategizing and learning about the union movement. The need to educate young workers about the benefits of Union members has never been more important. Employment, income and benefits have fallen sharply for young workers over the past decade. 31 percent of young workers report being uninsured, up from 24 percent 10 years ago. Only 31 percent say they make enough money to cover their bills and put some money aside. It is hard finding a job and when they do one in five say they are over-qualified for their current jobs and 22 percent are working outside their chosen field.

AFSCME members know the importance of having a Union to combat threats to our livelihood. More than half of AFSCME members are eligible to retire in the next 10 years and we are not ready to fill this Leadership void. Next Wave chapters are important in providing the tools and connections to get younger members active and ready for future union leadership.

Get involved with your Union! Strong Unions help the middle class. Vice President Joe Biden speaking at an AFSCME conference in May of this year said .."the best way to rebuild the middle class is to help labor unions grow." Protect your jobs and income, get involved! Go to the Next Wave page on the AFSCME International website to learn more at:

<http://www.afscme.org/members/nextwave.cfm>

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**Officers of AFSCME Local 3937**

President  
 Barbara Bezat  
[union@afscme3937.org](mailto:union@afscme3937.org)  
 213 Andersen Library  
 612-625-3550

Vice-President Organizing  
 Jason Iversen  
[JasonIversen3937@yahoo.com](mailto:JasonIversen3937@yahoo.com)  
 15 Andersen Library  
 612-624-6368

Vice President Chief Steward  
 Ken Holm  
[holmx013@msn.com](mailto:holmx013@msn.com)  
 cell ph: 612-296-3727

Treasurer  
 Mary Austin  
[austi006@umn.edu](mailto:austi006@umn.edu)  
 612-626-9462  
 300 WBOB

Secretary  
 Ryan Mattke  
[matt089@umn.edu](mailto:matt089@umn.edu)  
 S-76 Wilson Library  
 612-624-2030

**Executive Board Local 3937**

West Bank  
 Nicole Bretall  
[bret0035@umn.edu](mailto:bret0035@umn.edu)  
 Wilson Library  
 612-625-4840

Medical Area  
 Krista Gallagher  
[galla020@umn.edu](mailto:galla020@umn.edu)  
 B633 Mayo  
 612-625-9946

Medical Area  
 (vacant)

St. Paul  
 Brad Kraling  
[kralli001@umn.edu](mailto:kralli001@umn.edu)  
 E311 Vet Tch Hosp  
 612-624-6169

Off-campus  
 Fred Pulling  
[pulli003@umn.edu](mailto:pulli003@umn.edu)  
 WBOB  
 612-624-8765

**Executive Board Local 3937**

Morris  
 Ron Kubik  
[kubikra@mrs.umn.edu](mailto:kubikra@mrs.umn.edu)  
 320-589-6150

Outstate  
 (vacant)

East Bank  
 Chris Koehler  
[c-koeh@umn.edu](mailto:c-koeh@umn.edu)  
 612-625-0043

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 M 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.

**AFSCME Local 3937**  
**1313 5<sup>th</sup> Street SE, Suite 332B**  
**Minneapolis, MN 55414**  
**Phone: 612-379-3933**  
**Website: [afscme3937.org](http://afscme3937.org)**  
**E-mail: [union@afscme3937.org](mailto:union@afscme3937.org)**