

LOCAL 620



Stronger Together

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‘State of the Union’



From the Executive Director
Walt Hamilton

For myself, this time of the year always prompts reflection on last year’s events and consideration of what lies ahead.

2007 was in many ways a typical year for Local 620 members with contracts being negotiated and wage and benefit improvements achieved in many agencies including the County of Santa Barbara, the City of Santa Maria, Cambria Community Services District, City of Morro Bay and Goleta Water District.

Local 620’s membership still continues to grow each year and with it, the power and influence of our combined membership strength. If current organizing plans bear fruit, 2008 will be the year our membership tops 4,000 for the first time. This is a far cry from the 700 members when I first took the job back in 1984 and like many things in life much has changed over those years but much remains the same.

The County settlement is always an important event for Local 620 since the County chapter represents the largest group of members and was in fact at the heart or core of our organization when our county members originally organized as Santa Barbara County Employees’ Association (SBCEA) in 1947. Many changes have occurred in our organization as well as with

our employer agencies since that time, of course, but the County contract settlement is still a significant event each time it comes up for re-negotiation.

This year was no different with tremendous participation by members in the effort, starting with another record number of nominees to serve on the bargaining team followed by a record number of contract action team members (CATs) taking charge of organizing their work sites and finally by one of the largest rallies in years by public employees in the area when over 550 rallied for a fair contract in three separate locations on Tuesday, October 9, 2007.

Having said that, most would agree our results were mixed with most but not all members getting good wage and benefit improvements over the next three years. A major victory was achieved through a new ‘classification & compensation’ system for county clerical employees which will usher in a new ability to earn competitive wages through skill attainment. Another major accomplishment achieved by our team was the elimination of the unfair double retirement contribution for members hired after 1994; but a major goal to improve our basic retirement benefit had to be deferred to a ‘re-opener’ this year when right in the middle of our bargaining the pension fund got hit with a new calculation projected to cost the county increased annual contributions somewhere between \$10 – 16 million.

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Our second largest Chapter is the City of Santa Barbara. Their current three year contracts expire next fall which promises to be another major project involving a large number of member activists.

'State of the Union' Continued

From the Executive Director
Walt Hamilton

This re-opener on the basic pension benefit in 2008 is shaping up to be another huge issue, with the County wanting to propose radical new changes to our pensions probably through creation of a different, hybrid (defined benefit & 401K type) plan for new hires and perhaps offering benefit enhancements to current employees as an inducement. One doesn't have to look too far to find a model of this type of plan as Local 521 and the County of Kern recently agreed to just such an arrangement.

Our second largest Chapter is the City of Santa Barbara and their current three year contracts expire next fall. Together, these contracts will be another major project involving large numbers of member activists there as well.

In other ways 2007 was anything but typical with the SEIU International reorganizing public sector local unions in California in March. Local 620 became the only public sector local in SEIU independently electing our own officers and determining our own bargaining issues outside of the large merged union structures created by the national union.

Our elected officers asserted our unique status under a contract called an affiliation agreement that sets out the legal relationship between the national and regional bodies and our local union. Basically that contract grants Local 620 members the right to elect our own officers, set our own dues and budget, determine our own staffing levels and bargaining demands for our members here locally, irrespective of the regional structures just created.

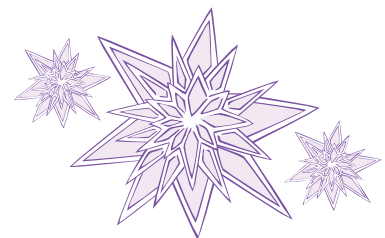
Our current, independent local status is under review by our elected officers and they have expressed their intention to continue to evaluate the pros and cons of staying independent or merging into our regional structure now known as Local 721. It is likely that this assessment process will intensify during 2008 and lead to

a vote by our Board of directors and our membership near the end of the year or the beginning of 2009 after Local 721 adopts their new constitution and By-laws and elects their new officers.

Rounding out the 2008 picture, the Presidential primary in February will set the stage for our national decisions in November; the Governor and legislature are poised to announce a plan for a statewide pay or play health care initiative to be submitted to the voters; SEIU national will elect new officers and determine program for the next four years when they meet in Puerto Rico in May; the Board of Supervisors seats are up for re-election in the First and Fourth Districts; a proposal to extend the Measure "D" sales tax to fund road maintenance will be on the ballot and, well, you get the picture. There will be plenty for our members to do in 2008, just as there was in 2007 and each year before.

As the saying goes: The rich have money and the poor have time. To the extent that was ever true, you can see how working people active in their union have to spend their time. My thanks and appreciation to all our members who serve to make our union effective. Whether by their service on the elected Boards or bargaining teams or as stewards or CAT's, we all collectively make this union strong by our individual contributions.

On a personal note, I know I also speak for our officers and staff when I ask you to accept my sincere best wishes for a prosperous new year for all Local 620 members and our families.



Update from Local 620's Northern Turf

By Bruce Corsaw

Local 620 members and staff are busy in the northern turf negotiating contracts, conducting field campaigns, representing fellow members.

Membership in the City of Grover Beach ratified a negotiated re-opener on December 4th, 2007, achieving an enhanced retirement formula of 2.5% @ 55. The shared cost of this enhancement was 3.329% of salary with the City picking-up 3.0% and employees picking-up .329%. The City is contractually required to have the new formula in effect January 1st, 2007.

Local 620 would like to congratulate the City of Paso Robles on forming their own Chapter within Local 620. For many years City employees have had the desire to have their own Chapter and recently they met the requirements to form a Chapter and were given Executive Board approval. Elections of officers were conducted in late November which resulted in the following members being elected to office beginning on January 1, 2008: Michael Hendry – Chairperson, Aaron Borden - Vice Chairperson and Laurie Engstrom – Secretary.



December 19th, 2007 the City of Santa Maria Full Time and 32 Hour members overwhelmingly ratified a 2 year agreement with the City. Negotiations began on October 2nd with both full time and part time members at the same table with a goal of combining both groups into a single MOU, and achieving a contract superior to past contracts. I am pleased to announce that we achieved both goals thanks to the following Bargaining Team members: Daniel Vegezzi, Herb Soares, Stan Powell, Keith Howland, Louie Raygoza, Cathy Davison, Tracy Aris and Javier Valencia. We were able to combine both employee groups into one Bargaining Unit within the MOU and achieve enhancements not seen in the City for over 20 years. The following are just some of the major enhancements achieved for the represented employees of the City of Santa Maria:

Salary: Year 1 - 5.5% effective December 22, 2007. Year 2 – 5.0% effective December 20, 2008

Equity adjustments: Wastewater Operator benchmark 3% and Evidence & Property Clerk benchmark 4%.

Health Care: 80% pick-up of any increases both years for FT and increase to \$300 monthly PT or PT cash-out \$250.

Dental: Was 100% employee paid, now 100% employer pick-up in March 2008 and 50% dependent in July 2009.

Non-Binding Arbitration: For both grievances and appeals from discipline.

Retirement: Re-opener to negotiate over cost of EPMC option for the present 2.7% @ 55 retirement in February 2008.

Part Time (32): Increase floating holiday from 12 to 24 hours, added jury duty pay, added paid bereavement leave, added Life insurance \$25,000 and personal leave cash-out option of 32 hours annually.

2008 brings new challenges to the northern turf with upcoming bargaining in San Luis Obispo Coastal School District, Port San Luis Harbor District, City of Morro Bay, Santa Maria Cemetery District and City of Grover Beach, all of which have MOUs that expire on June 30th, 2008. Followed by San Luis Superior Court scheduled later in the year. Along with strong membership support, I am confident that we will achieve victories in our upcoming negotiations with these employers.

Together Local 620 membership can overcome obstacles at all of the bargaining tables and in support for all working families. One way is by voluntarily contributing to SEIU Local 620's Political Program (COPE) so that we have the funds to make substantive impacts and changes with Local, State & Federal Government such as Universal Health Care especially due to the rising cost of healthcare. Three to five dollars per pay period may not sound like very much, but when you multiply these amounts by thousands of members it enables us to make a difference with our elected leaders and pass much needed laws that benefit working families.

Local 620
Unite • Participate • Overcome
Stronger Together



The proof of our increased membership participation was also clearly evident in the final count of the County contract ratification vote.

CATs Flex Political Muscle Resulting in Phenomenal Union Victories

By Marcelino Sepulveda & Joel Rodriguez Flores

It has been an unprecedented season of union activism leading to victories at the Local this past quarter. In coordination with the Local 620 Organizers, County members exercised political muscle and saw results phenomenally beyond everyone's expectations.

According to Mario Chavez, our political director, "this year we saw a 1000% increase in member participation above the last contract campaign." For this, we must congratulate our Contract Action Teams (CATs) in Lompoc, Santa Barbara, and Santa Maria who activated employees county-wide to voice their opinions to the Board of Supervisors in noon-time rallies, phone calls, and emails. According to bargaining team members, this expression of political power helped shift the dynamics at the bargaining table in favor of our members—the end result being a new contract with significant gains.

The proof of our increased membership participation was also clearly evident in the final count of the County contract ratification vote. As Walt Hamilton, our executive director, explained, "Participation was higher than in many previous years and the contract approval rate was almost ten to one. The clerical approval rate was much greater than ten to one."

After our county contract negotiations victory we focused our CAT power on getting Shawn Terris successfully re-elected to the board governing the Santa Barbara County Employees' Retirement System (SBCERS). As a member of that board for the past 9 years, Shawn has worked to help maintain and improve retirement benefits for County employees. However, this year she faced a tough

challenge from an opponent endorsed by both a County Supervisor and the County Auditor-Controller. He waged a relentless campaign of false accusations about Shawn, plastering County facilities with his literature and sending postcards and emails to our members' homes and work email addresses.

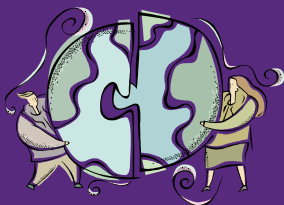
CAT members countywide responded by talking to hundreds of their co-workers on the ground and during Union "phone banks" to dispel executive management's lies about Shawn Terris. Despite unethical scare tactics, underhanded politics, and other alleged election misconduct, the dirty politics of County officials could not stand up against our CAT Power!

Our CATs helped Shawn win by a landslide victory: election participation was 42% over the previous record turnout, and 73% of the counted votes were for Shawn Terris—an almost three to one win!

Shawn holds a seat as a State retirement representative, so she also had this to say: "I'm awed, I was hoping to win but this is a landslide! Thanks to all the hard work of CAT members. The CATS won this election – they were the troops on the front lines turning out the membership to vote. Without you I would have probably lost. Your volunteering – all of it counted – every little bit of it helped!"

Continued on next page

Working Together Works!



Our campaigns may be over but we hope the momentum will continue.

CATs Flex Political Muscle Continued

By Marcelino Sepulveda & Joel Rodriguez Flores

The CATs won a major victory for us against management locally and statewide. This victory insures a pro-labor leadership at the local Retirement Board level but also at the State level for all other County Retirement Systems. Employees from around the state were concerned about this election. The CATs are statewide heroes. Never underestimate any of your volunteering – all of it counted – every little bit of it helped!”

The phenomenal success of our CAT power demonstrates, once again, that incredible achievements are possible when we act together in a well-organized manner – and this is the essence of belonging to a Union! The campaigns may be over but we will work to continue the momentum. We’ve received suggestions from CAT members for monthly or quarterly meetings to keep the spirit of collective organizing alive. We encourage ideas like this because we know we will need to flex our CAT power again!



Represent!

The mission of a Local 620 Union Steward is to listen, learn and provide effective leadership to the membership at your worksite. Stewards communicate with members, field representatives and employers to assist union members in problem solving work issues and in empowering members to become more active through confidence, trust and motivation. Stewards maintain knowledge about employees’ rights and demonstrate a professional attitude, and stand in solidarity to promote membership, organize for union issues, and resolve members’ issues.

At Steward trainings newly pledged Stewards learn about employees rights to due process, including “Weingarten Rights” and the right to a “Skelly” hearing for major disciplines, and about grievances and alternatives to filing grievances. In the workplace, while filing a grievance is necessary for documentation, it allows production to continue without disruption. Other discussion centers around effective actions to move an issue: circulating and signing petitions; writing letters to City Council; members showing up at a City Council meeting; members wearing purple on a given day. Veteran Stewards give tips to newbies, emphasizing the need to maintain confidentiality (without that trust, co-workers can vote you out of being a Steward), to be involved in contract issues, and to stay knowledgeable about MOU provisions by working closely with the Field Rep for your worksite.

Future Steward trainings will be held on a schedule to be announced soon. If you are interested in becoming or being trained as a Steward, please call 963.0601 to get a Steward Election Petition, and be placed on the training list. All attendees must RSVP for their attendance.

See you there! - Lisa Pompa

The Conscience of a Liberal

Introducing This Blog
By Paul Krugman

“I was born in 1953. Like the rest of my generation, I took the America I grew up in for granted—in fact, like many in my generation I railed against the very real injustices of our society, marched against the bombing of Cambodia, went door to door for liberal candidates. Its only in retrospect that the political and economic environment of my youth stands revealed as a paradise lost, an exceptional episode in our nation’s history.”

That’s the opening paragraph of my new book, *The Conscience of a Liberal*. It’s a book about what has happened to the America I grew up in and why, a story that I argue revolves around the politics and economics of inequality.

I’ve given this New York Times blog the same name, because the politics and economics of inequality will, I expect, be central to many of the blog posts—although I also expect to be posting on a lot of other issues, from health care to high-speed Internet access, from productivity to poll analysis. Many of the posts will be supplements to my regular columns; I’ll be using this space to present the kind of information I can’t provide on the printed page—especially charts and tables, which are crucial to the way I think about most of the issues I write about.

In fact, let me start this blog off with a chart that’s central to how I think about the big picture, the underlying story of what’s really going on in this country. The chart shows the share of the richest 10 percent of the American populations in total income—an indicator that closely tracks many other measure of economic inequality—over the past 90 years, as estimated by the economists Thomas Piketty and Manuel Saez. I’ve added labels indicating four key periods. These are:

The Long Gilded Age: Historians generally say that the Gilded Age gave way to the Progressive Era around 1900. In many important ways, though, the Gilded Age continued right through to the New Deal. As far as we can tell, income remained about as unequally distributed as it had been the late 19th century—or as it is today. Public policy did little to limit extremes of wealth and poverty, mainly because the political dominance of the elite remained intact; the politics of the era, in which Americans were divided by racial, religious, and cultural issues, have recognizable parallels with modern politics.

The Great Compression: The middle-class society I grew up in didn’t evolve gradually or automatically. It was created, in a remarkably short period of time, by FDR and the New Deal. As the chart shows, 1940s, with the rich losing ground while working Americans saw unprecedented gains. Economic historians call what happened the Great Compression, and it’s a seminal episode in American history.

Middle class America: That’s the country I grew up in. It was a society without extremes of wealth or poverty, a society of broadly shared prosperity, partly because strong unions, a high minimum wage, and a progressive Tax system helped limit inequality. It was also a society in which political bipartisanship mean something: in spite of all the turmoil of Vietnam and the civil rights movement, in spite of the sinister machinations of Nixon and his henchman, it was an era in which Democrats and Republicans agreed on basic values and could cooperate across party lines.

The great divergence: Since the late 1970s the America I knew has unraveled. We’re no longer a middle-class society, in which the benefits of economic growth are widely shared: between 1979 and 2005 the real income of the median household rose only 13 percent, but the income of the richest 0.1% of Americans rose 296 percent.

Most people assume that this rise in inequality was the result of impersonal forces, like technological change and globalization. But the great reduction of inequality that created middle-class America between 1935 and 1945 was driven by political change; I believe that politics has also played an important role in rising inequality since the 1970s. It’s important to know that no other advanced economy has seen a comparable surge in inequality—even the rising inequality of Thatcherite Britain was a faint echo of trend here.

On the political side, you might have expected rising inequality to produce a populist backlash. Instead, however, the era of rising inequality has also been the era of “movement conservatism,” the term both supporters and opponents use for the highly cohesive set of interlocking institutions that brought Ronald Reagan and Newt Gingrich branches of the federal government under George W. Bush. (Yes, Virginia, there is a vast right-wing conspiracy.)

Because of movement conservative political dominance, taxes on the rich have fallen, and the holes in the safety net have gotten bigger, even as inequality has soared. And the rise of movement conservatism is also at the heart of the bitter partisanship that characterizes politics today.

Why did this happen? Well that’s a long story — in fact, I’ve written a whole book about it, and also about why I believe America is ready for a big change in direction.

For now, though, the important thing is to realize that the story of modern America is, in large part, the story of the fall and rise of inequality.

ATTENTION: SANTA BARBARA COUNTY CLERICAL EMPLOYEES!

I want to briefly address some rumors that I have been receiving phone calls on recently regarding the Clerical Classification and Compensation Project, which was recently ratified. The Union and the County are still in negotiations over several of the details of the project. We will also continue to talk after employees are allocated into the new system in May of '08. However, I do want to address some issues that are apparently causing some concern among clerical employees.

#1 – Employees allocated to the new system will NOT be required to serve a new probationary period when they are allocated into the new classifications. If you are currently on probation you will have to complete your regular probationary period.

#2 – Except for the 1% raise in March 08, Clerical employee's WILL receive all of the negotiated cost of living increases in the recently negotiated MOU between the Union and the County in addition to being eligible for annual salary movement within the new system.

If you have any questions regarding the Clerical Classification and Compensation Project, or would like to volunteer to work on a sub-committee to help work out the final details of the plan, please call George Green at 963-0601 X 15.



President Walter Kauhn Retires

Walter Kauhn was instrumental in forming the new Chapter in the City of Paso Robles where he has been employed for 35 years. It is with great happiness and a little regret that Walter announced that he will retire from his position as Waste Water Plant Operator, as of December 21, 2007.

Walter's term as President of Local 620 is scheduled to end January 26, 2008. Walter has been a member of Local 620's Executive Board for over six years as the Small Chapter Board member and a Steward for many years. Walter has given his time without compensation to improve the quality of life for his co-workers in the City as well as for working men and women throughout Local 620's region. Walter negotiated great contracts and he helped shape Local 620 into the strong Union that we are today. Local 620 will miss Walter's leadership, dependability and unwavering dedication to improving the quality of life for working people everywhere.



We wish Walter much happiness in the retirement that he truly deserves and the retirement that he himself struggled to negotiate for all City employees. Thank you Walter for the years of service to the membership and the staff of Local 620.

Santa Barbara County Employees' Assn.
 SEIU Local 620
 933 Castillo Street
 Santa Barbara CA 93101

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION
 U.S. POSTAGE PAID
 SANTA BARBARA, CA
 PERMIT NO. 620

We are always updating our database. Please return the member change form to the Santa Barbara Office.

Santa Barbara Office
 933 Castillo Street
 Santa Barbara, CA
 93101
 Phone: 805-963-0601

If any information has changed:

New address?
 New Email Address?
 Name Change?
 New Job Location?
 New Job Classification?
 New Home Phone?

MEMBER CHANGE FORM	
Name:	Home Phone:
Address:	Work Phone:
City:	Zip Code:
Work Location:	Fax Number:
Job Title:	Date of Birth:
Beneficiary:	Relationship:
Email Address:	Signature:

Chapter: (Place an "X" next to your Chapter)

<input type="checkbox"/> Air Pollution Control District	<input type="checkbox"/> Pismo Beach, City of	<input type="checkbox"/> Santa Maria, City of
<input type="checkbox"/> Arroyo Grande, City of	<input type="checkbox"/> Port San Luis Harbor District	<input type="checkbox"/> Retired Chapter
<input type="checkbox"/> Atascadero, City of	<input type="checkbox"/> San Luis Coastal Unified School Dist	<input type="checkbox"/> Guadalupe, City of
<input type="checkbox"/> Cambria Community Svc District	<input type="checkbox"/> San Luis Obispo Court Tech. Unit	<input type="checkbox"/> Santa Barbara Hourly , City of
<input type="checkbox"/> Carpinteria, City of	<input type="checkbox"/> San Luis Obispo Courts "General"	
<input type="checkbox"/> Goleta Water District	<input type="checkbox"/> Santa Barbara "General", City of	
<input type="checkbox"/> Grover Beach, City of	<input type="checkbox"/> Santa Barbara "TAP", City of	
<input type="checkbox"/> Isla Vista Recreation & Parks Dist.	<input type="checkbox"/> Santa Barbara, County of	
<input type="checkbox"/> Morro Bay, City of	<input type="checkbox"/> Santa Barbara Court Employees	
<input type="checkbox"/> Paso Robles, City of	<input type="checkbox"/> Santa Maria Cemetery District	