



# The Flame

Lighting the Way for Quality Health Care

February 2014

## UNAP Holds Eighth Biennial Convention



Linda McDonald, RN  
President

On October 28<sup>th</sup> over 120 UNAP leaders in RI and Vermont gathered at the Westin Hotel. The State of The Union

address by UNAP President, Linda McDonald RN, focused on “UNAP Strong”. Where we are and where we need to go to prepare for a stronger future. President McDonald’s message is that The UNAP over 6,200 members strong will stand together. One Issue, One Contract, One campaign at a time. For the Strength of this Union and all Unions is solidarity. “As I have said before, *A Unions courage is built on hard times, if we stand together and show our employers we are united , we will come out of this time stronger and better prepared for better times.*” The President expressed her deep appreciation to the leaders of the locals , “the heart and soul of the UNAP who work tirelessly...to represent members and promote positive changes in the workplace.” A Leadership Training was held in the morning session focusing on the need for a strong Unit Rep Structure. Invited speaker was Bill Harty, from the

(continued from  
President’s column.)

AFT Learning Institute. The delegation enjoyed the exchange of information and ideas on how to strengthen Union power by discussing Levers of Power, Expanding Member Engagement and Developing Effective Workplace Leaders.

## Election Victory at Kent Hospital

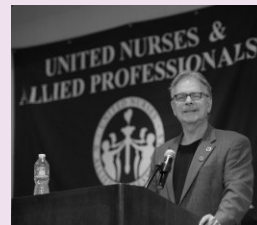
Story on page 3 of Flame.



## UNAP Eighth Biennial Convention Highlights



Vermonters Joyce Dion Vice President of UNAP and President of Local 5051.



Scott Malloy, Professor, URI and Labor Historian.



Sandy Grace, President of UNAP Local 5109.



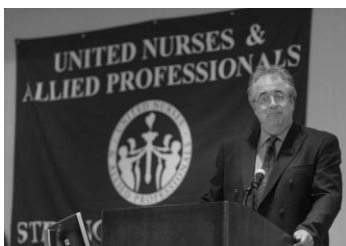
Delegates from Local 5110 Fatima Hospital



Delegates from Kent Hospital Local 5008



Rhode Island Hospital Local 5098 Delegates





**Brattleboro Retreat Reaches New Contract With Unorthodox Strategy**

In a remarkable turnaround, members at the Brattleboro Retreat negotiated a two year agreement that was characterized by an atmosphere of cooperation and good will. Recall that last year’s negotiations were marked by an extended period of regular picketing and acrimony. A key to the turn round was an agreement up front that the Employer would not propose any take

aways and that the Union and the Employer would represent themselves. The Union bargaining team was led by President Tom Flood. The Employer’s negotiating team was led by the Vice President of Human Resources. The new contract provides inroads on the issue of patient and staff safety, the Union’s top priority, and provides for modest increases in each year of the agreement.

**Who is the UNAP?**

The UNAP represents over 6,300 nurses, therapists, technologists, support staff and others who work at:

- Brattleboro Retreat (VT)
- Copley Hospital (VT)
- Fatima Hospital
- Health Care & Rehabilitation Services of SE Vermont
- Kent Hospital
- Landmark Medical Center
- Memorial Hospital
- Putnam School District (CT)
- Rehabilitation Hospital of RI
- Rhode Island Hospital
- RI Community Living & Support Services
- RI Dept of Human Services
- RI Veterans' Home
- URI, CCRI, RIC Health Services
- Seven Hills RI
- Visiting Nurse Home Care
- Westerly Hospital
- Youth Services (VT)
- Zambarano Hospital

**Copley Hospital Local 5109 Arbitrator Reverses Nurse’s Termination**

An arbitrator reinstated a long term registered nurse terminated by the hospital for an allegation of theft. The facts in the case were not in dispute. A nurse openly asked for and received supplies to obtain a blood and urine sample from a family member pursuant to a bona fide lab requisition. The hospital argued that the lab requisition was not authentic (even though the document had the hospital bar code on it) and that there was a standing policy prohibiting employees from taking the supplies in question. A crucial fact was that the supervisor engaged the nurse before she left the hospital with the supplies and asked what she was doing. The nurse offered a full explanation and left the hospital without warning from the supervisor. The nurse was reinstated with full back pay.

**UNAP Local 5082 Wins Battle Over Bumping Rights at Memorial Hospital of RI**

Since Memorial Hospital of RI (MHRI) affiliated with Care New England (CNE), Local 5082 has had its hands full. Most recently, the Local aggressively challenged an effort by MHRI and CNE to severely limit rights of senior employees to bump less senior employees in a layoff situation. In a nutshell, the job security of employees with as many as 30 years of seniority was jeopardized by MHRI and CNE’s effort to side step the collective bargaining agreement and decades of past practice. The Local President and Executive Board challenged MHRI and CNE publicly, sending a searing letter out to the full membership and a companion letter to the Vice President of HR at MHRI calling on management to reverse course. Management got the message and employee bumping rights have since been restored.

**Putnam School Nurses Gear Up For Contract Negotiations**

It’s nearly that time again for the Putnam school nurses and their Local to begin negotiations for a new contract

(UNAP Local 5202). The current agreement, a 3- year deal, expires at midnight on June 30, 2014. The nurses are in the process of putting together contract proposals and are looking to start negotiations in earnest in late February, early March.

**Clinicians at HCRS Negotiate Pay Raises in Wake of Legislative Victory in Vermont Statehouse**

UNAP Local 5051 is in the middle of negotiating yet another pay increase above and beyond what is called for in the collective bargaining agreement, this as a result of a recent win at the Vermont Statehouse. Last legislative session, the Local successfully lobbied a measure that requires the employer (HealthCare & Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont) to give clinicians a commensurate increase in compensation in the event of an increase in Medicaid reimbursement. The reimbursement increase amounted to approximately 3%. The negotiations are designed, therefore, to secure clinicians a commensurate increase in compensation.

**Nurses at Fatima Hospital Forge Partnership with California Based For Profit; Successfully Negotiate Two year deal**

Back in 2013, Local 5110 entered into talks with California based Prospect Medical Holdings (Prospect), for profit seeking to do a joint venture with CharterCARE Health Partners (CCHP), a not for profit system comprised of Roger Williams Medical Center and Our Lady of Fatima Hospital. Prospect and CCHP are currently seeking approval of the joint venture from the RI Attorney General and Department of Health. As a result of the talks, Prospect has agreed to recognize the UNAP as the representative of the nurses, to assume nearly all of the language in the current contract (which doesn’t expire until July 31, 2013), and has agreed to a 2 year successor agreement. The successor agreement provides the Fatima nurses with, among other things, job opportu

nities at Roger Williams that they did not previously have. In addition, their seniority and other core benefits will be fully recognized and portable should they move to Roger Williams as a result of any system integration. The parties have agreed that \$14 million will be put into the defined benefit pension plan which will bring the fund balance up to appropriate levels. And while the nurses did agree to a freeze of the defined benefit pension plan, that plan will be replaced with a competitive defined contribution retirement plan. Prospect has agreed to maintain medical/dental insurance benefits at current levels for the life of the 2 year successor agreement. Prospect has also agreed to increase pay by 2% per year, as well as pay step and longevity increases.

### **Rhode Island Hospital**

Local 5098 led by President Helene Macedo and with the determined effort of Liaisons Norman Farias, Isma Gueye, Sue Sweeney, and Bill Deware as well as a growing activism by some unit reps and executive board members have been enforcing the rights and benefits of members. The leadership has been working with the hospital to continue bargaining unit status of members and services when opening outpatient clinics and services in various community settings. The local currently has six arbitrations pending hearings over the next three months for contract violations. While the hospital has increased copay costs and restricted access to care for non-union employees there has been no increase in co-payments or access to UNAP members as a result of negotiated contract language. For members interested in becoming active in the union, there is a scheduled training session at the UNAP office on April 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **State Nurses**

Local 5019 led by President Cindy Lussier have been busy representing members who, the Union believes have been wrongly disciplined. Of particular note is the length of time it takes for the State to

### **UNAP in the Spotlight: Westerly Hospital UNAP President Jackie Desmond**

I have worked at the Westerly Hospital for 34 years. Originally on the Surgical Unit and then on the OB/GYN Unit. Unfortunately, my beloved Obstetrical Unit closed during all the turmoil of the receivership and buyout by Laurence & Memorial Hospital. Presently, I am working on the Ambulatory Care/Endoscopy Unit.



My involvement with the union started in my backyard in 1986. The time was perfect for organizing, staffing levels were dangerous, there was no workplace fairness, and we had the lowest pay rates in the state. I had the energy and vision that I could make our hospital better for both patients and employees. I have been proud and happy to serve as The Westerly Hospital's first Vice President of RN's since 1986.

More recently I was elected to follow in the footsteps of Jan Salsich, the first President of Local 5075. Serving as President during our receivership and transition to a new employer has been a challenge. Safe staffing and workplace fairness are issues that continue to be relevant, especially in the present health care environment. My years as a Rep for UNAP have been very rewarding. I have met the greatest people on Earth and have learned so much from the UNAP staff as well from my own members. I feel privileged and blessed to have had this most rewarding opportunity. My children grew up with UNAP and learned the value of being an activist and standing up for what is important and I believe they will pass those values on to my grandchildren!

conduct and complete an investigation and come to a decision while employees are off the job on paid leave.

### **Landmark/Rehab Local 5067**

On January 1, 2014 Prime Healthcare became the first "For Profit" healthcare organization in the State of Rhode Island when it closed on the purchase of Landmark Hospital and Rehab Medical Center. Since that time, there have been some growing pains at those two hospitals as Prime attempts to enforce practices and policies that have not been negotiated nor agreed to by the Union. The Union has been hard at work filing grievances and working behind the scenes to reverse these actions on the part of Prime, and ensure that the employees receive all the benefits due to them under the contract.

### **Westerly Hospital Locals 5014 & 5075**

The contract expiration date is soon approaching for these two Locals and we are beginning the process of readying for bargaining. Because of their prior receivership status, these Locals have gone without Steps or any increase for over three years, so we are

looking forward to getting back to the negotiating table to regain some benefits for these employees!

### **UNAP College Scholarships**

[See the back page of the Flame](#)

## **UNAP Organizing**

### **Kent Local 5008 Welcomes CNAs and Techs to Union**

Last February members of the Kent Executive Board decided that building their union was a top priority. The union, composed of registered nurses provided outreach and contact in the ranks of their non-union colleagues. After many months of hard work it became clear that a majority of CNAs, OR techs, Orderlies, ED techs and several other positions wanted to join their union. To the Hospital administration's credit, a neutrality agreement was reached providing for a prompt election with an agreement that neither the Union nor the administration would disparage one another in the run up to the election. The combined vote was 105 to 35.

## UNAP College Scholarships

Applications are currently being accepted by the Joan Medberry Memorial UNAP Scholarship Fund. Applicants must be a UNAP member or a child (under 25 years of age) of a UNAP member, and must be enrolled at least half-time in a degree-granting institution. Rhode Island Hospital UNAP members and/or dependent children are also eligible to apply for the Susan McGuire-Pizzo Memorial Scholarship. Applications must be received by March 28, 2014 at 4:00 p.m. For an application and more information call the office at (401) 831-3647, or go to: [unap.org/scholarships](http://unap.org/scholarships)

### Save the Date

#### UNAP Steward Training

Tuesday, April 1, 2014 10am-1pm or 5pm-8pm at the UNAP Office  
**REGISTRATION REQUIRED** by Friday, March 28 Tell us which SESSION you will attend, your email address & cell phone. Food & beverage provided. Contact options: -  
Bwheeler@unap.org  
-UNAP Office 401-831-3647  
-UNAP President of your local

### UNAP is giving away a **FREE** iPad mini

*A postcard will be arriving in your mail soon!*



Simply submit the survey, your email address & mail the postcard back to us. No postage necessary. You will be entered into our drawing. Submission must be received by **March 15**.

## UNAP On-Line



You can now keep up with the latest from the UNAP from the comfort of your own computer by going to the

following on-line sources:

### UNAP Website

The UNAP website features news and activities throughout the UNAP, legislative and health policy developments, important links, contact information, and much more.

([www.unap.org](http://www.unap.org))

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