



The Flame

Lighting the Way for Quality Health Care

June, 2013

Linda McDonald,
RN President



The Power of a Union

It is easy to belong to a Union in good economic times. Great strides are made in wages, benefits and working conditions. But - The Heart, Soul and Strength of a Union is developed during hard times. A Union is not just your contract.

A Union is How We Stand Together.

It is during these very difficult times that being

proud of belonging to a Union and understanding the importance of the collective voice is so important. The very nature of the right to belong to a Union and the right to use that collective voice will make us stronger.

All UNAP locals are feeling the sting of hard economic times. Difficult and painful decisions are being made at negotiations and at the workplace. Unions were formed during hard economic times. Those courageous workers recognized that a single voice is not heard like a collective voice. Difficult economic times always turn around. 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.

UNAP Convention

**Monday, October 28, 2013, 1:15pm - 5:15pm
Omni Hotel, One West Exchange Street,
Providence**

What does it mean to be a convention delegate?

UNAP Convention delegates are responsible for setting policy and goals for the UNAP for the next two years. Convention delegates will elect UNAP officers, consider proposed resolutions and constitutional amendments, hear reports from the UNAP and affiliated locals. We will also hear from invited guests on topics such as healthcare reform, tax equity, and the value of unions. Delegates may be asked to serve on Convention Committees.

How to become a convention delegate.

If you are interested in being a delegate, please notify your UNAP Local Union by email, phone, or US mail of your desire to be a UNAP Convention delegate.



**More information regarding the UNAP Convention and how to be a delegate will be sent out in August.*

UNAP Holds Spring CEU Program

On May 15 over 120 UNAP members attended a CEU program "Compassion Fatigue" presented by Dr. Donna McCarten White. She described the occupational signs of stress, the stages and negative factors leading to burnout and healthy strategies for survival. Donna's sense of humor provided for lots of stress relieving laughter from the audience as members listened to her anecdotes. We hope to see Donna again next May for our spring program.



(Donna White engages the audience.)

2013 UNAP Scholarship Winners

Congratulations to Stephanie Platzer, who attends The Berkley College of Music with the goal of becoming a board certified music therapist. Stephanie's Mom is an RN employed at RIH. Elena Wostrel, a high school senior, is going to pursue a career as a clinical psychologist. She is a dedicated student, belonging to the National Honor Society and a dedicated athlete. Her Mom is an RN at Westerly Hospital. Laurie Deruosi is an RN who has



worked at RIH for many years and is enrolled at URI in the Family Nurse Practitioner program. To read their essays go to the UNAP website at UNAP.org

(In photo are Stephanie Platzer, UNAP President Linda McDonald and Laurie Deruosi)



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

Landmark Medical Center and RHRI Local 5067

Members in this Local persevere while struggles continue at Landmark, as it approaches five years in receivership. The fortitude and loyalty of these members, with Jan Peso at the forefront, is inspiring. The potential purchase of this Hospital by Prime Healthcare is still ongoing, and is currently in the hands of the Rhode Island State Regulators who are evaluating whether to approve the sale. We hope to have a decision shortly.

New Agreement for Copley Hospital Members

Copley Hospital registered nurses just completed negotiations for a new three year agreement. The bargaining team did an excellent job protecting benefits (no changes) and defending important work rules that came under attack such as guaranteeing members their weekly standard hours regardless of patient census. Wage increases are 2% in the second and third year of the Agreement. Union President Sandy Grace said "Our top priorities in these negotiations were to protect our benefits, aggressively defend our rights under the contract and to provide the maximum amount of stability and certainty for our members in these truly uncertain times. While we all would like larger pay raises, we achieved our most important goals."

Fight for Safety and Safe Staffing Continue at the Brattleboro Retreat

Union members at the Brattleboro Retreat waged a successful bruising battle with the administration over patient and staff safety and proper staffing levels this past autumn that included repeated informational picketing. After protecting contract mandated staffing levels from the administration's attempt to cut staff, compromise safety and reduce quality programming, a ten month contract was agreed upon. The fight for safety and staffing has continued. Multiple grievances have been filed and the Union prepares once again to mount a campaign in the community calling attention to an administration that is incapable of providing a safe work place for staff and patients alike.

Seven Hills Rhode Island

UNAP Local 5068 at Seven Hills Rhode Island will return to the bargaining table this month to negotiate a successor contract in very difficult economic times. The

union continues to defend the membership by filing grievances and addressing workplace issues in the Labor Management Committee.

UNAP Local 5082 Negotiates New 3-Year Contract With Memorial Hospital of RI (MHRI)

UNAP, Local 5082, has settled on a new contract with MHRI. The contract is for 3 years and calls for 2% pay increases each year of the contract. Medical and dental insurance benefits will remain unchanged for the life of the agreement. In addition, the Local made improvements in tuition assistance, preceptor pay, personal days and leaves of absence benefits. The Local also successfully negotiated a successors and assigns clause, which requires that any buyer of MHRI honor the contract as a condition of sale. Simultaneously, MHRI is in the process of affiliating with Care New England (CNE). The process is under review by the Office of the Attorney General and the Department of Health, and is expected to go through smoothly, without delay. The Local did agree to freeze the defined benefit pension plan and replace it with a defined contribution plan in negotiations with MHRI. However, the Local also reached an agreement with CNE to move into their more generous plan after the MHRI/CNE affiliation goes through.

Attorney General and Department of Health Continue to Review Application of Prime Health Care Services' Application to Purchase Landmark Medical Center (LMC) and the Rehabilitation Hospital of RI (RHRI)

When Steward Health Care System announced that it was walking away from a deal to purchase LMC and RHRI last fall, the Northern RI UNAP, Local 5067, quickly moved to negotiate a contract with a new buyer, Prime Health Care Services,

a system out of California. The contract goes into effect when the deal closes, which is after the State's regulators (the Office of Attorney General and the Department of Health) approve the deal. So far, the application Prime has filed with the regulators has not yet been deemed complete. The review process can take up to 4 months after that.

UNAP Local 5051 Secures Big Pay Raises in Contract Re-Opener and Wins Big Legislative Victory in Vermont Statehouse for Additional Raises

Recently, UNAP Local 5051 had a wage re-opener with Health Care & Rehabilitation Services of Southeastern Vermont (HCRS). After years of trying to convince HCRS that it had to improve wages in order to recruit and retain the most highly qualified clinicians, HCRS finally came around. As a result of the re-opener, many clinicians will receive increases of several dollars an hour. In addition, the Local successfully completed a lobbying effort in the Vermont Statehouse this legislative session to secure funding through the State budgetary process that could result in another 3% in pay increases!

Local 5019 State Nurses Union

The Rhode Island Department of Labor issued a decision in favor of a union member who works at Zambarano Hospital. She was forced to work overtime several times. The ruling found the state in violation of Rhode Island General Laws prohibiting the requirement of nurses to work overtime in hospitals. The nurse was represented by the union at the hearing. Contract negotiations continue.

Rhode Island Hospital Union Protecting Their Members/ Enforcing Their Contract

UNAP in the Spotlight



Lynn Blais, RN, UNAP Vice President

I was born and raised union. I grew up watching my father as President of his local union and my mother who actively organized at her place of work at the Medical Bureau. In 1984 I graduated from St. Joseph Hospital School of Nursing, became an RN, and worked at St. Joseph Hospital. I became involved with the local union at St. Joseph Hospital. In 1986 I became President of the local and carried us through several successful negotiations and unprecedented pay raises.

In 1989 I left hospital nursing and became a Project Staff person for the AFT to work on organizing campaigns for healthcare workers. After 2 years I returned to nursing at Our Lady of Fatima Hospital and in 1996 I was active in the successful organizing campaign with the AFT. I have been President of Fatima UNAP Local 5110 ever since.

On a regional level I was one of the four originators of the movement to form the UNAP, and became the founding President of the UNAP. After stepping down from the role of President I have remained an active Vice President. Being part of the UNAP has been an extraordinary experience that has taught my children the value of being an activist and standing up for what is right and just.

The union won two important grievances including a termination and a suspension resulting in large back pay awards to two union members. The union also filed a grievance on behalf of case managers when the hospital reorganized the department in violation of the contract. And a class action grievance was filed on behalf of employees overcharged for healthcare benefits. Upcoming arbitrations include a grievance filed for benefits for employees returning to Local 5098 from non union positions and a class action grievance for Diagnostic Imaging over the right to pick up extra hours.

Kent Hospital

The Executive Board of Kent Hospital Local 5008 has made a commitment to reach out to their non-union coworkers to bring the benefits of union membership to them while at the same time strengthening their own union. In the initial stages of organizing, the

members did an excellent job introducing UNAP staff to interested non-union employees. At this time both the nurses and an emerging organizing committee composed of interested non-union colleagues are setting up meetings and building the momentum for a successful campaign.

Fatima Hospital

Things are running smoothly at Fatima. President Lynn Blais is aptly handling all the normal day-to-day issues that arise and keeping all major issues at bay.

Westerly Locals 5104 and 5075

Much has happened in these two locals since our last Flame edition. Effective June 1, 2013 L&M Healthcare is the new official owner of the Westerly Hospital. In general, the transition process is moving along well thanks to the tireless efforts of both Local Presidents, Jackie Desmond and Judy Lawrence. Everyone is hopeful that the new employer will be a favorable one. Unfortunately, the transition did come with some struggles and there

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(around the locals continued)

have been approximately 17 layoffs in Local 5104. Members' rights in this process were enforced, through contractual bumping language. Severance packages for those that chose to accept the layoff were negotiated. Another unfortunate consequence of the purchase of the Westerly Hospital by L&M Healthcare was the closing of the Maternity Department on June 3, 2013. All are sad to see it go.

Visiting Nurse Homecare Members Prove the Value of Solidarity

Demonstrating the core value and benefit of having a union, solidarity, three different bargaining units at the VNS stuck together and successfully negotiated a two year agreement. The negotiations were noteworthy in that newly organized clerical workers had to bargain their first contract while the nurses and home care aides were negotiating successor agreements. Some

of the issues were different between the three groups but all three bargaining units refused to settle their issues without the others. All three bargaining units voted together to approve the new contracts by a unanimous vote.



Visiting Nurse Home Care Employees meet to discuss and vote on their contract.

UNAP Children's Hospital Fundraiser Blasts past their \$5,000 goal!

Our May 30th "Fundraiser Party and Penny Social" to benefit the Hasbro pediatric patients was a huge success, netting \$11,000! Providence's Vanity Restaurant and Lounge was the perfect venue for a gathering of UNAP friends and family, union supporters and politicians. Thank

you to all who attended, our sponsors, local vendors and to all who created and donated beautiful baskets. Because of your support, we will continue to provide "the extras" for our pediatric patients. www.unap.org/childfund.

*****Save the date*****

**Leadership Retreat and 8th Biennial UNAP Convention
Monday, October 28, 2013 @
The Omni Hotel, Providence**

***Leadership Retreat 8:30am - 12:15pm**

***Lunch 12:15pm**

***Convention 1:15pm - 5:15pm**

***Reception following convention**

Note: More information about the UNAP Leadership Retreat and Convention will be sent out in August. We hope you will attend both the Leadership Retreat and The Convention.

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