

**2007 NSO Representative Assembly
Scottsdale, Arizona
June 8-9, 2007**

Carole Hester . Communications Chair/Newsletter Editor



This year's RA was in a beautiful setting, but that didn't deter your elected Reps from faithfully carrying out their duty! Below are accounts from all but one who attended this year's important business session.

The National Staff Union is the largest union of staff unions in the world. Under the capable leadership of President Chuck Agerstrand, the NSO has become a force to be reckoned with as these dedicated volunteers (yes, volunteers...all NSO "staff" volunteer their time) help defend attempts to strip contract benefits, shift costs to employees, advise on how to maintain pension and health benefits for retirees.

In his President's address, Chuck always brings the Representative body up to date on what NSO has been doing for members the past year. He's also astute enough to forecast trends and potential areas of disaster and conflict with management.

There are many areas of need, and requests for help, to which NSO responds. They've certainly been on hand in CAS' past history. What a privilege to be part of this global effort to protect union rights.



One bright spot was – for the second year – sisters from Richmond, Virginia. Their union organized in January 2006. Donna Hamilton and Allison Herndon represented their support staff union. They had no funds to attend the NSO RA, but recognizing the importance of being part of the RA, raised the money through various fund-raising projects. At the RA, they sold name badges and lunchboxes for \$5/ea. to raise more funds. Although individuals slipped them some donations at the Rep Assembly, it was CAS who made the only "group" donation, giving it to Donna and Allison in solidarity. They're hoping their union will be strong enough next year that they won't have to fund-raise in order to attend NSO RA.

REPORTS FROM YOUR REPS...

Roseanne Becher, President

NSO President Chuck Agerstrand opened the 2007 NSO RA by addressing the Rep Assembly with a commitment as a National Union to force the employer to “honor our contracts.” He spoke of “how when eagles fly, they know when a storm is coming and they use the storm by spreading its wings to soar above... the eagle uses the storm to its benefit.” President Agerstrand urged the RA delegates “to anticipate the storm and use it to our benefit.” The “storm” he referred to was the NEA Executive Committee’s vote to change the Pension Plan.

“We must tell our employers, including NEA, **we will not take any roll backs on our pensions and medical benefits.**” He continued, NSO and its affiliates need to “spread its wings” by coordinating our resources and ability to organize. “We must continue to work hard to ensure our member’s needs are addressed.”

Over the two day Assembly, it became clear the NEA Pension Plan issue was one of the most important the Affiliates face. Although many Affiliates were not directly affected by the decision of the NEA Executive Committee, the general consensus was that it set a dangerous precedent and more importantly, points out the principle that “an injury to one is an injury to all.”

Kathy Hill – Immediate Past President

Attending the 2007 NSO RA was again, truly time well spent gaining knowledge of how NSO operates, voting on important issues, such as Bylaw changes, supporting NSO’s efforts to protect the NEA staff and retirees from the NEA Executive Committee’s vote to change their pension plan from a single employer to a multi-employer status and Adoption of the 2007-08 proposed budget, just to name a few.

It also is time that serves to strengthen our CAS organization as it allows for:

***Relationship building with our fellow CAS colleagues
in a setting of commonality and productivity.***

Relationship building with our CSO colleagues who continue the teambuilding CAS and CSO established during the 2006 bargaining. As both organizations are facing bargaining build-up in the next year or so, it is extremely important to continue relationship building as it is important to both unions, as was proven at the last bargaining, to show strength and solidarity to management.

Networking among other state organizations that face similar challenges and changes within their organizational structure and opens discussions on how those challenges and changes are being handled.

Having the opportunity to spend time with NSO volunteers such as Marius Ambrose, John Reilly, Chuck Agerstrand, Robert Blackwell, Cheryl Singleton, Vera Bradford, Lynn Adler, John Stephens, etc who give so much of their time and energies in helping affiliates in areas such

as Arbitrations, NSO member Benefits, Harvard Union Trade Program, Budget and Financial and NSO Training Programs questions and assistance.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to represent you at this RA. I was unable to attend my last term as CAS President at last year's RA as my father-in-law had just passed away, so this year as an elected delegate it gave me an opportunity to thank all the NSO members who helped me in my endeavors on behalf of CAS the four years I was president and the opportunity to say goodbye to good friends and colleagues.

Next year the NSO RA is being held in San Diego and I encourage any member who is interested in becoming involved in the union to strongly consider placing their name in the nomination pool next year. It would be an experience that you will enjoy, one that you will learn from, and one that you will want to experience again in the future.

NSO Trainings, Assistance & Continuing Labor Education

Debra Oshige - CAS Vice President

Training & Assistance - One of the best benefits of being a member of NSO is the expert assistance and training it offers its affiliates. Lynne Adler, NSO Vice President for Program, reported to the 2007 Representative Assembly delegates on the status of program services and trainings offered during this past year. In addition to the annual Winter Advocacy Retreat which offers an extensive variety of labor training sessions, this year NSO held its first Leadership Academy in St. Louis, Missouri, attended by nearly 100 union advocates interested in developing leadership skills, refreshing themselves on the concept of unionism, and building stronger staff unions. Of course, upon request by an affiliate, NSO also continues to provide excellent support and field assistance in bargaining, crisis preparation, training, facilitation, grievances/arbitrations and conflict resolution. All NSO trainers and facilitators are our very own union brother and sister colleagues from all over the country, who volunteer their time, talent and expertise to benefit all who belong to the National Staff Organization. This is indeed the foundation of the collective strength of this national union.

NSO Harvard Trade Union Program Scholarships – Each year, NSO sponsors three attendees to the prestigious Harvard Trade Union Program (HTUP), an advanced education six-week session that teaches essential skills needed to effectively manage and lead unions. Cheryl Singleton, NSO Regional Director and Liaison to Harvard, reported to the RA delegates that interested candidates are encouraged to apply to the program, which teaches union management and leadership skills, and provides a great opportunity to explore key issues for the labor movement today. CAS was fortunate to have our very own Dean Chandler, longtime CAS member-advocate from Burlingame HQ, attend HTUP this year as an NSO-sponsored participant. The next session runs from January 7 – February 15, 2008.

Thank you again for your support and the opportunity to attend this year's NSO RA. It was the perfect setting for our delegates to network and build relationships with fellow unionists (including our CSO colleagues), to help decide policies of NSO, and to proudly represent the California Associate Staff.

Maureen Keating – CAS Grievance Co-Chair

Marius Ambrose, Vice President of Defense, gave a report on the assistance NSO gives to affiliates in the defense of member rights – grievances and arbitrations. Currently the biggest attack by management is to undermine retiree benefits and employee health benefits. One such employer’s arbitrary termination of retiree health benefits has resulted in the UAW joining with the NSO to fight this injustice in court. This past year NSO gave assistance to 67 NSO affiliates and, speaking from personal experience, a lot of very welcomed and appreciated assistance to CAS. It is always important to watch for the bad behavior trends of employers in other states because what is allowed to happen in one state will surely follow suit in others. This is why it is always important to remember, “An Injury to One is an Injury to All.”

Vicki Kramer

At this year's NSO Representative Assembly, we had a "hot" issue return to the agenda after being defeated at the 2006 RA. This issue was a proposed change in the constitution which, if approved, would allow NSO "Affiliate Assistance Teams" to, in essence, take over a state affiliate (such as CAS) in the event a petition was received, requesting assistance, by the state affiliate executive board. "The purpose of such teams is to address membership concerns and to provide assistance to affiliates in order to enable them to correct deficiencies." (National Staff Organization - 2007 Representative Assembly Handbook, page 25.)

In my opinion, this was a euphemism for "hostile take over." I believe this language was well-intentioned as it was to serve as a vehicle to correct inefficiencies, or possible inappropriate actions or activities, by state affiliates. However, I did not agree, as did the majority of the RA, in this solution to the problem. I believe that, if passed, this language would have opened the door to abuse in a state affiliate where factions exist, and may use it as a tool to cause trouble, further dividing membership, and defeating the purpose of implementing the assistance team.

I expect that this subject will return at future RA's, with changes that may be amenable to the majority. This is a perfect example of the RA at work in refining a solution to a problem, and involving membership on the national level in determining what works best for our affiliates. This is exactly what you are voting for when you ask us to represent you at the RA. Thank you for sending me to represent CAS members.

Rhonda King

NSO: An Equal Partnership

I have always known that the National Staff Organization’s strength comes from its membership. What I didn’t realize is that current NSO Associate Staff and UniServ Staff memberships are close to an even split.

Associate Staff: Full Time—2326 Part Time—212 = 2528
UniServ Staff: Full Time—2398 Part Time — 48 = 2446

Associate Staff members take on key leadership roles in NSO as was demonstrated in the only contested election at this year's Rep Assembly. After serving NSO as Region 5 Director this past year, Associate Staff Kathy Hill from Indiana was overwhelmingly re-elected.

Working together, NSO is a union of its members.

Wenessa Clark

Parliamentary Procedure at the NSO-RA

As stated in Article XVI of the NSO Constitution, *Robert's Rules of Order, Revised, shall be the authority on parliamentary procedure at any meeting of the duly constituted bodies of the Organization.* This book, first written in 1876 by General Henry M. Robert, on parliamentary procedure was designed to guide smooth, orderly, and fairly conducted meetings. I was informed that the best way to learn these parliamentary procedures is watching them take place, and I have to say that that statement was true to the core. Details on these organizational procedures can be found on the internet by searching "Robert's Rules of Order" on Google, Wikipedia, Yahoo, or a majority of other search engines. Also, if you go to www.youtube.com and search "Robert's Rules of Order" there are video streams that discuss and show the process during meetings. Lastly, a good source for any union book is always www.unionist.com there are plenty of union books, posters, cartoons, and materials for any inquiring mind.

Norma Ortiz

New Delegate Orientation commences in 2008 thanks to Simone Boe and Rich Wood of Washington EASO. Yes, first time delegates will now have the opportunity to meet with other new delegates, the executive board, and committee officers. New delegates will receive background and procedural information needed in order to vote and make the best out of the two-day event. This is a great idea and we are fortunate that someone was willing to stand up and ask for it. After some discussion amongst the 383 delegates, the item was approved.

The NSO-RA is open to all CAS members and if you'd like to experience something a little different and meet other union members across these United States, please consider running for the elected position and joining other delegates in 2008. There's an orientation waiting just for you!