

# THE UNION TALKS

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This is an MHS employee-produced monthly newsletter. It will report union activities and issues from facilities represented by SEIU Local 250.



Letters and suggestions are welcome-  
dillwood@sbcglobal.net

Ellen Dillinger, Editor

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An online copy of this newsletter as well as information and photographs of Sacramento union events can be seen at

<http://dillingertoons.net>

## CREATING THE TRUST FOR CHANGE

Creating trust, building a relationship, and encouraging change" were three topics addressed by facilitator Marti Mordecai at the second Local 250/MHS joint training session on January 27<sup>th</sup>. The session took place in the Union's home court, the Local 250 meeting hall on F Street, and was attended by a large roomful of shop stewards, Union staff, MGH managers/supervisors, MGH President Denny Powell, and Renae Bugge, (MHS Director of Labor Relations).

The topics of trust and relationship building are certainly appropriate at this moment of proposed change in our hospitals. It is understood that new laws and better technologies require a reassessment of how work is done. For the administrative planners of change, this can be an exciting process. However, for the workers who are a key element in providing health care and who will be experiencing the greatest change, the prospect of "something new" does not always inspire trust. MHS's interpretation of the new Nurse Staffing Ratio law, for example, has caused concern about the law's effect on LVN and CNA jobs.

The purpose of the Labor/Management training session was to maximize trust and minimize concern about the process of change. How to build a relationship between

management and labor that would empower both to create positive change was explored. As in all relationship discussions, communication skills were emphasized, and various communication styles examined. The communication exercise illus-

THE QUESTION: What to do in departments where this doesn't happen?

Managers in departments that have no shop steward need to understand that this is a failure that they must remedy by creating a



Union shop stewards and staff join MGH managers and HR in a demonstration of alternative communication styles.

trated the difficulties which can occur when one communication style encounters another. A manager who is "technical" in style and likes to have every possible fact before acting is likely to be irritated and unsympathetic to an "expressive" steward who demands immediate action. Each may end up not "hearing" the other, and dispute resolution will be more difficult to achieve.

In closing the session, MGH President Denny Powell made clear his resolve that managers and supervisors need to forge a good working relationship with the Union.

positive atmosphere where employees feel encouraged to step forward and be shop stewards. For their part, Union shop stewards should not wait for management to take the first step toward building a better relationship.

Former President Kennedy said: "Those who make peaceful change impossible make revolution inevitable." In our workplace, those who make cooperation impossible make grievances and constant turmoil inevitable. It doesn't have to be that way!  
--Ellen Dillinger, MGH

## POLITICAL ACTION CORNER

We have done so much politically this past year! We marched with Local 1877 to help them win healthcare coverage. We lobbied and collected enough signatures for the Budget Accountability Act initiative to qualify for the March ballot. This initiative will hold elected officials accountable to pass the State budget on time.

We lobbied, speaking to legislators and at Senate hearings, helping to make it possible for Senator Burton's bill (SB2), healthcare for all working people, to become a reality. But watch out in March, another bill is there to try and repeal this one...*(as usual, someone is trying to stop working people from making any progress at all, I won't name any names but we all know who it is.)* We joined our brothers and sisters in Stockton to picket healthcare cuts in county hospitals.

Those of us who traveled to Washington D.C. made our voices known to the new Democratic candidates and to those already serving. We spoke to them regarding the Medicare Prescription Drug program and the proposed cuts in overtime pay.

We listened to speeches and interviewed candidates for the 2004 Presidential race.

We are still marching: Homecare workers came out by the thousands to protest the cuts for Homecare Workers and disabled people that are being made by our new Governor.

Yep, 2003 was a busy year and 2004 will be even busier. Here in Sacramento, we are working everyday to help elect **Dave Jones** for State Assembly. Dave is a great guy. He has supported healthcare workers in many ways. Just recently, he stood

with our SEIU convalescent workers, speaking, marching and carrying a picket sign (in the rain!) to pro-



Long time friend of labor and State Assembly candidate **Dave Jones** joined members of UFCW (United Food and Commercial Workers) and other unions in an informational picket in front of Safeway on February 8. The UFCW has been on strike since October in Southern California in a fight to maintain healthcare benefits in their contract. Employers in many industries are throwing healthcare costs back on workers, a move Unions want to stop.

test the new owners of Saylor Lane Convalescent Hospital who will not honor their contract.

As a city councilmember, Dave Jones led the successful fight to make Sacramento a Living Wage city. "The role of an elected official is to empower people and communities to solve common problems," he says. That sounds like a Union attitude and we like it!

We are phone banking Monday

through Thursday at Dave's campaign headquarters at 1017 J Street. We are also phone banking and precinct walking on weekends.

Saturday, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. and on Sunday from 12:00 noon to 4:00 p.m.

We need Dave in the Assembly to support the rights of unions and support us on the healthcare issues, which directly effect our jobs here at MGH.

So, come out and help us. You will meet lots of nice people and meet Dave too! Join him in going door-to-door and talking to people about what he stands for. Just three hours a week will help! A lot of people still do not know how good Dave is, and we are the ones to tell them. Together, we can do it!

On the national front, we need a President who will support our issues on Healthcare and Union rights. This election is very crucial to the welfare of all of us.

**Many thanks to all who support our political efforts.**

**But the job is not done. We need more of us out there. We are accepting members into our PAC (Political Action Committee). For anyone interested please call Don Stone, Political Field Organizer, Local 250, 275-4526.**

--Sharon Martinez, MGH

## ASK JOSIE:



1) Is it true that Catholic Healthcare West has agreed to bargain at a statewide table?

- a) True
- b) False

**Answer:** a) True. What makes this so exciting is that we will be bargaining with 29 other CHW facilities throughout the state of California.

2) The first day of bargaining with CHW will occur when?

- a) March 16 and 17
- b) April 29 and 30
- c) February 24 and 25

**Answer:** c) February 24 and 25 in Oakland. Statewide bargaining will be rotated between Oakland and Los Angeles.

3) SEIU Local 250 Union dues are \_\_\_\_% of gross pay, based on a maximum of forty hours per week at the straight time rate. Dues are not charged on overtime, call-back pay, standby pay, differentials, and in-lieu-of benefits premiums.

- a) 1%
- b) 2%
- c) 2.5%

**Answer:** b. 2%

4) True or false? Would healthcare workers be wise to vote yes on proposition 56?

- a) No
- b) Yes

**Answer:** b) Yes. As healthcare workers, we need a fair and balanced approach to the budget crisis - not more cuts to jobs and vital services. Proposition 56 states that if the budget is late, legislators won't get paid (no budget, no pay). End budget gridlock by changing the current legislative 2/3 vote requirement for passing a budget to a 55% majority vote.

5) Can management perform bargaining unit work?

- a) Yes
- b) No

**Answer:** b) No! No! No! Article 5 states that bargaining unit work means work performed by employees represented by the Union and covered by this agreement. (This includes registry, Cal-Staff, non-bargaining unit employees, etc.).

## SHOP STEWARDS' COUNCIL MEETING FOCUSES ON NEW CONTRACT

As our Local 250 bus headed toward San Francisco Bay on January 31, we could tell it was going to be a beautiful day. The events that followed would turn out to be just that.

We arrived at the Emeryville Holiday Inn for the Local 250 Shop Stewards Council and were very surprised to see approximately 300-350 people in the Top of the Bay meeting room. It was exciting to see such good participation!

Union president Sal Roselli started the

meeting by saying he had received a phone call from S. California announcing that SEIU Local 399 (healthcare workers' union in S. Cal) would be joining us at the bargaining table. This means that we will be 16,000 members strong when we bargain one statewide contract. Sal also stated that CNA (Cal Nurse's Association) stands with us in our efforts.

After Sal's talk, we broke into groups based on hospital affiliation. John Borsos then took over to discuss

our Union contract dream list, which sounds extremely good! Top issues for the new contract will be an improved pension, retiree healthcare, and a master contract.

After a delightful lunch, everybody reported back to the main room from their groups to discuss bargaining. We left that day feeling very inspired!

--Cindy Nino and Kathy Benoit,  
Shop Stewards, MGH

**is an injury**

**CHIEF SHOP STEWARDS**

MGH: Vice Chief Stewards  
**Gina Mastergeorge**  
 Home: 645-9157  
 Work: 453-4567  
**Debra Patton**  
 Home: 348-6904  
 Work: 453-4171

METH: **Chris Kurpies**  
 Work: 423-6176

Bruceville Terrace:  
**Daryl Bell**  
 Work: 423-6025

MSJH: **Sherri Macias**  
 Home: 971-0654  
 Work: 537-5037

Woodland Clinic:  
**Annette Hendrix**  
 Refer to Union  
 bulletin board for  
 stewards' phone  
 numbers.)

FOLSOM: **Nikki Sparks**  
 Home: 725-0614  
 Work: 983-7400

**SEIU Local 250 Field  
 Representatives:**

Josie Summers: 275-6342  
 (MGH, METH, BVERR)  
 Mary Hennigan, 275-2659  
 (MSJH, FOL, WOOD)

**STEWARDS MEETINGS**

Methodist/Bruceville meets  
 3rd Wed. 1530-1630 hours.  
 Location: Methodist Hospital

Mercy General meets 2nd  
 Wed. at 1630 - 1730 hours.  
 Location: MGH Green-house

Mercy San Juan meets 3rd  
 Thursday, 1800-1900 hours  
 Location: MSJH Conference  
 Room.

Woodland Clinic and Hospital  
 meets 1st thursday, 1730-  
 1830 hours.  
 Location: DCR 3 and 4

Mercy Folsom meets 2nd  
 Tues. 1330 - 1530 hours  
 Location: MHF Conference  
 Room

**REOPENING WAGE SCALES FOR RADIOLOGY TECHS**

**R**N's aren't the only hard-to-find employees—Radiology techs are in short supply also. This is due to a shortage nationwide but it is exacerbated at MHS because wages for techs aren't competitive in the region. MHS Imaging Services currently employs 17 rad techs who are "travelers" because open positions aren't being filled, while Kaiser, the largest healthcare employer in the area, has only 6 unfilled positions.

The wage difference between Kaiser and Mercy wages is slightly more than 17% for each of the three Imaging classifications. (This translates to \$24.19 (at 6 years) at MHS compared to \$28.37 at Kaiser for a

Rad Tech II). With techs in short supply, why not offer wages that will lure them to Mercy instead of Kaiser?

With that in mind, Local 250 Union members met with MHS on 1/21/04 to discuss increasing wages for Rad Techs to make our Imaging department more competitive.

The meeting ended with MHS stating that they needed to do a market review before considering this proposal, as their market included Sutter and UCD, as well as Kaiser. Renae Bugge (MHS) also stated a reluctance to reopen wages with new contract negotiations set to begin. Does this mean we



stay "uncompetitive" for four more months?  
 Albert McConkie, Sp. Proc. Rad Tech, MGH

Editor's note: As of 2/5, MHS declines to reopen the wages issue. A grievance will be filed.

**A LETTER TO THE EDITOR:**

**PROBLEMS WITH LAWSON**

Editor: This letter is a complaint concerning the recent adoption of the Lawson software in our workplace. It has not accomplished the goals of improving cost effectiveness and streamlining operations. On the contrary, it interferes with patient care and worsens employee morale.

Lawson's payroll functions appear to be poor, resulting in delays of paycheck delivery and inaccuracies in the amount paid. Use of Lawson has also resulted in improper supply appropriations, denying employees the tools required to complete their jobs.

I am sure that CHW has no desire to limit the effectiveness of their employees, but currently, I have to worry about getting the supplies I need for my job and about whether or not I will be paid in an accurate and timely manner. If cost effectiveness is the issue, Lawson is not an improvement. With time, the system may provide what was intended, but right now, I see no advantage to its use and would like to express this concern strenuously. --MSJMC

**STATEWIDE 2004 CONTRACT BARGAINING SCHEDULE:**

February 24, 25	Oakland
March 4, 5	Los Angeles
March 9,10,15,16	Oakland
March 22, 23,30, 31	Los Angeles
April 7, 8	Oakland
April 13, 14, 21, 22	Los Angeles
April 26, 27, 28, 29, 30	Oakland

**Local Bargaining Committee  
 schedule TBA**

**to all.**