

## Goodbye 616 ... Hello Local 1021

The latest news and prognostications on the SEIU California Restructuring

The new Northern California Regional Local will become a reality when SEIU International President Andy Stern charters it and the three other new public sector locals on January 2, 2007. In a letter to all California locals, Stern said he hoped the transition to fully functioning locals would be completed by March 31.

The reorganization plan adopted by members this fall will unite 10 existing locals into a new Local 1021 (10-to-1) with more than 50,000 members. Local 1021's members will be city and county government employees, nurses and hospital staff, educators, and special district employees working in 33 of California's 58 counties.

At a Nov. 29 meeting in Fairfield, members of the various subcommittees developing the new, provisional local's structure and priorities handed in their recommendations to Damita Davis-Howard, Local 535's executive director and

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*A Year of Mobilization. SEIU-supported candidates won six of seven statewide offices in the November 7 general election. Arnold pulled off a major comeback to win re-election, but surveys repeatedly showed union members believed his kinder, gentler program was only an election-year charade, and that we would spend another Schwarzenegger term fighting to save public services. Local results were good too. We retained strong majorities in the State Legislature, electing long-time ally Ellen Corbett to Senate District 10, and Loni Hancock to Assembly District 14 and Sandre Swanson to Assembly District 16. Statewide, SEIU members volunteered for more than 11,000 shifts leading up to the November election.*

## Building Strength for the Future

Restructuring was the big story, but SEIU members also scored at the polls and the bargaining table

Here's a look back at what we accomplished in 2006:

### Building a New SEIU

The big news of 2006 was the massive restructuring of our union's operations in California. Members representing locals from all over California got a chance to voice their views on the union's future at a series of hearings in the spring, led by officers appointed by President Stern. The hearing officers' report became a restructuring plan that members approved in October with an overwhelming 88% of the vote.

Under the plan, the Golden State's 19 SEIU public sector locals will be consolidated next year into four regional locals. A statewide long-term care local has been created with jurisdiction over homecare

and nursing home workers — industries where SEIU has long-standing organizing campaigns. (See top story for the latest news.)

### Winning Better Contracts

When the first homecare workers joined Local 616 in 1993, they were earning the state and federal minimum wage of \$4.25 an hour with no benefits. On May 1 their latest contract took effect, a standard-setting two-year deal providing \$10.50 (the second highest in the state) plus improvements in the health benefits they won for the first time in 2003. Homecare workers also saved a \$100,000 transportation fund and were the first in the state to create a training fund as well.

Registered nurses got their own contract for the first time in March after

a year of bargaining, dragged out by the need to clean up problems left by Cambio, the hospital privatization firm that ran the Medical Center for 18 months. The first contract included major wage increases despite Cambio's failure to budget for adequate staffing. At the same time, the SEIU Tri-Local approved a three-year deal that included a retroactive pay increase and other benefits.

Tri-Local members also won a big arbitration over the Medical Center's practice of subcontracting bargaining unit work in violation of the MOU.

The threat of federal budget cuts didn't stop members at the Housing Authority from closing a two-year deal that gave them a four percent raise, preserved their health plan, increased their life insurance

SEE "YEAR IN REVIEW" ON PAGE 4

## Probation Dept. Volunteer of the Year: Donna Hom

When staff and managers in the County Probation Dept. think about putting together an activity or committee for a good cause, they probably think about Payroll Clerk and Local 616 member Donna Hom (pictured below).

In November, Donna received the Departmental Volunteer of the Year Award at the annual holiday luncheon. For the past several years, she has chaired the department's Asthma Walk, raising over \$7,000 for the East Bay American Lung Association. She serves on the Probation Retirement Committee, the Winter Social Committee, and this year is also chair-

ing the Holiday Food Basket Program. That's in addition to chairing this year's Employee Awards Decoration Committee. Plus, you'll always find Donna at the forefront of every Take Our Children to Work Day event.

Donna said she fits some of this activity into her days off, but some she can do during work time.

"This year we're making 60 holiday baskets for clients referred by probation officers," she said. "What motivates me is knowing that what I'm doing benefits others, and the satisfaction of knowing that the department appreciates it."

Congratulations, Donna!



## Extra! Extra! Read all about it!

Local 616 member Francisco Martinez, a legal processing assistant and shop steward in the city of Berkeley's Traffic Division, was quoted in the news recently. The Nov. 29 edition of the *Daily Cal*, the student newspaper of UC Berkeley, gave us Francisco's view of changes coming soon to his workplace: the traffic court is being closed and relocated to Oakland.

Court administrators said the move was necessary to improve efficiency, but city officials were disappointed and Francisco told the *Daily Cal* the move was more likely to hurt the public because the Oakland traffic division would become

overwhelmed while Berkeley residents would have to compete in more crowded circumstances.

"I feel a certain dedication to the public in Berkeley and I think it will be a hardship," the paper quoted Francisco. "I believe that the administrators have put the cart before the horse and have not thought [the relocation] out thoroughly."

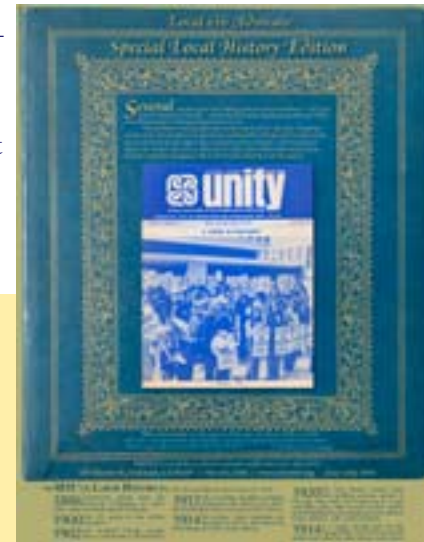
Ten SEIU members plus one supervisor and one commissioner will relocate to the Wiley W. Manuel Courthouse in downtown Oakland on Dec. 26.

## Local 616 Advocate Wins Awards

The staff of the *Local 616 Advocate* received two awards recently for a past issue of the newsletter. At a Nov. 17 luncheon in Washington, D.C., the International Labor Communications Association (ILCA) honored the June 2005 "Special Local History Edition" with a First Place award for Best Design and Second Place for Best Labor History Story.

The issue chronicles the 33-year growth of Local 616 from a management-run employee association into a county

powerhouse against a backdrop of labor history. The issue can be downloaded at [www.seiu616.org/advocate.cfm](http://www.seiu616.org/advocate.cfm). •



## field RAP

# ALCO Goes to the Table

Negotiations between Alameda County and SEIU Locals 535 and 616 are underway. The two sides have been meeting since late October, but the November election and the reorganization of the public sector locals in Northern California (the "Unite to Win" plan) have slowed the pace of bargaining. The team heads back to the table on December 15, when SEIU and management are expected to exchange additional contract proposals.

The Contract Action Team is gearing up for a "field campaign" to support our demands at the bargaining table. Members of the CAT reviewed contract proposals at their first meeting on November 15. The December meetings will focus on strengthening our network of worksite activists, who will keep members informed about developments at the bargaining table, and on developing worksite activities and actions to keep the heat on.

SEIU has created a communications strategy to keep members informed about progress at the table. For the first time, the union will distribute bargaining updates — the ALCO Report — in print, on the web, and by e-mail. Members can download flyers for distribution in the workplaces directly from our website, and they can post comments on our "blog." Just go to [www.seiu616.org/blog](http://www.seiu616.org/blog) to learn the latest. Click on the button in the left column to receive email updates from the bargaining table.

John Morgan, who chaired the Local 616 Stewards Council before retiring this year, is serving as CAT coordinator, chairing meetings, working with union activists in the field, and keeping the lines of communications open.

CAT meetings are open to all SEIU members who want to serve as worksite leaders during bargaining. For more

information, please contact John Morgan at Local 616, (510) 452-2366 x536.

The current contract expires at the end of December. The CAT will discuss our strategy as the expiration date approaches.

## • • CAT MEETING

**Wednesday, Dec. 13, 2006  
6 pm  
Local 616, 155 Myrtle St., Oakland  
(near Market & 3rd St.)**

**Agenda  
Bargaining update  
Strategy for Dec. 31 Contract  
Expiration**

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[www.UnionPlus.org](http://www.UnionPlus.org)

**Chapter Board Meetings**

**1st Monday**  
Dec. 4, Jan. 8  
Retiree Chapter (ACRE)  
10:00 a.m.

**1st Thursday**  
Dec. 7, Jan. 4  
ACMC Chapter  
4:00 p.m.

**1st Thursday**  
Dec. 7, Jan. 4  
ALCO Chapter  
6:00 p.m.

**2nd Wednesday**  
Dec. 13, Jan. 10  
Superior Court Chapter  
5:30 p.m.

**Last Wednesday**  
No Dec. meeting, Jan. 31  
HARD Chapter  
4:45 p.m. @ Round Table  
Pizza, Castro Valley

**Membership Meetings**

**1st Tuesday**  
Jan. 2  
Committee On Political Education (COPE)  
6:00 p.m.

**3rd Wednesday**  
Dec. 20, Jan. 17  
AFRAM Caucus  
5:30 p.m.

**4th Tuesday**  
Jan. 23  
Alameda Co. Employee Labor Coalition (ACELC)  
5:30 p.m.

**4th Thursday**  
Jan. 25  
Women's Caucus  
5:30 p.m.

**4th Thursday**  
Jan. 25  
Stewards Council  
6:00 p.m.

*Happy Holidays!*

Monthly meetings take place at Local 616, 155 Myrtle St. (at 3rd St.), Oakland, unless noted otherwise.

Dates are subject to occasional change due to holidays or other scheduling conflicts.

Visit our calendar online at [www.seiu616.org/calendar](http://www.seiu616.org/calendar)

**Volunteer. Vote. Give.**

The voters have spoken. SEIU members never believed Arnold's makeover was anything but an election-year ploy, but now he is back in office for four more antagonistic years. That means four more years of fighting to save public services from drastic cuts, four more years of fighting to save our pensions, four more years of fighting to stop Arnold's corporate-backed anti-worker agenda.

Your union needs your contributions of time and money now more than ever. That's where COPE comes in. If you already contribute, thank you. If not, ask your shop steward or field rep how you can. Visit:

[seiu616.org/action/cope.cfm](http://seiu616.org/action/cope.cfm)



## Local 1021: The Future is Now (from page 1)

transitional leader of the new local. The recommendations are being incorporated into a final report, which the regional steering committee is expected to submit to President Stern by the Dec. 15 deadline.

### The Train Has Left the Station

All existing MOUs between Local 616 members and Alameda County, the Medical Center, and other employers will continue in full force and effect after the Jan. 2 chartering. We will be working to get employers to recognize the new local as the successor of the current locals, and future MOUs will be negotiated with Local 1021 as the collective bargaining agent.

So from the standpoint of your worksite contract, nothing will change except that you will have a bigger, more powerful union next time you go to the table.

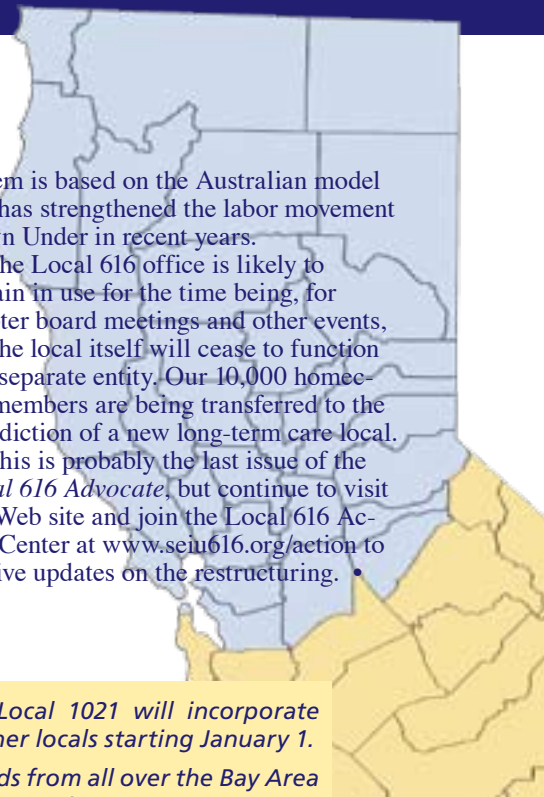
We are currently in contract negotiations with the County (see Field Rap, page 2), but those talks and the resulting contract will not be affected by the restructuring.

Changes may be more apparent with staffing as the union's structure changes behind the scenes. SEIU is developing a system of "call centers," similar to our Workplace Information Center, in order to provide better service to a larger number of members spread over a larger area. The

system is based on the Australian model that has strengthened the labor movement Down Under in recent years.

The Local 616 office is likely to remain in use for the time being, for chapter board meetings and other events, but the local itself will cease to function as a separate entity. Our 10,000 homecare members are being transferred to the jurisdiction of a new long-term care local.

This is probably the last issue of the *Local 616 Advocate*, but continue to visit our Web site and join the Local 616 Action Center at [www.seiu616.org/action](http://www.seiu616.org/action) to receive updates on the restructuring.



ABOVE: Public sector Local 1021 will incorporate Local 616 and nine other locals starting January 1.

LEFT: SEIU shop stewards from all over the Bay Area visited Local 616 in March for the second annual multi-local steward training.

BELOW: SEIU members talked politics with "Arnold" (Local 616 Political Director Berry Bingham) at a COPE picnic in Hayward.

BOTTOM: Local 616 homecare members voted themselves a standard-setting contract that gives them among the best pay and benefits in the state.



## Year in Review (from page 1)

coverage, and added Cesar Chavez' birthday to the list of paid holidays. Members attended meetings and wore union buttons to work, and this strong show of support helped push the new executive director to reach a fair settlement.

### Voting for Victory

After years of difficult budget fights, this past year provided a welcome change of pace in Alameda County. Thanks to higher than expected revenues, the Board of Supervisors adopted a balanced budget with no layoffs. On top of that, hundreds of SEIU members successfully lobbied the supes for \$8 million to help the Medical Center balance its budget.

The results were more mixed on the state level, where a budget was finally passed on schedule for only the fourth time in 20 years, although the \$131 billion deal did nothing to address the structural problems that Gov. Schwarzenegger promised to solve when he took office.

Three years after Arnold's coup d'etat, the state is still burdened by massive budget deficits and new bond measures that will likely make the problem worse.

That said, this year's elections were fairly good to SEIU members. The big downer was that Arnold staged a re-election comeback only a year after being trounced in his anti-union special election. Apparently, voters preferred his hype over the substantive program of the SEIU-backed candidate, Phil Angelides.

On the bright side, our candidates won five of the six other statewide offices, including John Garamendi for Lt. Governor, Debra Bowen for Secretary of State, and John Chiang for Controller. We won 32 Congressional races and retained strong majorities in the State Legislature. And we defeated Prop. 90, which would have led to the devastation of local community services and infrastructure.

