

**In This Issue**

- ◆ Parting News
- ◆ Dues, Dues and More Dues!
- ◆ What Does WSNA Do?
- ◆ Victories Won
- ◆ Assignment Despite Objective Class
- ◆ Upcoming Events and Meetings
- ◆ Nurses Celebrate Passage of Safe Patient Lifting Law

**WSNA Local Unit  
Yakima Regional Hospital**

**Local Unit Officers**

Brad Trisler	Co-Chair
Lori Bethay	Co-Chair
Julia Barcott	Vice Co-Chair
Pamela Rimel	Secretary/Treasurer
Anne Whitley	Grievance
Debra Corning	Grievance

**WSNA Nurse Representative**

Hanna Welander  
1-800-231-8482, Ext. 3035  
[hwelander@wsna.org](mailto:hwelander@wsna.org)  
and

Emery Davenport  
1-800-231-8482, Ext. 3115  
[edavenport@wsna.org](mailto:edavenport@wsna.org)

**WSNA Web Site**

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

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



***From the Desk of . . . . .***

***Carmen S. Garrison, RN***

***Outgoing Local Unit Secretary***

**Parting News**

As many of you already know, I resigned my positions as Admitting Nurse and Local Unit Secretary recently. I have accepted a position with WSNA as a Nurse Representative. My last working day at Regional Medical Center was March 15, 2006. I could not help feeling a pang of sadness as the day progressed. We have come through many rough times together. However, I am excited about the opportunity to advocate for Nurses as a regional representative for WSNA and hope to be a positive influence for the profession of nursing in this region and state.

Most of my time at Regional Medical Center and Providence hospital was spent working the night shift in the Emergency Department (ED). We went through the change of ownership, the ED reconstruction, transition from hand to computer charting, the exit of the ED physicians, a decrease in resources (ancillary departments and staff), and changes in administration. I will always feel a kindred spirit with my colleagues with whom I shared that time. While we will not be working together on a daily basis, I hope to stay in touch with those contemporaries with whom I have become so close.

The short time I spent as Admission Nurse was very enjoyable. I loved meeting the Nurses and ancillary staff members throughout the hospital. Together, we were a team, prioritizing the needs of our patients and their families and loved ones. Whether the meetings were casual or intense, I learned to value each of you and the expertise you bring to your area of work.

I really enjoyed my role as Secretary of the Local Unit. We have a fantastic group of dedicated officers. While I was not involved in the contract negotiations, as that was prior to my election, I was involved with the collaborative effort and emergency meetings to discuss staffing issues and concerns with Tim Trotter, the former CEO of Regional Hospital. Many of the improvements in staffing were a direct result of those meetings. I was also present during the recent arbitration of our grievance regarding missed rest periods. I was one of the Nurses who testified on behalf of all of the Nurses at Regional Medical Center. The arbitration is over and we are waiting for the decision of the arbitrator.

Julia Barcott and I attended the United American Nurses Leadership Conference last year in Chicago. We flew out together for the conference and met people from all over the United States who have met adversity and challenges in their workplaces. Their stories fired me up! I learned more about Assignment Despite Objection (ADOs), the grievance process, patient safety issues, and so much more.

I had the opportunity to attend Legislative Day in Olympia last year (due to the weather this year, I did not make it). I was so impressed with WSNA and the active role it plays in legislation on nursing issues. This made me want to take a more active role because I realized that as a group we are powerful!



I went to the WSNA Leadership Conference in Lake Chelan last September, along with Julia Barcott, Pamela Rimel, Lori Bethay, and Susan Jacobson. Our Local Unit Officers were

presented with the Adversity Award for their work with the administrative team at Regional Medical Center and the proactive, collaborative approach the team took during that very stressful time last spring and summer (2005).

If I have any advice based on my experiences at Regional Medical Center, it would be this:

Your voice really does count! Use your voice as a tool to constructively improve your work environment.

You are not in this alone! You are part of a team. Your teammates need you as much as you need them.

You are supported by a strong, professional organization -- WSNA. Become an active member. Stay in touch with your Local Unit Officers. Volunteer to help as much as possible.

Again, thank you for the opportunity to serve as your Local Unit Secretary. I wish you all the very best and look forward to serving Nurses, like you, in my new role.

Sincerely,

*Carmen S. Garrison, RN*

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



*Hanna Welander, BSN, RN  
WSNA Nurse Representative*

This is 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 mention that 4% of your dues comes back to you in what is called your Local Unit funds. WSNA is one of the few unions 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 for use of these funds would be:

1. Mailing costs such as newsletters and postcards announcing meetings, and classes.
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: 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 American Nurses Association (ANA) 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 studying the effects of Nurse fatigue created by working 12-hour shifts or overtime and a potential increase in medication errors. ANA also lobbies the federal government to protect the rights and safety of patients and Nurses. An example of this would be the regulation put in place to prevent needle stick injuries. Your hospital did not provide a needle-less system out of the goodness of their heart. This is but a snapshot of all the work ANA does, but for more detailed

information, please go to their website at [www.ana.org](http://www.ana.org) and learn how you can be involved.

Being a member of WSNA also makes you a member of United American Nurses (UAN). This is your national union, which is the largest national union of RNs in America. Part of your dues is paid to this organization. UAN represents over 100,000 Nurses nationally. Together with all those voices they work towards common goals, such as patient safety and 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 and participated in some small way! Please visit their web site at [www.nursingworld.org/uan](http://www.nursingworld.org/uan) to learn more.

Part of your dues goes to your District Nurses Association (Yakima's is District 6). The District Association supports nursing in your community by providing scholarships and develops 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.

Four percent of your dues go towards the emergency fund for the Cabinet on Economic Growth & Welfare.

The remainder of your dues goes to support WSNA. It pays the wages of the attorneys who, with your help and input, negotiate your contracts. We also have attorneys that deal specifically with contract maintenance through the arbitration process. A great example of this is the Virginia



Mason flu shot arbitration that has been in the news. The employer had threatened to fire any Nurse if they refused to take the flu shot. WSNA fought for and won the right for Nurses to keep their jobs at Virginia Mason. Health care decisions are to be left to the Nurse and his/her medical provider, not the employer. This decision affects all Nurses, even nationally.

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](http://www.wsna.org), or call me at (800) 231-8482, Extension 3035. You can also come to our office at 575 Andover Park West, Suite 101, in Seattle, 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 2003, a ballot was sent to all members to vote for or against the dues-increase proposal. 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 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 \$74 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 effect 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. WSNA depends on its members input to drive the direction your Professional Association will take.

## What Does WSNA Do?

WSNA works at the local level through our Local Units, negotiating labor contracts to address issues that are unique to each facility – as well as ensuring that all units meet the industry standards we have established through half a century of bargaining RN contracts in Washington State. WSNA Local Units provide leadership and professional development opportunities, facilitate resolution of workplace issues through the collective bargaining agreement, and assist members in their role as a patient advocate.



## Victories Won

Here are some significant victories won on behalf of Nurses by WSNA:

- ◆ Increased protection from mandatory overtime and mandatory shift rotations.
- ◆ A guaranteed and protected voice in Health and Safety Committees, Professional Practice and Patient Care Committees, and Staffing.
- ◆ Wage increases that lead the industry – including recognition for years of experience, additional steps for experience, improved differentials and premiums, and overtime pay.
- ◆ Excellent benefits packages covering medical, dental, and vision insurance, and retirement plans with employer contributions.
- ◆ Paid in-service training and reimbursement of educational fees including certification testing and allowances for educational leaves.
- ◆ Progressive discipline and grievance procedures that assure timely, reasonable settlements including binding arbitration when necessary

- ◆ Job security with restructuring and downsizing language detailing seniority, layoff and recall procedures.
- ◆ Utilization of Assignment Despite Objection (ADO) forms to document and address unsafe or poor patient care situations.
- ◆ Guaranteed residency programs for new Graduate Nurses.

## Assignment Despite Objection Class January 10, 2006, A Great Success!

We had a great turnout for the ADO class taught by Barbara Frye, BSN RN, WSNA Director of Labor Relations. Barbara came to Yakima Regional Medical Center on January 10, 2006, to educate Nurses on the Assignment Despite Objection forms. Continuing Nurse Education Credits were offered. Be watching for upcoming classes in the future.

**Please Note: Completed ADO forms are to be sent to Lori Bethay, ICU. Please remember to give as much information as possible on the form, attaching supporting documents (no confidential patient information).**



## UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

*Annual Leadership Development  
Conference  
Lake Chelan, WA  
September 24 – 26, 2006*



## Local Unit Officers

Co-Chair: Brad Trisler (509) 966-4651  
Email: [trisler2001@charter.net](mailto:trisler2001@charter.net)  
Lori Bethay (509) 452-3541  
Email: [NrsBethay@aol.com](mailto:NrsBethay@aol.com)

Vice Co-chair: Julia Barcott (509) 949-9244  
Email: [captveg1@netzero.com](mailto:captveg1@netzero.com)

Secretary/Treasurer: Pamela Rimel  
Email: [pamelarn@charter.net](mailto:pamelarn@charter.net)

Grievance Officers: Anne Whitley (509) 966-2345  
Email: [annielute76@aol.com](mailto:annielute76@aol.com)  
Debra Corning (509) 965-1079  
Email: [bekede2@aol.com](mailto:bekede2@aol.com)

## Nurse Practice

Pamela Rimel  
Elizabeth (Betsy) Grose  
Bruce Ferguson  
Susan Gleeson  
Susan Holdeman  
Bev Calvert

## Conference Committee

Lori Bethay  
Brad Trisler  
Julia Barcott  
Anne Whitley  
Debra Corning  
Pamela Rimel



## Nurses Celebrate Passage of Safe Patient Lifting Law



The Washington State Legislature passed legislation (House Bill 1672) to promote safe patient handling and prevent workplace injuries amongst Registered Nurses and health care workers. This was a top legislative priority for the Washington State Nurses Association this session, and the victory is the result of efforts made by the WSNA along with other unions and hospitals.

The Washington Senate voted 48-0 to approve the bill while 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 being 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.

Washington and states around the country struggle with a shortage of Nurses and other health care workers. Expanded use of mechanical lifts has been shown to significantly reduce worker injuries.