Secretary-Treasurer, Delegates Elected

Nanette Logan, an RN at Los Robles Hospital & Medical Center, is the new Local 121RN Secretary Treasurer after a secret ballot mail-in vote by the membership.

The positions of President Gayle Batiste, RN at Northridge Hospital Medical Center, and Vice President Jeannie King, RN at Pomona Valley Hospital, were uncontested and they will serve for another three years.

Local 121RN members also elected 11 delegates who will attend events that require votes from SEIU Locals. For example, there will be an SEIU International Convention in 2012, plus we may need delegates for state or national councils and conferences.

The 11 elected delegates are:
- Marilou Weiss, Northridge Hospital Medical Center
- Julia Clare, Providence Tarzana Medical Center
- Nanette Logan, Los Robles Hospital & Medical Center
- Nina Wells, St. John's Regional Medical Center
- Maxine Davidson, Riverside Community Hospital
- Michael Kaulback, Pomona Valley Hospital
- Joyce Gray, Encino Hospital
- Nene Ruelo, Encino Hospital
- Lorraine Myrick, Riverside Community Hospital
- Joanne Fujimoto, Pomona Valley Hospital
- Charlaine (Sherry) Clonts, Pomona Valley Hospital

The election was overseen by the California Elections Company. CEC staff picked up ballots from the SEIU Local 121RN Post Office Box and then instructed Local 121RN Election Committee members Stella Kennedy, RN from Providence St. Joseph, and Ermalinda Magallanes, RN at Hollywood Presbyterian Medical Center, on how to verify and sort the ballots to be electronically counted. Election Committee Chairperson Stella Kennedy then read the results aloud to those in attendance.

Those elected will take office January 1, 2011 and serve until December 31, 2013.

Congratulations, Nanette and delegates!

121RN Testifies at Calif Senate Health Committee Hearing

Riverside Community Hospital Union Representatives Donna Sigaty, RN, and Kathy Hughes, RN, attended the Senate Health Committee oversight hearing in Sacramento on October 20 to testify before Senator Elaine Kontominas Alquist, Chair, regarding RCH’s non-compliance with state-mandated nurse-to-patient ratios. They provided more than 180 Assignment Despite Objection (ADO) forms as evidence. Local 121RN received letters from the California Department of Public Health Services stating that they substantiated the complaints of non-compliance every month this year through October.

Sigaty and Hughes, along with SEIU Nurse Alliance of California Executive Director Ingela Dahlgren, RN, also spoke with CDPH Deputy Director Kathleen Billingsley at the hearing to request a copy of Riverside management’s “CMS Plan of Correction.” This document should outline how the hospital plans to correct the issues that have lead to their Title 22 nurse-to-patient ratio violations.

As a result of the hearing, Senator Alquist has asked the CDPH to “routinely and proactively” inspect the hospital for their compliance with the ratio law.

Local 121RN has not yet received the CMS (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid) Plan of Correction submitted by RCH, but Peggy Hendricks, the CDPH Riverside Regional director, has assured us that they will provide it.
Lines of Communication Open at JFK Memorial

Members of the John F. Kennedy Memorial Hospital 121RN Bargaining Team presented nearly 30 articles to Tenet management over two days of initial bargaining Nov. 16-17. The two teams meet again for several days in mid-December. While this is just the beginning, several issues stuck out in team members’ minds.

- Bringing In-House Registry pay back to RNs
- Developing a Clinical Ladder to recognize education and achievement of RNs
- Redefining Floating Clusters
- Mutual respect

Bargaining Team members: Jeannie Bruce, PEDS; Amanda Gibson, PEDS; Eloisa Peralta, ICU; Ralph Strnad, PCU West; Tracy Pryor, PACU; Dora Machuca, PACU.

Hollywood Pres Management Wants to Freeze Wage Scale

Hollywood Presbyterian management and the Local 121RN Bargaining Team agreed to expedite negotiations and made a number of improvements to the existing contract. However, when it came to economics, the team encountered a major stumbling block.

Hollywood Presbyterian management proposed a wage agreement that would not allow workers to progress through previously agreed-upon wage scales. The wage scales were negotiated into the previous contract to reward employees for remaining with HPMC and to use as an important staff recruitment tool. Other hospitals in the community with wage scales have a negotiated yearly wage increase, plus step increases.

The Bargaining Team has agreed to extend the contract until January 15, 2011. They are committed to a fair settlement which means the wage scale issues must be addressed in order for salaries to remain at market rates. Otherwise, our team believes it will become difficult for the hospital to both recruit and retain qualified, experienced RNs.

Bargaining Team members: Laura Villondo, ICU; Judy Barkley, ICU; Jacinta Lincke, L&D
Encino members are gearing up for new contract negotiations to begin soon. The Bargaining Team has been selected and team members have compiled and studied member surveys in order to determine what new proposals they will make this year. The Encino contract expires in March 2011.

Bargaining Team members: Nene Ruelo, ICU/CCU; Grace Haidenthaller, ER; Homer Marmor, Med Surg; Muti Jarrett, ICU/CCU.

Because of their strong contract, Encino nurses and professionals are long-term employees with a lot invested in Tarzana. This is just the beginning, but the Bargaining Team has promised not to lower our standards.

Bargaining Team members: Julia Clare, Float; Karen McDaniel, L&D; Jim Owen, FACU; Karen Pelone, L&D; Sue Stephens, NICU; Sandy Thompson, ER

“Our nursing standards at the bedside are not going down and we will not allow patient or nurse standards in our contract to go down. We don’t deserve to take less.”

Sue Stephens, NICU, Tarzana

Stronger Together!

Tarzana Team Won’t Allow Take-Aways

The Providence Tarzana 121RN Bargaining Team is ready to fight for what they currently have in their contract. Right off the bat, Providence management asked for “flexibility” in order to allow them to run the hospital. They said they will be asking 121RN to make changes in the contract we will not like, some of which we will find “unpalatable.”

“We’ve had a Union together at Tarzana since the 1980s and we’ve fought hard over the years for the standards included in our contract,” says Karen McDaniel, RN, Bargaining Team member. “As a result, most of the articles we put across the table so far are ‘no change’ proposals.” Our contract has been used as a model for many of the 121RN unions throughout the LA-area.

This year the Tarzana 121RN team will address specific concerns that members have raised — for instance, health and safety, scheduling, in-house registry and call-off. These issues will be addressed before economic concerns. The team already introduced articles on safe patient handling, 24-hour notification of employees who have been exposed to communicable diseases such as TB, and job vacancies and posting.

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“Our nursing standards at the bedside are not going down and we will not allow patient or nurse standards in our contract to go down. We don’t deserve to take less.”

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Check Out Our Website! www.seiu121rn.org

- On-the-job resources
- Staff & Representative Contact Info
- Events Calendar
- Individual pages for each hospital

RN News / December 2010
Local Awards $1,000 Scholarships to 10 Members

Ten Registered Nurses were awarded $1,000 scholarships on Nov. 16 by Local 121RN to help with continuing education. This is the second year 121RN has offered scholarships. Recipients were determined based on their date of hire. To be considered, RNs must have been a 121RN member in good standing for 12 months, and enrolled in an accredited university in a healthcare related field.

There were 36 applicants this year.

“This is the greatest gift and it is going to be a huge help to me and my family,” said Tammy Rautenberg, an RN at Los Robles Hospital & Medical Center.

In October, the Local 121RN Leadership Council approved an additional scholarship to begin in 2011. The Robert Thomas Memorial Scholarship will be a $2,000 educational scholarship given to an RN Union activist. Thomas was an RN at Pomona Valley Hospital for 25 years prior to passing away earlier this year. Thomas was an active member of Local 121RN until poor health prevented him from participating. Local 121RN will also give $100 each year to the Sickle Cell Research Fund Foundation in Robert Thomas’ name, and name a conference room at the Local’s new Pasadena office in his honor.

This year’s scholarship recipients:
- Sandra Ayala, RN, St. John’s Regional
- Ann Mari Huff, RN, Providence St. Joseph
- Sandy Jordan, RN, Pomona Valley
- Susan E. Jordon-Talaska, RN, Riverside Community
- Marietta Lopez, RN, Hollywood Presbyterian
- Regina Moss, RN, Northridge
- Socrates Nabor, RN, St. John’s Regional
- Tammy Rautenberg, RN, Los Robles
- Karen Reeves, RN, Pomona Valley
- Sue Stephens, RN, Providence Tarzana

Pomona Valley Hospital RN Layoffs Reversed

Pomona Valley Hospital had an upsetting summer. First, in July and August, PVHMC management announced that nurses and other employees would be laid off. They reduced hours for some, taking away health insurance and their retirement plan, as limited as it may be. Most every floor had per diems laid off. NICU and LDRP were hit extremely hard. However, as nurses were leaving and hours were being cut, the Women’s Center census continued to climb.

Local 121RN worked very hard to show the hospital that the layoffs and cutbacks would leave the units without enough staff. While the hospital was sending out layoff and reduction of hours notices, nurses were working extra hours and days. All 500 Women’s Center nurses were being negatively affected. When nurses are distracted from patient care, the patients also feel the stress. After the layoffs and cutbacks, patient census remained high. Business was booming. At first the reductions in staff were postponed and then ultimately cancelled.

Many nurses who had transferred to different units to avoid being laid off elected to stay in their new positions. The entire Women’s Center was in turmoil and ultimately short-staffed. Registry and Travelers have been hired to work the Women’s Center. However, there are per diems who want to work full-time and part-time nurses who are being overlooked. Our Union continues to work on these issues.
Most NoHo Staff Move to Pasadena

Most staff currently working out of 121RN’s North Hollywood office moved Dec. 16 to the Pasadena building that the Local purchased this past summer. Executive Director Sue Weinstein, RN, and Chief Financial Officer Claritz Vergel will split their time between offices. Until all staff moves to the Pasadena building in spring 2012, it is recommended that members call their rep’s cell phone before coming in.

Monthly Leadership Council and other large meetings will continue to be held in North Hollywood.

Moving to Pasadena Dec. 16:
- Aimee Barajas, communications director
- Tina Bordas, LVN, rep for Providence St. Joseph
- Donalda Dunnott, RN, education director/RN specialist
- Ruben Garcia, membership administrator
- Sonya Jimmons, MSW, political director / rep for Barlow Respiratory
- Sherwyn Lopez, IT director
- Cris Stables, RN, rep for Hollywood Presbyterian

Remaining in the North Hollywood office until 2012:
- Mimi Holt, RN, rep for Pacifica and Northridge
- Christina Molina, staff coordinator
- Judy Serlin, rep for Encino, Tarzana and West Hills

Staff cell phone numbers can be found by going to www.seiu121rn.org and clicking on “Staff Directory” in the yellow bar at the top.

Fourteen Local 121RN Registered Nurses all recently volunteered their nursing skills for eight days each to the residents of Haiti. The island nation is still reeling from a January earthquake, and now there is a major cholera outbreak to contend with, as well.

“The resources in Haiti are limited, but doable,” said Karyn Elsenbach, a registered nurse at St. John’s Regional Medical Center in Oxnard. “Once you get used to what you have, you still can do your job.

“There’s definitely some MacGuyver nursing going on when I have to secure a chest tube with duct tape and zip ties,” Elsenbach continued, referring to the Richard Dean Anderson-starring television show, “MacGuyver.” MacGuyver’s main asset is his practical application of scientific knowledge and inventive use of common items.

Bryant Baldorado travelled to Haiti earlier this year and he said he tried to communicate some of what to expect to the other nurses going for the first time.

“We really had to use critical thinking when we were there. There are no IV pumps, so you have to titrate. Everything they have there is old school or donated,” Baldorado said.

Northridge Hospital Medical Center RNs Aileen Legarda, Judith Lamasan, Brittany Vowels, Bryant Baldorado, Jaime Deloera, Shalimar Tomaneng, and Nina Wells of St. John’s Regional Medical Center and Nancy Pruitt of St. John’s Pleasant Valley Hospital, all went to Haiti on Oct. 15.

Northridge Registered Nurses Alise Hatley and Pippa Gossett arrived in Haiti October 23, and Alma Loera and Susana Sanchez of Northridge Hospital Medical Center and Karyn Elsenbach of St. John’s Regional Medical Center, left Oct. 29. Cindy Petrak, RN at Providence Tarzana Medical Center, left for Haiti on November 10.

“We appreciate you representing 121RN,” said Local 121RN Executive Director Sue Weinstein, RN. “Your courage and compassion is inspiring.”

SEIU international contributed $300 per nurse to Project Medishare and paid for airfare to Miami and back. Konbit, a strategic partnership between leaders of South Florida’s Haitian community, prominent businesspeople, elected officials, and labor and relief organizations with a shared vision of combining forces to provide immediate relief, arranged flights from Miami to Haiti.

Want to Volunteer?
If you are a Local 121RN member who would like to volunteer your services to the people of Haiti, please contact Union Representative Chris Slane, RN, at (805) 279-1198.

Local 121RN is also collecting surplus hospital supplies to donate to the University of Florida Field Hospital in Haiti. Supplies that can no longer be used by your hospital may be of use if it can be sterilized in Haiti. For example, lap sponges, IV pumps and other equipment can be taken to a Local 121RN office before taking any supplies, even if it’s something the hospital would otherwise discard. Please call ahead to your nearest Local 121RN office before dropping off supplies.
Los Robles CCU RNs Earn AACN Beacon Award

Registered Nurses at Los Robles Hospital & Medical Center didn’t set out four years ago to achieve a Beacon Award from the American Association of Critical Care Nurses. They simply wanted to explore the AACN’s Healthy Work Environment initiative to make their department a better place to work.

“It actually started in 2006 when we were looking for ways to make it a more pleasant place to work. We wanted to encourage pleasantness and discourage aggressive behavior,” said Registered Nurse Ulla Vandersande, one of the “driving forces” behind achieving the Beacon Award. “The Healthy Work Environment initiative involves communication, true collaboration and all these components to make your unit a better place to work.”

After putting some of the Healthy Work Environment practices into place, Vandersande and fellow Registered Nurse Sandi Patterson, now retired, decided to enlist the help of others in the CCU to pursue the Beacon Award. The hard work by all the RNs in the department, as well as assists from management and other healthcare workers, culminated in the CCU being presented with the Beacon Award in September 2010.

According to the AACN, the Beacon Award “recognizes individual nursing units that distinguish themselves by improving every facet of patient care.” Out of roughly 6,000 Critical Care Units in the United States, only 315 have been recognized with a Beacon Award from the AACN. Sixty-one of those units have achieved the excellence award more than once. The Beacon Award is active for one year from the month of receipt.

Peter Winch, a charge RN in the Los Robles CCU, participated in the educational portion of the program. He held a monthly journal club during which RNs would review an article from a critical care magazine. He would find one that covered a “best practice” that the CCU nurses could put into action at Los Robles. RNs could also earn one Continuing Education Unit by passing a test after the journal club. Critical Care Registered Nurses (or CCRN) have advanced certification in Critical Care and must earn 100 CEUs every three years. Non-Critical Care registered nurses must earn 60 CEUs every two years.

One of the “best practices” that Los Robles RNs implemented is called ST Segment Monitoring. It has to do with placing monitor leads in specific places on a patient’s chest and how you monitor those leads. This practice is especially beneficial for those with diabetes.

“Diabetics are notorious for having what are called ‘silent’ heart attacks that traditional monitoring won’t detect. They don’t have the chest or arm pain,” Winch said. “If you monitor in this fashion, you can detect silent heart attacks.”

Another aspect of achieving the Beacon Award was providing a means for additional nurses to become certified CCRNs. Many Los Robles CCU RNs took a 39-hour Critical Care Certification Review Course. Karen Setterfield was one of those who completed the course, and, according to Winch, Los Robles “should have half a dozen more CCRNs before the year is out. It’s an extremely hard test. It’s not that easy of a qualification to get.”

Management also pitched in to help the department achieve Beacon status. Setterfield said that the department had to have 90 percent of its staff as members of the AACN to qualify. The hospital helped with the cost of membership and now the CCU has close to 100 percent.

One part of the program that Vandersande is most pleased with is the mentoring program. RNs volunteer to be mentors to newly graduated RNs, RNs new to Los Robles’ CCU or current Los Robles nurses transferring to the CCU. “The mentors help them with what to expect and coach them on different policies and ways of doing things,” Vandersande said. “They also help them with social aspects, finding daycare, whatever they need to help them adjust to their new role. They also make sure all new employees fill out an evaluation of how their orientation process went and how we can make it more effective.”

What does the Beacon Award mean for Los Robles RNs and patients?

“This award means we have met quite a few qualifications. We are a unit other people can look to, that we are using the best practices and that we know what we’re doing,” Vandersande said. “We’re making it better for patients, nurses and the community we serve.”

“And it’s fun and we’re going to try it again!” Vandersande continued.

-- By Aimee L. Barajas
After a marathon session of negotiations that lasted from Dec. 6 to 11, bargaining broke down on Dec. 11 at about 9 p.m. At that point, the Bargaining Team for RNs at Los Robles, Riverside Community and West Hills presented the hospital’s chief negotiator with a strike notice. The team is disappointed that hospital managers felt they had to leave. Our Union remains committed to preventing this strike and the team is ready to return to the bargaining table at any time. We remain hopeful that management is prepared to do the same.

We did make some progress, with the hospital signing off on important new language such as fatigue management, maintaining our current contract language concerning Bargaining Unit Work and not allowing supervisors to do our work, and improved contract language on articles such as Distribution of Available Work.

To conclude negotiations, issues such as New Technology (on which we have conceptual agreement) and those below still must be addressed:

**Staffing by Acuity** – The hospitals want to staff by numbers. We want to staff by acuity.

**Clinical Ladder** – In our last contract, we agreed to work together at the local level to develop a Clinical Ladder. Despite attempts at all three facilities, the hospital has made no attempt to reach an amicable conclusion.

**Call-Off** – We want the hospital to fulfill the hire-on commitment. After almost one year at the table, the hospital has still not responded to this proposal.

**Rest and Meal Periods** – The hospitals want to change our language regarding penalty pay for missed meal periods and rest breaks in the event the courts change current law.

**Economics** – Our Union team continues to address our economic proposal. Management has now offered to increase the current wage scale by 1.75 percent the first year and by 1.5 percent in subsequent years. If your hourly wage is above scale, you would not receive an increase. And, for Los Robles grandfathered RNs, the hospital has still not agreed to continue the grandfather language. The hospitals have also not offered to extend any raises retroactively to July 1.

This strike is not only for RNs but also patients. RNs in all areas of the hospitals have concerns about staffing. Through our efforts, we are addressing the needs of nurses now and in the future. We are taking a stand to improve the care we provide to our patients.

**Kaiser Moreno Valley RNs Ratify Contract with 3.5% Raise Per Year**

It’s official: the majority of SEIU members at Kaiser Moreno Valley Community Hospital voted to approve a new contract with Kaiser management on Nov. 3, 2010. This new contract provides a 3.5 percent across-the-board wage increase for all nurses in 2010 and 2011, as well as providing a step increase for all nurses retroactive to July 1, 2010. The contract will reopen in 2012 to negotiate wage increases only.

The Kaiser Moreno Valley Bargaining Team worked long and hard to make sure that RNs and other healthcare workers would continue to progress through “steps” like Moreno Valley workers did before Kaiser purchased the hospital.

Be sure to thank the Bargaining Team members for their hard work and dedication to a fair contract for all Kaiser Moreno Valley workers!

**Bargaining Team members:**
- Jasper Diaz, RN, ICU
- Elvie Palac, RN, PACU
- Susan Petho, RN, CBM
- Mimi Stapleton, RN, Med-Surg-Tele
- Anita Triglia-Hook, RN, Med-Surg-Tele
- Barbara Washington-Knight, RN, PCCU
- Jeannie Wu, RN, L&D

After almost one year at the table, the hospital has still not responded to our hiring and fulfillment commitments.

Despite attempts at all three facilities, the hospital has made no attempt to reach an amicable conclusion.

Be sure to thank the Bargaining Team members for their hard work and dedication to a fair contract for all Kaiser Moreno Valley workers!

**National Agreement Implemented Oct. 1**

A National Agreement through the Kaiser Coalition of Unions also covers Local 121RN members at Kaiser Moreno Valley Community Hospital. A new National Agreement was implemented Oct. 1 and includes an economic package with raises, preservation of benefits, enhanced incentives tied to attendance and stable funding for workforce development trust funds.

**Wages and benefits. 3%**

Across-the-board raises went into effect October 1, with an additional 0.5% across-the-board increase for Southern California RNs. Benefits remain the same for the life of the two-year agreement. Funding for the Workforce Planning and Development education trusts, which provide for worker training and skill upgrades for current and displaced workers, is set at 0.27% of annual payroll.
Year-End Political Contributions Report

SEIU Local 121RN contributed to the following re-election campaigns throughout 2010:

- Re-Elect Bob Blumenfield for Assembly
- Re-Elect Norma Torres for Assembly
- Re-Elect Bonnie Lowenthal for Assembly
- Re-Elect Jerome Horton for Board of Equalization Dist. 4
- Re-Elect John Chiang for State Controller
- Re-Elect Julia Brownley for Assembly
- Re-Elect Warren Furutani for Assembly

We assisted in bringing new blood, as well as some not so new blood, to California politics:

- Jerry Brown for Governor
- Das Williams, Assembly District 35
- Kevin De Leon, Senate District 22

We participated in some not so successful campaigns:

- Helped coordinate funding for Bill Hedrick’s Campaign for Congressional District 44
- Contributed to Chris Parker (member of SEIU Local 721) for Board of Equalization District 2
- Supported Justin Blake (Palm Springs Unified School District Board of Education) for Senate District 37
- Contributed to Ted Lieu for Attorney General
- Contributed to Janice Hahn for Lt. Governor
- Donated to Nick Karno (member of SEIU Local 721) for Assembly District 53
- Donated to Reggie Jones Sawyer (member of SEIU Local 721) for Assembly District 47

We contributed to several Independent Expenditures:

- Coalition for a Responsible Government
- LA County Federation of Labor (PAC Funds)

We supported labor gatherings:

- Strengthening Our Lives dinner (SOL is a grassroots organization dedicated to building political power in working-class and immigrant communities.)
- UCLA Labor Banquet
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Labor Breakfast
- 6th annual Cesar Chavez Breakfast sponsored by the Latino and Latina Roundtable and LCLAA SGV-IE. This event is held annually to highlight leaders in the San Gabriel Valley and Inland Empire whose work demonstrates an embodies the values and examples of civil rights leader and United Farm Workers co-founder, Cesar E. Chavez. The Latino and Latina Roundtable and LCLAA SGV-IE have been strong supporters of SEIU Local 121RN through our organizing and contract campaigns at Pomona Valley Hospital Medical Center.

In total, Local 121RN contributed $113,025 toward state and local politics. Many of our political programs are funded by Committee on Political Education money, which is voluntarily donated by members. If you would like to contribute to COPE or sit on the Local 121RN COPE Committee, please contact Political Director Sonya Jimmons, MSW, at (213) 247-4585 or jimmonss@seiu121rn.org.

Members of the 121RN COPE Committee attended a Barbara Boxer fundraiser hosted by United States Rep. Judy Chu, D-CA on Oct. 10. From left: Nina Wells, RN, St. John’s Regional Medical Center, Sonya Jimmons, 121RN political director; Rep. Chu; Gayle Batiste, RN, 121RN president; and Barbara Washington-Knight, RN, Kaiser Moreno Valley Community Hospital.

- Dr. Ed Hernandez, O.D., Senate District 24
- Gil Cedillo, Assembly District 45
- Mike Gatto, Assembly District 43
- Dr. Richard Pan, Assembly District 5 (2/3rd plan)
- Ricardo Lara, Assembly District 50
- Tom Torlakson for State Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Dave Jones for Insurance Commissioner

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