

The 39th International Convention was held in Boston, MA from June 28-July 2. This year's theme was **Ready to Fight! Ready to Lead!** There were more than 5,000 delegates, alternates and guests present. I along with three of my local members attended this conference. Randy Moore, Colleen Meyer and Tom Miller and I were privileged to have attended this historical event. This is the first time I was a delegate and what a thrill to sit on the floor and watch as the business of the International Union takes place. We had a total of 70 resolutions to go over in this five day period and all but two of them were adopted and voted on and approved. Imagine my surprise when the first resolution was titled Develop and Implement Technology-Utilization Criteria for AFSCME Locals. This is a something we have wanted to see in place for the last few years and in due time we will see it implemented. I will keep you all posted. Some resolutions had to be amended and this was done with recommendations on the floor from members and added to the original resolution. This year we will elect a new Secretary/Treasurer for the international to replace outgoing Secretary/Treasurer, Bill Lucy. Bill held this position for 38, years since May of 1972 and had been a union activist for 57 years. On **Monday** our International President gave the keynote address and we had a special video tribute highlighting Bills life which included his work alongside Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King and his fight for fairness for the working class and civil rights struggles. At the end of the ceremony our International President, Gerald McEntee, presented Mr. Lucy with a tribute book from the AFSCME members thanking him for his contributions over the years. Many on the floor spoke praises of Bill's life fighting for the union cause. It was a very emotional tribute.

On **Tuesday** we had nominations for the Secretary/Treasurer. The two gentlemen vying for this position was Danny Donohue and Lee Saunders. Donohue was nominated by Veronica Montgomery and Seconded by Denise Berkley. Many supporters spoke on his behalf. Saunders was nominated by Gerald McEntee and seconded by Sherryl Gordon and many spoke on his behalf. This was a very energetic and emotional time on the conference floor with many people supporting their candidate to the hilt. We recognized PEOPLE contributor Ron Green; and the AFL-CIO president, Richard Trumka spoke. We honored the late Senator Ted Kennedy, a longstanding ally of the working class, and AFSCME with a video of his life supporting the working middle class. His wife, Vicki spoke on how proud he was of the work AFSCME does in the trenches in supporting and caring for the public. She said he stated many times that he spelled his last name **LABOR**. She said she will carry on his fight for the working class and unions and stated that she will now spell her last name **AFSCME** and that got a roar and standing ovation from the crowd.

Wednesday we had special caucuses for busting myths about public service workers where delegates and alternates could meet and talk to other members who do the same work and compare words of wisdom. The highlight of the day was after we adjourned we were invited to go to Boston Common to join forces with Council 93 members who were fighting to save public

services. How wonderful to see a sea of green carrying signs and joining forces with our brothers and sisters.

Thursday was the BIG day. The election was held and what a process. It was very well organized and again found a vibrant crowd standing outside the buses shouting, carrying signs and blowing whistles in support of their candidate. I was on the cheerleading committee in support of Lee. The voting started at 6am until 10am. I had to report at 7:00 to help with the exiting of the voters AFTER I voted. All delegates had to show their convention badge and photo ID to vote. I carried 185 votes for our membership in support of Lee Saunders. Next on the floor of the convention we had a special program focusing on AFSCME's role in the historic passage of health care legislation. Progressive radio talk show host Ed Schulz spoke on political victories. We also heard from political strategist Donna Brazile. Both are champions of unions and the working middle class. They both received standing ovations. We were then informed that Lee Saunders had been chosen as the next International Secretary/Treasurer. The crowd for Lee erupted in applause and a standing ovation for him. The race was very close. Lee received 652,660 votes to Danny's 648,356. A late entry into the campaign, Mark Foley received 1,489 votes. So much more happened at the convention and you can find information to review the day-to-day happenings on the AFSCME website at www.afscme.org I encourage you to take the time to check it out. I could write more about this, but it would take several pages.

Friday has two events-the PEOPLES fun run at Castle Island which a few of our members participated in and the swearing in of the NEW International Secretary/Treasurer, Lee Saunders and then we finished up with the remainder of the resolutions.

I want to thank the membership for allowing me the privilege to attend the 39th International Convention in Boston. What a wonderful experience and I thank you again from the bottom of my heart.

In Solidarity,

Sharon R. Heverly, President
AFSCME, Local 2360