



Sonoma County Regional Newsletter

Region 6 – Sonoma County & Lake County

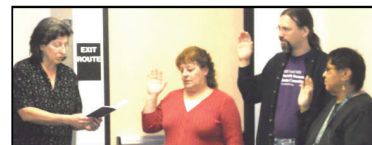
SEIU 1021 Members Vote 'YES' On Bylaws

www.seiu1021.org/ (Posted by: Carlos Rivera on 3/25/2011 at 5:30 PM)

The results of the bylaws vote are in: **4,693—Yes to 963—No.**

Our members have voted overwhelmingly to change the current bylaws by a 5 to 1 vote.

“Today, we delivered on a promise to make our union stronger. With this vote, our members approved the bylaws changes that we need to swiftly and decisively respond to opportunistic politicians and special interest coming after our jobs, pensions, healthcare benefits and the services we provide,” said SEIU 1021 President Roxanne Sanchez.



Roxanne Sanchez, Local 1021 President, swearing in BFC members to the Executive Board on March 26, 2011; [L-R] Nadeen Roach, Amos Eaton, and Mary Jane Logan.

Region 6 County Area Representative: Nancy Atwell

Welcome to the first issue of the SEIU 1021 Sonoma Area regional newsletter! This newsletter is a forum for all of us, an important part of the Communications Action Network (CAN) in our region, and a critical part of the Northern California local's new Secure Retirement Campaign.* SEIU 1021 covers more than a third of the state, with more than 50,000 members, over 200 chapters and scores of committees and caucuses, so it's more important than ever to expand our capacity to communicate. I look forward to issuing the newsletter on a quarterly basis.

(* Watch the Secure Retirement campaign video at www.SEIU1021.org (politics tab)

Nancy Atwell

Sonoma/Lake County Area Representative

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Our Other Sonoma County Board Members:



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Larry Bradshaw

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Sonoma / Lake County Area Representative meetings for 2011

- May 24
- June 18 (Sat.)
- July 26
- August 23
- Sept. 17 (Sat.)
- October 25
- November 15
- December 2
(Friday, unity event)

May 2011
Volume 1, Issue 1

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Editor: Nancy Atwell
Layout: Josh Smith

Submission deadline for
the next issue is June 7.





~ Sonoma County ~

SEIU 1021 Represents Employees in the following industries:

City

- City of Santa Rosa
- City of Rohnert Park
- City of Sonoma
- City of Sebastopol

*Find out the latest at
www.SEIU1021.org*

Call our Member Resources Center at 1-877-OUR-1021 for questions about your work or our union.

County

- Sonoma County Office of Education
- County of Sonoma



County Chapter Officers [left to right] Paul Foster, Secty/Treasurer; Chip Atkin, Cope Chair; Bob Moffett, President

Courts

- Sonoma County Superior Court

Private Non-Profit (PNP)

- North Bay Regional Center
- Community Action Partnership
- Community Support Network
- Council on Aging



Fiona Robertson, Chapter President; and Heidi Ostreich, Vice President.

Schools

- Santa Rosa Junior College
- Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District
- Geyserville Unified School District
- Sebastopol Unified School District
- Sonoma County Junior College District
- Sonoma County Office of Education

Special Districts

- Sonoma County Library
- Sonoma County Transit

Send labeled pictures of your chapter officers for future newsletters.

Private Non Profit [PNP] Industry Committee meetings are attended by members who work for a Private Non profit agency, including Regional Centers for the developmentally disabled (DD), DD providers, Museums/SF Exploratorium, Health Agencies, Community Housing, Head Start, and adult entertainers. We discuss issues we face within our industry, discuss contracts and how to improve them, create a stronger alliance between chapters, and educate our members about their rights as private non profit employees. Every three months, we rotate locations throughout the local.

Denis Villanueva, Industry Chair, (530) 339-6117 or (209) 324-8960
Gina Castellano Head Start Vice Chair: (209) 462-7153
Eric Stern DD Vice Chair: (510) 387-2713
Ramses Housing Vice Chair: (415) 948-1093

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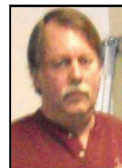
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Oakland Unified School District





~ Sonoma County ~

Sonoma County COPE Strategic Planning

By Paul Kaplan

For the past few months, our local COPE committee has been reviewing our strengths and weaknesses with the goal of making a strategic plan for the upcoming period. We have been talking about how to balance the immediate issues and long range objectives. For instance, how can we work on the issues around the current state budget crisis and involve and educate more and more of our members in all of the bargaining units in Sonoma County (schools, cities, county, private non-private, etc.).

To date, we have identified the state budget as the main focus of our efforts in the next few months. The budget shortfalls and the realignment questions affect every one of our members in Sonoma County. Please read Chip Aitkin's article on the state budget. In addition, we want to support the county CAT team in their effort to lobby the Board of Supervisors regarding savings ideas, instead of further cuts to program and personnel.

We also want to promote the value of public services. In addition to combating the misinformation about public employees, we want to present accurate pictures of what our members do in the community. We want to develop consistent messaging and build alliances in the community that support the role of public service. To do this, we are starting

a COPE newsletter for our members and a public communication team for external communication to the public; letters to the editor, Op ed columns, etc.

Labor unity, member education, and involvement are the other areas that we highlighted in our plan. Last year, we saw many unions on opposite sides in local city council and county wide races. When labor's efforts are split, our effectiveness is diminished. Finding the ways to work together and be on the same page when it comes to our conditions of work, benefits and pensions is going to be essential so that we can achieve common election victories. One way of working on this is at the labor council level. The newsletter, plus e mail communication with members and a local web site for county employees are tools that we are trying to use to educate and involve members in the work around politics.

For further info about COPE and our plans, please come to one of our meetings. We meet the first Tuesday of the month at 6:00 PM at our office on B Street.

You can contact me at: pkaplan50@yahoo.com or COPE Chair, Chip Atkin at: wcatkin@earthlink.net.

"The American Labor Movement has consistently demonstrated it's devotion to the public interest. It is, and has been, good for all America."

-President John F Kennedy

• GOTV [Get Out The Vote].

Make phone calls, or recruit other members to participate in phone banks and other activities before an election.

SEIU Mission Statement

*We are the
Service Employees International Union,
an organization of 2.2 million members
united by the belief in the dignity and worth of
workers and the services they provide and
dedicated to improving the lives of workers
and their families and creating
a more just and humane society.*

~ California ~

COPE Rises to State Budget Challenges



*By Chip Atkin, Chair
Sonoma County Chapter of 1021 COPE*

The Great Recession has played havoc with the State budget, creating a massive \$26.4 billion deficit. The State Budget impacts virtually every SEIU 1021 member, because it provides some funding to all the organizations for whom we work. SEIU 1021 Committee On Political Education (COPE) has taken on the challenge to shape budget proposals, to limit the immediate damage of cuts, and to set up favorable circumstances for our members down the line.

Governor Brown is proposing to close the \$26.4 Billion gap, half by cuts to services, and half by extending temporary tax increases (.25% income tax surcharge, 1% extra sales tax, and .5% boost in Vehicle License Fee) that were scheduled to expire this year. Many of you have begun to hear about cuts to your program or to the programs around you.

Brace yourselves, because the cuts to our client's services and the loss of jobs, will be twice as bad, if the tax extensions fail to pass in this June's election.

The first hurdle is to get the State Legislature to put the tax extensions on the June ballot. To do this, Governor Brown will need the cooperation of a few Republicans.

The second hurdle will be getting people to vote for keeping our taxes at the same level as last year. Given all the derogatory articles in the news about public employees, their "lavish pensions" being the cause of deficits, etc, you can see there is a segment of the public who has taken our valuable services for granted.

Therefore, it will be important that all our members speak up about the value of what we do, and the impacts the cuts will have on the public. Probably beginning in April, COPE will be mobilizing campaign efforts to get these tax extensions approved, and we will be asking for your help in these efforts.

In the meantime, COPE has been coordinating input from all the different Industries we represent (Counties, Cities, Schools, Non-Profits, etc.), to ascertain how Governor Browns Realignment proposals will affect us.

Phase I Realignment would take services (such as Child Welfare, Adult Protective Services, Mental Health, Substance Abuse, Adult Parole, Juvenile Justice, etc) that have some level of service and bureaucracy at both a local and a State level, and make them the primary responsibility of the local level. COPE has been lobbying legislators to make sure realignment works correctly.

Realignment does promise some efficiencies, but past realignments, initiated by the State, have fooled local governments by giving them "100% of the responsibility and 50% of the resources." COPE has been demanding that there be adequate level of funding for the responsibilities passed down.

To protect services and jobs, COPE has also been asking that there be clear standards for services, and that services not be contracted out unless there is a mechanism to ensure the quality of those services are maintained.

These are dire times, but COPE is protecting Public Employees from being scapegoated, and fighting to ensure our interested and taken into consideration in the changes that are coming.



The Social and Economy Justice Committee [SEJ]

Oversees nine diverse committees of our union for leadership development, community awareness, and member

solidarity. Please look us up on the SEIU 1021 website or contact the Chair person Gladys Gray at: Gladys.gray@seiu1021.org or call her at (510) 395-7624.



~ California ~

From Wisconsin to California



By Larry Bradshaw,
3rd Vice President, Region 6

It is a challenging time to work in the public sector or to work for a publicly funded non-profit agency. Since the Wall Street crash of 2008, life for public workers has gotten harder.

On one side we are confronted with wage concessions, furloughs or a reduction in our hours. At the same time we chase after the rising cost of gas, fuel and food. Health care co-pays, deductibles and premiums shoot-up at double the inflation rate. We face job losses and increasing economic insecurity. Some of us have mortgages that are upside down, or in default and some families have lost their homes. Many of us who are still working face increased workloads and added stress as we struggle to do our jobs and the work of our laid off brothers and sisters or cope with vacancies that go unfilled. When we sit down at the bargaining table, we do so with a gun to our heads.

Then there are our pensions. Public sector pensions are now public enemy number one. Shout radio, conservative politicians, and 'concerned billionaires', like the Koch brothers, have discovered the source of all evil in the universe - your and my pension!

Across the country it is now open season on public workers. Our pensions and our Unions are demonized and scapegoated for a recession and a jobless recovery; neither of which were of our making.

Add to this charged environment a new crop of conservative 'Tea Party' Republicans Governors like Wisconsin's Scott Walker whose agenda is nothing less than the destruction of collective bargaining in the public sphere.

So yes, this is a difficult time to work in the public or non-profit sectors. If this was the total picture, it would indeed be a bleak prospect. Fortunately, there is another side to 2011 and it is one of excitement and promise.

We have witnessed the largest labor rallies and mobilizations in memory, as tens of thousands have occupied the State capital in Madison and over 200,000 have marched in support. All this is being led by public sector workers.

The dramatic mobilization of public workers was initiated spontaneously by rank and file union members, by students and by working people who aren't even in a union. The power of Union members and our supporters have transformed the situation in Wisconsin in a matter of days.

In a matter of weeks, the mobilization by public workers shifted public opinion polls across the country as our neighbors, co-workers and friends came out in support of preserving collective bargaining rights.

The outcome of the fight in Wisconsin is still up in the air - the situation can go either way and can end in victory or in defeat. However, there does seem to be some lessons that we can draw from the 'Battle of Wisconsin'. Wisconsin shows that we can not be timid, nor defeatist and we cannot be slow to act.

If we are to survive beyond 2011, Union members need to speak loudly, boldly and to proclaim that public workers are not 'the problem'. We need to say:

- Wall Street excesses and greed crashed the stock market, gutted our pension funds, fueled the budget deficits and caused tens of thousands to lose their homes.
- Cutting wages and benefits does not create jobs. As Robert Reich, former US Secretary of Labor wrote on April 3rd, 2011, "The same untruth is used to justify corporate and state battles against unions. But it is dead wrong. Meager wages and benefits are reducing the spending power of tens of millions of American workers which is prolonging the jobs recession."
- Budget deficits are in reality revenue deficits. Last month Reich wrote, "The truth is, if the superrich paid their fair share of taxes, government wouldn't be broke. If Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker hadn't handed out tax breaks to corporations and the well off, Wisconsin wouldn't be in a budget crisis. If Washington hadn't extended the Bush tax cuts for the rich, eviscerated the estate tax and created loopholes for the private-equity and hedge-fund managers, the Federal budget wouldn't look nearly as bad."

We need to draw the line in Wisconsin and we need to draw the line in California. 2011 will be a year of major importance for public workers.



Aren't you in the 1021 Network yet?

Weekly Voice of SEIU 1021
1021NewsWire.org

Tweet with 1021
twitter.com/seiu1021

Watch 1021 on TV
youtube.com/seiu1021

Political Action Central
1021LiveWire.org

Like 1021 ... a lot
facebook.com/seiu1021

1021 State Budget Campaign
1021Votes.org

This statement could save your job

"If this discussion could in any way lead to my being disciplined or terminated I respectfully request that my steward be present at the meeting. Without representation present, I choose not to respond to any questions or statements."

These rights are called "Weingarten Rights" based on a 1975 Supreme Court decision (NLRB vs. J. Weingarten). As with all rights, if we do not use them we lose them.

Your protections as a steward

When you're dealing with management on union business, you deal with the employer as an equal.

You can imagine how happy that makes them. That's why the National Labor Relations Act and state labor boards specifically protect you (and other union leaders) from punishment or discrimination by management because of your union activity. It's illegal for an employer to:

- Deny you promotions or pay opportunities.
- Isolate you from other workers.
- Saddle you with extra work or unusually tough assignments.
- Deny you overtime opportunities.
- Enforce work rules unfairly against you or harass you with extra supervision.

Your contract may also spell out your rights, and perhaps you're covered by state and local ordinances if you're a government worker.

If your employer tries to discriminate against you in this way, it's a violation of federal law.

SEIU 1021 COPE

Leading the way to a new political majority for working families

The core purpose of the 1021 Committee On Political Education (COPE) is to lead the local's campaign to create a new political majority for working families by increasing member leadership and engagement in: worksite political education, community partnerships, issue advocacy, electoral campaigning, and voluntary contributions to our COPE fund.

Members and staff work in partnership through working committees -- our local-wide committee and county COPE committees -- to achieve our program goals. Through our COPE committees, members determine priorities, interview and endorse candidates, approve contributions to candidate and ballot measure campaigns, coordinate member participation in political activities, and hold elected officials accountable.

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Mary Sanders, Organizing Chair



"When I talk to non-union workers about my experience working a union job, they really get it. It means more to them when they hear from people who actually work in jobs like theirs!"

For union members, "**organizing the unorganized**" is the most effective form of job security! Organizing non-union workers eliminates non-union competition that threatens our wages, benefits, and working conditions.

"**How often do we hear bosses say during contract negotiations they can't afford to improve wages, benefits or job security because their non-union competitors have lower costs?**"

As long as there are employers in our communities who run non-union shops, our wages, benefits and working conditions are threatened.

History of SEIU



SEIU's commitment to building a fair economy, providing workers a voice on the job, fighting for equality and ensuring that all working people can live with dignity spans the Union's 90 year history.

We are the Service Employees International Union,
an organization of more than 2.2 million members
united by the belief in the dignity and worth of workers
and the services they provide
and dedicated to improving the lives of workers
and their families and creating a more
just and humane society.

~ Labor History ~

Triangle Fire Commemoration Draws Parallels With Today

By Mark Gruenberg

PAI Staff Writer

WASHINGTON (PAI)—A half-day-long Capitol Hill commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Triangle Shirtwaist Company fire in Manhattan – a fire that killed 146 young immigrant workers, almost all of them women – drew uncomfortable parallels with conditions facing workers today.

Speakers, including Sally Greenberg of the National Consumers League, Mine Workers President Cecil Roberts and workers who suffered exploitation or have seen family members die, used the March 21 meeting to urge mass action to restore workers' rights to collectively bargain and to toughen and enforce job safety and health laws.

The session honored the centennial of the fire, on the afternoon of March 25, 1911 at the Triangle Shirtwaist Co., a clothing maker – one of hundreds in lower Manhattan – that employed young mostly Jewish and Italian immigrant women. Almost half were under 20. It even had children in a “kindergarten” snipping thread, speakers said.

Triangle was located on the top three floors of the Asch Building on Greene Street. It was actually one of the “better” sweatshops in the city – thanks to a citywide strike by 20,000 female garment workers 18 months before – but it wasn't unionized.

When the blaze began, there was one exit. Triangle's two owners deliberately padlocked it to prevent theft. There was flammable debris – cuttings and scraps – everywhere and the workers were allowed to smoke. The fire escapes were flimsy and ended far above street level. Stairwells quickly filled with smoke and flames. The elevator stalled, though one woman slid down its cable.

Fire department hoses couldn't reach those top floors. The 18-minute blaze left workers with two alternatives: Burn to death – or jump. Many burned. The rest jumped.

Speakers said such horrifying working conditions still exist, in the U.S. and worldwide. They cited such

disasters as a 1991 poultry plant fire in Hamlet, N.C. – the doors were locked, again – the Texas City, Texas BP oil refinery blast in 2005 (15 dead, 180 injured), last year's Gulf of Mexico disaster (11 died) and the Upper Big Branch coal mine explosion in West Virginia (29). Bangladesh was the international example.

*When the blaze began,
there was one exit.
Triangle's two owners
deliberately padlocked it
to prevent theft.*

The exploiters are the same, they said: Firms that put profits ahead of people. The predominant victims of such disasters are, still, those who the most defenseless: The young, women, minorities and, importantly, non-unionized. They're unprotected.

And they said workers and their allies must seize a present teachable moment – the Right Wing campaign to obliterate workers' rights – to both re-energize the labor movement and to enlist allies and the general public. “Pay attention to the parallels between 1911 and today. Our call to action is really a manifesto,” Greenberg said.

Speakers explained how activists used the Triangle Fire and its aftermath, including acquittal of the company owners of manslaughter charges, both to grow unions – in particular the pioneering International Ladies Garment Workers – and to campaign successfully for reforms to health and safety laws, fire code improvement and enforcement and institution of workers comp.

Frances Perkins, a witness to the fire and then a social worker employed by the Consumers League, used its lessons to help draft and push through New Deal pro-labor legislation when she became Labor Secretary under FDR, biographer Kirstin Downey said. “We're continuing to deal with the same kinds of issues,” Downey added.

(Continued on page 9)

~ Labor History ~

Triangle Fire, continued

(Continued from page 8)

"We leave things to the market and this" – Triangle and subsequent workplace disasters – "is as good as it gets," said University of Maryland history professor Robyn Muncy. "The market can't be allowed to determine all the conditions under which people work," added Georgetown

*"If you want higher wages,
join a union.*

*If you want better health care,
join a union.*

*If you want health and safety on the job,
join a union.*

*If you want a greater America,
join a union"*

University labor history professor Joe McCartin. "There needs to be a public interest."

They will campaign for the same platform now: Updating, strengthening and enforcing job and mine

safety laws; preserving and enhancing minimum wage and anti-child-labor laws, bringing farm workers under child labor laws, saving worker protection programs from Right Wing budget raids; and upholding the right of collective bargaining.

The rights to organize and collectively bargain must be at the top of the list of ways to right present wrongs, just as they were in the New Deal, said Roberts, the keynote speaker. He was seconded by a last-minute addition: Stephanie Bloomingdale, Wisconsin AFL-CIO Secretary-Treasurer – who commented on "our arsonist," Right Wing GOP Gov. Scott Walker, who set fire to workers' rights there.

"No worker should have to listen to the boss say: 'I want you to do A, B and C, and it's dangerous,'" Roberts said. "Every worker should be empowered to look that boss in the eye and say: 'Kiss my ass.'"

"If you want higher wages, join a union. If you want better health care, join a union. If you want health and safety on the job, join a union. If you want a greater America, join a union," he declared.

And mass mobilization of unions and their allies – as in Wisconsin and Ohio and Indiana and elsewhere – "will move that agenda a lot faster," Roberts



GIVING LUTHER BURBANK HIS PROPS



Michael Allen
Assembly Member
District 7

I have written a letter to the California Museum to officially nominate Luther Burbank to the California Hall of Fame. The museum, along with former California First Lady Maria Shriver, created the California Hall of Fame to recognize legendary Californians who have influenced the state, the nation and the world.

Burbank was born in Massachusetts in 1849 but later moved to California, and he resided in Santa Rosa for 50 years. I believe that his many accomplishments and personal contributions to life here in California warrant Burbank a place in the California Hall of Fame.

Inside the District - March 2011 e-newsletter

If you wish to support his nomination of Luther Burbank to the California Hall of Fame, please contact Michael's field representative Sean Hamlin in the Santa Rosa District Office (707) 546-4500.

Region 6 Area Representative

SEIU 1021

600 B Street

Santa Rosa, CA, 95401



SEIU 1021 is on the Web!

Find us at: www.SEIU1021.org

Our mission is to ensure that all workers and their families have a voice in our Union, as well as our workplaces, government, and communities.

Fold Here

Why Wisconsin Matters to You

By Bill Steck, SEIU 1021 Political Director

Workers in Wisconsin and other states are fighting back to save the middle class.

Unions and collective bargaining rights are important for all workers. So when they are attacked anywhere, we have to stand in support everywhere. A nationwide, coordinated campaign -- backed by corporate CEOs -- is underway to strip workers of bargaining rights, union membership and benefits that are the basic building blocks of a middle class life.

What's at Stake?

Our Strength in the Workplace: On issues such as quality services, paid time off, workplace safety.

Our Strength as Unions: 1 million of the nation's 16 million union members could lose their voice.

Our Strength in Supporting Pro-Worker Candidates and Policies: Our unions provide huge financial and logistical support to pro-worker candidates and to the entire progressive movement.

Here are the facts:

1. Republican Gov. Scott Walker pushed through a bill that took away almost all rights that public employees in Wisconsin have to bargain a contract and even join a union.

2. In Wisconsin alone, the livelihoods of more than 14,000 SEIU members-including nurses and other healthcare providers-are adversely affected, as well as thousands of teachers, firefighters and other public employees. But if these same attacks on us occur in other states, tens of thousands more would suffer too.

3. Every day for more than three weeks leading up to the anti-worker vote, faith and civil rights leaders, community groups, politicians, union members and private sector workers among others stood with Wisconsin families demonstrating in the state Capitol to prevent the Legislature from passing the anti-union bill. Tens of thousands more demonstrated in cities across the country.

4. Gov. Walker claimed this was about solving the state's budget crisis, but he just gave big tax breaks to the very wealthy and corporations who funded his 2010 campaign.

5. The union workers had offered concessions to their wages and benefits, but the governor still went forward and pushed through his anti-union bill.

We won't stop fighting for the middle class.

Find out the latest at www.SEIU1021.org