

July 2006

**WSNA Local Unit  
KITTTITAS VALLEY  
COMMUNITY HOSPITAL**

**In This Issue**

- Current Contract
- Upcoming Events
- Local Unit Funds
- UAN Leadership Chicago
- Victory for Nurses
- Safe Patient Handling
- Kentucky River
- Virginia Mason Update

**Local Unit Officers**

Vonda Jennings	Chair
Paul Kelly	Co-Chair
Judi Lyons	Secretary/ Treasurer
Judith Cullinane	Grievance
Kathy Honeysett	Membership

**WSNA Nurse  
Representative**

Carmen Garrison  
(206) 575-7979, Ext 3113  
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**WSNA Web Site**

www.wsna.org

*The Oldest and Largest Union  
Representing Registered Nurses  
in Washington State*



**WASHINGTON STATE  
NURSES ASSOCIATION**

**Current Contract**

Need a copy of your current contract? The current contract is in CD form. Contact Judi Lyons for a copy. You can also down load a copy from <http://www.wsna.org/snas/wa/localunits/kittitas.asp>



Have a change of name, address, or phone number? Complete a yellow change of information card and send it to WSNA as soon as possible.

WSNA applications are also available at the WSNA web site (wsna.org).

**Upcoming Events**

**Conference Committee Meeting** – Contact Vonda Jennings if you have anything you need to have discussed. The purpose of the Conference Committee is to foster problem solving pertaining to the contract through improved communications between nursing management and the nursing staff. The function of this committee is limited to an advisory capacity. The Conference Committee shall be convened at the request and mutual agreement of the Nursing Administrator or Local Unit Chairperson no later than ten (10) calendar days after either party request a meeting. The Conference Committee shall meet at least quarterly.

**Nurse Practice** – This committee meets to discuss practice issues as they relate to nurses and their patient care. Contact Vonda Jennings if you have any practice issues you would like to have discussed at the next meeting.

**Local Unit Meetings** – We are here for you! Please try to attend one of these local unit meetings:

<b>Place:</b>	Four Square Church 906 E. Mountain View Ellensburg, WA
<b>Date:</b>	July 25, 2006
<b>Times:</b>	8:00 AM - 10:00 AM 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM
<b>Agenda:</b>	Workplace Environment Staffing/Scheduling issues New Policies

**This is your opportunity to voice your concerns!**

Carmen Garrison, WSNA Nurse Representative, will also be available during lunch hours (11:30 AM – 1:30 PM) in the KVCH cafeteria to meet with nurses who are working.

## Lake Chelan Leadership Conference

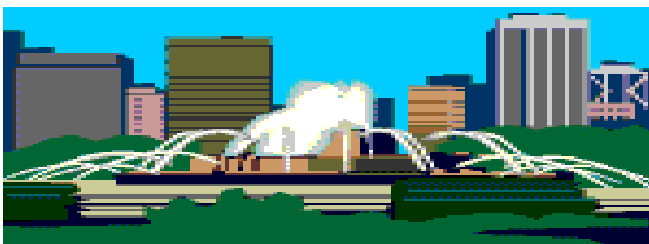


### Local Unit Funds:

A portion of your WSNA dues goes back to your local unit. This money can be spent to send members to Leadership Conference at Lake Chelan or other WSNA approved activities. Money can be used for local unit meeting expenses. Vouchers for reimbursement must have the signature of two local officers. Specific guidelines are provided by the Cabinet of General Welfare of WSNA.

### UAN Leadership Chicago

If you have never been to a UAN conference and would be interested, please contact Carmen Garrison regarding your interest.



## Victory for Nurses in Rest Break Arbitration Decision Against Sacred Heart Medical Center

Spokane, WA, 6/1/2006

The Washington State Nurses Association (WSNA), who represents nearly 1,300 registered nurses at Sacred Heart Medical Center (SHMC), won an arbitration decision against SHMC for not providing 15 minute rest breaks for the nurses. The collective bargaining agreement clearly provides for 15 minutes of rest every four hours. Due to the recent restructure and inadequate staffing at SHMC, the nurses have not been getting their rest breaks.

According to the arbitrator's decision, the collective bargaining contract "provides that 15-minute breaks *shall* be provided during each four-hour work period. The arbitrator is at a loss to see how that language could be any clearer. The word *shall* is mandatory; it allows for no managerial discretion whatsoever."

In addition, the decision stated that "in order to provide quality care, the nurses need occasional rest breaks that allow them to attend to personal needs. Simply drinking a glass of water or quickly using the bathroom does not suffice."

The decision orders SHMC to:

1. Comply with the collective bargaining agreement and provide the required 15 minute breaks for the nurses.
2. Compensate each RN for missed breaks since August 3, 2004.

"We are thrilled with the decision because this is a patient safety issue. Nurses must have the opportunity to take a break to refresh ourselves in order to provide the quality care that our patients deserve," said Marty Avey, RN, Local Unit Chair.

*"The average nurse in Washington is in her late 40's and we simply cannot work 8 or 12 hours without a rest break and practice safely. This decision sends a clear message to employers that they must provide for adequate staffing in order to ensure that nurses are able to take the rest breaks,"* said Barbara E. Frye, RN, WSNA Director of Labor Relations.

# New Legislation for Safe Patient Handling - Nurses Celebrate Passage of Safe Patient Lifting Law

March 8, 2006

The Washington State Legislature today passed legislation (House Bill 1672) to promote safe patient handling and prevent workplace injuries amongst registered nurses and health care workers. This is a top legislative priority for the Washington State Nurses Association (WSNA) this session, and the victory is the result of efforts made by the Washington State Nurses Association (WSNA) along with other unions and hospitals. The Washington Senate voted 48-0 today to approve the bill. Yesterday, the Washington House of Representatives voted 85-13 in favor of the legislation.



“Registered Nurses throughout the State applaud the passage of this critical legislation and are celebrating this key victory which

will reduce musculoskeletal injury for nurses at the bedside,” said Kim Armstrong, BSN, RN, President of WSNA. Health care workers are the leader among all industries in Washington State for musculoskeletal disorders, with injury rates higher than other dangerous occupations such as construction, agriculture, manufacturing and transportation. The manual moving, transferring and re-positioning of patients is the primary cause for the high rates of back injury in the health care industry.

“Health care lags way behind many other industries as they have mechanized to remove the causes of acute and chronic back injuries. These injuries not only lead to higher worker compensation and insurance costs, but also drive many registered nurses out of direct patient care. We look forward to working with the hospitals in the implementation of this law,” added Judy Huntington, MN, RN, Executive Director of WSNA.

This legislation will promote safe patient handling and reduce injuries amongst health care workers by establishing a Safe Patient Handling Committee (with at least half of the Committee be direct care providers) and implement a safe patient handling policy to prevent musculoskeletal disorders among health care workers and injuries to patients. The law will also mandate hospitals to acquire the much needed lifting equipment and provide staff training.

## Kentucky River

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

**Kentucky River.** If the name doesn't worry you, you need to know more about the latest effort to take away the right to have a voice at work. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is considering cases which could ultimately deprive millions of workers in this country of the right to have any union representation.

There are over 130 cases pending before the NLRB which represent an effort to eliminate the right to have a union for, potentially, at least a couple of millions workers in the private sector. How - By redefining large number of professional and higher-level workers as “supervisors,” removing them from federal labor laws.

Right now the focus is on nurses. The NLRB will be ruling on three cases within the near future that could define all hospital RNs as “supervisors.” That alone could **take away the right to choose union representation from 300,000 nurses.**

But this isn't just about nurses. If big business – and make no mistake, hospitals today ARE big businesses – can eliminate union rights for nurses, it's easy to see where they'll go next. **Foremen in the building trades** are an obvious target; and, in fact, the NLRB could take the position that **all journeymen in the building trades** are “supervisors,” on the grounds that they “supervise” apprentices. **ILWU-represented “walking**

bosses” would have targets on their backs in the next round of negotiations. **Working foremen in factories and warehouses**, who spend most of their time doing the same work as others but have limited supervisory authority, could also lose their rights.

*This is not just about the rights of nurses. And it is not about whether you personally think nurses – or anyone else – should choose to have a union. These cases are about whether workers in this country have the right to choose – whether we will be “allowed” to have unions at all.*

### A little history

Sixty years ago, the Taft-Hartley Act dealt working people in this country a blow from which we’ve never recovered. Twenty-five years ago, Ronald Reagan used the smashing of the PATCO air traffic controllers to send a signal to big business that it was open season on workers.



But today we’re better prepared, and we’re fighting back.

The anti-worker has already reversed itself, ruling that graduate student workers in the private sector have no right to union representation. The administration stripped 165,000 federal workers of union rights, transferring them to the Department of Homeland Security. Why? Retired Admiral James Loy, Undersecretary of Transportation for security, in signing an order denying collective bargaining rights to airport screeners under the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), declared that **“mandatory collective bargaining is not compatible with the flexibility required to wage the war against terrorism.”**

Then the administration moved to eliminate union and civil service protections for 750,000 civilian workers in the Department of Defense through the National Security Personnel System (NSPS). And on tap is the Working for America Act, which would effectively end meaningful union representation for the rest of the federal workforce, removing several million workers from any real collective bargaining.

The courts have struck down many of the worst elements of NSPS. Washington’s own Rep. Jay Inslee got the US House to adopt by voice vote a provision denying funding to any of the illegal portions of NSPS. We’re winning that battle.

*The Kentucky River cases represent just the most recent strategy by employers to eliminate unions altogether. They are a threat to basic freedoms for all of us.*

## What you can do?

Tell your member of Congress to demand that the National Labor Relations Board provide for oral argument on this case. The NLRB must understand that we won’t give up our rights, and that we insist on being heard. You can do this easily by going to [http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/kentuckyriver\\_cases](http://www.unionvoice.org/campaign/kentuckyriver_cases).

**Barbara E. Frye**  
**Director of Labor Relations, WSNA**

## **NEWS FLASH**

### **Virginia Mason Update-Mandatory Mask Hearings**

*July 11, 2006*



The pressure was on. A rally held in front of Virginia Mason on July 10, 2006 was inspiring. Members of all types of unions united to send a message to Virginia Mason and the National Labor Board. Hundreds of union members united in one voice while administrative heads at Virginia Mason watched from across the street. The message? Nurses and other professionals presently covered by union contracts do not hire and fire. They are not supervisors. The retaliatory mandatory mask move by the Virginia Mason administration has come to a final curve in the road. A motion to take the word “employee” and replace with “RN” was accepted by the Judge hearing the case. This took the supervisory issue out and the verbiage was expunged from the record. This is a huge victory for the nurses at Virginia Mason and WSNA. Pictures from the rally can be viewed at <http://wsna.org/snas/wa/events/2006/vmrally/>