

## ONA-Sky Lakes (SKY) Executive Committee

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Juliann Underwood, RN,  
OR

### Vice President:

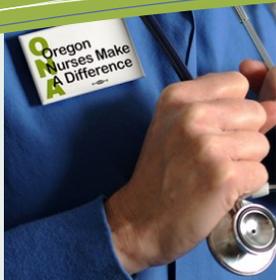
Greg Collins, RN, OR

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Jaime Delzotti, RN,  
Post Surgical Unit

### Treasurer:

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Day Surgery



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## Nurses Voice Concerns About Changes

### High Turnover, Managerial Bullying and Vacant Positions

In recent weeks, your ONA leaders have received numerous calls and conversations from longtime Sky Lakes nurses about changes in our workplace. Nurses feel that the place is no longer like it used be, a tight family of community care givers.

These concerns had several themes. Many nurses commented that turnover has increased substantially in recent months, especially among long-term nurses who have transferred to new departments after being in one unit for many years and others who are leaving the facility altogether. Their experiences and high level of patient care is sorely missed.

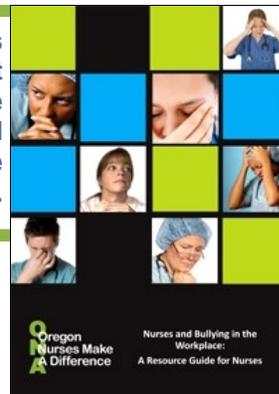
Another theme addressed the implementation of the new pain management techniques mandated by the Joint Commission. Nurses embrace the new procedures, but many experience difficulty with the increased workload.

In several departments, managers have been unsupportive in working with direct care nurses. Many nurses reported their managers threatened to use formal discipline, instead of understanding and assistance. Several RNs said they felt bullied by their managers in these interactions.

RNs should be aware of “Nurses and Bullying in the Workplace,” an excellent

resource guide produced by ONA’s Professional Services Department. [Click here for more information.](#) Some of these nurses described these managers as outsiders, who possess unknown abilities to perform the tasks that bedside RNs, their direct reports, are asked to do on a daily basis.

ONA provides an excellent resource guide on nurses and bullying in the workplace.



We also heard from you about the large number of

vacant nurse positions at Sky Lakes. In one recent week, a nurse counted 72 open RN positions. We have also heard that we currently have more than 60 travelers at Sky Lakes. While we highly value and appreciate agency nurses who are very competent and highly-qualified, their short tenure often leads to high turnover. We would rather nurses be hired as permanent employees.

We heard these concerns and asked to meet with administrators to discuss them.

*(continued on page 2)*

## SAVE THE DATE!

### ONA 2016 Annual Bargaining Unit Leadership Conference

Sept. 30 –  
Oct. 1, 2016

Portland Hilton  
921 SW 6th Ave.,  
Portland, OR  
97204

### Oregon Nurses Association

18765 SW Boones Ferry Road  
Suite 200, Tualatin OR 97062

1-800-634-3552

within Oregon

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

## Nurses Voice Concerns About Changes *(continued from Page 1)*

The employer had previously agreed to quarterly meetings between labor and management to discuss relevant topics. So, we arranged to meet on May 24.

At that meeting, Juliann Underwood, our BU Chair, shared nurses' unease with the CNO and HR. CNO Annette Cole informed us that she developed and fielded an employee satisfaction survey in affected departments. The anonymous results confirmed what we were hearing directly from nurses. She assured us she would work with those managers to develop better communication skills. She understood that if employees don't respect and trust their managers, they are unlikely to be productive.

On the pain management regiment, Alan Caldwell, HR director, said these were mandated by the Joint Commission and if they are not properly implemented, "they can shut the place down and we would all be out of a job." We responded that managers, especially those

who are outsiders, should be knowledgeable and be able to perform the tasks themselves to instill confidence in their employees.

In a hospital with 200 RNs, our number of vacant positions and traveler is quite high. We recognize the difficulty that rural hospitals face in recruiting and hiring nurses. Recent RN graduates frequently prefer big city hospitals. The employer has begun to offer \$5,000 signing bonuses, but we still get few applicants. While the cost of living in our community is relatively low, our wages are among the lowest of any ONA-represented acute care facility in Oregon.

These problems won't be solved easily by either party. By working together, nurses presenting a single voice to the employer, we can move administrators to address our concerns.

## Grievance Log

ONA at Sky Lakes has an energetic and motivated grievance committee that engages our employer to defend our contract. In recent months, your ONA grievance committee has actively defended nurses when the employer potentially violated the contract. These actions require constant vigilance and hard work by your ONA nurse leaders. Contract enforcement actions are conducted professionally and confidentially.

In one case, nurse A was inappropriately disciplined for transferring a patient without proper documentation. Upon further investigation, ONA discovered the physician did not provide clear and complete paperwork. In the grievance hearing, the ONA unit representative successfully argued that the nurse did not receive any coaching prior to the step 1 "verbal" warning. Without constructive criticism ("coaching and counseling"), a nurse would not know they did something wrong. Hence, the nurse had no opportunity to improve or correct their performance. After the hearing, the employer removed the discipline from the nurse's personnel file, the nurse was coached to review and confirm proper charting before transferring, and we withdrew the grievance.

**"An injury to one, is an injury to all."**

In a second case, nurse B contested the employer's decision to create rotating evening shifts in a department, which is a violation of our collective bargaining agreement. In the grievance hearing, the ONA representatives showed that the employer had not adequately attempted to use other resources, including travelers or posting an evening position. The employer agreed to post an evening position and we withdrew the grievance.

In a third case, nurse C, an experienced Sky Lakes nurse, was terminated for improper charting. The case involved a complex set of facts, where the nurse had recently been disciplined for similar practice issues. Instead of grieving the termination, nurse C accepted employment elsewhere. So, ONA successfully negotiated a separation agreement, which was signed by the nurse, an ONA representative and the employer. In the non-precedential agreement, the nurse accepted two weeks of wages as settlement compensation and was allowed to resign—rather than being fired.

These three cases demonstrate the value of nurses uniting to protect and defend each other. The guiding maxim is "an injury to one, is an injury to all."

# Oregon's Nonprofit Hospitals Need to Invest in Patient Care

ONA President Katy Cooper, BSN, RN, CCRN



A recent report on hospital profits revealed one of the major faults in our current health care system. Simply put, profits are not always used for their intended purpose. Hospitals exist to provide care to their patients and their communities. But while Oregonians turn to them for care, there is no guarantee hospital administrators share the public's priorities.

Seven of the 10 most profitable hospitals in the United States are nonprofits. Each made more than \$160 million a year from patient care alone. PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at Riverbend in Springfield is No. 9. It raked in more than \$170 million in profits from patient care in 2013.

Sacred Heart Medical Center at Riverbend is just one of 60 nonprofit hospitals in Oregon. Despite skyrocketing earnings at nonprofit hospitals, hospital administrators continue to argue they can't afford to hire enough staff to care for the patients they bill. Refusing to invest in patient care compromises patients' health and leads to errors. Since 2013, nurses have filed more than 4000 reports of insufficient or unsafe staffing at Oregon's hospitals;

identifying instances when there is not enough staff or the right staff isn't available to care for patients.

When hospitals aren't staffed appropriately, patients don't receive their medications on time, they don't get the information they need about follow-up care and they can't get help with basic needs like walking or personal hygiene.

For hospitals, investing in patient care isn't a luxury, it's a necessity. Hospitals must prioritize patient care and fund it before paying executives' six-figure salaries or building new facilities ready-made for magazine covers instead of for patients.

Years of research have shown investing in nurses and other health care providers prevents medical errors, helps patients recover more quickly and ultimately saves lives. Hospitals need to invest excess profits in the staff, technology and equipment that make patient care safer and more cost efficient.

It is time for hospitals to be held accountable for their profits and renew focus on their purpose; providing high-quality health care that is accessible and affordable.

Katy's commentary was [published in the Statesman Journal](#) on May 18, 2016.



As part of ONA's ongoing efforts to best serve our members and every nurse in Oregon, we are excited to present OCEAN (Oregon Continuing Education Activities for Nurses) online continuing education. It is available at: [www.OregonRN.org](http://www.OregonRN.org)

## Featuring courses on topics such as:



Health Effects of Climate Change



Hospital Nurse Staffing



Medical Marijuana for Pain



How Laws are Made in Oregon

This new learning environment provides continuing education (CE) opportunities to ONA members and nurses across the region, in a convenient and user-friendly format. The OCEAN system features:

- Self-paced, independent learning modules, covering a broad range of topics and encompassing all levels of nursing practice
- CE that is conveniently accessible 24 hours a day
- The ability to house each learner's CE history for easy access and retrieval

You can find out more about using OCEAN online CE by visiting the ONA website, [www.OregonRN.org](http://www.OregonRN.org).

*We encourage you to enjoy the courses currently available and be sure to check back regularly as more courses are added.*

## Vital Labor Signs



Our regular review of labor activities in our area highlights the struggles of two labor unions with our employer, specifically ONA and the hospitalists at Sacred Heart in Eugene-Springfield. We extend our support to health care workers in their efforts to improve working conditions.

### *SH Hospitalists Work Without a Contract*

In a recent letter to the editor of the Register-Guard, David Schwartz expressed his frustration with the lack of movement by Sacred Heart medical centers. As president of the Pacific Northwest Hospital Medicine Association, American Federation of Teachers (AFT) Local 6552, Schwartz and his team have been bargaining with their employer for more than 18 months without an end in sight. He writes, “we are dangerously understaffed, and recruiting has been slow and arduous. We continue to seek resolution of all outstanding issues and prompt settlement of our first contract so we can get back to the business of building the premier hospitalist group in the Pacific Northwest.”

### *Nurses Bargaining at Sacred Heart*

In their fantastic June 1 newsletter, the ONA bargaining team at Sacred Heart highlight their priorities in their current bargaining round. We strongly urge you to [read the news yourself here](#). The bargaining team focuses on improved staffing by ensuring meals and breaks are not missed, increased compensation for extra shifts, improved orientation, and a cap on mandatory call of 60 hours per cycle. In home care services, they propose to address workplace violence, improve safety and support for injured nurses. They have met with the employer several times in the last few weeks and have nine more bargaining sessions scheduled for June. [Learn more here](#).

### *McKenzie Willamette Nurses Sticker Up for SEIU*

Also in Eugene, ONA nurses at McKenzie Willamette (MCW) are supporting SEIU Local 49, which represents 350 CNAs, technicians and other McKenzie

Willamette workers. ONA-MCW

officers and union stewards are distributing stickers for nurses to wear on Tuesday, June 7, as SEIU enters their third bargaining session that day. Local 49 is working through difficult negotiations with their employer.

### *Other Bargaining In Our Area*



At Good Samaritan Regional Medical Center in Corvallis, nurses held a “Black Thursday” job action. Nurses in each unit and shift wore black scrubs to support their bargaining team. At Samaritan Lebanon

Community Hospital, ONA nurses are bargaining with their employer to eliminate a two-tiered benefit system and for parental leave.

Nurses continue to bargain with Mercy Medical Center in Roseburg, where both sides have made a commitment to clean up language so that the contract will be followed once negotiations are concluded. After three bargaining sessions, they remain apart on issues around orientation, floating, PTO, holidays and minimum shifts required of per diem nurses.

The ONA collective bargaining agreement with Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria expired on May 31. Federal law requires employers to maintain the status quo as long as negotiations are progressing forward. The parties have met only twice with disagreements on education benefits, low-census requirements, limits for on-call and wages.



## Vital Labor Signs

*(continued from page 4)*

Last month, nurses employed by the Klamath County Public Health Department ratified a three-year agreement that includes a new classification for BSN nurses, who will receive a 5 percent wage increase. The employer also agreed to a 20 percent increase in the County's contribution to the employee's premium for medical plans and a 20 percent increase in on-call pay.

Cascade Health Solutions, a home health and hospice provider in Eugene, rejected ONA proposals around the on-call positions, including a third part-timer position, earned leave, an increase in minimum guaranteed hours, and self-scheduling. A few years ago, regular nurses successfully advocated for the creation of two on-call positions and won additional

benefits for these positions in a letter of agreement 18 months ago. Nurses contend that the on-call positions serve an essential role in safe patient care. The parties also disagree on their wage proposals and next meet on June 6.

Silverton Hospital was recently purchased by the Legacy Health, which bills itself as the largest nonprofit, locally-owned health system in the Portland-Vancouver area. The 48-bed hospital based in Silverton includes a Level IV trauma center, a 24-hour emergency room and a birth center. Nurses at Silverton Hospital have been and continue to be represented by ONA. However, with the change in ownership, nurses will soon begin to negotiate a new collective bargaining agreement with Legacy.

### UPCOMING EVENTS IN EUGENE

[OSV Summit, July 29.](#) Oregon Strong Voice is a statewide network of regional alliances between labor unions and community-based organizations.

[UO Labor Education and Research Center, Summer School, July 29 – 31, Eugene, OR.](#) Together We Rise! Building strength, equity and strategies for a workers' justice agenda.

STAY CONNECTED with Oregon AFL-CIO. [Sign up for weekly updates and alert actions by clicking here.](#)

## ONA 2016 ANNUAL BARGAINING UNIT LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE

Sept. 30 – Oct. 1, 2016

Portland Hilton

921 SW 6th Ave., Portland, OR 97204



## Is The Stewardship Of Nature A Task Of Labor?

PSU conference examines “red-green” alliances; film debut celebrates NW labor leader

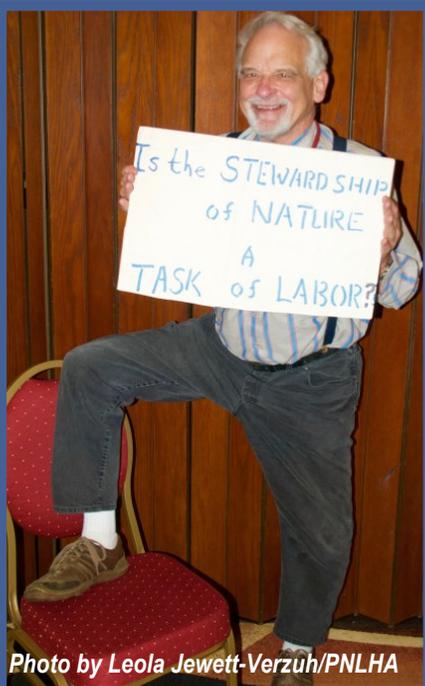


Photo by Leola Jewett-Verzuh/PNLHA

Tom Getts, a member of Laborers International Union of North America - Local 737, asks a timely question.

Speakers at the 48th Pacific Northwest Labor History Association (PNLHA), which was held May 20 – 22 at Portland State University, addressed whether labor should be involved in environmental issues. Tom Lux, PNLHA President, set the tone for the conference by asserting

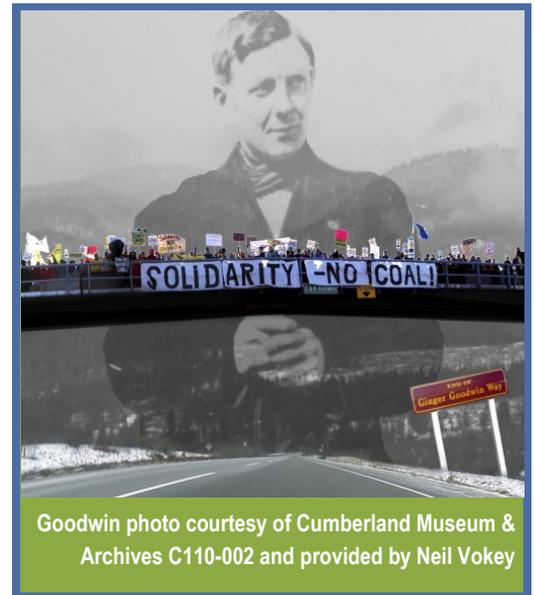


Lovejoy Fountain gushes forth near Portland State University on an overcast Saturday afternoon, where a recent conference explored labor and the environment.

that labor should be at the forefront of eco-policy. He continued, “only labor can talk about the process of adapting to climate change. Communities should not be sacrifice zones for good jobs. Labor needs to be at the table” when policy discussions focus on replacing fossil-fuel industries with a greener economy. “If you are not at the table, you are probably on the menu! Clean energy can create tens of thousands of more good jobs” than the nonrenewable energy industry currently employs.

The conference’s theme, “Labor, Justice and the Environment: Historical Insights, Alliances and Challenges,” brought together academics, union members, environmental activists (“enviros”), and other progressives. The opening plenary panel featured Barbara Dudley, Senior Policy Adviser with Oregon Working Families Party, and George Heyman, a member of the British Columbia (BC) legislature. Dudley identified examples of the “red-green alliance,” where unions collaborate with “enviros,” e.g., Earth Firsters cooperated with United Steelworkers to foster sustainable logging a generation ago. Heyman described efforts by “enviros,” labor, and First Nations in the BC logging industry to “create the most jobs per cubic meter of wood,” including value-added production.

On Saturday, many attendees viewed **Goodwin’s Way**, the U.S. premiere of Neil Vokey’s documentary film. Albert “Ginger” Goodwin organized mineworkers and smelters on Vancouver Island, BC, where he led several strikes. In 1918, a police constable, pursuing Goodwin for draft evasion deep in the BC backcountry, shot him dead. In the 1990s, a stretch of BC highway was named Ginger Goodwin Way, but the official signs



Goodwin photo courtesy of Cumberland Museum & Archives C110-002 and provided by Neil Vokey

quietly and mysteriously disappeared courtesy of the right-wing government in 2001. In his honor, homemade signs emblazoned Goodwin’s Way sporadically crop up along the highway. The film features interviews and accounts of his life and times that continue to inspire others in the labor movement. For more information, [click here to go to the Pacific NW Labor History Association website](#) or [click here to go to the Goodwin’s Way website](#).