



NETWORK

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President's Podium

by Candice Owley, R.N.

Charting our future together

This newsletter includes the formal announcement of the first annual meeting of the newly consolidated state-wide Local 5000. We have called this meeting, “*Charting a New Course*,” because that is exactly what we will be doing. For decades, the Wisconsin local bargaining units that were affiliated with our national union operated mostly in isolation from each other. Some have done well and grown, but many have struggled, and some have even gone out of existence. Our local bargaining units have felt connected, but mostly to our state office and state staff, and much less so to each other. This connection has led WFNHP to be thought of as, “someone at an office in Milwaukee that we call,” rather than something that binds us all together in our struggle for justice for ourselves, our patients, and our communities. I believe this thinking is a result of both our structure and our culture; and, I’m reminded of our concern, when members see the union as a service or insurance product, rather than something they are part of, and all play a part in keeping strong and vital.

Over the last five years, unions in Wisconsin, including our union, have experienced great struggles with the loss of bargaining rights for our public sector members, followed by passage of ‘Right to Work’ legislation that will create challenges for all of our private sector units. The impact of these two legislative bills has been damaging, but it is important to recognize the great difference between these two changes. The loss of bargaining rights, including the loss of payroll deduction for dues, has been extremely damaging; and, all but two of our public sector units decided to disband their unions, because they saw little reason to stay together, when nothing could truly be bargained. They felt too weak and powerless to continue. Many of these units had contracts going back to the early 1970’s, and were some of the first healthcare unions in the state, so their loss is truly tragic. One bargaining unit that has decided to fight on and demand their voice be heard is Milwaukee County, which against all odds, has not only twice recertified; but, has also been able to maintain a very significant voluntary membership, even without payroll deduction. But, there are seeds of hope for public healthcare workers. We still have individual members in at least five other units, even without being certified. These individuals are working to keep the flame of workers’ voices burning, as we fight for a better future and a return one day to full bargaining rights. These members are like the public workers of the 1950’s who organized before there ever was a law. We know the efforts and beliefs of those public employees are what led to the passage of the collective bargaining law. The lessons of history teach us that the path forward will be led by groups of workers that continue

the struggle, so some future generation will again gain full bargaining rights.

The challenge to our private sector units is very different, and has great potential to lead to stronger unions. They will continue to have full bargaining rights and payroll deduction. The only change is, that workers will have to voluntarily choose to be members and pay dues. This change will be a challenge, but I know that it will make our unions much better and much stronger. Whether a unit has 50% or 100% membership, knowing each member chose to join is a very powerful message. One shining example, is our VA local, which has limited items it can bargain, and has always been limited to voluntary membership. This unit, with new energy and new focus, has month by month increased their membership numbers, and they believe, for the first time in their history (which goes back to 1980), that they have a real chance of hitting the 50% mark. Another example, is the lab unit in Milwaukee which only lost 5 out of 135 members, when mandatory membership ended.

These are some of the challenges we’ve faced the last few years, and made it critical that we take a step back and see how to become a better, stronger, more united state-wide union—a union where leaders and members from around the state come together to support each other. Whether the members are in Cumberland, Antigo, Burlington, Sheboygan, Racine or Milwaukee, we need to see we are all united under common cause and common concern; and, that we will make real the words, ‘an injury to one is an injury to all.’

Our journey of unity begins with changes to our structure, so that all bargaining units have a voice in the democracy of our union; that all leaders have a say on the staff we hire, law firm we use, dues members pay, and programs and policies that guide our collective actions. The new Constitution lays out the structure to make this change a reality, but it is just a beginning. The framework is there, but that alone will not change our culture. That will require bringing leaders and members together to talk about what kind of union they want and where they want to be in three to five years. We begin that work with members on Friday, October 23rd at the first membership meeting, and follow up with a leadership meeting on Saturday, October 24th.

I look forward to being part of this journey, as we chart a new course for a strong, proud future together.



Charting a New Course...

It's time for Local 5000 members to set sail and chart a new course for the future of our union. Members should **register now** to secure their reservation for the First Annual Meeting of the new state-wide Local 5000 which will take place on **Friday, October 23rd on a Milwaukee Riverboat Dinner Cruise from 5:30-9pm** (a \$5 advance registration fee is required and will be returned when you board).

The program will include a welcome by current Local 5000 President Leigh Ullman, brief presentations by each Chapter President on who they are and the challenges facing their bargaining unit, plus solidarity greetings from our community partners. Members will also vote on proposed amendments to the Constitution & Bylaws, and elect officers who will lead our union—WFNHP—into the future with strength and purpose, and carryout the plans for a new era for our union.

Nomination & election process:

If you have been a member in good standing of Local 5000 (which includes all chapters and non-bargaining unit members of the former Local 5001, and Locals 5033 and 5040), for at least three months, you can run for office yourself or nominate other members you believe will be the best team to lead our union for the next two years. To nominate individuals, you must first get their permission and then submit their name(s) on the official nomination form. **Nominations must be received by the union office no later than 5pm on Wednesday, October 21st.** (Nominations will also be accepted from the floor at the meeting on October 23rd.)

The **election will take place** at the first annual meeting on **Friday evening, October 23rd.**

Elected offices include:

The **President**, which is the most important union role because it is the leader and official spokesperson of the organization, oversees all activities of the union, supervises the staff, runs meetings, and keeps in close contact with all chapter leaders to make sure the members' needs are being met.

The **Executive Vice President's** role is to assist the President. The **Treasurer** is responsible for overseeing the finances, and the **Secretary** for handling minutes and correspondence. Additionally, **three At-Large Vice Presidents** will be elected, pending adoption of a proposed Constitutional amendment to add these officers.

Additionally, members will be electing 26 delegates to represent Local 5000 at the WFNHP Convention in December. (The President is an automatic delegate.) This will be the last convention of WFNHP, and the

purpose is to eliminate the state federation structure and transfer all assets, property and personnel to Local 5000.



Proposed Constitution & Bylaw amendments:

The rationale for the amendments is to expand the executive board by adding three at-large seats, create a political action fund, plus technical changes regarding budget preparation and presentation, and chapter elections.

See proposed amendments on page 8.

Official Nomination Form

(I checked with each person I have nominated, and they have agreed to run for office.)

I nominate the following as Local 5000 officers:

President: _____

Exec. Vice President: _____

Treasurer: _____

Secretary: _____

At-Large Vice Presidents: _____

I nominate the following as Local 5000 delegates to the 2015 WFNHP Convention:

Signature _____ **Date** _____

(Only nominations on the official Nomination Form will be accepted. You may drop off, fax, or mail in your forms. Nominations by phone will not be accepted.)

Nominations are due by 5pm on Wednesday, October 21st, 2015.

Fight for Fairness in Antigo

Antigo is a city of approximately 8,000 people, three hours north of Milwaukee. The nurses and professionals have been part of WFNHP since the early 1980's. They work at Langlade Memorial Hospital, which is a 25-bed critical access hospital, which means, while it is small, they must be ready to handle almost any emergency from heart attacks, to broken bones, to delivery of new babies. The role of this hospital is critical to the community, and the workers come overwhelmingly from the community. For many decades, contracts have been negotiated with only minor disputes, some picketing in the early 1990's; but, for the most part, the relationship with labor and management has been respectful and positive, even with a major change in time off policies, which created a PTO program and extended leave banks. In the end, both sides came together to find a positive way forward.

A few years ago, Langlade Memorial became part of a larger health system headquartered in Wausau, Wisconsin; and, increasingly, decisions moved away from local management and the community, and instead decisions were made by the Aspirus system. This year, the shift in decision-making became all too clear. First, all the signs changed, as did the name. Now, the hospital is Aspirus Langlade Hospital, and no longer can be called Langlade Memorial. Even pens, jackets, and any other item that did not include the Aspirus name, were removed from the hospital, and workers were urged to return any items of clothing with only the Langlade name, so they could be donated to third world countries. The conversion of the hospital from community control to corporate system control was complete.

The impact on bargaining was the next thing to change. For decades bargaining was handled by local Management, with the help of their long time attorney; but, this year, for the first time, the chief hospital negotiator was the Aspirus attorney.

For the last four years, the members had agreed to one-year contracts with only 1% raises, because they were concerned about the financial stability of the hospital, and knew many of their neighbors were struggling as a result of the economy. This year, however, members felt it was time for a reasonable raise, as the economy had been improving, while the wages for the vast majority of workers was not even keeping up with cost-of-living increases. The wage system in the contract includes yearly steps, but they end at year five, so all employees with more than five years of service (the vast majority) have only had the 1% raises.

In preparation for bargaining, we asked our national union to do a financial analysis of the hospital, and the number shocked everyone. It turned out, while the



L-R, Front: Mary Cerny, Calla Gelhausen & Eileen Mercer. Back: Danielle Majewski & Teresa Postler.

workers were being responsible, the hospital was making major profits; and, management was reaping the financial benefits. From 2011–2013, the hospital had an 800% increase in profit—making \$10 million, and the CEO of this 25-bed hospital was given a 28% raise, bringing his total compensation in 2013 to \$415 million. At the table, we discussed these facts and made it clear that the membership was upset and expected a raise that reflected the financial performance of the hospital and showed respect, especially for the experienced staff. The union proposed a 5% raise and new steps at years 10 and 15. The hospital refused, and month in and month out, insisted it would not move above the 1%.

The contract expired 6/30/2015 and, after three sessions with a federal mediator and rejection of the proposal, there is still no contract. During bargaining, the union team modified their proposal to 3% and reduced the amount of money for the additional steps; but, the employer still made no change. The hospital attorney continued to believe the bargaining team was not in touch with the members, and only offered a one-time bonus of \$250, if the members voted to ratify the 1%. On September 22nd, the bargaining unit once again overwhelmingly rejected the hospital's proposal and bonus. Now we are waiting for the employer to see if they will finally bargain in good faith.

The members and leaders are strong and committed to winning a fair contract, and being treated with respect and recognition for the work they do. Many members of the labor and progressive community stand ready to give their support. It is also important that all of the WFNHP members throughout the state stand in solidarity with our members in Antigo. Just as the hospitals are coming together for strength and unity, so must we show these members they are not alone and we all have their back.

VA RN's Ratify New Contract With 100% Support

by Jamie Lucas, Lead Organizer

1992 was a different time. There was no Internet, no cell phones, and no Twitter. Someone thought Crystal Pepsi would be a good idea. Clintons and Bushes dominated American politics. (Maybe some things are still the same, after all.) However, a lot has changed.

One of the many changes between 1992 and 2015 is that the RN's at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center will have a new contract! After years of hard work, WFNHP Local 5032 has negotiated, settled, and ratified a new collective bargaining agreement for the almost 800 RN's in the hospital.

The process was not without its challenges. The VA WFNHP leadership team had to skillfully navigate the nuances of federal labor law, file a couple of Unfair Labor Practice charges, spend countless hours meeting with membership and management, and gather scores of information from handbooks, policies, directives, Executive Orders, and statutory codes in order to arrive at the end of the process with a contract that will bring the Local into current times and accurately reflect the multitude of rules and rights that VA RN's deserve.

Highlights of the new agreement include: more access to WFNHP members and leaders in the hospital; clear-cut rules for scheduling of overtime; rights related to RN's input into proficiencies, and a clearer understanding

of the proficiency process; due process rights in disciplinary situations, and a clear outline of the disciplinary process; Workers' Compensation rights; contractual rights to educational opportunities; rights related to the different types of available leave; access to any committee in effect in the hospital, so that RNs can have a direct voice in the policies and procedures that affect their day-to-day; and, protections of RN's Constitutional rights regarding personal conduct and protection against unreasonable searches and seizures in the workplace.

The scope of topics is not only much larger in this agreement than in the past, but the wealth of information gained by the union leadership grew immensely. One union official said, "Our strengths and personalities came together and we melded into a stronger voice for the nurses we represent. We really morphed into a more powerful, united team."

The unity isn't just evident among the Local leadership team, though. Just a few weeks ago, bargaining unit RN's ratified this new contract unanimously! The 100% support of the membership for this new contract is a clear indication that things are on the right track at the VA.

As we move into the future, WFNHP Local 5032 will continue to build strength and unity.

Pursuing Liberty in the Face of Injustice

by Cheri Stuttley, BSN RN-BC, VA Local 5032

On Friday, September 25, 2015, five WFNHP leaders attended the Annual NAACP Milwaukee Branch Freedom Fund Celebration. This event was a truly unforgettable experience. Participants described the themed dinner, "Pursuing Liberty in the Face of Injustice," as a feast filled with tangible, intellectual, and spiritual sustenance—one that left their personal and professional souls enriched and sated.

The communal atmosphere and celebratory mood was blessed with prayer followed by the crooning of the National Negro Anthem, "Lift Every Voice and Sing." Program highlights included a historical look at the civil rights efforts of the NAACP organization, as well as a salutation and recognition of two of its esteemed leaders, the Honorable Vel R. Phillips and its former National Chairman, Julian Bond.

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L-R: Ethel Davenport (VA Local 5032), Jennine Easley (St. Francis-Tech), Cheri Stuttley (VA Local 5032), Angelina Wyatt (Milwaukee County) and Connie Smith (St. Francis-Tech) attend the Sept. 25th NAACP dinner.

I'm With Hillary, Because...

by Mary Milton, R.N.

Twenty years ago, Hillary Clinton declared that "women's rights are human rights and human rights are women's rights." Hillary Clinton is still that passionate fighter for women, busting through the glass ceilings that hold all of us back, and I am proud to be a "Woman for Hillary."

But I'm not supporting Hillary just because she's a woman. I'm supporting Hillary because she is the most qualified, most experienced, most tenacious candidate for President.

As a Registered Nurse, here's what concerns me most: every day I see patients that, because of high out-of-pocket insurance, forgo treatment until they're seriously ill. I see consolidation in healthcare, limiting choice for patients. I see nurses, techs and patient care staff stretched to their limit with short-staffing and overtime. I see corporate CEO's that would rather fight working people than pay them the wages and benefits they deserve that would allow them to provide a decent life for their families.

Hillary will fight for women, for my patients and for America's working families. From her earliest days in public life, Hillary has been a champion for affordable, quality healthcare. She's the serious, solution-driven candidate we need to tackle the complex and growing challenges our healthcare system faces.

She's also the champion of fairness that women and working families need. More women than ever are our families' main earners, yet full-time working women still earn only \$.78 for every \$1.00 that men earn. That means women are bringing home less money to provide for their families and are saving less for their retirement.

In the Senate, Hillary led the effort to pass the Lily Ledbetter Fair Pay Act of 2007, which expanded the right for women to challenge pay discrimination. She has stood up for a woman's right to choose, denouncing the Supreme Court's Hobby Lobby decision and advocating for Planned Parenthood. She has been outspoken on the need for paid leave.

As Secretary of State, she made the rights of women and girls central to her work and the work of the U.S. State Department. And on the campaign trail, she is proposing policies that will help working moms—like the "New College Compact" that will help moms balance getting a degree and caring for their kids.

Hillary Clinton is a fighter and will help move our nation forward. And I'm proud to support her.



WFNHP's Mary Milton, president of the RN unit at Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare—St. Francis, was honored to meet Hillary Clinton at her Women for Hillary event in Milwaukee on September 10th.



Sandy Jacobs, retired Milwaukee County Occupational Therapist, is with Hillary because she supports women's issues.

Milwaukee Chapters Elect New Officers

Members of the Milwaukee County, Wisconsin Diagnostic Laboratories and Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare-St. Francis Hospital chapters, now members of the newly consolidated state-wide Local 5000, elected new officers this September who will lead their members for the next two and one-half years.



Jeff Weber

Charles De La Pena

Mary Milton

Jaci Ranft

These leaders know the challenges our union and the whole labor movement in our state are facing. And, they've stepped up to the plate to work with their leadership team, their members, and WFNHP coalition partners to fight for workplace justice and a better life for all working families. They will begin by working together with other WFNHP leaders from around the state, who will gather on October 24th to collectively plan the future of our union. The leadership teams will share their vision for having a strong union able to not just survive, but grow, in an era of Act 10 and Right-to-Work; and, will together create action plans that make our local bargaining units stronger than ever.

Congratulations to all the newly elected union officers:

Milwaukee County Chapter

- ♥ President—Jeff Weber
- ♥ Vice President—Molly Janas
- ♥ Recording Secretary—Angelina Wyatt
- ♥ Chief Steward—Stephen Bradford
- ♥ Steward—Jim Cichy

Wisconsin Diagnostic Laboratories Chapter

- ♥ President—Charles De La Pena
- ♥ Vice President—Louie Borda
- ♥ Recording Secretary—Christine Klinger
- ♥ Chief Steward—John Epple
- ♥ Steward—Nicolette Tarantino

St. Francis Hospital RN Chapter

- ♥ President—Mary Milton
- ♥ Recording Secretary—Elaine Tombari
- ♥ Chief Steward—Mike Walker
- ♥ Stewards—Ann Homsey & Mary O'Toole

St. Francis Hospital Service/Tech Chapter

- ♥ President—Jaci Ranft
- ♥ Recording Secretary—Judy Langoehr
- ♥ Chief Steward—Connie Smith
- ♥ Stewards—Dan Cooper, Jennine Easley, Vanessa Jones & Thomas Ryan

NAACP... from page 5

The Keynote Speaker, Dr. Joy DeGruy, served the diverse attendees a poignant discourse based upon her book, "Post Traumatic Slave Syndrome: America's Enduring Legacy of Injury and Healing." She courageously and unapologetically unearthed and addressed the buried and forbidden topic of slavery. In an effort to promote understanding and healing, she bared its traumatic, epigenetic, and multi-generational effect on the behaviors, decisions and attitudes of African descendants. She concluded with realistic evidenced-based treatment approaches for individuals, families and communities.

The President of the Milwaukee Branch, Fred Royal Jr., emphasized that the local and nationwide movement for individual freedom, voting and civil rights, equitable and

qualitative public education, a fair criminal justice system, the eradication of poverty and crime, sustainable jobs and wages, access to healthcare remain the organizational focus of the NAACP efforts. The event ended with a call for solidarity and action through prayer.

In reflection, the participants felt that the longstanding societal injustices and inequalities which continue to exist, give insurmountable credence to the need for the NAACP's infinite existence. It also affirmed the importance of our union officials' and membership's involvement, participation, and support in addressing and helping solve these issues. We are lifelong partners and an important link in the communal chain for change in the African American community.

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Proposed Amendments... *from page 3*

Constitution

Article IV – Election of Officers and Delegates

Section 2. Add new section: **e. Three Vice Presidents**

Article VI – Executive Board

Section 1. The executive board shall be comprised of the ~~four~~ **seven** officers... If a Chapter President is elected to one of the ~~four~~ **seven** officer positions...

Article VII – Committees

Section 7. The finance committee shall assist the Treasurer in preparation of the annual budget which will be presented to ~~the membership at its annual meeting~~ **the first Executive Board meeting of the year for approval.**

Section 9. The political education and legislation committee shall work ~~together with the state federation committee~~ to raise voluntary money to support the political work of the organization and ~~where appropriate~~ shall recommend candidates for endorsement to the **Local Executive Board.** ~~state federation.~~ It shall also be responsible for monitoring government actions that affect the membership and develop appropriate responses to such action **in consultation with the Local Executive Board** ~~the state federation.~~

Article VIII – Membership Meetings

Section 2. The annual meeting of the organization shall be in the Fall of each year at which time annual reports shall be made and elections held. ~~The budget shall be adopted at the first membership meeting of the year.~~

Article IX – Revenues

Section 3. Effective January 1, 2016 one dollar (\$1.00) of each member's monthly dues shall be set aside for the Political Action Fund.

Bylaws

Article I—Rules of Operation of Chapters

Section 1. Election of Chapter Officers

Add new number: **2. Prior to nominations, the Chapter officers shall identify which positions will be elected positions. At a minimum, each Chapter must elect the following: President, Chief Steward and Secretary. Additional elected positions are at the discretion of the Chapter.**

Section 2. F. Stewards

1. Each Chapter shall appoint **or elect** a sufficient number of workplace stewards...

NOTE: ~~Strikethroughs~~ denote language to be deleted. **Underlines** denote new language.



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