

# County and City Employee

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

## SPECIAL CONVENTION EDITION



Denny Finegan of Local 618 (right) supervises a Thurston County Public Works crew. Finegan was presented with the Mary Hersey Award at Council 2's 2011 convention.

## Award winner enjoys helping others

**D**enny Finegan likes to support the underdog. "I like defending people who have been done wrong, who have not been treated well," says Finegan, who works as a crew chief for the Thurston County Public Works Department and has been active in 700-member-strong Local 618 for 30 years. He has served on Council 2's executive board for eight years.

"I like to make sure people are treated decently. I enjoy what I do. It is rewarding work."

Finegan received another sort of reward during the 2011 Council 2 convention. He was presented with the Mary Hersey Award, given to that Council 2 member who provides outstanding service and leadership within the labor community.

"He is always there, helping people with their challenges in the workplace," Staff Representative Kathy Brown said in presenting the award to Finegan at a breakfast sponsored by the Women's Action Committee. "His calm, easy-going approach to problem-solving is what sets him apart."

In response, Finegan said receiving the award is humbling. "I appreciate the committee choosing me. I will cherish it all my life. After all, only one person receives that award every two years when the convention is held."

Finegan works for the Thurston County Public Works Department where he began in 1981 after eight years working in the maintenance department of the Tumwater School District. He worked his way up the ranks until eight years ago he was appointed crew chief, responsible for supervising workers who

mow grass, trim trees, and generally maintain the roadsides in the county. Over that time, Finegan has served as a shop steward, a chapter chair, and on and off as local president for 20 years.

Among the high points of his work in the union came recently when a Local 618 chapter with 130 members wanted to decertify. "I was asked to help out and we stopped the decertification," Finegan says.

What advice does Finegan give to someone entering public service?

"Stay active in the union," he replies. "Be aware that there are people out there who want to get rid of unions and want to take away your job. We must retain our right to bargain collectively. It is very important that we do so."



Denny Finegan displays his award

## Unions fight back

Public employee labor unions are fighting back against vicious attacks all across the country, delegates to Council 2's 50th biennial convention in Seattle in early June were told.

"Our members are angry. They are fed up," AFSCME Secretary-

**Attacks are 'worst in 30 years'**  
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Treasurer Lee Saunders said in a key address to the 300 delegates.

"This is not about being a Republican, a Democrat, a conservative, a moderate, a liberal or a progressive. It is not about left or right.

"What this fight is about is right and wrong. This is about funding public services or privatizing services. It is about weakening the government so it is ineffective when you need it most. It is about making our cities safe. It is not only just about protecting our jobs, but protecting

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## Council 2 officers are re-elected

Council 2's top three officers were re-elected at the convention.

• **Chris Dugovich** was re-elected president and executive director of Council 2 for another four years. He was the only nominee and so was elected by acclamation.

Dugovich starts his sixth four-year term in the position.

In nominating Dugovich, Roger Moller, president of Local 109 and a member of Council 2's executive board, said, "Chris Dugovich has built up our membership from 6,000 to 18,000 over 20 years. We have gone from having no money to having significant reserves. We have gone from having no place to call home to own-

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# RESOLUTIONS ADOPTED AT 50TH CONVENTION

**#1 HEALTH CARE OPTIONS FOR RETIREES**  
That Council 2 continues to actively pursue health care options that provide affordable alternatives for retired public employees.

**#2 SUPPORT OF THE CITY OF SEATTLE RESOLUTION 31271**  
That Council 2 supports Resolution 31271 [adopted by the Seattle City Council on March 7, 2011 honoring and supporting public employees and their collective bargaining rights] and expresses our appreciation to the Seattle City Council and the City of Seattle for their unanimous adoption of the resolution and their continued support of public employees and the collective bargaining process.

**#3 APPRECIATION FOR THE HOST LOCALS**  
That the assembled delegates of the 50th Council 2 Convention applaud the members of District 2 and their respective committee members.

**#4 CORRECTIONAL STEWARD TRAINING**  
That Local unions be more active and supportive in participating in Council 2 Correctional Stewards Training Program; and

That WSCCCE Council 2 provide a viable Correctional Steward Training Program and additionally continue to search for and offer new, creative and advanced training modules.

**#5 EXPANDING OUR MEMBERSHIP AND SUPPORTING OUR RIGHTS**  
That Council 2, along with our af-

filiates, members, and staff make a commitment to redouble our organizing efforts through our commitment of resources and funding for organizing throughout Washington and Idaho.

**#6 SUPPORT OF LIBRARY WORKERS**  
Council 2 thanks and salutes the services these public employees [library workers] provide to our community and encourages all members to support the prevention of any future cuts to library services in the state of Washington.

**#7 100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE TRIANGLE SHIRTWAIST FACTORY FIRE**  
That Council 2 recognize and commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire and demand that elected officials, employers and the public confront and address the issue of occupational safety; and

That Council 2 work with its affiliates to continue to press employers as well as city and county elected officials to improve occupational safety throughout Washington.

**#8 COMBINED WITH RESOLUTION #5**  
**#9 CLOSING TAX LOOPHOLES**  
That Council 2 support Federal and State tax reform that distributes the fair and equitable taxation of individuals and businesses for public services.

**#10 COMBINED WITH RESOLUTION #5**

**#11 COMBINED WITH RESOLUTION #16**

**#12 CORRECTIONAL OFFICER MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING AND RESOURCES**  
That WSCCCE Council 2 and local unions shall be more active and assertive in lobbying employers of correctional facilities to provide training and resources for members working with inmates.

**#13 DIVERSIFYING COMMUNICATION VIA TWITTER AND FACEBOOK**  
That Council 2 explore adding Twitter and Facebook to its current methods of delivering and receiving information; and

That the Executive Board be briefed on progress toward achieving this goal at the October Board Meeting and subsequent Board Meetings as requested.

**#14 HEALTH CARE FOR ALL AMERICANS**  
That Council 2 supports the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

**#15 IMPLEMENTING 'NEXT WAVE' PROGRAMS**  
That Council 2 encourage and assist locals to implement the "Next Wave" philosophy and programs without delay; and

That the Executive Board be briefed on progress toward achieving this goal at all future Board Meetings as requested.

**#16 CONTINUING TO ENHANCE COUNCIL 2 COMMUNICATIONS**

That Council 2 shall continue its ongoing process of updating all of its technology systems;

That all communications including the website, email and more traditional methods, such as the newspaper, continue to be updated to provide all members with the most pertinent and timely information available as quickly as possible, and

That the WSCCCE establish and promote a state-of-the-art interactive website based on a content management system and assign such staff and/or resources as appropriate to update and maintain the content of this site in a timely fashion.

**#17 RETIRING WITH DIGNITY**  
That Council 2 work to establish deferred compensation programs and/or employer matching contributions through contract negotiations in all jurisdictions that do not currently have them; and

That Local Officers and Stewards encourage their members to participate in their individual deferred compensation plans throughout their careers, at least enough to receive 100% of any employer match, and

That Council 2 help educate our members about deferred compensation options so that they may become empowered to make intelligent decisions that enhance their retirement savings and enable them to retire with dignity.

## Attack on unions is 'worst in three decades'

The attack on public employee unions is the most intensive he has seen in his 30 years in office, Steve Kreisberg, AFSCME's director of collective bargaining, told a workshop during the 50th biennial convention in Seattle in early June.

"It has never approached anything like this," Kreisberg said. "Our enemies are using a bad economy to overreach and challenge our very right to exist. Their agenda is not balancing the budget. It is union busting. This is not our vision of society. We believe in greater equality of wealth and opportunity."

In the workshop, Kreisberg outlined the broad attacks on labor taking place across the country.

• An area of attack is right-to-work legislation — meaning people who do not want to join a union do not have to do so — which is being introduced in more and more states. "It prompts people to be free riders," Kreisberg added. "They don't have to pay their fair share."

The result: Lower wages in states like South Carolina, a right-to-work state, compared with Washington state.

• Another attack comes in the area of "paycheck protec-

tion," which requires written consent from an employee for the use of union dues on political contributions.

Kreisberg said some states want to stop the deduction of union dues from paychecks. "You will have to send in a check," he said.

• The major attack is on collective bargaining.

In at least eight states workers' right to collectively bargain has been encroached upon, Kreisberg said.

Even in Washington state, heads of information technology departments represented by the Washington Federation of State Employees have had their rights to bargain taken away, he added.

In Ohio, city and county workers, teachers, firefighters and others are facing a huge attack, Kreisberg said. Their union security is being threatened under SB5 — legislation approved in March that would create right-to-work in the public sector. But citizens are fighting back and have collected enough signatures to place a vote for repeal of the law on the

November ballot.

"This election is probably the most important moment in the labor movement since 1981 when Ronald Reagan was able to bust the air-traffic-controllers' union. That action signaled to corporate America that it is OK to bust unions.

"If we lose this election in Ohio, it will signal that the people want weak la-

bor laws, they want unions to be busted.

"If we win, it will indicate that the people are pushing back.

"Our message is that collective bargaining is a fundamental right. What these people are trying to do is to take away our rights."



Steve Kreisberg, AFSCME director of collective bargaining, speaks at a convention workshop.

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OFFICERS		
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# Improve your negotiation skills

When people are negotiating, they will have a greater chance of success if they try to solve problems and do not waste time fighting over rigid positions.

That's the advice of Brad Reich, associate professor of law and ethics at the University of Puget Sound, who spoke at a workshop at the 2011 Council 2 convention.

"The need to solve problems is particularly important for labor in these tough economic times," Reich said. "Solving problems does not

mean you are weak. It means you are efficient and smart."

Reich explained that most negotiations start with each side adopting a position. One side wants one thing, the other side another. "There has to be a winner



Brad Reich.

and there has to be a loser if we fight over that number," he said.

Often the positions are extreme and each side feels it cannot show weakness by moving away from its position. The result is negotiators dig in their heels, yell at one another and become determined to win.

"Fighting over that number will achieve little if we want to solve the problem. By taking up a position that you are right and they are wrong you are never going to get anything done," Reich said.

The answer is to move from positions to interests.

"If we move to interests — that is, if we can figure out other ways to reach a resolution — we are not fighting, we are solving a problem."

Reich suggested several actions to move from positions to interests.

- Find common ground early.

"Find the things that brought you together and that you can agree on," he said. "Then move to asking, how can we build on these things?"

Reich suggested trying to avoid using the words "I" and "you" during negotiations. Doing so is polarizing. Also try to avoid using the word "but" — "it really means everything you have just said does not matter at all."

- Ask questions to gain information, not just to verify.

Sometimes people ask questions to win a point. "Use questions to move from positions to interests."

- Reorient the time frame. Look forward, not back.
- Don't lose your cool.

"In labor negotiations, it seems as though it is almost required that someone yell or blow their cork," Reich said. "What's the result? It means they have broken you. Noise gets noise in response and you get a bunch of noisy people getting nothing done. Don't let noise bother you."

## Convention scenes



Escort committee poses with AFSCME Secretary-Treasurer Lee Saunders.



Delegation from Local 1857— King County Library.



Spokane County and City delegations.

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ing three buildings that we can call home. All this has come about as a result of Chris Dugovich."

- **Ron Fredin**, who works in the Road Maintenance Department of the City of Vancouver and is a member of Local 307-VC, was re-elected vice president for a third consecutive four-year term by acclamation.

- **Kathleen Etheredge**, who is a senior financial analyst for the City of Kent and is a member of Local 2617, was re-elected secretary-treasurer for a second four-year term by acclamation.

A number of new executive board members were elected during the convention. See the full list on Page 2.

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# HEARD AT THE CONVENTION

## 'You don't get thanked enough'



We have dedicated, competent public employees and I want to thank you for that. Many of you have stepped up to the plate at a very difficult time and you don't get thanked enough for that.

We should not lay off another public employee until General Electric pays its first dollar in federal taxes. We expect all Americans to participate in solving our economic problems, not just the middle class.

— Jay Inslee, U.S. Representative for Washington's 1st Congressional District

## 'Our strength lies in our people'



We should not be making the mistake of trying to balance the budget on the back of working families. AFSCME did not cause this recession. Slashing salaries and pensions is not what is going to stimulate our economy.

Our strength lies in our people. When I see people like you and the contributions that Council 2 is making I have hope for the future.

— Maria Cantwell, U.S. Senator for Washington State

## 'You help us build the city'



You are part of the reason I ran for the Seattle City Council; I have always had a strong admiration for the good work that public employees accomplish every day.

Day after day you do your jobs in the most trying of conditions. People don't always see the top caliber of what you do.

When I see you being innovative and tolerant, you give me the drive to be a better politician. You are the ones who help us build the city. It is a pleasure to be in the company of

women and men making a difference.

— Jean Godden, Member of the Seattle City Council

## 'We believe in the rights of workers'



I like to think we are different here in King County compared with what is happening in other parts of the country. We believe in the rights of our workers and the role of unions in our society. We believe in the people who serve our citizens every day.

King County's economy is larger than that of 14 of our American states and we can be a model for others.

Recent challenges have shown us that organized labor is on the right track. You are an important part of the solution, an important part of helping

America to be true to its founding principles.

— Dow Constantine, King County Executive

## Council 2 'godmother' retires to Hawaii

When Lois Clement began work at the Bellingham library in 1966 she received a week's annual vacation and no health benefits.

"It took many years to gain today's benefits," says Clement, who announced at the 2011 convention her retirement from Council 2 after more than three decades of service to the union.

Clement, who will live in Hawaii, served in many union positions, but is best known for her years as head of the Women's Action Committee, which grew strongly under her guidance.

In a tribute, Rebekah Johnson of Local 1553 in Spokane County said, "Your dedication to this group has brought us together and made us what we are. You inspire me every day."

"She is considered to be the godmother of Council 2," Lee Saunders, Secretary-Treasurer of AFSCME, said in a tribute to Clement during his convention speech.

"She has been committed and dedicated to this union for many years."

In thanking members, Clement conveyed parting words of advice.

- When you go to negotiation, the last thing you need is a divided union. You have all got to be in it together.

- Being a member of a union can mean the difference between having a job and not having a job. Guard that contract.



Lois Clement displays her parting gifts from Council 2 members.

- Should you lose those benefits gained over the years, you will not get them back.

View pictures taken at the convention and the golf tournament at: [www.council2.com](http://www.council2.com)

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our rights."

Saunders said the attack on labor is awakening a "sleeping giant" across the country, bringing many groups together.

"This is a defining moment for our union — to fight for what we believe in and for us to determine what kind of country we want to live in. It is about whether this is a country that pays a decent wage or an adequate pension for those who have worked for 35 or 40 years. It is who we are. It is what we are about.

"This defining moment is an opportunity for us to work more closely together, to fight together and, yes, to pray together for a better country and a better union.

"We will stand together and fight. And we will win that fight."

King County Executive Dow Constantine told delegates that a political war is being waged on middle-class people across the country. Vicious organized attacks on working people and on the right to bargain collectively are being waged in Wisconsin, Ohio and even in Washington State's own capital.

"We must remember that your



services have nothing to do with the collapse in our economy. We will work together to address our economic challenges, not as adversaries, but as partners with a shared mission."

U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell told delegates that America's problem is not that so many public employees have decent pensions, but that so many others do not.

"These issues are about our priorities and our strength as a nation. We need to make sure they are heard not just in Wisconsin and not just here in Washington state, but around the country."