



# KCLS VOICE

## The newsletter of Local 1857

FEBRUARY 2016

### News & Events:

**March 11 7:00 PM**  
Executive Board Meeting  
Eastside Fire and Rescue  
Headquarters, Issaquah

**April 12 7:00 PM**  
General Membership Meeting  
Renton Public Library

**April 22 7:00 PM**  
Executive Board Meeting  
Eastside Fire and Rescue  
Headquarters, Issaquah

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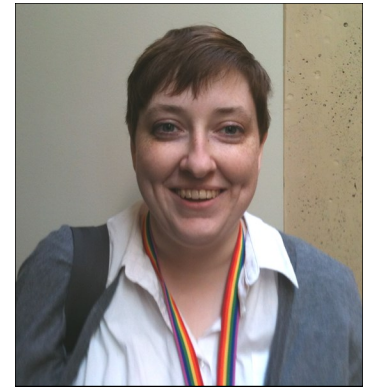
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## President's Podium

**Carrie Rolph, President, Local 1857**



Local 1857 is still negotiating with KCLS for all three of our contracts (Base Unit, Page, and Maintenance.) We have been meeting with KCLS since early October and currently have meeting dates scheduled into early March. Our 2013-2015 contracts continue to be in effect until the new contracts are ratified by the membership.

One of the questions that comes up most frequently is what is happening with a cost of living increase. For union-represented staff, it is determined during contract negotiations, so that increase will not be known or show up on a paycheck until after negotiations have finished. The Union's position is for the increase to be retroactive to January 1st.

Some of the topics being negotiated for the main unit are scheduling, the transfer and hiring process, and driving Library 2 Go vehicles. For the Page unit, topics include scheduling and higher-hour positions. For the maintenance unit, one of their biggest concerns is the large service areas they need to cover, and how much their commute time can vary, depending on their assigned route.

When your bargaining team has reached a tentative agreement with KCLS, we will send out more details about what changes are being proposed. If possible, we will also hold a special meeting for members to attend with any questions. All members in good standing will vote on the contract for their bargaining unit. Ballots will be sent out from Council 2 by US Mail.

There have been two Joint Labor Management Committee (JLMC) Safe and Secure Libraries solutions implemented recently that addressed concerns Pages had when they first joined the union. One was that Pages did not have building keys, and were unable to get into the building until staff with a key arrived, and the other was Pages picking up litter outside the buildings. Both solutions will help make a safer work environment for our largest group of employees.

After feedback from members that attending meetings on Fridays in Issaquah is difficult, we are rotating the day and location of our general membership meetings this year, in hopes that members who previously have not be able to attend may be able to do so. Our February general membership meeting will be Friday, February 19th at the Eastside Fire and Rescue Headquarters in Issaquah. Our April meeting will be Tuesday, April 12th, at the Renton Library. Both are from 7-9pm.

# **Chief Steward's Corner**

**Cindy Richardson, Chief Steward, Local 1857**

## Union succeeds in reducing discipline for library card misuse

Think back to January 2015. Do you recall being notified about expectations for ethical use of your library card? Did you take seriously the announcement that, going forward, library card transactions by staff would be more closely monitored and that there would be greater consequences when misuse was detected? Upon asking for clarification about the monitoring process, the Union was told that every six months KCLS would run a program designed to detect library card misuse by KCLS staff. The first time these measures were employed, several of our members experienced quite a shock when they were notified to attend a pre-disciplinary meeting. Those who requested help from the Union were ably assisted by Stewards.

All were found to have violated KCLS policies regarding staff library card use, and all were given a Final Written Warning, a more severe form of discipline than the Union had previously seen for a first offense and one that had, up to now, been used so infrequently that current officers were not familiar with it. As a result of this experience, we learned that a Final Written Warning persists indefinitely, and should a staff member be eligible for discipline for any reason in the future, the result would be immediate termination. By contrast, a regular Written Warning is in effect for eighteen months, after which a staff member may request its removal from his or her personnel file if no additional discipline has occurred.

The Union responded by filing a class action grievance on behalf of all affected members, objecting not only to the severity of the discipline relative to the offense, but also to the fact that this form of discipline was not defined in any official documents and was therefore not foreseeable. After much discussion back and forth, the grievance was settled by a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between KCLS and the Union that reduced the duration of the Final Written Warning for our affected members to eighteen months instead of having it be an open-ended threat of termination.

Given the serious nature of discipline for library card misuse, we want to remind you that when using either a personal library card or a branch/departmental library card, staff may not use their position to gain privileged access to any collection materials and may not have unauthorized possession of library materials or hold materials for extended periods. In other words, best practice when using your library card is to not perform any action that is not authorized for a patron. Any transactions beyond that are considered a violation of public trust.

## Monitor the deductions from your paycheck

Occasionally, an error may occur in the amount taken out of one or more paychecks for a deduction such as medical coverage. If the amount taken out is too little and this goes undetected by the staff member or payroll for some time, the amount that the staff member then owes to make up the difference can be quite substantial. In that worst case scenario, you will need to consult with payroll to work out a manageable repayment plan. Be especially vigilant about checking that the amounts deducted are correct after you have made a change, such as adding dependent coverage to your medical insurance. Always question any unexpected change in the amounts for regular deductions and contact payroll immediately if you suspect an error.

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# Educate Yourself

Don Issacs and Stan Brooks

## KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

And by that we mean your *WEINGARTEN RIGHTS*! How many of you know what that refers to? Well, we'll clear that up right now.

- Weingarten Rights refers to the 1975 case NLRB vs. J. Weingarten Inc. in which the U.S. Supreme Court decide that unionized employees (in the private sector) have the right to have a steward present during an investigatory meeting with Management when the employee believes that meeting could lead to discipline. In Washington State public sector employees are also protected by the Weingarten ruling.

These legal rights arise from Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act, which guarantees the right of employees to act "in concert for mutual aid and protection". Denial of this right violates Section 8 (a)(1) of the NLRA.

Weingarten rights apply during investigatory interviews when a supervisor attempts to gain information that may then be used as grounds for discipline. When you as an employee believe that such a meeting could lead to discipline, you have the right to have a union representative in the meeting with you.

From the Supreme Court decision these are your rights:

- The employee **must** request representation before or during the meeting
- After an employee makes the request, the supervisor has three choices
  - ◆ Grant the request and wait for the union representative's arrival;
  - ◆ Deny the request and end the meeting immediately; or
  - ◆ Give the employee the choice of either ending the meeting or continuing without representation.
- If the supervisor denies the request and continues to ask questions, the employee has a right to refuse to answer. In addition, the supervisor is committing an unfair labor practice.

If you have any questions about this or any other aspect of dealing with disciplinary situations, please contact a Shop Steward or any member of the Executive Board and we will be glad to find the answers to your questions. And you might also consider becoming a Shop Steward.

*Problem on the job?*  
**CALL THE UNION**





## On the Waterfront

Review by Carla McLean

Seeing this “classic” movie from 1954 for the first time, I was a little thrilled to finally hear the oft-repeated line, “I coulda been a contender” in context. Terry, played by Marlon Brando, is angry at his brother for not having done more for him growing up. He was a prize fighter but now is a stevedore for the longshoreman’s union and a thug for the union boss, played by Lee J. Cobb.

Equally compelling for me as the union content was the unfolding love story between rough guy Terry and “good girl” Edie (Eva Marie Saint) which becomes tense after he inadvertently harms her brother. However, what held my interest even more than the love story was the abundance of spectacular shots in this black and white film.

There are plenty of big names in this movie, including Karl Malden, who plays the priest trying to get Terry to testify against corruption in the union. That alone makes the film worth watching. The union corruption portrayed in this film is certainly disheartening and helps explain why some people have a negative opinion of labor unions, but those were different times. I was glad that the happy ending ultimately inspires hope about the future of unions.

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# What's the Union ever done for me?

**Don Isaacs and Stan Brooks**

What are unions?  
Why do we have unions?  
Are unions still necessary?

These are all valid questions, which we will try to answer in this and future articles. We will begin with a brief history of unions and will eventually include an article on the formation of our Local, 1857. This is a complex topic and we will only touch briefly on some of these issues, but let us begin.

The dictionary definition of a Labor Union is:

***“An organization of workers formed for the purpose of advancing its members’ interests in respect to wages, benefits, and working conditions”***

A little known fact is that the Boston Massacre in 1770 began as a labor dispute between an off duty British soldier seeking to supplement his salary and a colonial rope maker who didn't like having to compete with the soldier for the scarce employment opportunities. According to the Boy Scout's merit badge pamphlet on American Labor, it was this event that eventually led to the American Revolution.

Many American workers, inspired by the Declaration of Independence, began to demand their rights as people “created equal” to business owners. Workers in various crafts and trades began to come together to demand a redress of their complaints over low wages, long hours, and poor working conditions.

The earliest unions were trade and craft associations, but these were somewhat ineffective, which led to the formation of The Noble and Holy Knights of Labor. This organization started as a secret trade union of tailors in 1869, and went public in 1879 as the “inclusive union” and accepted workers of all skill levels and trades with the exception of lawyers, politicians, and liquor dealers, and encouraged women and men of all races and national origins to become members.

Some workers who were alienated by the broad social platform of the Inclusive Union and who wished to concentrate more exclusively on economic concerns formed the American Federation of Labor (AFL) in 1886. The AFL was a loose affiliation of skilled workers in craft unions. Samuel Gompers, the leader of this loose confederation, saw the AFL as a business union and focused on such bread and butter issues as obtaining better working conditions and mandating the 8-hour workday.

Fast forward to 1935, when John L. Lewis formed the Committee for Industrial Organization, which subsequently broke away from the AFL in 1938, changing its name to the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in the process. This independent federation of unions believed that unions should organize by industry rather than by trade.

The AFL and the CIO were rival organizations for many years but ultimately merged into the AFL-CIO in 1955. AFSCME, Council 2, and our own Local 1857 are part of the hierarchy that makes up the AFL-CIO. In later issues we will look at the history of Council 2 and of our local.

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## Council 2 Scholarships

The Washington State Council of County & City Employees annually provides substantial **scholarships for children of members** in locals affiliated with Council 2. These amounts will be awarded this year:

One \$5,000 per year four-year scholarship (\$20,000 total)

Six \$5,000 scholarships

Sixteen \$2,000 scholarships, ten of which are funded by money raised at the annual golf tournament

In addition to the above, five **continuing education grants** of up to \$1,000 each are awarded annually to members in good standing of locals affiliated with Council 2.

Children of Local 1857 members have several times won a Council 2 scholarship. The competition is stiff, as there are typically between 80 and 100 applicants each year. Each applicant must submit an essay on the subject “What Unions mean to my family”, a description of involvement with the parent’s local union or other labor activism, or any other political activism or community service, and a statement of education and career goals. The essay is always a critical factor in the decisions of the Council 2 Scholarship Committee.

**Applications must be postmarked no later than March 15.** Application forms may be found on the Council 2 website ([www.council2.com](http://www.council2.com)).

## Dues and Taxes

Be sure to include your union dues in the unreimbursed employee expense category if you use Schedule A to itemize for your taxes. In order for your dues to count, your expenses for dues paid plus all other itemized deductions must exceed 2 percent of your adjusted gross income.

## Minutes Megaphone

Union meeting minutes contain lots of information about Union actions and discussions that affect our work lives. For answers to this issue of the “Minutes Megaphone,” check these minutes: Executive Board Mtg. 6/9/15, 8/7/15, 10/9/15 and General Membership Mtg. 11/6/15. Didn’t receive the minutes? Please contact Susan Manning [smanning209@yahoo.com](mailto:smanning209@yahoo.com).

1. According to our Staff Representative, is discipline ramping up or quieting down?  
(Ebd 8/7/15)
  2. What change was made to the Local 1857 Constitution regarding PSAs?  
(GM 11/6/15)
  3. What is the new name of the “Anti-Bullying Campaign”?  
(Ebd 6/9/15)
  4. Who contacted our 1857 president regarding the former KCLS Director Bill Ptacek?  
(Ebd 8/7/15)
  5. Who are the members of our Grievance Committee?  
(Ebd 8/7/15)
  6. Have contract negotiations begun?  
(Ebd 10/9/15)
  7. What was the number one concern of respondents to the KCLS Scheduling Committee survey?  
(GM 11/6/15)
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