

"The boss doesn't listen when one guy squawks, but s/he's gotta listen when

THE UNION TALKS

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This is the first edition of a hospital employee-produced monthly newsletter. It will report union activities and issues from MG, Methodist, and Bruceville. Letters and suggestions welcome—deliver them to your shop steward.

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Information and photographs of Sacramento union events can be seen at <http://dillingertoons.net>

Shop stewards fight back!



Cathi, Lonnie, Edna, Billie, Michelle, and Keith gather outside the hospital before heading upstairs to defend a fellow shop steward. (photo-Ellen)

When shop stewards get “harassed,” who defends them? The shop stewards at Mercy General found themselves asking that question when first one was fired in August and then it looked like another would be. Since both were accused of actions that had previously been standard practice in their departments, it

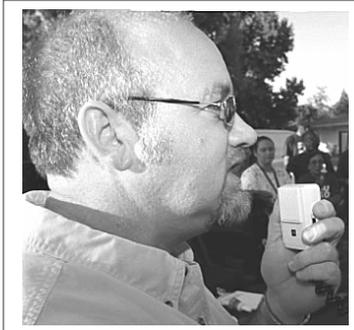
seemed obvious that their shop steward status was the real issue.

Unwilling to accept this negative trend, shop stewards at Mercy General visited the supervisor in the department where the latest “harass the shop steward” event had occurred. We informed her that while Human

Resources might condone this kind of behavior, an outside arbitrator would likely view it in a different light when the case reached arbitration. An alternative viewpoint was expressed by the department supervisor (and disputed by the shop stewards), and we then took our **(con't. on page 3)**

An injury

From the Chief!



Chief Shop Steward Bill Watson, Mercy General Hospital

Hi, and welcome to Mercy General Hospital. Please use the tiered structure bordering “H” Street for your parking convenience. Remember to park in a space labeled for your specific parking needs. Read ALL signs, instructions and directives both posted, and in the employee handbook before turning off your engine. We have a prepaid monthly parking card available to all

employees who wish to have their comings and goings tracked. With this service, your start time can and will be verified should there be a question as to your time card entries. It’s been done many times already, and works well due to the costly computerized monitoring system installed for your surveillance pleasure. Time spent in the

structure after your assigned quitting time will probably not be traced due to the fact that verification of actual work-related activities is difficult and the overtime could be costly. This card is valuable in that it makes your parking experience smooth and effortless, and serves as an unofficial time clock as well. Thank you for parking in the Mercy General Parking structure and remember...

MERCY GENERAL: THE ONLY MHS FACILITY WHERE IT “COSTS” TO PARK.

ONE OF THE BENEFITS OF CHW IS PAID TIME OFF— TRY TO USE IT AT BRUCEVILLE TERRACE AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS!



Josephine Summers
Field Representative
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Employees at Bruceville Terrace are finding that when they request PTO, even if it is approved, they have to find coverage for themselves. This happens even when they have requested PTO months in advance! The most frequent management response to PTO requests is “No, you can’t have it, we are short of staff.”

As a result, morale is at an all-time low. Management may be wondering why there is such a high turn-over, and we can tell them that in addition to the above:

1) Management frequently turns down employee requests for over-time, and instead hires registry on a daily basis.

2) Employees are having to use PTO to take CPR classes and they are paying for these classes out of their own pocket.

What are we doing about it? Approximately 20 employees attended the Step 1 grievance in reference to PTO violations, with some employees actually being turned away as they tried

to attend the meeting. We are now advancing this to a Step 2 grievance.

If you are employed at Bruceville Terrace and the above violations have happened to you, contact your shop steward or your SEIU Local 250 field representative, Josie Summers. (see photo, left).

Leadership conference....

Sometimes in this Union business, a person wonders “what do OTHER shop stewards do when this (whatever it is) happens?!!!” That’s when you need to go to a leadership conference, both to learn from the workshops and to compare notes with other shop stewards.

SEIU Local 250’s conference took place on September 13 and 14 in Oakland. In addition to workshops on such things as presenting grievances and learning about health care legislation, we were treated to speeches by three outstanding political persons who have demonstrated many times over that they are real friends of working people.

The first speaker, California Attorney General Bill Lockyear, has supported patients’ rights, laws ensuring quality nursing home care, and the right of people to organize in unions.

U.S. Rep. Dennis Kucinich of Ohio then spoke to us, arriving with

great credentials as an advocate of progressive change in areas varying from national health care to the establishment of wholesale cost-based rates for gas and electricity.

On Saturday, Senator Barbara Boxer spoke, addressing health care issues and also her concerns about an impending war with Iraq. She received a standing ovation.

Why did these politicians come to speak to our healthcare workers’ union conference? I think we all realized that we need each other—they need the support of our ever-growing membership and we need their leadership and advocacy of legislation that affects us as health care workers (and citizens!).

One of the speakers said “The health of healthcare depends on the health of unions.” Our insistence on adequate staffing and our advocacy of various health care legislation are part of what that speaker was talking about, but we need the legislators’ help to do it. In turn, they need our help on election day.



Senator Barbara Boxer addressing the SEIU Local 250 Leadership Conference, while Union President Sal Roselli smiles in the background.

Shop stewards fight back! (cont. from page one)

argument to Human Resources. Here, no one was available to see us, obliging Chris, the HR clerk, to record a rather lengthy message for HR personnel to read when they became available.

We have seen what

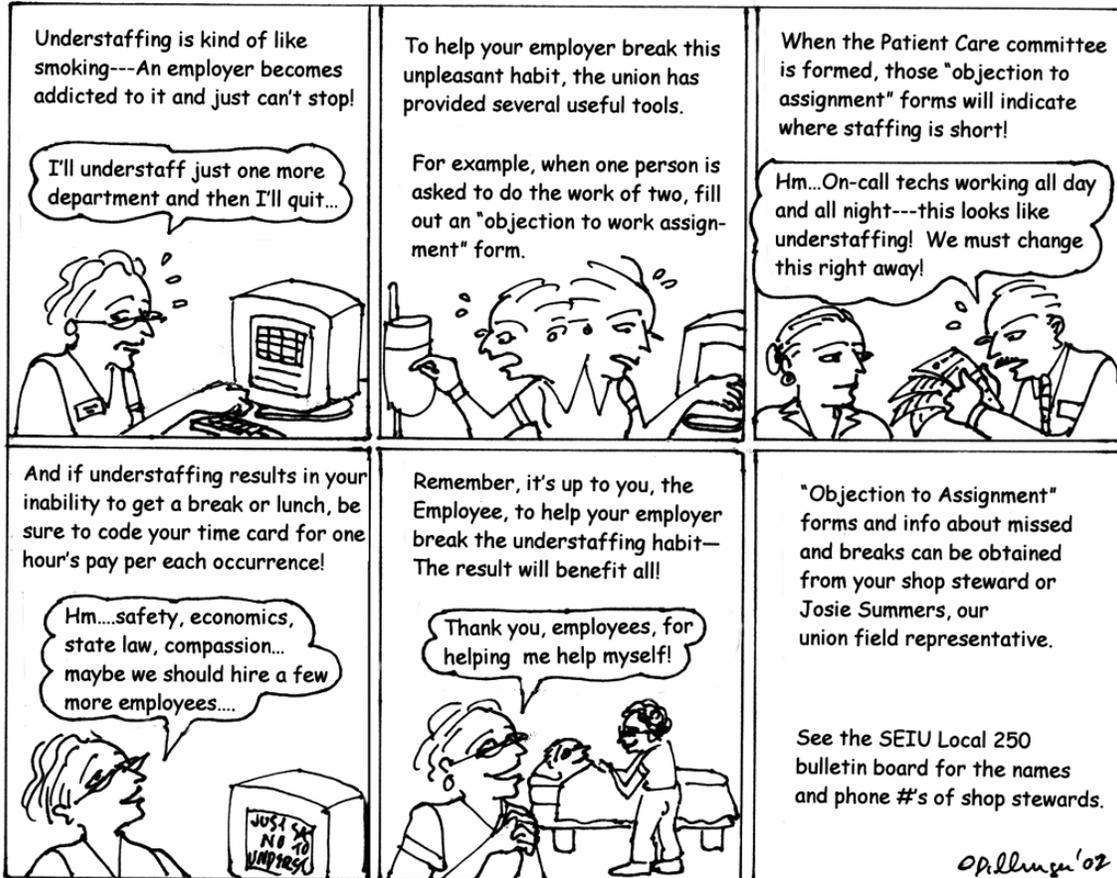
happens when people do nothing to defend their co-workers: employees lose their jobs. That is one of the reasons we voted for the Union, and now that we ARE the Union, this is the kind of action we have to take when one of us is threatened. That

is what Union means.

Shop Steward training is offered at various times and places. The next date is November 23, 0900 – 1430 hours, at the Central Labor Council Bldg. Contact Josie or Local 250 for details.

“We have seen what happens when employees do nothing to defend their co-workers....”

BREAKING THE UNDERSTAFFING HABIT....



The story from Methodist...

Chris Kurpies, Chief Shop Steward at Methodist Hospital, files this report:

Here at Methodist Hospital, there seems to be a growing problem that employees keep asking about. Employees are being forced to float to a higher job classification and are not being compensated for it. An example of this would be CNA's being forced to float to a UA's position.

According to our contract,

when an employee floats to a higher job classification, the employee is entitled to at least a 5% increase. People who have not received compensation for floating may be entitled to back pay.

In the future, be sure to ask your manager what relief code to put on your timecard. See your Department Shop Steward if you feel you are entitled

to back wages. It would be a good idea to start keeping copies of your completed time card.

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| <p><u>DATES TO REMEMBER</u></p> <p>Shop Steward Meetings:</p> <p>Methodist/Bruceville meets every 3rd Wednesday of the month at 1530-1630 hours. Location: Methodist Hospital</p> <p>2) Mercy General meets every 2nd Wednesday of the month at 1630 – 1730 hours. Location: Mercy General</p> |
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to all.