

President's Message

By HealthCare-PSEA President Sandi Zubek, RN

www.healthcarepsea.org

Strong unions-stronger communities

The assaults on union workers' rights, including nurses, are relentless these days. Our opponents are not just content with criticizing us. They want to divide and conquer our union. Strong as we are member to member, we need more support than just our internal unity, as important as that may be.

What can we do to add to our strong internal unity? The inescapable truth is that we simply must reach out to the community in order to build understanding and solidarity with the general public with whom we interact frequently. This doesn't have to be overwhelming or terribly complicated. Think about how many community groups you and

other members already belong to or participate with, e.g., churches, Elks, Rotary, VFW, American Legion, hunting and fishing clubs, etc.

In addition, consider branching out to other community organizations with common interests. For example, consider a county labor council, which is an umbrella group of unions within the county that come together for monthly meetings to share notes, promote unionism, and build solidarity.

Make sure to get involved in community service projects like food pantry drives, soup kitchens, Adopt a Highway, Meals on Wheels, or river and lake cleanups. Additionally, remember to do something that is not in a nurse's comfort zone. Let

the community know about the good work and volunteerism that your members and the union do throughout the year. For example, get a press release and photo into the local newspaper.

The purpose, as always, is primarily to build an in-house solidarity network as members of local unions and HealthCare-PSEA. Beyond that we can extend our ties to fellow sisters and brothers in the broader union movement and the communities where we serve and live. It's a culture change for those of us in the medical caring fields. But it's essential, and I am quite confident we can do this. Good luck and keep us posted on your progress. Please share your pictures and stories!

News from HealthCare-PSEA Locals

Bucks County Nurses Association

by **Bonnie Neiman**
PSEA UniServ Representative

For many years, the citizens of Bucks County have had a heart for those facing hardship. In fact, in 1790 the residents of the county began discussing the need for an indigent care institution. In 1807, after the Pennsylvania Legislature passed a bill requiring care for the destitute,

the county snapped into action.

Land on the Rodman Farm on Spruce Hill was secured, and the first Almshouse building was erected in 1810 to accept 40 indigent residents. The farmhouse became a hospital, and Dr. Charles Meredith was hired for \$1 per week as the resident physician.

If you are familiar with the works of James A. Michener, the famous American author, you might be interested to know that he began his

life as an orphan in the Bucks County Almshouse. Michener, who penned more than 40 books, was raised as a Quaker by his adoptive mother, Mabel Michener. He draws on his Almshouse experiences in the book "The Fires of Spring."

Today, the Bucks County offices are housed in an 1869 redesign of the early Almshouse building. The Neshaminy Manor Nursing home was built in 2000 on the same land as those original 1810 buildings.

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News from HealthCare-PSEA Locals (cont. from Page 1)

The early building was erected to provide compassion and care, and the HealthCare-PSEA Bucks County Nurses Association members continue to carry out that long tradition.

Highlands Hospital Nurses Association and Lab Technicians

By Stephanie Cramer,
PSEA UniServ Representative

Amid bargaining at Highlands Hospital, we wanted to pause and profile two members of the Highlands Hospital Nurses Association and Lab Techs bargaining unit. We sat down with Josefina Dascani (known as “Bing” to her colleagues) and Gwen McPoyle (who is married to Connellsville Area Education Association President Jamie McPoyle).

How long have you worked at Highlands Hospital?

Dascani: 18 years.

McPoyle: 14 years.

What brings you joy in your job?

Dascani: “The feeling and sense of fulfillment that you made a difference in people’s lives not just physically, but also psychologically, emotionally, and at times, socially.”

McPoyle: “My co-workers and patient care.”

What do you feel is the biggest issue in the medical profession right now?

Dascani: “The health care system. I have seen a lot of changes since I’ve been a nurse for 43 years now.”

McPoyle: “Job stability.”

What do you like best about your union?

Dascani: “It serves as a liaison

between administration and nurses. Getting us updated and informed about administrative issues that affect our working conditions.”

McPoyle: “They are there if you need them.”

What would we find you doing when you’re not at work?

Dascani: “Traveling and doing medical-surgical mission work in third-world countries.”

McPoyle: “Running my kids around; watching them play sports.”

One interesting fact you are willing to share that others may not know about you.

Dascani: “I am very patient and always willing to give.”

McPoyle: “I volunteer as a mentor to seventh- and eighth -graders for the WELS (Wilderness Experience, Leadership and Service) program. Visit www.welsadventure.org.”

Indiana Registered Nurses Association

By Tim Tuinstra, HealthCare-PSEA UniServ representative

Indiana Registered Nurses Association President Kathy Wolfe and PSEA UniServ Representative Tim Tuinstra participated in lengthy (multi-day) testimony sessions with an agent of the National Labor Relations Board, which was part of the union’s Unfair Labor Practices filing against the Indiana Regional Medical Center (IRMC). The dispute was over IRMC’s appalling and inappropriate imposing of health care and paid time-off policies after they declared impasse following the bargaining sessions.

Dick McEwen, HealthCare-PSEA’s lawyer in the western part

of the state, has guided the union’s activities throughout and has provided the legal arguments and a considerable number of documents and other pieces of evidence essential for the union’s case to the labor board. As they await the board’s decision on whether to file the charges against the employer, IRNA members continue working hard for their patients and the broader Indiana area community despite these enormously challenging times.

IRNA members came together for various bargaining and legal updates, fellowship, and next-steps-planning at an Oct. 28 general membership meeting. IRNA is planning a rally in the near future to generate visible support among members and the community.

The nurses continue to express their ongoing gratitude for all the tremendous support they continue to receive from fellow members of HealthCare-PSEA, PSEA members, and the public overall.

In other news, officers, members, and Tim Tuinstra have met and exchanged ideas repeatedly with management on possible ways to handle, and prevent as much as possible, the repeated temporary closures of the IRMC pediatrics unit. Ensuring the employer follows the contractual obligations for members temporarily displaced in such circumstances is a point of interest.

The union is exploring some creative ideas through which the hospital and union could partner to promote the pediatric unit beyond the hospital’s tradition as a market population because surrounding hospitals largely have eliminated their pediatric units.

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News from HealthCare-PSEA Locals (cont. from Page 2)

Somerset Professional Nurses Association

By Tim Tuinstra, HealthCare-PSEA UniServ representative

Several cases were going to arbitration, but they were resolved to the mutual satisfaction of the Somerset Professional Nurses Association members and the UPMC Somerset management. Members who were sent home at times when agency nurses were present have received back pay for those times in question during the grievance and arbitration process. While not precedent setting, these settlements made the affected members whole, and represent the ongoing building of trust between the union and the management as the continuous integration of Somerset Hospital into the UPMC system continues.

Beyond the arbitration settlements, there has been a measurable improvement in communication between union members and officers with management at the facility. While there are undoubtedly many day-to-day and some longer-term disagreements, there is a growing sense that the two sides are improving their ability and willingness to hear and understand each other's points of view.

Another area where the parties are connecting is the beginning of the bargaining process. SPNA's contract expires toward the end of March 2020. The sides have already indicated a desire to start bargaining sessions at the start of the new year. SPNA is putting together a bargaining team and will shortly send

members a survey seeking member input into bargaining priorities and strategy for the upcoming negotiations.

Not that there's ever a wrong time to boost union membership, but the leaders have been successful in helping to sign up several previous agency-fee payers (a private sector form of Fair Share) into full dues-paying members, helping to build solidarity and signal strength heading into bargaining. Thanks to those folks and some new hires signing up, membership now exceeds 90 percent of the total bargaining unit. Congratulations!

Finally, members are looking forward to a warm general membership meeting on Dec. 4 at the Pine Grill in Somerset. Local leaders will send the details to members.

NOTICE TO PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYEES REGARDING UNION SECURITY CLAUSES

Negotiating and enforcing collective bargaining agreements comes with costs. To spread these costs fairly, private-sector employees who benefit from their collective bargaining agreements but who do not join their local associations, PSEA, and NEA still can be required to pay an agency fee to maintain employment if their collective bargaining agreement contains such a requirement. These requirements or provisions are known as union security clauses.

The agency fee, as calculated by PSEA each year, is a percentage of PSEA dues reflecting only expenditures that PSEA makes

on activities or projects germane to collective bargaining, contract administration, and grievance processing.

PSEA's practices regarding the calculation and collection of agency fees comply with the decisions of the National Labor Relations Board and the courts which have held that unions cannot require agency fee payers to financially support union activities not directly related to the core representational responsibilities of collective bargaining, contract administration, and grievance processing.

Each year, PSEA calculates the agency fee (the chargeable

percentage of PSEA dues) as follows:

1. The chargeable percentage includes PSEA's expenditures related to negotiations with employers, enforcing collective bargaining agreements, informal meetings with employer representatives, discussions of work-related issues with employees, handling employees' work-related problems through the grievance procedure, administrative agencies or informal meetings, and aspects of union administration. In the past, approximately 70-75 percent of PSEA's expenditures have supported such activities.

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400 North Third Street, PO Box 1724
Harrisburg, Pennsylvania 17105-1724

Richard W. Askey
PSEA President

Aaron F. Chapin
PSEA Vice President

Jeffrey D. Ney
PSEA Treasurer

James G. Vaughan
PSEA Executive Director

Sandi Zubek
HealthCare-PSEA President

Erica Garcia
Designer/Layout

Paul Shemansky
Editor



NOTICE TO PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYEES REGARDING UNION SECURITY CLAUSES *(continued from Page 3)*

2. The chargeable percentage does not include PSEA's expenditures related to charitable activities, lobbying or other legislative activities, support of political candidates, participation in political events, recruitment of members to the labor organization, and members-only benefits (including members-only social events). In the past, approximately 25-30 percent of PSEA's expenditures have supported such activities.

Each year, PSEA will provide a notice to agency-fee payers informing them of the amount

of the fee, providing a full explanation as to the calculation of the fee, and listing in detail the categories of expenditures deemed to be "chargeable" and "nonchargeable." The notice will include PSEA's audited financial statements. After receiving the notice, agency-fee payers may challenge PSEA's calculation of the chargeable percentage by filing an objection with PSEA, following the instructions contained in the notice. The objection will be resolved by an impartial arbitrator appointed by the American Arbitration Association,

and the agency fee will be held in a segregated account until the decision is rendered. In addition, agency-fee payers with conscientious religious objections to financially supporting a labor organization can notify PSEA of their objections and arrange to make a charitable contribution equal in amount to the agency fee, instead of paying the agency fee.

Any questions regarding agency fees can be directed to PSEA UniServs or to PSEA's Financial Management Division at 1-800-944-7000.