

Jennie Kordenat receives major IBEW award

Jennie Kordenat of IBEW Local 48 received a Founders' Scholarship from the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. It is one of only two scholarships awarded annually to working members of the IBEW based on academic achievement and potential, character, leadership, social awareness, and career goals.



Kordenat will receive \$200 per semester hour toward her degree, with a maximum amount of \$24,000, not to exceed an eight-year period.

Kordenat, 41, is pursuing a pre-law degree, but also is interested in public administration and business administration.

Until mid-2011, Kordenat, who is married and has two active middle- and high-school-age daughters, three dogs, and a rabbit, was working full time and taking 10-15 credits at Washington State University-Vancouver campus. She had to take a break from school to attend to a life threatening medical issue afflicting her husband. Now that he's fully recovered, she will return to her previous schedule of work, family (now with an exchange student from Iceland), and school, next term.

Kordenat is a senior prevailing wage compliance investigator for Fair Contracting Foundation of Oregon and Southwest Washington. She has worked there since 2006.

A resident of Longview, Wash., Kordenat joined the IBEW in 1993, coming in as an apprentice. As a member of Local 970 she served as recording secretary, on the Executive Board, and on the Examining Board. [Local 970 merged with Local 48 earlier this year.]

Kordenat's father, Jan Kerby, is a retired 42-year member of the IBEW and a past president of Local 970. He now serves as registrar for Local 48.

Kordenat's husband, Keith, is apprenticeship coordinator for Portland-based Iron Workers Local 29.



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600 nurses, allies picket St. Charles Medical Center

The Bend hospital turns sprinklers on half an hour into informational picket

BEND — St. Charles Medical Center may have turned the sprinklers on picketing nurses Sept. 10, but it didn't dampen their fervor for a fair contract, says Oregon Nurses Association (ONA) representative Alison Hamway.

ONA reports that over 600 supporters, including nurses, co-workers, and community allies, turned out for the late afternoon picket outside the Bend, Oregon, hospital where 670 nurses are working under a contract extension since their previous two-year agreement expired.

At about 4 p.m., half an hour after informational picketing began on the sidewalk next to Neff Road, sprinklers came on in the section of lawn nearest the picketers. ONA attorney Alan Yoder called the hospital immediately, and the sprinklers were shut off. ONA spokesperson Scott Palmer says the union can't be certain whether the sprinkling was intentional, but it came after several other aggressive acts by hospital management:

- The hospital has contracted with Huffmaster, "a leading provider of strike management solutions," and the firm has e-mailed nurses all over the state to recruit them to work in the



RN Barbara Crane, president of the National Federation of Nurses, addresses members at a Sept 10 informational picket at St. Charles Medical Center in Bend, where the Oregon Nurses Association is in a contract dispute.

event of a strike.

- On the day of the informational picket, some managers were telling nurses they weren't allowed to attend the picket on their 15-minute breaks — until ONA protested that move, and every manager was reminded that nurses have that right.

- And on Sept. 6, the day after a mediated bargaining session, ONA Executive Director Susan King was making the rounds at St. Charles updating members about the contract, accompanied by ONA President Steve Rooney, who is a St. Charles intensive care unit nurse. Managers told them they were interfering with patient care and told them to leave; they refused.

Thus far the two sides have met 17 times since May, six of them with the help of a federal mediator.

In particular, union nurses object to two hospital proposals that they say would harm patient care. One proposal would eliminate charge nurses, which are akin to foremen in that they assign other nurses to duties based on an assessment of how much care patients need. The hospital's 56 charge nurses would be demoted to regular bedside nurses, and their duties would be taken over by newly hired "clinical supervisors" — nonunion employees without medical expertise, whose job would be to ensure that the hospital stays within budget regardless of patient circum-

stances, Hamway said.

Second, St. Charles wants to eliminate "unassigned critical float RNs," a group of 11 nurses who serve as rapid responders to life-threatening emergencies in the hospital.

St. Charles also has not agreed to a "successorship" clause in the contract — which stipulates that the nurses would remain unionized in the event of a sale of the hospital.

Nurses have had a union contract at St. Charles since 1977, after they went on strike to win union recognition. RN hourly wages at St. Charles currently range from \$31.05 starting wage to \$50.38 for a nurse with a master's degree and 25 years experience. The average nurse at St. Charles has 10 years of experience and earns \$41.89 an hour.

ONA is affiliated with the National Federation of Nurses and the Oregon AFL-CIO.

The two sides meet again Sept. 27.

(Editor's Note: 600 caregivers represented by Service Employees International Union Local 49 are trying to secure a first contract at St. Charles. They voted to unionize in January 2011.)

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