

Job reps: Have pulse of work area

WILSONVILLE -- OSEA job representatives at Dammasch State Hospital, like those elsewhere, must decide where they are going to concentrate their energies.

In regular sessions with OSEA Employee Representative Ken Allen, the five Dammasch job reps, often meeting as a group, will go over a list of events since the last meeting, plan strategy, seek advice, compare notes and discuss approaches to resolve the working problems which have come up at the hospital.

Job rep Jack Bowsky, a psychiatric aide, said that there had been some discrimination because of union activity in the past that could become grounds for an unfair labor practice charge unless it's stopped.

Malpractice and medication is a concern of the psych aides like Bowsky. Aides give medicine to patients though nurses supposedly are legally responsible. Bowsky gave an example of two aides who dispense some 400 pills on an evening shift.

What Bowsky describes as a "mini-issue" concerns a place to clean up. Psych aides have several reasons to clean up in the course of their work. After a strenuous volleyball game with the patients is one example. Secondly, when patients have a brawl with the aides, the patients sometimes throw

excrement and urinate on them.

Job rep Barbara Johnson, a custodial worker, had a number of issues of particular concern to workers in her classification. Housekeepers should receive some general combative training, she believes. She also thought that management of the hospital shows too little concern for the danger of disease to members of her department. Scabies were said to be appearing on one of the wards of the hospital, but management had provided inadequate warning and advice on how the custodial workers should handle the problem in the course of their daily rounds.

Johnson and Bowsky agreed that housekeepers should be permitted to attend staff meetings so that they know what is going on in the wards. In the parlance of Dammasch Hospital, "33" means emergency on the wards. Only male psych aides respond to the "33s" and Bowsky thinks that these teams are becoming "male chauvinist goon squads." He believes that with proper training, women psych aides could be as useful -- in some cases more effective than men -- responding to the "33s."

Toward the end of this meeting, and possibly as a subject for further examination, these two OSEA job representatives suggested that job reps become specialists. Individual job reps

could concentrate on the state contract, on the agency contract, on the merit system and on classification problems.

Not all of the issues discussed at the job rep meeting with Employee Rep Allen will become formal, written grievances within the next week. Many, of course, will be resolved informally. Some are much more long range. Some may have to wait for the negotiation of the agency contract or the central contract for resolution. Still, they're all worth keeping track of.

"Good job reps have their pulse on employee problems, concerns, hopes and fears as well as what's going on in their agency, department or work area," said Allen.

Story, photos

by

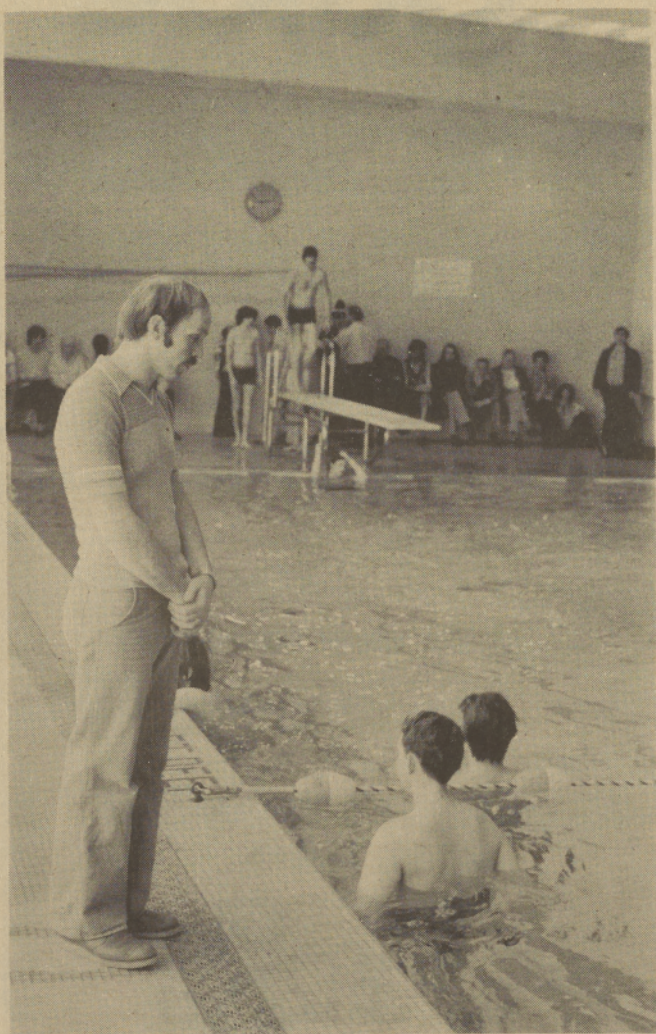
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Bowsky, Allen and Johnson plan.



Johnson at work.



Job rep Bob Watts works in the recreation department.



A training seminar was held recently.