

The Voice of SEIU Local 250 Members working at Mercy Hospitals in the Sacramento area.

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

# THE UNION TALKS

## METHODIST ON-CALL GRIEVANCE RESOLVED IN FAVOR OF TECHS

August 2003  
Volume 2, Issue 8



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—[dillwood08@msn.com](mailto:dillwood08@msn.com)

### INSIDE

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- 2004 Contract
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Ellen Dillinger (MGH) Editor

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

<http://dillingertoons.net>

*The on-call service required of employees by hospitals poses many problems. Methodist Chief Shop Steward Chris Kurpies describes how one of these problems was recently resolved:*

Let me start off by telling you that our call schedule in Radiology is posted one year in advance. We had a tech leave, which left a multitude of holes in the schedule. Right away there was a panic as to how these holes would be covered. Would they force us to work them? Of course not, that would be mandatory overtime and that's a contract violation. Would they just leave the holes and go without? That would compromise patient care. Would they use registry? That will cost an arm and a leg. What was going to happen? The Techs have had their schedule since December. Vacations were planned, appointments made, child care covered; all of the things we have to plan for around our work schedule.

It was decided we would call a meeting with our Department Manager to discuss the call schedule holes and to come up with a reasonable resolution to keep us all happy.

It was proposed by the Techs to offer incentive pay for every 24 hours of call coverage. An incen-

tive pay policy was already in place for MRI coverage. Our Manager agreed to propose this to the Human Resources Director. During these negotiations, plans were already in the works to force the Techs to work additional call days and weekends.



The following day our Manager came back to us with an answer from H.R... The response was: there was nothing in our contract about incentive pay, therefore why should they pay it. Obviously they were unwilling to make a good faith effort to bargain this.

On April 28<sup>th</sup>, I filed a grievance on the behalf of the X-Ray techs at Methodist to stop the changing of schedules and the forcing of overtime. (Both of which are contract violations)

H.R.'s response was past the 15 calendar day deadline, so our grievance was pushed straight to a Step II grievance. We held our Step II, and the response from H.R. was basically

the same as their original response. No incentive will be granted.

So off to arbitration we go...We were scheduled to present our case at the July arbitration meeting. July 23<sup>rd</sup> was the last hope for a settlement. We met with the Director of H.R. and CHW's Labor Relations Specialist. Once again our case was explained. The Labor Relations Specialist asked "What do you believe to be the contract violation?" It was pointed out to him that mandatory overtime and changing employee's schedules are both violations. The "Specialist" said "adding to someone's schedule is not changing it, it's just adding to it." Needless to say my jaw hit the floor. As far as I was concerned this meeting was over, let an arbitrator decide!

H.R. and the "Specialist" said they would get back to us Friday the 25<sup>th</sup> and present a solution. Well Friday came and went...No call from the "Specialist"

Monday, July 28<sup>th</sup>, to my surprise a call came from the "Specialist". Call Techs will no longer be forced to take call beyond their scheduled call shifts.

Chris Kurpies, Chief Shop Steward, METH

**An injury**

**MAKING EVERY POSSIBLE EFFORT.....**

Many people lost savings and retirement security in the last two years if their investments were in the stock market. This investment loss happened to corporate CHW as well, and CHW's mandate is to recoup the loss by proposing the implementation of productivity standards that would result in the elimination of some positions. However, our contract is clear that management **MUST** bargain with our union over any changes and we have not agreed to the layoff of a single employee.



MSJMC employees attending the SEIU Western Region 2004 Contract Campaign Conference in Oakland on July 19th. In response to CHW's cut-back plans, we propose staffing for quality patient care as one of the goals for the master contract in 2004 and a faster track to arbitration in staffing disputes. (Susie Boedecker, 2nd from right)

The four Mercy hospitals in the Sacramento region have made \$106,000,000 in profits over the past three years. The plan to cut jobs was made without discussions with the Union about other strategies to help CHW with their financial health. Repeated requests for information by SEIU Local 250 Vice President John Borsos were first ignored and then incompletely provided

There are other options for improving CHW's financial health and the Union has offered to assist in finding them. Working together through state and federal political systems to improve reimbursements to hospitals and reducing worker's comp costs are two viable options. Our contract states that every possible effort must be made before employee layoffs happen. This has not been done by corporate CHW or MSJMC administration.

While there are already shortages in many of our departments and nursing units, MSJMC administration is

proposing to eliminate many positions. Proposed changes cut CNA'S, LVNs and respiratory therapists, while RN's are asked to take on extra duties. These proposed cut-backs are being suggested at a time when California is facing the largest nursing shortage in the nation.

Process redesign is being revisited! Changes in staffing mixes using team nursing, or modified primary nursing (using an RN with care assistant and unit assistant) bring recollections of how unsuccessful process redesign was.

Silently the cut backs are already happening in many units and departments by not filling vacant positions. Our contract clearly states that all vacant positions must be posted and filled. The impact created by not filling positions is hard felt by the existing employees. Who will do the extra work created by the shortages of unfilled vacant positions? We all will! If you know of positions not being filled in your department, contact your Union

shop steward. Many departments such as EVS already have an extreme work overload due to understaffing. Employees, patients and their family members have observed a decline in cleanliness here at MSJMC. The EVS employees are routinely working double or more their work assignments and morale is low.

Excellent patient care is a priority for all of us. We believe that patient care will suffer with reduction of staff. How will RN's have time to care for our patients when the RN's time is spent performing the tasks of LVN's, CNA's, UA's and ED techs? The last "process redesign" was unsuccessful and we propose not to repeat it!

-Susie Boedecker, MSJMC

NOTE: Meetings are being set at each hospital to better understand CHW's proposed plans so that our Union can give management a proposal of our own.

## CONTRACT CAMPAIGN FOR 2004

In the year 2004, over 50,000 SEIU healthcare workers at more than 95 facilities in California, Oregon, and Washington will be bargaining a new contract. Most of these facilities won union representation and their first contract fairly recently, and almost all contracts were bargained individually. In 2004, the goal is to achieve a region-wide master contract with a common expiration date and major improvements in job security, wages, and benefits. We got good first-time contracts, but living with them has revealed that there is more to be done!

To make this happen, SEIU healthcare workers from around the state, belonging to Locals 250, 399,



A conference room of SEIU Healthcare workers from Western Region Locals.

these and other goals in mind, the SEIU Western Region 2004 contract campaign has begun.

SEIU Local 250 President Sal Roselli welcomed Union members to the 2004 contract conference. Describing the changes in the healthcare industry since the founding of Kaiser Permanente in the 1930's, Sal noted that Kaiser and SEIU have evolved together. As a result, Kaiser has set the industry standard for employee wages, benefits, and a voice in the workplace. It is a standard that the rest of us are trying to meet.

The current corporate atmosphere in the healthcare industry poses new challenges to Labor. Corporate-wide union busting actions require new strategies from Unions such as the "Fast and Fair" campaign in the Bay Area and "right to organize" language in Union contracts. The answer is still ORGANIZE, and that is what Sal is exhorting us all to do.

"We must use our political power and moral authority to fight for comprehensive healthcare reform!" Sal urged. "Cost, access and quality are the three challenges of healthcare!" It is SEIU's goal to make



Local 250 President Sal Roselli presenting Union goals.

healthcare a central issue in the 2004 U.S. Presidential campaign.

Union members left the conference inspired and educated about Union goals and Contract 2004.

Ellen Dillinger, MGH



Darnell Carter attended after a night's work at Methodist.

49, 616, and 121 met on July 19 in Oakland, California to discuss key issues such as Patient Care/Health and Safety, Retirement /Retiree Health Insurance, Union Rights, and Universal Health Care Access. With

## LATE JULY 3RD PAYDAY CAUSES JULY 4TH FIREWORKS

Pay day—time to receive our hard-earned cash, our bread and butter. We work hard for it everyday and we expect to be paid on time. Many of us take advantage of the direct deposit option-- it's convenient and we don't have to stand in line at the bank. But lately, confidence in direct deposit is being lost.

There have been times recently when receiving wages by direct deposit HASN'T been convenient. Employees with direct deposit were not paid on pay day. For instance, for the pay day that occurred July 3 of this year, many of us with direct deposit did not have access to our pay checks until the following Monday, June 7<sup>th</sup>. This was four days later than those who received their check at work on the designated pay day. Worse than that, this occurred over a three-day holiday, leaving people without pay at a time

when they would most want to have it.

One employee was concerned that since it was the beginning of the month, their direct withdrawals for their mortgage and car payments would bounce. People suddenly found they couldn't make an expected automatic cash withdrawal. Another employee had plans for the three day weekend but was unable to go through with their plans because their check had not been deposited. So many were inconvenienced: Who's responsible for this?

Well, here are the stories that we're getting from both the CHW payroll and the bank: Neither are admitting fault, as might be expected. CHW claims that they transmitted the payroll on the correct day but banks did not run the funds. The banks say they received the payroll late from CHW. Either way, something's wrong

Methodist Hospital employees have the same pay date as Mercy General, but are paid in a timely manner. One employee who works for both hospitals says that she gets her Methodist direct-deposit on time, but her Mercy General check is always late. What gives? Don't we both have the same payroll center? Why is MGH's always late?

Our suggested resolution: We would like to receive our direct deposit paychecks on the designated payday, along with everybody else. Why can't payroll send the appropriate funds to banks and credit unions a little earlier, so employees receive their money on time?

--Employees for On-Time Direct Deposit -- Why Not Now?

## WELCOME TO THE NEW PHARMACY SHOP STEWARD!

I want to give a great big thank you to Ellen Dillinger for all the time and effort she has given on behalf of my grievance. There actually are not enough thank you's I can give her to make up the countless hours she has put in. I am sure all other shop stewards put in some hours also. Thank you to those of you who stand up for the employees' rights.

I have learned through this process it is not easy to step into another department and fight for the employees without knowing how the department works as a whole. So, I



have chosen to step up for our department and be there for those in need. My co-workers felt that I can do this, so with their vote, I am now shop steward for the Pharmacy Department. I encourage all

other departments to choose someone to stand up for the department. It will make any grievance process

go quicker and smoother. Maybe you may feel that your department does not need one, but believe me, every department does at some time.

Again, I want to thank Ellen Dillinger (chief shop steward), Josie Summers (field rep), Jill Dibert (shop steward) and my co-workers for believing in me and encouraging me to do what is right.

Thank you,  
Gina Mastergeorge, CPhT

**to all.**

## SOME GRIEVANCES RESOLVED IN PRE-ARBITRATION

Arbitration is the last step for grievances not resolved during the Step I and Step II processes. Before taking this final step, the Union and CHW hold a pre-arbitration meeting to see if some satisfactory agreement can be found. On July 23, a pre-arbitration meeting was held at MGH to discuss pending cases at MGH, METH, and Folsom which resulted in several settlements and a decision to take two cases to arbitration.

1) METHODIST: Imaging Services  
Techs forced to take additional call.  
RESOLUTION: Cease and Desist.  
(See front page story).

2) MGH: Nutrition Services  
Issue: Unjust Discipline

RESOLUTION: Reduced suspension to written warning with back pay.

3) MGH: Bereavement Leave.  
(Standards Preserved Issue).  
THIS ISSUE WILL GO TO ARBITRATION

4) MGH Nutrition Services  
Issue: Changes in Job duties.  
RESOLUTION: Agree to re-evaluation with Union of ergonomics changes

5) MGH: RSP Dept.  
Issue: Unilateral changes.  
RESOLUTION: Management will meet with RSP employees and if no resolution, will move

back into arbitration.

6) MHS: All Affected Employees.  
Issue: MHS not recognizing seniority of employees from other CHW facilities. (Prior to contract).  
RESOLUTION: ARBITRATION

Note: There are other cases pending arbitration and scheduled for arbitration. It is a very slow process!

### NEWSFLASH!!!!!!

July 31, 2003

The Patient Care Committee at Methodist Hospital took up the issue of a new "greeter" position in ER and OK'd creation of the new job. At the same meeting, it was agreed that subcontracting in Environmental Services and Patient Registry would cease. New positions in both departments will be posted. This is good news for Methodist!

Celeste, Maria, Elaine, and other Union members from Woodland Clinic and Woodland Hospital at the SEIU Western Region Contract 2004 Conference.



### GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

#### BRUCEVILLE

DATE: August 7, 2003

LOCATION: Multipurpose Room

TIME: 3:30 p.m. -6:00 p.m.

#### METHODIST

DATE: August 14, 2003

LOCATION: Art Therapy Room

TIME: 0700 a.m. – 0900 a.m. and  
3:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

**SOLIDARITY**

## SIGN UP FOR 2003-2004 LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

The 2003-2004 Leadership Conference is coming up soon and will be held in San Francisco September 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> at the Mariott Hotel. Everyone is welcome to attend not only shop stewards but also all members of SEIU. There will be many interesting classes to attend some giving you CET credit.

I attended last year and was really impressed. We were served a wonderful dinner and I had a lot of fun dancing til 2:00 a.m. We were entertained by Chinese Dragon Dancers

and heard from our State Senator, Barbara Boxer and our Attorney General, Bill Lockyear.

This is a great opportunity to see what **OUR UNION** is really about, meet many other members from across the state, attend workshops of your choice and have a really fun time, too.

The cost is only \$50.00 which includes all your meals ( dinner of steak, fish or vegetarian menu) and hotel room. Transportation will be

provided if we have enough people to sign-up.

So, come on out and have some fun with all of your SEIU Union Friends.

For more information contact your field Rep Josie Summers at 275-6342

Sharon Martinez  
Shop Steward  
Mercy General Hospital  
Cardiopulmonary Department



### WORKING BY NUMBERS

A recent push for “productivity standards” by CHW has department managers planning job cuts and finding ways to track employee productivity. When employees are confronted with failure to “measure up,” those who have not carefully recorded each day’s activities may find themselves at a loss to explain a “low number” performance.

A recent day’s events (Friday, July 25<sup>th</sup>) caused me to suffer “low numbers,” and I decided to record what had caused it.

1) A coworker called in sick for the second day in a row, causing the remaining workers to get even further behind in their work. No blame here: sick leave is a right and it’s better to use it than to come to work sick.

2) A well-liked fellow employee was transferring out of our department

and we were called by a supervisor to attend the celebration of her escape (which we were glad to do), but the numbers clock kept ticking.....

3) A supplemental coworker arrived to help us by collecting work and carrying it back to another MHS hospital where she was working. This required borrowing some office equipment, which she wisely tested before taking, as it turned out that the equipment, though recently returned from repair, in fact still did not work. Other equipment had to be found and tested and the faulty equipment repackaged for re-repair.

4) The printer stopped in the middle of a batch process and sent out repeated unwarranted complaints about the “unexpected size” of the paper. A call to “the computer guy” was not returned, and it was deemed useless to call the help desk (located in Phoenix, Arizona). Later another employee took pity on us and brought

the printer back into compliance.

5) Two bright and friendly high school girls arrived to help us with our mail. Unfortunately, preparing the mail for them requires 20-30 minutes from us, as we must sort out various exceptional mail. Though we did not have this time to spare, we did not want to lose the help of the volunteers, so one of us stopped typing and did that.

6) Throughout these events, clerks came to us with requests for specific dictations, as they are supposed to do. But, the farther behind we get, the more frequently this happens, and the more it happens, the farther behind we get.

The work day idealized in computer programs fails to consider these deviations to the norm, but those are the reality of actual experience.

Ellen Dillinger, MGH



## ASK JOSIE:

1. Who is considered the founder of modern nursing?
2. If an employee is not relieved of all duties (pagers, cell phone, etc.) during a meal period or rest period, the employee is entitled to \_\_\_\_\_ hours of pay for each workday that the meal or rest period is not provided.
3. In which war did the United States attempt to gain territory in Canada?
4. A \_\_\_\_\_ employee who works (40) hours or more each pay period for 90 days in the same Department and Classification shall have the option of changing to a benefited position.
  - a) Temporary
  - b) Per Diem
  - c) Supplemental
  - d) Per Diem or Supplemental
5. What did Congress make the official national flower of the United States in 1986?
  - a) Carnation
  - b) Rose
  - c) Tulip
  - d) Daisy
6. Can a Flexible Working Arrangement (10 or 12 hours shift) be implemented without conducting a Vote in the specific department that is affected?
  - a) Yes, but only with the approval of the Human Resources Department.
  - b) Yes, but only if the employee volunteers for a Flexible Working Arrangement.
  - c) Yes, but only with approval from the Director of Nursing.
  - d) No. A Vote must be conducted within the affected department. If management fails to conduct a Vote, any employee that is working a 10 or 12 hour shift will be entitled to overtime (above 8 hours).
7. Who was the first president of the United States to be shown on color television?
  - a) Dwight D. Eisenhower
  - b) John F. Kennedy
  - c) Lyndon B. Johnson
  - d) Harry S. Truman

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## ANSWERS:

1. Florence Nightingale
2. One (1) hour
3. War of 1812
4. Per Diem or Supplemental
5. Rose
- 4) d (No) 5) Pres. Eisenhower

# THE UNION TALKS

## WE NEED MORE SHOP STEWARDS!

### CHIEF SHOP STEWARDS

MGH:

Home:  
Work:

METH: Chris Kurpies  
Work: 423-6176

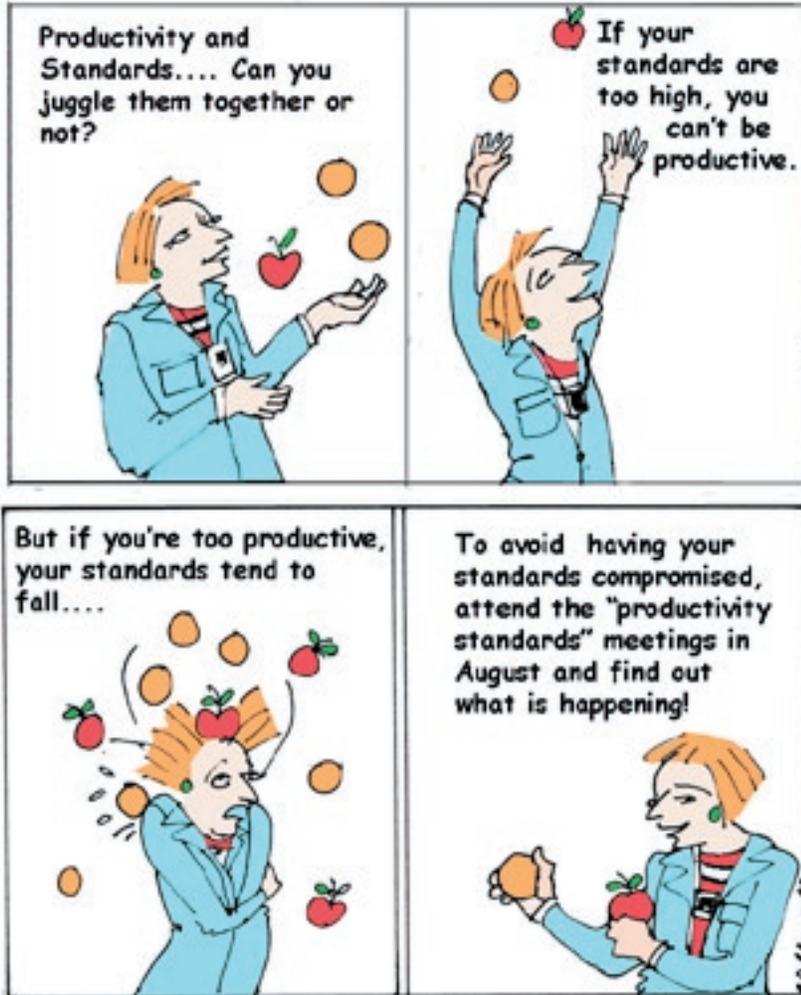
Bruceville Terrace:  
Christine Thomas  
684-9265

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

Woodland Clinic:  
Refer to union  
bulletin board for  
stewards' phone  
numbers.)

**SEIU Local 250 Field Representatives:**  
Josie Summers: 275-6342  
(MGH, METH, BVTERR)  
Mary Henagan 275-2659  
(MSJH, FOL, WOOD)

## PRODUCTIVITY OR STANDARDS



### STEWARD MEETINGS

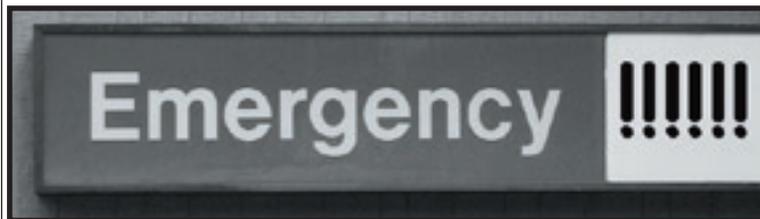
Methodist/Bruceville meets  
3rd Wed. 1530-1630 hours.  
Location: Methodist Hospital

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



### **SEIU LOCAL 250/MHS ADMINISTRATION MEETINGS ON THE SUBJECT OF PROPOSED PRODUCTIVITY STANDARDS**

Shop stewards will be released from work to attend this event. All other employees are strongly encouraged to attend these meetings which will definitely impact YOUR future.

#### MERCY GENERAL

DATE: August 15, 2003  
TIME: 14:00 (approximately 2 hour meeting)  
LOCATION: Mercy Medical Plaza B

#### METHODIST HOSPITAL

DATE: August 14<sup>th</sup>, 2003  
TIME: 3 o'clock  
LOCATION: Main Conference Room

**action**