

County and City Employee

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



Tom Trarbough

It's a tough job — but there are bright spots

Corrections officer Tom Trarbough performs a tough job, one that most people do not want to even hear about, let alone do.

It's unpleasant, it's challenging and it can be soul-destroying.

"We have had several people who have tried the job but they have not been able to do it," says Trarbough, who is a sergeant at the Spokane County Jail, president of Local 492-CS and a member of Council 2's Executive Board.

"Society wants people locked up, but as long as they are off the streets they don't give them — or corrections officers — much thought. Yet we are dealing with the worst of society."

And it's not getting any better.

"The inmates — who are increasing in number — are blatantly more aggressive and more violent than they were just a few years ago," Trarbough says. "They could care less about authority and are younger when they end up here."

"The situation is compounded

This is another in a series of articles highlighting Council 2 members and the services they perform.

by those who carry disease or who have mental-health issues. We are like a second mental-health facility because the states have cut back so much on their spending on mental-health facilities.

"And sometimes you think that the inmates have more rights than the average citizen."

Cutbacks resulting in fewer staff and overpopulated jails magnify the task.

In addition, those at the top keep changing. Trarbough says he has worked for eight jail commissioners and four sheriffs. Each new occupant of a position wants to change the ways of working and it is hard to adjust each time.

But there are bright spots.

One is being a member of a union.

When young people come into the workforce, they often criticize unions, says Trarbough, who has been a member of Council 2 for all of the 25 years that he has worked as a corrections officer for Spokane County. "But they have not yet experienced the real world," he adds. "They do not realize how far unions have brought us and how much we still need them."

"I have the highest regard for the union to which I belong. I think Council 2 does a phenomenal job in the way they help us negotiate better wage and medical packages."

"I came from a job that didn't have a union and the wages reflected that. It is great to have a union that can protect your interests in the workplace and ensure you have a good retirement plan."

The other bright spot is the friendships that Trarbough has made among other corrections officers. He says he has made long-time friendships among them that he will

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Contract trend improves

With talk of cutbacks and budget shortfalls everywhere, Council 2 members feared the worst when they faced contract negotiations this year. But, so far, they have been largely satisfied with agreements reached around the state, particularly given the economic situation.

And, if anything, the trend seems to be improving.

Take, for example, recent contract negotiations in Snohomish County.

"It was as good as it was going to get with the exponential rate of increase in medical costs," says Staff Representative James Trefry of a recent 2012-2014 master contract settlement between local unions representing workers in Snohomish County and the Superior and District Courts.

The major amendments are to the Regence medical plans, which were

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Worst pension attacks defeated

Changes to the state pension system emerged as the greatest direct impact on local government employees in the state's 2012 legislative session, which ended in mid-April. But, thanks to intense lobbying by the labor union coalition, which includes Council 2, the fallout was less damaging than it might have been.

In the early going, the session seemed to pose little threat to public employee pensions as three bills imposing severe cutbacks on pensions were thought dead. But they were revived by three Democratic senators (Rodney Tom, Jim Kastama and Tim Shelton) who joined Republicans in supporting them.

The worst of the revived bills would have closed Plan 2, siphoned \$130 million from the pension system and eliminated all the Early Retirement Factors (ERFs).

In the end, and because of the labor-union coalition lobbying, it was

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McEntee's legacy is unmatched

CHRIS DUGOVICH

During this year's AFSCME International Convention the torch will be passed and a new era of leadership will begin for this union. Gerald McEntee, who has served this union for close to 50 years and been International President since 1981, is stepping down. His accomplishments for this union are long and without precedent.

Gerald McEntee was President when I was hired in 1982 and over the years I was able to get to know him and learn a great deal from him about labor unions.

The first thing was he is an extremely hard working individual whose days are long. His insight and knowledge of unions, politics and maybe most of all organizing new members, was unmatched. Council 2 has tripled in size since 1982 and that growth is largely due to the assistance that he personally made sure we received.

In his early days, he was responsible for leading the organizing campaign that ultimately led to AFSCME gaining upward of 100,000 members in Pennsylvania. His focus on bringing the benefit of belonging to a union to the public sector more than doubled the size of AFSCME nationwide.

Politically he had a real sense of what was possible and who best could help the public employee lead a better work life. In the fall of 1981 I remember attending a conference



Letter from the President

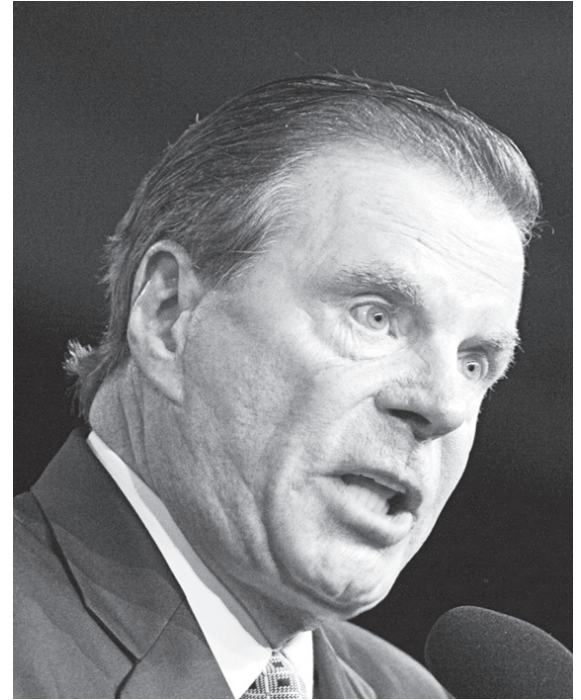
in which he was promoting a little-known governor from Arkansas. That governor was an unknown commodity in a presidential race that was largely viewed as an automatic win for the first George Bush.

He recommended Bill Clinton and AFSCME endorsed early. What most viewed as a real long shot McEntee saw clearly what took the rest of us a while to realize. Clinton could become an American president who puts the country on the right track and who respects public employment. McEntee was right and his insight proved invaluable to this union's membership through the nineties and beyond.

During my eight years on the International Executive Board I enjoyed watching him chair the meetings and appreciated his insight into all types of union issues. His sense of humor would come out and he used it to keep things light when needed.

Council 2 has tripled in size since 1982 and that growth is largely due to the assistance that he personally made sure we received

Probably my best memory was spending the better part of a day driving him from Las Vegas to Laughlin, Nevada for the Arizona state AFSCME Convention. It was August on a blazing hot 118-degree day in the desert and



AFSCME President Gerald McEntee addresses an international convention

for better than three hours each way he told great stories about working for the union.

The purpose of that hot drive was that he wanted to know all about what Initiative 747 was — the 1 percent property tax limitation that was appearing on the ballot in November of 2001. McEntee made sure we had the resources to fight one of Eyman's efforts. He did this even though the odds were against us and there were countless other priorities across the country. It was automatically his fight and he cared about the negative effects it would have on our membership. There were countless issues over the years where his reaction and response were the same.

Without question, he has loved his time working for AFSCME and his enthusiasm and energy is unsurpassed. He has pulled and pushed more people of influence and people without influence into respecting all the professions that make up public employment.

He deserves our applause and thanks and if you happen to be attending the Los Angeles International Convention and have the opportunity to say hello, make sure you thank him!

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treasure for the rest of his life. "Those who have left say they don't miss the job, but they miss their friends," he says.

Mike Smith, Spokane Staff Representative and a former corrections officer, says he has known Trarbough since the eighties.

"He has always been an outstanding officer, an outstanding

'I have the highest regard for the union'

sergeant and a really great guy. "He has contributed much to the union and has been very instrumental in union work.

"I worked with him when I worked at the jail.

"We went through a strike together in 1989 and also a work stoppage.

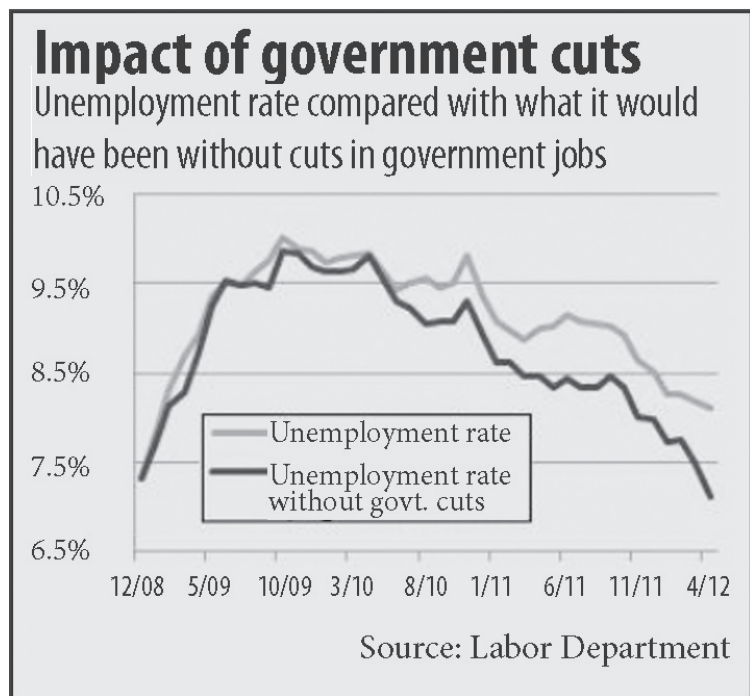
"He is just a great person."

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| | | |
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Jobless rate would be lower without public sector losses

The unemployment rate would have been a full percentage point lower, at 7.1 percent, had it not been for the job losses at state and local government, according to published reports.

The Labor Department's establishment survey of workers shows the government has been steadily shedding workers over the past three years. These job losses were the most dramatic since the department began keeping records in 1955.

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restructured to keep down union members' premiums. "We tried to minimize impacts on the members as much as possible," Trefry says.

As part of the agreement, Group Health coverage will be free for full family coverage again in 2012.

For 2013-2014, cost increases will be split 80-20 between the employer and employees.

"Our Snohomish County members triumphed by minimizing changes to the plans and by keeping employee premium costs as low as possible," Trefry adds.

In addition to a 1.35 percent general increase in compensation in April 2012, employees

will receive 1.5 percent increases for each of 2013 and 2014.

Another example comes from recent wage-only negotiations between Local 1553-G and the City of Goldendale.

"We were pleased with what we got," says Yakima Staff Representative Yvette Lewis. "The negotiations went smoothly and it took only two meetings to reach agreement."

The city's workers will receive a 3.4 percent increase for 2012.

A similar story comes from Union Gap where negotiations resulted in a 3.5 percent wage increase.

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only the ERFs that took a hit and only new hires from next year will be affected.

Here is the result:

Employees hired after May 1, 2013 will be assessed a 5 percent penalty for every year prior to age 65. For example, 60-year-old employees with 30 years of service will receive a 25 percent reduction in their pension benefits. The penalty for the same current employee is 5 percent.

"This measure had nothing to do with the health of the pension system or the current budget deficit," explains Council 2 Deputy Director Pat Thompson. "It was ideologically based."

The bill also includes a study on what the benefits reduction will mean to employees who might have difficulty performing jobs after 30 years of service.

"That's right," Thompson adds, "They're directing the Select Committee on Pension Policy to study the bill's impact after they passed it!"

Current employees are not directly affected by this measure but future attempts to undermine public employee pensions are likely.

The session was not all negative. Among the positive aspects was the passage of a measure that will help generate 18,000 construction jobs and will therefore help our state's economic recovery.

When is a worker a supervisor? Ruling clarifies the issue

When the East Wenatchee public works director is out of the office, the associate engineer stands in for him. Because the public works director works only about 30 hours a week, the associate engineer is regularly called upon to represent the director and make decisions affecting the Public Works Department.

Does this mean that the associate engineer is a supervisor who should not be represented by Local 846-W?

Yes, said the City of East Wenatchee management.

No, said Council 2.

The union last year asked the Public Employment Relations Commission to resolve the issue, filing a unit clarification petition seeking to include the position of associate engineer in the existing bargaining unit. Council 2, represented by General Counsel Audrey Eide, argued that an examination of the associate engineer's actual duties showed that he spent more of his time working as an engineer on storm water

activities than on supervising employees.

Michael P. Sellars, PERC Executive Director, agreed, ruling in mid-May that the associate engineer is a lead worker, not a supervisor.

"The associate engineer does not have the independent authority to promote, transfer, layoff, recall, suspend or discharge employees, or adjust employee grievances," he said. "Although the associate engineer may have the authority of a supervisor while standing in for the director ... the time spent on such activities does not meet the preponderance test for supervisory duties."

He directed the associate engineer should be included in the bargaining unit.

In his ruling, Sellars said the purposes of the rule excluding supervisors from bargaining units containing their subordinates is to avoid the potential for conflicts of interest created by including a supervisor acting on behalf of an employer in the same bargaining unit as the employees being

supervised. If an employee spends a preponderance of his or her time performing one or more of the supervisory activities, that employee is a supervisor, he added.

"The determination of whether an employee possesses sufficient authority to be excluded from a rank-and-file bargaining unit as a supervisor is made by examining the actual duties and authority exercised by that individual, not on the basis of his or her title or job description," Sellars said.

Supervisors, who act with independent judgment, are different than lead workers, who carry out the decisions of a supervisor and so are not excluded from a subordinate bargaining unit, he added.

The associate engineer acts in the capacity of a lead worker, not a supervisor, he said, "because he does not have the independent authority to make meaningful changes to the employment relationship of subordinate employees."

Two Executive Board members retire



Michael West

Local 2084-SC President and Council 2 Executive Board member Michael West will leave the union when he retires as a King County probation counselor July 5. He has been a union member for 25 years, the last 14 of which have been as a member of the Local Executive Board.

Over this time, West says, he has learned how important union membership is, "especially in these times when a lot of workers are viewed as being a problem rather than a model for decent wages and working conditions," he adds.



John Ohlson

As City of Tacoma Local 120 President John Ohlson retires, he looks back on years of union service in which he has worked hard to improve workers' welfare.

Ohlson, who served as the 664-worker Local 120 president for 10 years, stepped down from his position with the City as a Principal Technical IT Analyst on May 31.

He joined AFSCME in 1996 when he began working on software implementation for the City. He served as chairman of the Council 2 Scholarship Committee for 10 years.

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AFSCME We Make America Happen

Scholarship winner tells why unions are important

The essay alongside was submitted by Helen Pendergraft, daughter of Norman Pendergraft of Local 114 (the City of Bellingham) as part of her application for a Council 2 scholarship.

She was selected to receive Council 2's 2012 four-year Scholarship Award (\$5,000 per year for four years).

While in high school she joined the picket line when her schools' teachers went on strike. In addition, as a reporter for her school magazine she wrote her first article on the teachers' strike, so that she could help dispel some of the mixed messages being spread.

A full list of scholarship winners appears on this page.

Member's daughter wins AFSCME scholarship

Katherine Winchell, daughter of Council 2 member Steve Winchell, a member of Local 113, is a winner of a 2012 AFSCME Family Scholarship. Katherine is a student from Archbishop Thomas J. Murphy High School.

Each year the AFSCME Family Scholarship Program provides 10 \$2,000 scholarships to high school seniors that will be renewed for \$2,000 each year for a maximum of four years, provided the student remains enrolled in a full-time course of study. The scholarship may be used for any field of study.

BY HELEN PENDERGRAFT

Unions are vitally important; whether you are looking at this nation's history or its present day struggles.

Because both my mother and my father are heavily involved in their respective unions, I have been brought up with the values presented in the ideals of workers' rights. Taking advanced U.S. history courses in high school and hearing the stories of my family's own history, I have seen the battles of historical activists who helped build fair and equal workplace conditions reflected in the present political and economic atmosphere my parents have to live and work in.

My mother has been the co-president of her union for the last five years. Even before then she was the vice president and the union representative for fifteen years as she was raising children. She often talks to me about the problems she faces. I have seen her fight for competent pay and changes in contract language that would benefit all members of her union. She has fought valiantly and has never given up. She tells me her inspiration is her own parents and grandparents, who



What unions mean to my family

never gave up either. She tells me stories passed down from her father about her grandfather who worked in the steel factories

in Detroit before steel workers were unionized; they had to deal with subhuman conditions, starving wages, overly demanding work hours and the constant threat of unwarranted layoff. This torch was passed to my mother, and she has passed it again to me. My mother and I are Daughters of the American Revolution.

For our family, having lived in America for generations, it is a source of pride to know that my ancestors were among the workforce who built the country we recognize today as the U.S.

Likewise, my father is an active member of AFSCME. He dutifully knows his contract, his job description and the role of the union. My father's lineage helped shape the workforce of this nation as well.

Unions help ensure the rights laid down in the Constitution; an ironic thing since rights should theoretically not need to be fought for; that's why they are called rights. The fact that people still have to fight for workers' rights is frustrating, but also inspiring as even though we are nowhere near an ideal world for workers, at the very least the fight within my family is burning as brightly as ever.



Chambers Bay golf course

Locals can still sponsor golf tournament

There is still time for locals wanting to sponsor Council 2's 11th annual golf tournament to make contributions of \$250, \$500 or \$1,000.

The money from the sponsorships goes toward the scholarship fund for dependents of eligible union members.

Because of the money raised at last year's golf tournament, Council 2 was able to give an additional \$8,500 in scholarships this year. It is hoped that the amount will be even larger this year.

The tournament will be held at 1 p.m. on July 20 at the Chambers Bay Golf Course in University Place.

For those wanting to play in the tournament, a registration form is available on the Council 2 website — www.council2.com.

- Basic steward training will be held in Kennewick on August 4 from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Call 509-545-8171 for more information.

DEPENDENT SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

In Honor of Alpha O'Laughlin, Council 2 Staff Representative, Retired

Four-Year Scholarship Award (\$5,000 per year for four years) *In Memory of George Schultz, past member of Skagit County Road Department*

| Recipient's Name | Member Name | Member is from Local |
|---------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Helen Pendergraft | Norman Pendergraft | 114 City of Bellingham |
| \$2,000 Award | | |
| Recipient's Name | Member Name | Member is from Local |
| Kendal Bates | Don Bates, Jr. | 176 Skagit County Road Dept. |
| Riley Hill | Allen Hill | 1191 Walla Walla County |
| Katie Weichel | Henry Weichel | 1341 Lewis County |
| Jordan Cravens | Janay Pettet | 1811-DC Snohomish Co. Dist. Ct. |
| Chelsie Nathe | Valentina Espinosa-Bushman | 1837 City of Kirkland |
| Sheherazed Poshtkouhi | Irene Poshtkouhi | 3787 Pierce County Library |
| \$5,000 Award | | |
| Recipient's Name | Member Name | Member is from Local |
| David Irwin | Jeff Irwin | 109 Snohomish Co. Road Dept. |
| Kyle Brogan-Ferguson | Lisa Brogan | 114 City of Bellingham |
| Dylan Chase | Scott Chase | 120 City of Tacoma |
| Kevin Celustka | Larry Celustka | 1811-M City of Mill Creek |
| Dana Michels | Tory Haschak | 1837 City of Kirkland |
| Theo Henderson | Linda Johns | 2083 Seattle City Library |
| \$2,025 Golf Award | | |
| Recipient's Name | Member Name | Member is from Local |
| Katelyn McLeod | William McLeod | 120 City of Tacoma |
| K. Caleb Eades | Norma Eades | 1857 King County Library System |
| Matthew Glenn | Dana Glenn | 2658 Kittitas County Appraisers |
| Noah Doran | Hugh Doran | 3787 Pierce County Library |

CONTINUING EDUCATION AWARD

In Honor of Kevin James, Retired Member of Grays Harbor County, Local 275 and former Council 2 Executive Board member

| Recipient's Name | Recipient is from Local |
|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Pei-Shaun Chang | 114 City of Bellingham |
| Anna Huett | 275 City of Hoquiam |
| Alicia Sundby | 1533-SH Skyline Hospital |
| Angela Davis | 1811-CA Snohomish County Auditors |
| Kelly Diefert | 1845-I Island County |