

County and City Employee

WASHINGTON STATE COUNCIL OF COUNTY AND CITY EMPLOYEES — AFSCME AFL-CIO

Council 2 endorses Inslee for governor

Council 2 is endorsing Jay Inslee for governor.

“He has shown consistent support for labor, and for our union in particular, and he will do a great job as governor,” says Council 2 President/Executive Director Chris Dugovich.

“He is no stranger to our union. Indeed, our relationship with him goes back decades and he has spoken at several Council 2 conventions, most recently in June last year.”

For the rest of the races, Council 2 members have been urged to vote for those candidates who support the labor cause in general and our



union in particular.

All the seats in the State House of Representatives are being contested and about half of the State Senate seats are up for re-election,

“We need to be on guard constantly that we do not suffer the same fate as Wisconsin,” Dugovich says.

Public employees’ rights to bargain collectively have been reduced in Wisconsin.

“Although it seems unlikely, we

should be vigilant nevertheless.”

One of the most hotly contested local races is likely to be that in the First District — the seat being vacated by Inslee — where

former Microsoft vice president Suzan DelBene (D) faces off against Snohomish County Council member John Koster (R). The district has been redrawn since the last election.

• Watch the Council 2 website, www.council2.com, for a full list of our endorsements as the November election draws closer.

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Jay Inslee



Dianne Smith was introduced to union power in an unusual way. In 1998, two weeks after she was hired as a credit consultant in the Federal Way offices of Qwest Communications, the union that represented workers at the company went on strike.

Unsure whether she was even a member of the union, the Communications Workers of America, Smith consulted her grandmother, chief steward for a produce-packing company in California and an ardent union supporter. “You must not cross the picket line,” her grandmother told her. “You need to walk the line.”

For two-and-a-half weeks Smith — who found out that

she was indeed a union member — walked the picket line with fellow workers.

“I was on strike for longer than I had worked,” Smith recalls.

The incident helped place her on a path of support for unions — and she has never looked back. After working at Qwest for seven years, where she worked her way up to area vice president, Smith, a mother of three, moved to Birch Bay, taking a position at the Ferndale branch of the Whatcom County Library.

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Saunders elected AFSCME president

About 200 Council 2 members attended the 40th International AFSCME Convention in Los Angeles in late June.

They were among 5,000 delegates from around the country who adopted key policy resolutions and constitutional amendments during the week-long convention.

They also took part in a rally during the convention at MacArthur Park expressing solidarity with Cali-

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fornia sisters and brothers fighting cuts to public services statewide and kicking off negotiations with the University of California system.

During the convention Lee Saunders — chosen as secretary-treasurer at the 39th International Convention in July 2010 — was elected president, replacing Gerald McEntee, who retired after leading the union for 31 years.

Laura Reyes was elected Secretary-Treasurer, the first woman to hold this position.

“It was a very well attended and

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Saunders is great choice for International president

CHRIS DUGOVICH

This year's AFSCME International Convention held in Los Angeles marked a new era for this union. Lee Saunders, who has served in a host of positions on AFSCME staff and with various councils, was elected to be only the fourth individual to serve as International President.

I first got to know Lee during a long afternoon in the late eighties, meeting and talking to prospective members in an organizing campaign in Indiana. That day we traveled to a number of road maintenance shops around Indianapolis.

Organizing new members is never easy and unsurprisingly some individuals can just be downright rude. We weren't exactly welcomed with open arms, but Lee was not about to give up and at least say hello to every eligible voter we ran across.

I'm sure we made at least a small difference that day and you can rest assured that he has done all the less-than-glamorous tasks this union has to offer. He also didn't hesitate to keep at it that day.

It's the same type of unending energy and enthusiasm for the job he will bring as International President.

He was sent in to New York City's District Council 37 during some dark days for the union in the late nineties. The 120,000-plus City Union had been run by some individuals who, along with having some money issues, also ran a shady contract ratification process.

President McEntee and AFSCME took over the union and Lee was sent in to right the ship.

It took a number of years but right it he did! Mayor Giuliani in those days started to get tough on public employees and Lee Saunders was up to the effort of defending and advancing the public employees working life in New York.

I've heard some of the stories, but it was also a story of tragedy when 9/11 hit. District Council 37 represented a countless number of first responders. Their headquarters in lower Manhattan near the Trade Center also encountered severe damage.

I'm sure he would call his experience in New York more than challenging. What he left was a much more democratic and well run city union. His hard work made the difference.

His breadth of experience is really what will make him the next excellent AFSCME President. From a young man not far out of college working in AFSCME research department to organizing new members in field services to becoming President McEntee's right hand person, he's seen and encountered many aspects of this Labor Union's efforts.

We are all the beneficiaries and I wish him congratulations in this new position.



Letter from the President

Employee, fired over corrected test paper, is reinstated

It all began when an employee for the Spokane County Roads Department took home his answer sheet from a flagger class administered by a county instructor. The sheet contained the corrected answers.

The employee, a member of Council 2, did so accidentally, he said, bundling it with his class materials and a magazine he had brought to the class.

When the road-crew member realized his mistake, he called the instructor and apologized. He returned the answer sheet the next day.

But the instructor was not impressed. He alerted the County Engineer, who issued a Loudermill notice the next day that said he was considering terminating the employee, who had been told not to remove the test results from the testing room.

These actions were "in-subordinate to the instructions that were given to you and fraudulent in nature," the County Engineer told the employee.

Three weeks later, the employee was issued a termination letter that said, in part, that the employee's actions could result in the testing agency seeking reimbursement for developing a new test.

Council 2 filed a grievance against Spokane County on the employee's behalf. After the two parties were unable to resolve the dispute, a hearing was held before Arbitrator M. Zane Lumbley.

The county contended in the hearing that the employee knew he could not remove the test from the classroom or modify it, but did so anyway, thus engag-

ing in theft and conversion of county property. The choice of termination, the county officials argued, was appropriate.

Council 2, represented by General Counsel Audrey Eide, argued that the termination lacked just cause. The county did not show

'I find this to be an appalling case.'

what personal gain the employee derived from taking the test answers home, nor did the county investigate that he had committed a disciplinable infraction.

All the other seven employees who had taken the test that day said the instructor had failed to tell them that the score sheet was not to leave the room.

Lumbley ruled that there was not just cause to terminate the employee.

"I find this to be an appalling case," he said.

"In the first place, while it is undisputed that the grievant took the flagger test results home and later modified them, assertedly to show his wife how smart he was after changing the results to reveal a perfect score, there is absolutely no evidence to show he removed the sheet intentionally."

He said he did not find the instructor credible. He accepted that the county was concerned about the

integrity of the test and its value to the organization that drew it up.

"But it appears that the instructor "threw the grievant under the bus" to save his license to administer examinations because he feared he had been lax in his stewardship of the results, Lumbley said.

"As a result, I do not believe it can be said the grievant was on notice of a rule and then knowingly violated it," he said.

Lumbley added that the reason he called the case "appalling" was that it resulted from the failure of the county to investigate the situation before terminating the grievant.

"Had the employer done so, among other things, it would have learned, just as I did at the hearing, that the overwhelming weight of the evidence demonstrates that the instructor did not state a hard rule about leaving the test results in the room.

"That failure to properly investigate before taking disciplinary action exhibits a disregard for the disciplinary process in general and the requirement for due process in particular...

"The employer must perform a fair and unbiased investigation before deciding whether to institute discipline at any level. It did not do so here. Instead, it abused its discretion by leaping to the conclusion that the grievant was aware of and must have violated an announced rule based entirely on the self-serving accusations of the instructor."

Lumbley rescinded the termination and directed that the employee be reinstated and made whole.

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Candidates outline their views to Island County locals

It is not always easy to know where some local election candidates stand on the issues, particularly those relating to county and city employees. For example: How will they handle budget shortfalls?

In an effort to learn more on their candidates' stands, a group of members from locals 1845 and 1845-I in Island County invited the nine candidates standing in districts 1 and 2 in the August primary election to meet with them and to answer five questions on issues relating to the election.

All nine candidates agreed to attend. Among them were the two incumbents who were standing again.

The candidates' forum was held July 17 in the Coupeville Recreational Hall. About 50 members attended.

With the candidates waiting outside, Staff Representative Vinnie O'Connor explained the purpose of the meeting to the members.

"We then brought the candidates in one by one," explains Kyla Walters, of Local 1845, one of the organizers of the meeting.

O'Connor asked each the same five questions that had been prepared by the locals in advance (see list alongside).

"The meeting was helpful in letting us know what the candidates

stand for and what we can expect from them," she adds.

"We also had a better idea which of the candidates had our interests in mind."

Walters adds that most members who attended the forum and to whom she talked were happy with the results of the primary election.

"Those who won were those who some of us thought were the best, based on their answers to the questions at the forum," she said.

The members will decide whether to hold another forum before the



The candidates

The candidates who attended the forum (with the primary winners marked):

Curt Gordon, District 1
Ed Jenkins, District 1
✓ Helen Price Johnson, District 1
✓ Jeff Lauderdale, District 1
Wayne Morrison, District 1
✓ Angie Homola, District 2
✓ Jill Johnson, District 2
Jim Campbell, District 2
Phil Collier, District 2

The questions

Here are the questions that members from Locals 1845 and 1845-I in Island County asked candidates in the primary election at a special forum:

1. Over the past several years Island County has experienced severe budget shortfalls which have resulted in layoffs and service cutbacks. In terms of services, what do you believe Island County's priorities should be?

2. Do you believe Island County offers pay and benefits that are competitive with other jurisdictions, or the private sector? If not, how would you address this issue?

3. What would you do to attract and retain qualified employees?

4. Do you support the proposed "Law and Justice" tax?

5. Do you support the Public Safety Tax?

November election or whether they have sufficient information on which to decide whom they will support.

"Generally, everybody thought it was a positive experience," Walters adds.

"Members thought it was a really good idea and the candidates appreciated it."

Joining Council 2 pays off for managers

More than two years ago, 130 managers and supervisors at Seattle City Light opted to join Council 2. Their reason: Their jobs were targeted for cuts by Seattle Mayor Mike McGinn and they believed that being union members could protect them.

The group, which consisted of supervisors, strategic advisers and managers, was the highest level of management ever represented by the union. In the past, few managers at any level have been included in union contracts.

Bargaining for the first contract began in January 2011.

Months of drawn-out negotiations followed until, in March this year, the City made its "last, best and final offer."

Not good enough, members said, voting it down.

The parties returned to the bargaining table.

The dispute went to mediation and the parties arrived at a mediated settlement on the contract. On August 2 members voted by more than 70 percent to ratify the agreement.

Highlights of the contract for the new Local 21-C include:

- A just-cause provision
 - Protection for health-care benefits
 - Arrangements for a system of discretionary based-pay adjustments and performance pay awards for managers and strategic advisers.
- The result: Joining the union helped the managers avert pending layoffs. They all keep their jobs and receive a good contract, too.

Golf tournament raises \$21,000 for scholarships

This year's Council 2 scholarship benefit golf tournament — held on July 20 at Chambers Bay — was a rousing success.

It raised an additional \$21,000 to be awarded for scholarships, meaning we will award close to \$100,000 to member dependents for the academic year that starts in 2013.

A total of 156 golfers took part in the tournament.

Next year's tournament will be held in the later part of July at Chambers Bay.

Watch for the notice after the first of the year and sign up early. Our foursomes will fill up fast.

Results:

• Although three teams shot a low 65 in the four-man best-ball tourna-

ment, the team of Brian McGuire, Will Weglage, Nick Logue, Travis Spencer from our City of Vancouver Local 307-VC carried the day by wining via the tie breaker.

• Second Place: Chris Jones, Lucky Spitzer, Darren Peterson, Scott Baker of Local 109 Snohomish County Road Maintenance.

• Third Place: Tom Faye, Scott Johnston, Stefan Schlecht, Phil Sayamnet of Local 618-L City of Lacey.

• The two KPs were won by Scott Baker and Lucky Spitzer of Local 109 Snohomish County Road Maintenance. The two long drives were won by Rick Knotsman of Local 618 Thurston Country and Marilyn Van-Tassel of Local 492 Spokane County Corrections.

SMITH, from Page 1

Today Smith is assistant manager of the branch. Her job, which she really enjoys, focuses on services to children and teens. She recently completed an annual award ceremony for children in the library's summer reading program, taking photographs of the children, writing up short details of their reading accomplishments, and posting them on a bulletin board.

She also oversees nine pages as well as the regular library duties of answering questions from the public, checking books in and out and finding books that need to be replaced with new ones.

A recent challenge has been the arrival of electronic books that have changed many aspects of library work.

"It has been a wild ride, but we are managing it well," Smith says.

In addition, Smith — who is president of Local 1581 — devotes a considerable amount of her time to union activities.

"I think that our situation would be a lot different if we didn't have our union," Smith says. "For one thing, the union has helped retain our health-care benefits at a reasonable cost at a time when many workers have to pay considerably more for their benefits."

Smith credits a lot of her initial interest in unions to her family. Not only was her grandmother actively involved in the union, but also her father was a Teamster for 30 years when he was salesman for a bread-making company.

"As kids, we got to hear a lot about what the union did for us, particularly in terms of health-care benefits and pay," she recalls.

As she looks back, Smith is grateful that her family pointed her in the right direction. She is benefiting now and is confident she will be doing so for a long time to come.

"She has a very good working relationship with all the employees and a respectful role toward management," says Staff Representative Vinnie O'Connor.

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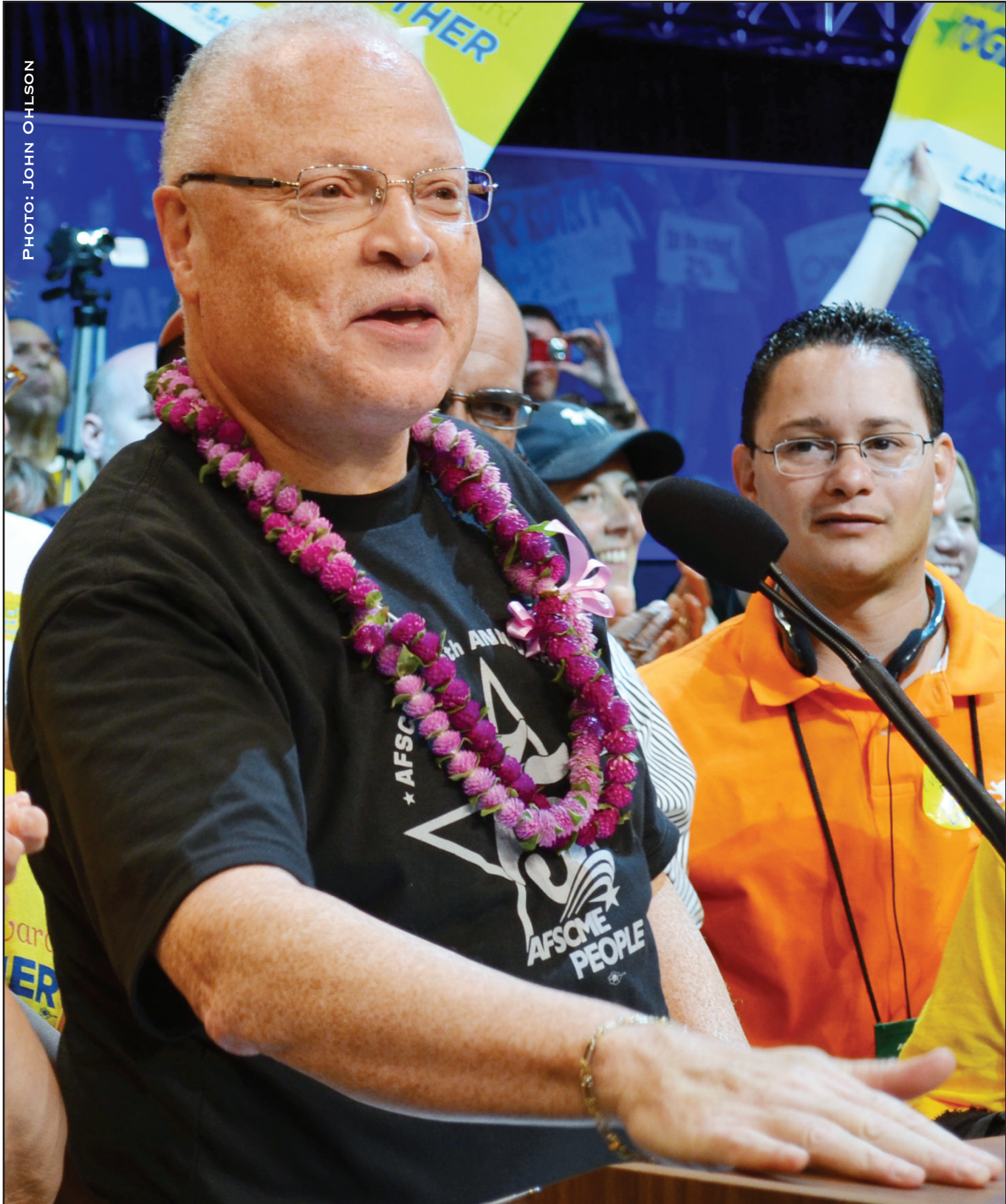


PHOTO: JOHN OHLSON

New AFSCME President Saunders hears he has been elected to lead the union.

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exciting convention, with the election of Lee Saunders a highlight,” says Council 2 President/Executive Director Chris Dugovich. “Most of our delegates enjoyed it and felt good about the experience

‘We must propose long-term solutions to strengthen pensions’

and being part of the process.” Saunders told the convention that members “must work our hearts out to re-elect President Obama” to meet the tough challenges facing labor and working families” and that the union will hold all politicians accountable for their treatment of public workers. “We must continue the focus on organizing, even in hostile, right-to-work states, because we cannot win the fights of tomorrow unless we are growing today,” Saunders said.

“We must propose long-term solutions to strengthen pensions, emphasizing that most of our members pay into their pensions, and that those pensions contribute to local economies. “To that end, I am appointing a special task force of IEB members who will study this issue, consult with experts, and put forward sound strategies.” In her address, Reyes focused on building a stronger union. “We will dig deep into every state, every city to organize new workers from every sector,” Reyes said. “What we do will determine whether collective bargaining survives, whether members’ lives get better, whether retirement security is restored, whether public services are strengthened and whether the American dream is renewed.”



Laura Reyes

10 AFSCME scholarships available

The AFSCME Family Scholarship program is offering 10 scholarships of \$2,000 each for children of full dues-paying AFSCME members. The scholarships, which will be renewed for \$2,000 each year for a maximum of four years, may be used for any field of study. The student must be a graduating high-school senior and be enrolled in a full-time degree program at an accredited institution. Applications must be postmarked by December 31, 2012. To download an application form visit www.afscme.org/family.



Members of the Local 1857 (King County Library System) delegation to the convention.