

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

# THE UNION TALKS

## UNIONS WIN IN STATE ELECTION

### AND AT SUTTER CPMC

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This is an MGH employee-produced monthly newsletter. It will report union activities and issues from MGH employees represented by SEIU United Healthcare Workers-West.



Letters and suggestions are welcome- send to [dillwood@sbcglobal.net](mailto: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>

### THE CALIFORNIA SPECIAL ELECTION

A united effort by union members resulted in a decisive victory in the November Special Election called by Governor Schwarzenegger this year. The Governor's expensive (\$55+ million) effort to use an election to bypass the State Legislature lost, with all of his propositions going down to defeat.

Now that the campaign mailers and phone-banking have stopped, what did we win?

In addition to defeating propositions which would have enabled the Governor to cut important public services, this election demonstrated that attempts to portray unions as something sinister will not fly. Our once popular Governor suffered a big defeat when nurses, firefighters, teachers, and police clarified for the benefit of all that when the Governor criticizes union members, he's talking about them-- the people we rely on for our most valued public services.

The defeat of Proposition 75 was particularly important for unions in this election. As organizations uniquely created by and for working people, unions are respon-



The Union campaign against the governor's proposals included a "Day of Action" in May 2005, in which teachers, nurses, healthcare workers, firefighters, state workers and other union members rallied at the State Capitol in protest.

sible for promoting and supporting issues that affect their members. What other organization is there whose sole purpose is to protect and improve regular working people's lives?

Nationally, large corporations outspend unions 24 to 1 on political issues. If the Union's ability to raise political money were limited by ill-conceived initiatives like Prop. 75, it would be left to individuals to challenge the power of large corporations when a People vs Corporation issue is at stake. How many people have the time or money to do that?

As organized individuals, however, we defeated these anti-union propositions. Our union organized phone-banking and precinct walking so that members could let voters know that real people

--nurses, healthcare workers, teachers, firefighters, people in the trades--would be negatively affected by these propositions. It was a major, costly, time-consuming effort, but the result was a victory for working people and unions. Many thanks to all who participated!!!!

#### UHW MEMBERS WIN AT BAY AREA SUTTER

SEIU UHW members at Sutter California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco ended their 60 day strike with a big victory -- A new contract that includes a voice in staffing, a training and upgrade fund, industry standard wages, a fast and fair union election process, and HEALTHCARE BENEFITS FOR RETIREES!!!!

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## LVN/CNA BARGAINING COMMITTEE REPORT

Twenty-two LVNS and CNAs received RIF packages and a 30 day termination notice during an improperly conducted lay-off notification on October 10<sup>th</sup>. Employees on several units at MGH were escorted by their unit managers to HR and told that their jobs were being eliminated as of November 13 2005.

What is a RIF? For those fortunate enough not to be acquainted with the term, a RIF is a "reduction in force." It is described in Article 18 of our contract as "an involuntary, indefinite elimination of a position or hours." The remainder of Article 18 describes the correct notification, implementation, or alternative arrangement for the RIF.

According to Article 18, section C, the Employer was correct in notifying the Union thirty days prior to implementing a reduction in force. The Employer erred, however, in "direct dealing" with employees by giving specific employees termination notices.

According to the contract, lay-offs are to be conducted by job classification within the affected department, on the basis of seniority. Since departments under our contract extend to Mercy Hospital Folsom, MSJMC, Methodist, Bruceville Terrace, Woodland Clinic and Woodland Hospital, it would be incorrect to assume that LVNs and CNAs in a particular targeted unit would be the employees laid off.

This RIF is a result of MGH's proposed staffing plan, which was disputed by Union members on the Patient Care Committee and sent to Arbitration a year ago. The Arbitrator's decision favored the staffing that was asked for by the Union for 2East, but sided with the hospital for MICU, Acute Rehab, and Oncology. A Union bargaining team of LVNs and CNAs led by UHW Director Debbie Cortez is now bargaining how the MGH RIF will play out at MHS.

Since bargaining of this issue is in progress, it would be inappropriate to speak of it in great detail, except to clarify what is commonly known of the events leading to our current status.

Because of the improper "noticing" (giving termination notices to specific employees rather than a RIF letter to the Union) by HR, our field rep, Josie Summers, initiated the filing of an unfair labor practice against the hospital and a grievance was filed. A subsequent vote by UHW members at MGH popularly supported holding an informational picket to protest the

hospital's handling of the issue.

Then, at the start of bargaining, MGH rescinded the termination notices, restored affected employees to the

schedule, and issued a letter to employees apologizing for MGH's improper action. As a result, the union withdrew the grievance, and, on the advice of our Union's lawyer, withdrew the unfair labor practice charge. The Union reserves the right to refile the grievance pending the outcome



of bargaining.

Where are we now? Bargaining has been on hold due to the illness of UHW Director/Bargainer Debbie Cortez, but will resume December 7TH. In the meantime, the LVNs and CNAs who received termination notices (since rescinded) remain at work in their units.

Change is a challenge, no question about it. Thanks is due to the LVNs and CNAs on the Union Bargaining Committee who are giving their time and effort to negotiate the best possible outcome for their co-workers.

--Ellen Dillinger

### WHAT THE CONTRACT SAYS ABOUT JOB SECURITY: Article 4A

"The parties acknowledge a common goal and intent of providing employment and income security to employees. As such, it is the intent of the parties to avoid displacement of employees, but recognize that there are circumstances when avoiding displacement cannot be achieved. The parties acknowledge a mutual intent to make use of attrition, business growth, job matching, retraining and/or other mutually agreed upon mechanisms to accomplish this goal. Insofar as practicable, the Employer will make every effort to avoid displacing employees....."

## UHW HEALTHCARE WORKERS WIN AT BAY AREA SUTTER....continued from page 1

The strike began September 17<sup>th</sup> after CPMC backed out of a Federal mediator's agreement. It ended with a tentative agreement reached November 9 after two days of talks, facilitated with what was described by UHW bargaining participants as "the intense involvement" of Congresswoman Nancy Pelosi and other SF civic leaders.

The contract was ratified by UHW members on November 11 and served as a model for Sutter St. Luke's Hospital, where a similar contract was ratified on November 12<sup>th</sup>.

The two month strike tested the resolve of striking members, who demonstrated great unity and determination in maintaining around-the-clock picket lines, rain or shine. They were encouraged by Union, religious, and community leaders from around the U.S., who joined the strike line to offer moral and/or financial support. UHW employees from other hospitals also participated, joining the picket line

or contributing money to help union members walking the line and surviving on strike-pay.

Debbie, Chief Shop Steward at Mercy Medical Center of Mt. Shasta, drove to S.F. from Mt. Shasta to participate with UHW strikers at CPMC. "I took my daughter out of school to spend a day on the picket line at CPMC-- I wanted her to see the union in action, and she did!"

The strike was rightly viewed as a significant step in raising standards for all health care workers. Each UHW contract builds on other contracts, and our ability to achieve healthcare benefits for retirees at next year's bargaining is enhanced by the contract UHW members won at Sutter CPMC.

Unions are the trailblazers when it comes to winning better wages, benefits and working conditions for workers, but it doesn't happen unless union members stand together.



UHW healthcare workers walk the picket line in front of Sutter CPMC.

Thanks is due to all who lent their support to Sutter workers at CPMC.

E.Dillinger, Shop Steward, Imaging

## WAL-MART POLICIES FAIL MERCY CORE VALUES TEST

**S**acramento's Crest Theater was sold out on a week-night in November for a showing of "Wal-Mart: the High Cost of a Low Price."

The film is a documentary of the damage caused to communities when a Wal-Mart comes to town. Cities that court Wal-Mart with subsidies and tax breaks soon find that Wal-Mart jobs don't pay a living wage (40% less than Costco), and that Wal-Mart's healthcare plan for most employees is the public welfare system.

Hardest to watch in this documentary were the owners of small family businesses as they struggled, then failed, to compete with Wal-Mart. A former Wal-Mart developer describes how

he used to drive down the main street of a town where a Wal-Mart was planned and joke about the sequence of small businesses about to go under.

Also painful to watch were the sweatshop employees in China whose low wages and long hours make possible the low prices of Wal-Mart products. The "Everything made in America" boast by Wal-Mart is definitely a thing of the past.



Would Wal-Mart pass the CHW core values agreement that MGH employees were asked to sign? Does Wal-Mart embody Dignity, Justice, Stewardship, Excellence? See the film and decide.

There's a high cost to the community for Wal-Mart's low prices. When shopping this season, remember that the values practiced by this retail giant are completely out of sync with the spirit of any known holiday.

--E. Dillinger

**is an injury**

# THE UNION TALKS

## MGH Steward Chairs

Chief Steward  
**Raj Dayal**  
Home: 729-8187  
Work: 453-4084

COPE Chair (alt.Chief)  
**Sharon Martinez**  
Home: 372-2145  
Work: 453-4440

Mobilizer Chair  
**Kathy Stegall**  
Home: 682-0844  
Work: 453-4553

Secretary Chair/Editor  
**Ellen Dillinger**  
Home: 441-3468  
Work: 453-4138

## SEIU UHW-West Field Representative:

Josie Summers: 275-6342

See list of Shop Stewards on Main Union bulletin Board near Cafeteria.

## STEWARD MEETINGS

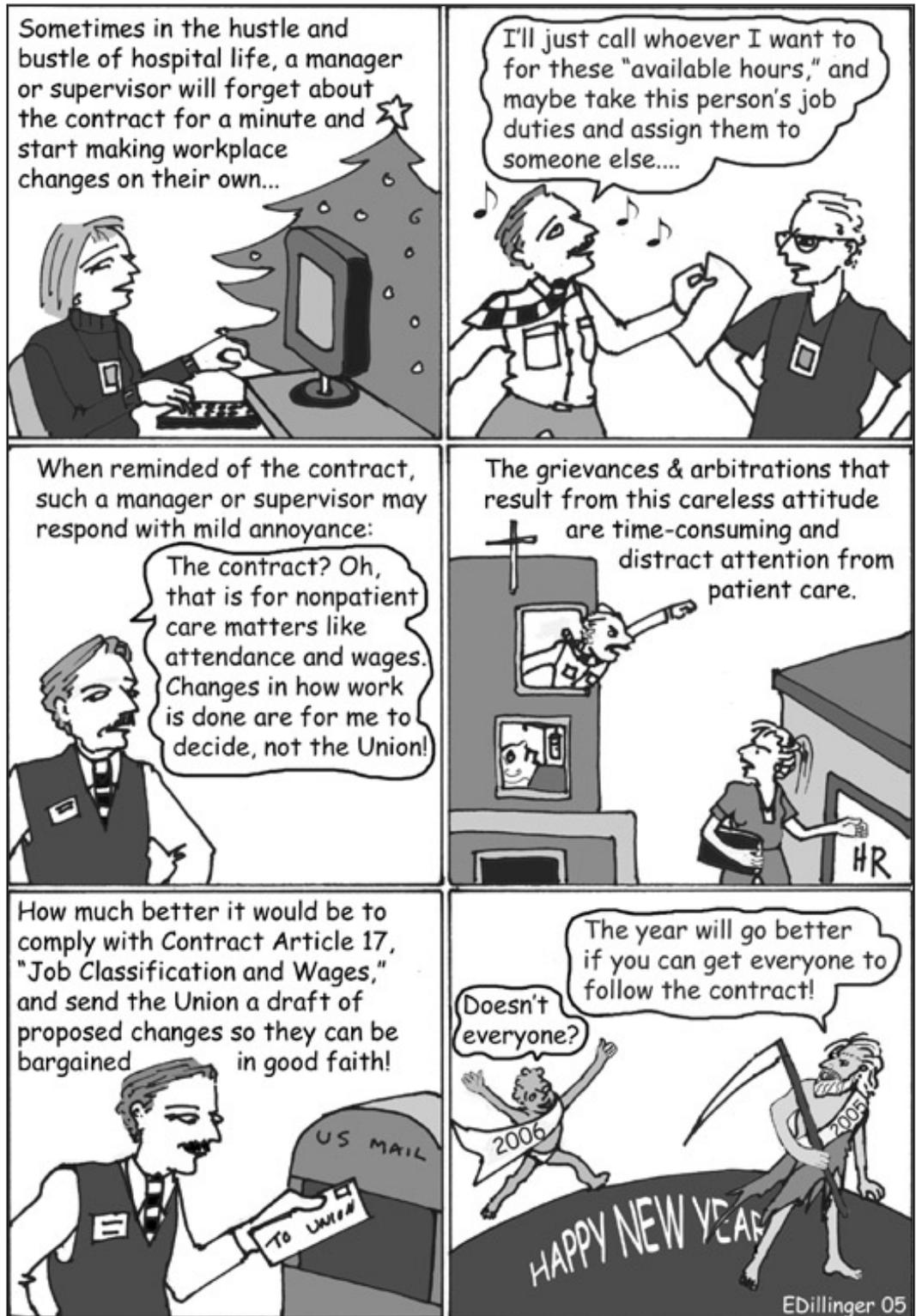
Every third Wednesday,  
Time: 1 p.m.- 5 p.m.

## LOCATION VARIES

Dec.21: Conference Rm 2

It is the responsibility of the shop steward to inform their dept.manager in a timely manner of release time required for shop stewards' meeting.

## Healthcartoons: "A New Year's Proposal"



to all.