



# NETWORK

A PUBLICATION OF THE WISCONSIN FEDERATION OF NURSES & HEALTH PROFESSIONALS, AFT, AFL-CIO

## We Kept the 'Saint' in St. Francis!



**President's Podium..... 2**

**Endorsed Candidates ..... 6**

**Compare the Candidates..... 3**

**News Around the State..... 7-8**

**St. Francis..... 4-5**

**Fall Annual Meeting ..... 8**

# President's Podium

by Candice Owley, R.N.



## Taking a Moment of Personal Privilege: We've come a long way...or have we?

In a few days, we will elect the next President of our country. The policy differences are profound and well defined elsewhere in this newsletter. From paid family leave to affordable college education; from women's health to union rights, it is clear who is on the side of working families. But, beyond policies, there is another aspect of this election—which is a decision about the type of country we are and want to be. We have a candidate that demeans women and the disabled, vilifies immigrants, and spews racist language. As a woman active in the fight for equality and dignity for all, I am deeply offended by all of this behavior; but, especially by the nasty and sexist attack on our first woman candidate for President.

I recently read an article asking if there was a double standard in our country. There is no question there are double and triple standards, but let's focus on the gender divide. What woman has not been told to smile more—every woman in leadership that I know has been told this, not once, but dozens, even hundreds of times; yet, I know of no man who has had that said to him.

When I was a young nurse, it was common for doctors (all of whom were men) to make sexual comments and engage in various forms of sexual harassment, including physical contact. This was the 70's and there were no laws to protect us. As the years went by, I became a union president and chief negotiator, and had many encounters with men who seemed to feel they had a right to say and do sexually inappropriate things. Some were hospital administrators, some politicians, and some high ranking lawyers. What I knew is that it was always about power. These were men of power and entitlement. Eventually, we found legal ways to protect our rights, and over time, language and behavior changed. But,

as I listened to the current presidential campaign, I became increasingly concerned about the language used and outrageous behavior that was being defended

and excused. It made me wonder how deep is today's sexism?

The other day, I listened to Michelle Obama state clearly what I have been feeling as I listened to the comments made during this year's election. It is not about vulgar language, but about sexist and predatory behavior. I now have five granddaughters and, when I listen to spokespeople defend the indefensible, it makes me sick. How do I explain this election to them?

Months ago, the eight year old asked me which candidate was going to make sure she could afford to go to college. I was surprised and pleased that she was following the election enough to wonder about policy positions.

Today, I don't even want her to listen to the news, fearing what she might hear next.

The campaign for President should be a noble quest for the most powerful position on earth because, after all, that is what it is. The U.S. President will not only lead our country, but will show the world who we are and what we believe.

I close by urging you to vote for Hillary Rodham Clinton. She is not a perfect person or a perfect candidate, but she is a smart, experienced individual who has proven for decades that she will fight for children's issues, women's rights and for working families. When we go to the polls this year, we need to send a strong message that we will not let our country go backwards; and, we will not let a racist, sexual predator be the role model for our country and the world. We've come too far and we deserve better.



Charlotte and Ooma Lippmann,  
two of my five granddaughters,  
and fellow Hillary supporters.



# HOW THE CANDIDATES COMPARE ON THE ISSUES...



## HILLARY CLINTON

## DONALD TRUMP

✓ Hillary Clinton believes affordable healthcare is a basic human right. She plans to build on and improve the Affordable Care Act by lowering prescription drug costs and out-of-pocket healthcare expenses. She also supports better nurse-to-patient staffing ratios and training to address national nurse shortages.

### HEALTHCARE

✗ Donald Trump wants to repeal the Affordable Care Act and let insurance companies write the rules all over again. His plan would kick almost 21 million people off their health insurance plans and does not help keep costs down.

✓ As president, Hillary will support equal pay for women, defend women's health and reproductive rights, and fight for paid family leave and affordable child care.

### EQUAL RIGHTS

✗ Donald Trump has a long history of using insulting and offensive rhetoric to set one group against another. He will continue to divide our country, not bring it together.

✓ Hillary Clinton's plan to increase the minimum wage would raise the pay of nearly 1.3 million healthcare workers across the country.

### ECONOMY

✗ Says he loves so-called "Right-to-Work" laws, that American wages are too high and that he opposes raising the minimum wage.



# WHO WILL FIGHT FOR WISCONSIN'S WORKING FAMILIES



## RUSS FEINGOLD

## RON JOHNSON

✓ Russ Feingold supports raising the minimum wage, and has fought against pay discrimination in the workplace. He also supports a full 12 weeks of paid family and medical leave.

### ECONOMY

✗ Ron Johnson is opposed to any federal minimum wage, has fought against equal pay for women, and sides with employers over hard working families on paid family and medical leave because it would 'cost employers money.'

✓ He wants to close special interest loopholes and help keep jobs from being shipped overseas.

### JOBS

✗ Johnson has supported TPP, a bad trade deal that will ship more jobs overseas and leave working families behind.

✓ Feingold will protect Social Security against privatization and expand benefits by making sure the wealthy pay their fair share. He will also work to make prescription drugs more affordable.

### SOCIAL SECURITY

✗ Johnson wants to privatize social security and favors establishing "private accounts," which would risk the program's funds on Wall Street.

# How We Kept the 'SAINT' in St. Francis

On October 13<sup>th</sup>, the members at St. Francis Hospital, in a historically high turnout, voted by over 90% to ratify a new two-year contract. The new contract was the first negotiated with the new parent company, Ascension, which took over Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare on March 1, 2016. The goal of bargaining was to bring stability and job protections for workers, plus ensure a contract where benefit and economic transitions were done in a way that members felt was just. After weeks of bargaining, including a marathon week ending at midnight, the teams reached agreement on all items.

## Community Support and Job Protection, Workers' Rights and Future of the Hospital

Bargaining began with a demonstration of great community support. Over 50 community, political and faith leaders joined the union's bargaining team at the opening of negotiations on September 7<sup>th</sup>. The show of support sent a strong message of solidarity and support for keeping the hospital open; and, protecting jobs, benefits, and workers' rights. President Owley began the meeting by explaining that the individuals present came to show their support and even love for St. Francis Hospital. A number of politicians and their families are long time (even lifetime) patients of the hospital, and they praised the care provided by the dedicated workers. President Owley urged the Ascension representatives to remember the critical role not only St. Francis, but also St. Joe's, plays in providing family supporting jobs and services to our community, and stressed that loss of either would tear at the very fabric of the community. In addition to the community members joining the bargaining, over 1,200 additional individuals, including Mayor Tom Barrett, signed the union's community petition of support, which was also presented at the meeting.



Over 50 community, political, and faith leaders joined the union's bargaining team on the first day of negotiations—sending a strong message of solidarity and support for keeping the hospital open.

## Job Protections for Subcontracting

The new agreement includes strong protection for the 130 employees in linen, housekeeping, and food service. These jobs are planned to be subcontracted to another company (probably TouchPoint) in early 2017. The new contract will have language guaranteeing existing St. Francis employees in these departments will be offered jobs with any employer taking over the services, and the jobs will be at the same rate of pay, same FTE (full time/part time), and full recognition of seniority towards all benefit plans in the new company. St. Francis employees choosing to go to work for the new company will not have to serve a new probationary period; and, it was agreed, if a majority of St. Francis workers take the jobs, then they will have automatic union representation, and a new contract will be negotiated immediately to cover all of the employees and provide strong job protection.

This was a huge victory, and was directly linked to the extremely high membership participation by the current employees—dozens who showed up to bargaining to demand a strong protection agreement from Ascension. The agreement also will serve as a model in the event of any future subcontracting, but none is expected to happen during the new two-year contract period.



Members from Food Service, Housekeeping and Linen, joined the bargaining team to send a powerful message to Ascension that they want to keep their jobs at the hospital.

The following is a summary of the new contract which expires October 14, 2018. For more detail go to the union website [www.wfnhp.org](http://www.wfnhp.org).

**Protection for .8 employees**—Ascension defines full time as .9 FTE. This change caused a major problem, because currently St. Francis has over 200 .8 employees who were considered full time. The biggest, but not only, impact was on health benefits. As part of the bargaining process, it was agreed that all current employees that are .85 and above will be considered full time, and will not have to increase their work weeks. For employees .8 to .849 the employer agreed to work

with each individual that wants to move up to a .9 FTE, so that they can be full time by the end of the year. The new benefit programs go into effect 1/1/2017. This was a major victory, because we know non-union employees were not given the same opportunity.

**New insurance plans**—As of 12/31/2016, there will be no more Wheaton benefit programs. The new Ascension plans begin January 1<sup>st</sup>. The new plans are similar to existing plans, but the network will be larger. For some members there will be increases depending on their wages and the plan they choose. The biggest change is that premiums will be based on employees' incomes, so that those making more money will pay more in premiums than those at a lower rate of pay. The determination of premium is based on FTE times rate of pay. This concept is tied into what Ascension describes as their commitment to social justice. Along the same line, the subsidy program for the lowest income employees will continue; but, it is expanded to cover not only premiums, but also co-pays, deductibles, and drugs. The only downside of the new subsidy program is that it was only for full time employees. An agreement was reached to grandfather in all current part time employees that are on the Wheaton subsidy program. There will be a new wellness program that will allow members to earn up to \$400 which will be put into a medical reimbursement account. Also, the spousal surcharge is eliminated. Another positive is that for all Ascension insurance plans—not just health—including dental and vision, children up to age 26 will be covered, even if they are no longer dependents or attending school.

**Disability plans**—There will be a new short term disability plan for full and part time employees that pays 50%, but covers up to 180 days (*currently the plan covers only 90 days*). In addition, employees can purchase additional coverage up to 70% of their salary. There will also be a change in long term disability, which begins after 180 days and pays 50% for full time only. Part time employees can purchase the long term disability. Also, full and part time can purchase up to 70% coverage.

**Retirement program**—The Wheaton plan will be frozen as of 12/31/2016. The union team and lawyer reviewed the financial status of the plan and found that it is extremely well funded. The frozen plan will continue to make money, and the total fund will be in a separate account that cannot be used for anything but paying benefits to Wheaton employees. The new plan will begin 1/1/2017 and include: an **automatic contribution** based on years of service from 2%-3.5%. Current employees will be given credit for years of service to determine the contribution amount. For low income employees, there will be a prorated minimum contribution of \$1,400/year. In addition to the automatic contribution, there will be a second **matching contribution** of 50% for money contributed by the employee up to 6%. Therefore, if an

employee contributes 6%, the employer will match 3% (*this is the maximum employer contribution*). The final aspect of the retirement plan will be a new **retiree health program**. Ascension will contribute \$100/month, up to \$1,200/year, into a special account that can be used upon retirement to pay medical costs. The employee must maintain Ascension employment until age 55. Then, when they leave or retiree, they can access the fund to pay medical costs.

**PTO**—A new PTO program will be in place as of 1/1/2017. The new program made it clear that no PTO hours will be lost at the end of the year and, for most employees, the new system will provide more total PTO hours. The new formula provided more hours for employees with 0-15 years of service. One major victory was winning an additional 8 hours of PTO, in each year of the contract, for all employees with 15 or more years of service. The new formula includes two new holidays—Martin Luther King Day and Good Friday; and, increases the maximum accumulation to 320 hours for everyone, plus the ability to get a payout twice a year for up to 120 total hours per year.

**Wage system**—The current merit wage system—**PEP—is eliminated**, along with the patient satisfaction rating requirement. There will be a new merit system called **Success Factor Program**. The new system needs to be modified to work for the unionized workers, because it is a mandatory item of bargaining. The final document will be developed with a team of 12 (*6 union/6 management*) and finalized by the end of November. Employees will then receive the new evaluation tool and be rated on it based on work from December through next July. Raises will then be paid October 1st each year. There is no way to know for sure how the new program will work in terms of fairness, so it was agreed that for the first year all employees that get a rating of **Fully Meets or Exceeds Expectations will receive a 2% increase on 10/1/2017. On 10/1/2018, those that Fully Meet Expectations will receive 2%, and those that Exceed Expectations will receive 2.1%**. In both years, those that Meet Most Expectations will receive .5%, and those that Need Improvement receive no increase. Float Pool that is paid a flat rate will have their wage increased by \$.25/hour each year on October 1st. Another major victory was for those at the top of the scale. The bargaining team was told that the Ascension system does not payout once you reach the top. However, in the end, it was agreed that those at the top that Fully Meet or Exceed Expectations will continue to receive the **100% payout**.

**\$11 Equity**—The final major victory was an agreement for a fund to provide an equity increase for those at the lowest pay range. Those increases will take place 1/1/2017.



## General Election Endorsements

Nobody's vote is more important than yours! We have a lot of concerns this election. We're sure you do, too. Now, let's make sure we do something about them! **VOTE on Tuesday, November 8th** for candidates who will stand up for working families. How you vote is a personal decision. Our union has researched the candidates' records and believes these are the best candidates for working families:

**U.S. President:** Hillary Clinton\*

**U.S. Senate:** Russ Feingold

**U.S. Congress:**

District 4 — Gwen Moore

District 8 — Thomas Nelson

**State Senate:**

District 6 — LaTonya Johnson

District 10 — Diane Odeen

**State Assembly:**

District 7 — Daniel Riemer

District 8 — JoCasta Zamarripa

District 9 — Josh Zepnick

District 17 — David Crowley

District 18 — Evan Goyke

District 19 — Jonathan Brostoff

District 20 — Christine Sinicki

District 63 — Andy Mitchell

For a full list of union-approved candidates go to:

<http://tinyurl.com/zuffaob>

*\*Hillary Clinton was endorsed by our national union, the American Federation of Teachers (AFT).*



**Left:** Lindsay Ullman, RN (St. Francis Hospital), is supporting Russ Feingold for U.S. Senate because he will fight for her patients and healthcare workers like her.

**Below:** Members having important conversations about why Hillary Clinton and Russ Feingold are the right choice for Wisconsin's working families.



**This is why elections matter**—These legislators (L-R) Rep. Daniel Riemer, Sen. Tim Carpenter, Rep. Jonathan Brostoff, Sen. Chris Larson, Rep. Christine Sinicki, & Rep. LaTonya Johnson came to bargaining to show Ascension they stand in solidarity with the workers of St. Francis against detrimental cuts to their hospital.



## **VICTORY! National Labor Board Issues Formal Order to Aspirus Langlade Hospital**

In spring of 2015, the union representatives began negotiations for a new contract. For the first time since the hospital was taken over by the Aspirus corporation out of Wausau, the corporate attorney showed up to negotiate. From the beginning, it was clear that the company was there—not to bargain in good faith—but, to dictate to the workers. Months went by when the members twice rejected the hospital's proposals, and Aspirus moved forward to illegally impose a new contract. After meetings with the Labor Board, it became clear that the Board found merit in the many complaints filed by the union. During these months, the employees kept working without a contract and demanded the hospital bargain in good faith. Finally, in spring of 2016—one year later—the hospital brought back the former attorney; and, in short order, a new 18-month contract expiring 12/31/2016 was ratified, providing a total 2% increase, a \$250 bonus for everyone, plus a special bonus for employees with 10 or more years of service.

Even though a new contract was in place, the Labor Board continued to negotiate a settlement regarding the violations that took place when bargaining began. In August 2016, an agreement was reached between Aspirus Langlade and the Labor Board that provided back pay for some med techs, back pay to the union for lost dues, and posting of formal notices around the hospital stating that the hospital will respect the workers' rights to organize and bargain in good faith. All members covered by the contract also received the notice by email, and it was posted on the union's electronic bulletin board. The victory was not only legal, but moral. Time and again, the union leaders had said the hospital had violated the law; and, in the end, the Labor Board agreed.

## **Bargaining Begins Again in Antigo**

While it seemed as if the last contract was just settled, it was also time to begin bargaining the new agreement. The hospital clearly learned from the experience and brought back the former attorney (*not the corporate attorney*) to bargain the next contract. Bargaining has already begun, because the Aspirus system now wants to make major changes as part of their corporate consolidation. Sound familiar? The changes proposed thus far include a new health and benefit system, and major changes to the PTO and Extended Leave banks. The union members are stepping forward in support of

their team and membership is now at an all-time high and growing. The other major issue will be wages, because the vast majority of employees have only received 1% increases for the last six years, and feel strongly it is time for experience and dedication to be recognized. The current contract expires 12/31/2016.

## **Aurora Burlington Shifts All Surgical Programs to New Ambulatory Center**

On October 17, 2016 about one-third of the Burlington Hospital bargaining unit members were transferred to the newly opened Southern Lakes Ambulatory Center. In a very unusual move, Aurora decided that the hospital would not only move traditional ambulatory programs, such as clinics and day surgery, to the new center; but, also, all of the surgical and recovery room employees. The effect as described by Aurora representatives would be that the current employees providing those services would no longer be employed by the hospital, but instead be employed by the new ambulatory center. The hospital will no longer have a dedicated surgical staff, but instead, will float the surgical staff back and forth between the ambulatory center and hospital as needed. Impact bargaining between the union and Aurora representatives took place in Spring of 2016, and led to an agreement for how the transition would take place. This included language that prevents the former hospital employees from having to also rotate to Lakeland Hospital, which also transferred its surgical and outpatient programs to Southern Lakes. As of now, the employees moving to the new center will no longer have union rights; but, we are monitoring the situation to see how it will function in reality rather than in theory, and see if it is possible to find a way to provide representation in the future.

## **Aurora Initiates New Pay System**

In May 2016, bargaining took place for a wage reopener for the Aurora Burlington RN and Tech unit. Aurora has developed a new pay system for its 30,000 employees. The new system continues the merit program, but included a significant change in how pay increases take place. At the heart of the change is linking pay, not only to performance, but also to placement on the wage grid. For employees receiving the same performance rating, the pay increase will be higher for the newest employees and lowest for the most senior employees. The union team was able to make significant modifications moving pay up for the most senior employees, and also including 100% payout for most employees. With the changes made, the members voted to accept the agreement on the wage increase. The full contract expires 5/31/2017, at which time the entire pay system will again be up for review.

*continued on page 8*



**Around the State...** *from page 7*

**Cumberland Nursing Home Changing Hands  
but Keeping Union**

Local 5000 represents RNs and support staff at Cumberland Memorial Hospital and Extended Care Unit. Last year, it was announced that the hospital was selling the nursing home to a new company. The transition to the new employer is to take place 1/1/2017. The planned change caused great uncertainty, because there was no information on wages, benefits or union rights. Recently, the union leadership was informed that the new employer wants a good relationship with the workers and their union, and agreed that the union would be given automatic recognition. This is great news, because it means a new contract and protections will be in place, even before the workers transition to the new company. Bargaining for the new contract is about to begin.



*Members meeting to plan for the future of the new bargaining unit.*



**WFNHP-LOCAL 5000**  
*Fall Annual Membership/  
Dinner Meeting*

**DATE:** Friday, November 11th, 2016

**TIME:** 5:00 – 9:00 PM

**PLACE:** Klemmer's Banquet Center  
10401 W. Oklahoma Ave., West Allis

*Family Style Dinner* 🍁 *Cash Bar/Cocktail Hour* 🍁 *Door Prizes*

**COST:** \$5.00 advanced registration fee required  
*Sorry, no guests—seating is limited*

**Please R.S.V.P. no later than Friday, November 4th!**

Please RSVP to 414-475-6065 x10 & give your \$5.00 to your Union Rep or mail to WFNHP, 9620 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis, WI 53214

