

WSNA/SPOKANE VISITING NURSES

Washington State Nurses Association

LOCAL UNIT NEWSLETTER

December 2005

Local Unit Officers

Chair:	Carolyn Chandler
Vice Chair:	Gail Vance
Secretary:	Carey Smith
Treasurer:	Jody Howerton
Grievance Officer:	Carol Puetz
Member at Large:	Vacant

WSNA Nursing Representative:

Deborah Bessmer, BSN, RN

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dbessmer@wsna.org

Local Unit Organization:

- Chair/Vice Chair are co-coordinators of the local unit.
- Secretary keeps the records; communication.
- Treasurer monitors local unit funds.
- Grievance Officers enforce the contract.
- Nurse Rep-WSNA staff assigned to educate, advise, represent and advocate for the local unit.

Weingarten Rules



Under the Supreme Court's Weingarten decision, when an investigatory interview occurs, the

following rules apply:

- **Rule 1:** The employee must make a clear request for union representation

before or during the interview. The employee cannot be punished for making this request.

- **Rule 2:** After the employee makes the request, the employer must choose among three options. The employer must either:
 - a. Grant the request and delay questioning until the union representative arrives and has a chance to consult privately with the employee; or
 - b. Deny the request and end the interview immediately; or
 - c. Give the employee a choice of:
 - 1) having the interview without representation, or
 - 2) ending the interview.
- **Rule 3:** If the employer denies the request for union representation and continues to ask questions, it commits an unfair labor practice and the employee has a right to refuse to answer. The employer may not discipline the employee for such a refusal.

Contract Negotiation Preparation Begins!

Negotiation preparation has started. Your negotiation team consists of Carolyn Chandler, Gail Vance, Carey Smith, Jody Howerton, and Carol Puetz. Please give them all your help and support through this process. An initial



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survey has gone out, please fill this out and return it. This is your contract; your input is vital.

To do list:

- ✓ **Read** - Be informed: post cards, newsletters, ANA, UAN, WSNA web site, Washington Nurse, and American Nurse.
- ✓ **Attend** educational offerings - Bring a friend.
- ✓ **Communicate** your concerns - give us input.
- ✓ **Get involved!** There is a place for everyone.
- ✓ **Believe!!!**

DUES, DUES, AND MORE DUES!!! WHERE DOES MY DUES MONEY GO AND WHAT'S IT DOING FOR ME?



Always the question and a good and fair question it is. In this article, I would like to help you understand more clearly where and how your dues money is used. First, it is important to note that 4% of your dues come back to you in what is called your local unit funds. WSNA is the only union that I'm aware of that does this. Each facility represented by WSNA has a local unit fund, and that money is managed by your local unit officers and is used for the local unit. A few examples would be:

1. Some mailing costs such as newsletters and postcards announcing meetings, classes, etc.
2. Nurses Week - Your local unit officers decide how to best use the money to celebrate nurses.

3. Meetings or classes - Provides food and drinks when we have these activities.
4. Educational opportunities - Usually used by your local unit officers and unit representatives to attend WSNA, ANA and UAN sponsored events.

The other 96% of your dues is divided in many directions. First, as a member of WSNA, you also are a member of ANA (American Nurses Association) and a fee is paid to this organization. ANA is the national division of your professional association and your dues help support their work. One of the important things ANA does is to provide research on various issues affecting nursing today. An example would be studies done on the effects of nurse fatigue created by working 12-hour shifts or overtime and the increased potential for medication errors. ANA also lobbies the Federal Government to protect the rights and safety of patients and nurses. An example of this would be regulations put in place to prevent needle stick injuries. Your hospital did not provide a needleless system out of the goodness of their heart. I can only begin to tell you of all the work ANA does. For more detailed information, please go to their website www.ana.org and learn how you could be involved.

Being a member of WSNA also makes you a member of UAN (United American Nurses). This is your national union, which is the largest national union of RNs in America, and a fee is also paid to this organization. UAN represents over 100,000 nurses nationally and together with all those voices works towards common goals, patient safety, better wages and working conditions. In unison with your state association and the AFL-CIO, the UAN works to organize nurses so that our voices can be heard louder and stronger. Just imagine how strong we could be if every nurse in America belonged

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and participated in some small way. Please visit their web site at www.nursingworld.org/uan to learn more.

A third fee is paid to your District Nurses Association. Districts support nursing in their own community by providing scholarships and develop special interest groups. Each district sets its own dues and as a courtesy, we collect that for them. If you are not aware of your district activities, give us a call and we can put you in touch with them. This is another opportunity for nurses to actively participate.

The remainder of your dues goes to support WSNA. It pays the wages of the attorneys who, with your help and input, negotiate your contract and deal with contract maintenance through the arbitration process. A recent example of this is the Virginia Mason Flu Shot arbitration that has been in the news. WSNA fought for and won the right for nurses to keep their jobs at Virginia Mason. This decision affects all nurses, even nationally. WSNA lobbies in the state government for nursing concerns, such as the mandatory overtime law. Your dues also pay my wages, and I am always available to you for help in enforcing your contract, answering your questions or helping you with any problems or concerns. I can only scratch the surface when talking about all the services that, together with your voice and participation, we can and do provide for nurses. Please visit the website www.wsna.org, call me at (206) 575-7979 ext. 3112 or come to our office at 575 Andover Park W, Seattle WA for a tour. You are always welcome.

Now, let's talk about those dues increases. Unlike most other unions, each member of WSNA throughout the state has an opportunity to vote for or against all increases in your dues. Each quarter, (April, July, October, and January) you receive a

publication called the Washington Nurse. In October of 2002, January 2003 and April of 2003, the Washington Nurse published an article explaining the process of dues increases that was to be voted on by the membership. Along with the articles, many informational forums were held throughout the state for nurses to attend and hear this information. In May of 2003, a ballot was sent to all members to vote for or against the dues increase proposal. The ballots were counted in June, the measure passed overwhelmingly and the process was put in place. What is the process? Each year, all the wages at the Step 5 level for each bargaining unit are added together, averaged and a percentage of that amount is what the WSNA base dues will be. Add to that the ANA, UAN and District amounts we collect and pay to them and you have the total dues package. Remember YOU are WSNA and YOUR participation matters. I work for WSNA, but my union is the Teamsters. As a member of the Teamsters, I can tell you I pay over seventy dollars a month to belong. Is it worth it? YOU BET! Not because we have work issues, but because I believe belonging to a union is the most effective means of having a voice regarding my working conditions. Also, I believe in supporting labor as a whole, and we are all labor whether we are educated in a particular profession or not.

We are responsible to you, our members, for the care and stewardship of your dues money. The Board of Directors, elected by you, has fiduciary responsibility for the entire Association. The Board also hires the Executive Director, currently Judy Huntington. Elected officers decide the direction of the Association with input, both directly and indirectly, for the entire membership. It is the responsibility of the membership to actively participate.

In your last newsletter I wrote about participation and how that might look, for each person it could be different.

WSNA depends on its members input to drive the direction your Professional Association will take.

It doesn't cost to be a union member – it pays!

UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

**Monday,
January 30th, 2006**

Nurse Legislative Day

Join hundreds of nurses and nursing students from around the state. It's an energizing, fun-filled day. Featuring Keynote Speaker Governor Christine Gregoire. For more information, event agenda, and registration form, visit wsna.org

Have you moved or changed your FTE?

Membership Reminder

*It is the responsibility of each nurse to notify the Washington State Nurses Association of any change in work status which may include but are not limited to: name, address, phone number, FTE increase or decrease, leave of absence, medical leave, maternity leave, leaving or joining a bargaining unit. This change must be done in writing either by using a **Change of Information Card** or sending an email to wsna@wsna.org.*

*The Cabinet on Economic and General Welfare (E&GW) policy states, when a nurse is on an unpaid leave of absence, the dues are adjusted to the Reduced Membership Category during the unpaid Leave of Absence period. The accumulated dues payment is to begin within 90 day of return to work. The nurse will have up to twelve months to complete payment of these dues. **It is the responsibility of the nurse to notify WSNA of this change in work status.***