



WHITE COLLAR

Office and Professional Employees International Union, AFL-CIO and CLC

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Winter 1991



There must be another way— a Blue Cross success story

White balloons and the warm glow of candles at twilight. Voices raised, harmonizing and unifying, in "We Shall Overcome." These were the images at a candlelight vigil held by members of OPEIU Local 212. The vigil was part of their corporate campaign against Blue Cross in Buffalo, New York.

The campaign was waged in lieu of striking what became a hard-nosed, union-busting employer. It was fought with courage and dignity and with a great deal of creativity.

The union fought to win the hearts and minds of the general public—community, religious, political and labor groups, who in turn would pressure Blue Cross to settle their labor contract with Local 212. As the minister at the candlelight vigil prayed: it was fought to instill understanding into management. Ultimately it was immensely successful.

We Want to Work

"We want to work. We want to work," was chanted repeatedly by the hundreds of Blue Cross employees who amassed at the doors of their employer's headquarters. They insisted they be allowed to go back to work, following a lockout by Blue Cross that morning.

Blue Cross had presented totally unacceptable contract demands, said Local 212 President Gerald Skrzeczkowski (also known as Ski). "When our members rejected the agreement, management locked them out of the building," he said.

But, the union set the stage immediately for the upcoming campaign, not by striking, but by insisting—in front of television camera crews and newspaper reporters from the area—that they be allowed to work. Twenty minutes after the lockout began, it ended. The President of Blue Cross Charles Rath asked if OPEIU members were ready to return to work, to which they replied with a rousing "yes." Looking confused, President Rath offered to hold open the door as the employees filed past him.

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OPEIU Local 212 members at the Blue Cross of Western New York contract ratification meeting, where they overwhelmingly ratified their new agreement.

New York Stock Exchange, SIAC and Futures win Local 153 contract

Following a lengthy negotiations process—22 meetings in all—Local 153 members at the New York Stock Exchange, the New York Futures Exchange and Securities Industry Automation Corp. have won a collective bargaining agreement. Bargaining was difficult, said Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer and OPEIU International Vice President Michael Goodwin.

But, the final result is one in which the members can take pride—thanks primarily to a dedicated negotiating committee: Local 153 Business Representative Paul Greenspan; Fred Deal, Tom Genovese; Abe Goldstein (153 executive board member), Ken Habercorn, Debbie Johnson, Barbara Krause, Frank Liccione, Carl Migallo, Tom Palese, and Jimmy Saccardo from the Stock Exchange; Colleen Coor from the Futures Exchange; and Sam Brotman, Mike Kohan, Shirley Pires (153 executive board member) and Ron Widerhold from SIAC.

(Continued on page 5)

RNs at Lansing General Hospital negotiate a model contract

There is a shortage of registered nurses throughout the United States. This fact was a crucial part of the recent negotiations for a new three-year contract for the RNs at Lansing General Hospital (LGH), said Local 459 President Neal Wilensky.

This past summer, he said, the hospital often ran short-staffed, and employees were forced to work faster and harder and to take more risks to make up for the vacant positions. At the same time, other hospitals were raising wages for RNs to compensate for the shortage.

After the give and take of negotiations the hospital agreed to an acuity system by which staffing levels would be determined. If, following a particular formula and time period, the hospital does not meet staff projections, it must pay a \$250 penalty for each unit and each shift where the staffing is not met. In addition, a \$250 penalty is paid anytime a probationary graduate nurse or an RN who is still in orientation is the only RN on a unit. The hospital can pay up to a max-

(Continued on page 6)

Solidarity Day II— August 31, 1991

Join us in Washington, DC, to celebrate Labor Day and to urge Congress and the President to support striker replacement legislation, to enact a national health care program, to provide for family and medical leave, and more. Stand up and be counted.

Watch for more details.

Local 367 member saves child's life

by Faye Orr, International Representative

Gloria Fisher, vice president of Local 367 in Memphis, Tennessee, accompanied her husband Doug Fisher to an IBEW district progress meeting in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. He is business manager for IBEW Local 474.

Fisher expected the trip to provide rest and recreation. So, she wasn't expecting to hear someone screaming, "A child is drowning," as she walked near the swimming pool. Instinctively Fisher dove in, rescuing an unconscious seven-year old who had sunk to the bottom.

Working with others, including President of IBEW Local 379 Jim Grant, she administered CPR. We are happy to report that the youngster, Samuel Matthew Reddman, was revived. We also are confident that this family, on vacation from Baltimore, Maryland, is happy as well.

When not serving as a heroine, Fisher works as secretary for the Memphis Labor Council. She joined Local 367 in October 1984 and has been vice president since May 1985. She has worked on contract negotiating and grievance handling for the local.

She is also a delegate to the Memphis Labor Council and is a member of the Shelby County Democratic Committee. She is a board member of Family Services, an agency of the United Way. And she is also active in religious and community organizations.

OPEIU joins Local 367 and the child's family



in applauding Gloria Fisher's courageous act and her quick reaction to others in need.

How to become a bounty hunter:

OPEIU is offering a reward to members who serve as bounty hunters. To collect, you must turn in another OPEIU rank-and-file member—a friend.

That is, we want photos (black and white film only) and stories of OPEIU members who are involved in interesting work or interesting hobbies or excel in some way. For example, we know that there are outstanding members out there who serve their communities (as big brothers and sisters, on community boards, in homeless shelters, etc.) who are terrific golfers, tennis players, gardeners; who win awards and trophies for many things; who teach or write in their spare time. Or, there are members who have unique jobs, like animal trainers.

We (as well as you) are interested in reading about such members and seeing photos of them at their jobs, performing their hobbies or other areas of involvement.

If we print the photo and story you submit, you will immediately be sent \$25, as well as receiving credit in *White Collar*, just as we will to Faye Orr for the article submitted here.

Orr, however, has asked that the \$25 be donated to the Union's political action fund—Voice of the Electorate.

Happy hunting, bounty hunters.



It has been some time since we have offered basic collective bargaining and grievance handling at an OPEIU regional conference. Many of our local unions train stewards and bargaining committee members on these topics regularly, but there always seems to be more room for such education. Considering the turnover rate among stewards and officers, we find a continual need to train new people.

We can reach those stewards and committee members who might not ordinarily receive train-

ing. And, we can give a break to those locals who usually find themselves hard pressed to work additional training into their already busy schedules.

Collective bargaining: We will provide a thorough overview to the collective bargaining process: the legal background for bargaining, goal-setting (contract proposals), selecting and working in a committee, bargaining skills and techniques. In the case of at least two conferences, advanced negotiations techniques will be addressed (see schedule for details).

Region	Dates	Location
West/Northwest	April 19 to 21	San Francisco, California
Southwest/Southeast	May 3 to 5	Albuquerque, New Mexico
Western Canada	May 31 to June 2	Vancouver, British Columbia
Northeast	September 6 to 8	Boston, Massachusetts
Erie	September 20 to 22	Detroit, Michigan
North Central	October 18 to 20	Milwaukee, Wisconsin
Mid-Canada	October 31 to November 2	Thunder Bay, Ontario

Grievance handling: Shop stewards are the backbone of the union. They are the ones who administer the contract on a day-to-day basis. This program will help them to more effectively defend the rights of our members they represent. They will receive a general overview of the grievance process: the steps, recognizing a grievance versus a complaint, investigating a grievance, presenting the grievance, and more.

Where and when: We have arranged locations, hotels and times to help defray the costs—travel, housing, food and lost time—for our local unions. In addition, the International's education subsidy program will pay \$180 this year to each local union to assist on finances. As a result, each local should now be able to participate or to send additional delegates to the regional conference.

Please mark your calendars and make arrangements to attend these very important training sessions.

WHITE COLLAR

Official Organ of
OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES
INTERNATIONAL UNION
affiliated with the AFL-CIO, CLC

JOHN KELLY
President

GILLES BEAUREGARD
Secretary-Treasurer

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What's Ahead For Medicine

By Dr. Phillip L.
Polakoff, M.D.

Director, Western Institute for
Occupational/Environmental Sciences

One of the major challenges facing occupational medicine in the 1990s does not concern a specific disease or set of related conditions.

Rather, it is to maintain—better yet, speed up—the momentum generated by and for this clinical specialty in the unprecedented decade of the '80s.

The past decade saw tremendous strides made in researching occupationally related diseases. But much more work needs to be done to safeguard the health of American workers.

Still heading the list is the ongoing tragedy of asbestos-related diseases. It was the ravages of asbestos that gave much of the impetus to the resurgence of interest in occupational medicine during the last decade.

There are also a host of other diseases and physical conditions that still need to be vigorously addressed. Among them: industrial asthma and bronchitis; upper respiratory and eye irritation; the whole spectrum of organic solvent intoxication; noise-induced hearing loss; and repetitive motion disorders, notably carpal tunnel syndrome.

There are still problems caused by heavy metals; silicosis, hepatitis, and the adverse psychological responses to workplace toxic exposures and accidents.

The 1990s will almost certainly see a continuing and heightened public concern about chemical degradation of the environment (typified in the '80s by dioxin and the ongoing controversy over Agent Orange).

There is the puzzling phenomenon (also a holdover from the last decade of multiple chemical sensitivities). This is an illness in which previously healthy people experience recurrent and intensified symptoms to progressively smaller toxic exposure, often in trace amounts of the original substance.

New technologies have created a whole new range of problems around video display terminals (VDTs), particularly as they may affect women and the reproductive process.

The medical challenges of the coming decade are not made easier by a hobbling lack of reliable data. Reliable surveillance of occupational disease began in earnest only in the late 1980s.

Development of data is farther along in regions dominated by manufacturing, general construction and shipbuilding. It lags in regions dominated by mining, and is scarcest in agricultural areas. The last two areas are especially worrisome because mining and agriculture are the two most dangerous U.S. occupations, according to the National Safety Council.

One of the largest health-related issues that will affect millions of working men and women over the next few years is that of parental leave and child care in the workplace.

How we handle this issue will touch Americans in several important ways: How people work. How they are compensated. How they—or someone else—will take care of their children.

It will change the way family assistance and health care dollars and resources are allocated.

It will test the leadership of governments at all levels, the health care industry, unions and corporations, and communities at large throughout the remaining decade of this century.

Protect Strikers' Rights....



Job-Robbing By Replacements!

Help elect candidates who care...
who'll protect strikers' rights...
who'll stop job-robbing by scabs...
who'll make it illegal for employers to hire
scabs as permanent replacements for
strikers. (More than 50,000 strikers' jobs
have been stolen in recent years.)

Together We Can Do It...
Check Off For Our Vote

Washington Window

Long-term jobless running low on hope

There was a time when a laid-off computer operator or a logger could find a new job or even a new profession. This is not that time. The U.S., engulfed by a recession, has entered an era marked by long-term joblessness often resulting in poverty.

Unlike past recessions, most of the long-term jobless are not getting UI benefits. Congressional efforts to extend unemployment insurance are in the early stages. But as House Human Resources Subcommittee Chairman Thomas Downey (D-NY) complained, such efforts aren't getting support from the White House.

When Gloria Sneed was laid off from her job at a New York City bank, she began working part-time as a recreation leader at the Willoughby Nursing Home in Brooklyn. On March 12, 1990, she lost that job as well. And this time, when she went searching for work, there was not a job to be found.

Sneed, 52, has been unemployed for a year now. She lives alone, and spends much of her time either looking for work or caring for her 33-year-old son. A father of five, Sneed's son recently contracted full-blown Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome. He has been continually denied public assistance.

"Even though I believe my benefit check of \$64 a week is woefully inadequate, I wouldn't know what to do without the money," she said. "I am now two months behind in my rent in the one room apartment that I call my home. I am now paying rent on a weekly basis. I have no medical insurance and very little food in my refrigerator."

Unfortunately, in the weeks to come, Gloria Sneed will have to learn what to do without that \$64. According to Isaac Shapiro, senior research analyst for the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, she will join the 2.3 million people who were still jobless in 1990 when their 26 weeks of unemployment benefits ran out. As permanently replaced New York Daily News striker Joan Shepard said, "Twenty-six weeks roll by very quickly."

Margaret Jenkins has less than a month before her benefits are exhausted. A member of the Hotel and Restaurant Employees, she was laid off last September from her job as a chamber maid after 6 years. A new hotel

owner wanted a low-wage, non-union staff.

At 52 years of age, Jenkins was forced to go on unemployment for the first time in her life. She receives only \$105 a week, but Jenkins knows that her story is not unique. "Every time I have gone back to unemployment since September, the lines have gotten longer. How are we supposed to find work? The employers are laying off more people every week. People aren't going back to work—more are being laid off," she said.

At House Human Resources Subcommittee hearings on long-term unemployment, Rep. Jim McDermott (D-Wash.) said that sometimes it is not until half-way through the 26 weeks that a person realizes his old job will never be back. For example, he said, "they could sit there and wait for the steel industry to reopen until they turn to dust."

In McDermott's home state, the timber industry is in rapid decline "because the trees aren't there anymore. Unemployed loggers could sit out on the stumps and wait 50 years for a new crop before they can work again." McDermott said the discussion about extending unemployment insurance should include providing job retraining for UI recipients.

Advocates for the unemployed said the federal government has an \$8 billion fund for extended benefits. During the 1980s, however, laws were rewritten to make it more difficult for states to become eligible to receive those funds. Despite today's growing lines at unemployment offices, only two states now qualify. Congress is considering easing such restrictions.

Rep. Sander Levin (D-Mich.) said, "Why in the world are we in this situation? What sense is it to have a system that doesn't help most of those who have been laid off?"

William Buckheit, representing Baltimore unemployed workers, said that "the people who have run out of benefits or never qualified for benefits will and are becoming another statistic—that of the homeless, many of them with families."

Immanuel Ness of the New York Labor-Community Coalition to Extend Unemployment Benefits, said, "The White House ignores the problem of unemployment and paints a rosy picture for the future of the national economy while the jobless in our communities are quickly running out of their 26 weeks of unemployment benefits and facing the threat of foreclosures, evictions and utility turnoffs."

The time to extend a hand is now.

Local Unions in the News

Local 71 defeats paper company's attempt to oust union

Faye Orr, OPEIU International Representative, reports from Mobile, Alabama, that the members of OPEIU Local 71 beat back an employer attempt to have the union ousted.

International Paper Company tried to persuade bargaining unit employees to vote in favor of getting rid of its duly elected representative OPEIU. It promised them salaried positions, merit pay increases and improved pension benefits.

The vast majority of employees, however, recognized that their interests were best served by a labor union and collective bargaining agreement. The members agree that "America works best, when we say union yes," Orr said.

Local 71 appreciates the help and letters of support it received during the campaign from sister locals 420 in Pine Bluff, Arkansas; 478 in Texarkana, Arkansas; and 209 in Moss Point, Mississippi.

Following the union's election victory, negotiations got underway. All are hopeful of reaching an equitable resolution of all contract issues, Orr said.

International Organizer Ron Hutson, as well as Orr, helped the local union during this struggle. It was the second attempt in four years that the company has tried to rid itself of the union, and the second time OPEIU and the members were victorious.

Local 337 wins right to decide its committees

OPEIU Local 337 in Palatka, Florida, refused to allow an employer to tell it who could or could not serve on its negotiating committee. It has since been supported by the National Labor Relations Board.

The local, says former International Representative Don Wright, found its negotiations with Georgia Pacific Credit Union stalemated when the employer tried to dictate who could be on the union's negotiating committee. Since we were unable to work out an amicable resolution, we filed charges against the employer with the Labor Board, he said.

It was such a blatant failure-to-bargain violation that even the present NLRB in Washington was forced to uphold the union position that Local 337 had the right to decide members of its own committee, Wright said.

A settlement between Local 337 and the employer was the result, and negotiations resumed. The credit union recognized that Local 337 could have whomever it chose at the bargaining table.

Local 18 organizes without an election

OPEIU Local 18, reports International Representative Faye Orr, has successfully organized Union Publishing House in Tupelo, Mississippi.

She says that the employer granted

voluntary recognition—something unheard of these days. That is, she explains, the employer recognized Local 18 as the bargaining representative after the Local demonstrated that it had support of the majority of employees. While the Publishing House could have demanded an NLRB sponsored election, it did not do so.

Negotiations have already been concluded on the first contract as this paper went to press.

Local 420 wins wages at International Paper Co.

Local 420 bucks the trend in new contracts with International Paper Company. After five years of no general wage increases and several strikes by other unions, Local 420 in Pine Bluff, Arkansas gained a major victory with their new collective bargaining agreement that includes improvements in monthly wages, as well as bonuses.

The new three-year contract, reports International Representative Fay Orr, also provides increased shift differentials, increased employer contributions to health insurance and the establishment of a 401(k) savings plan.

In addition, union and management will work jointly to address the issues of VDT safety and health, payroll deductions for life insurance and establishment of a child care program—all of concern to Local 420 members.

The successful negotiating committee for Local 420 was President Cathy Smith, Vice President Gwen Davis, Recording Secretary Octavia Denton, Board Member Frances McGraw and Faye Orr.

Local 106 bowls for Big Brothers/Big Sisters

Two bowling teams from Local 106 in Groton, Connecticut, participated in the Big Brothers/Big Sisters Bowlathon, March 3, 1991. The event took place at the Holiday Bowl, reports Local 106 President Paul Bruno, where they raised more than \$663 through pledges and donations.

Local 106 member Tammie Cunnian, a mailroom clerk at Electric Boat Division of General Dynamics, was the most successful fundraiser with \$262.40. Her fellow teammates are pictured with her here. They are (left-to-right) Sara Chaney (recording secretary), Rick Coco, John Duarte, Steve Hancock (vice president), Ed Fox, Mary Maynard, Dennis Maynard, Ida Rowley, Tammie Cunnian and Laura Brown.



Local 3 plays pivotal role in winning San Francisco VDT law

OPEIU Local 3 in San Francisco was one of the first local unions in the country to recognize the potential health and safety hazards of video display terminals, and one of the first to organize to seek worker protections.

Back in the 1970s, Local 3 organized with locals of the Service Employees International Union, the Communications Workers of America, the Newspaper Guild and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees to form the Bay Area VDT Coalition.

From that time Local 3 has won OPEIU contract language to protect workers from the VDT hazards. It also petitioned for a government study of VDT workers which indicted serious eye and musculoskeletal stresses for workers on VDTs. And, the local has consistently lobbied for state and local legislative protections.

Now Local 3 has played an important role in the recent adoption of a groundbreaking ordinance on VDTs in the City of San Francisco. OPEIU International Vice President and Local 3 President Kathleen Kinnick testified at a press conference in favor of the protections when the bill was first introduced.

Kinnick also was interviewed twice by local media on the ordinance and its importance. In addition, Local 3 and its members contacted the Mayor and all of the city supervisors urging adoption.

The San Francisco law

The law calls for business to provide adjustable computer screens with anti-glare shield, detachable keyboards, wrist rests and other equipment designed to avoid VDT-related injuries.

Employers must also provide alternate work breaks to employees who routinely perform "repetitive keyboard motions" for four hours or more per shift.

Enforcement of the ordinance will be carried out by the San Francisco Department of Public Health. And, a seven-member advisory committee will be established to issue recommendations for protecting VDT workers from possible radiation emissions. The committee will issue an annual report to the Board of Supervisors.

With this ordinance San Francisco becomes the first major American city to protect its workers from the health and safety risks associated with VDTs.

State Legislation

Vice President Kinnick reports that the California Labor Federation is sponsoring statewide legislation modeled after the San Francisco ordinance.

The Federation had sponsored similar legislation, which was enacted but vetoed by the Governor. With the help of Local 3 and other California unions it is hoped that this year the labor movement will successfully see statewide protections become law.

OPEIU attends inter-union gas conference: A report by Local 2 Representative Dan Dyer

The 1990 inter-union gas conference was attended by more than 300 union members from OPEIU; the Energy, Chemical Workers Union; the IBEW; the International Chemical Workers Union; the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union; Service Employees International Union; the Transport Workers; the United Association of Plumbers and Pipefitters; the United Steelworkers; and the Utility Workers.

The purpose of the conference is the exchange of information on changes and problems that unionized employees have experienced at gas utility companies across the U.S. and Canada. It is an opportunity for various unions to identify trends in the gas industry and to share their attempts at problem solving, grievances and arbitration.

Several of the international unions provided surveys of their negotiated agreements in the gas industry, as well as arbitration awards.

Workshops

The conference was divided into four workshops: clerical, distribution, service and field operations. OPEIU Local 2 participants attended the clerical workshops, which was divided into three parts over three days.

The first day the workshop covered the following topics:

1) Company attempts to control absenteeism through discipline and incentives and a review of arbitration decisions. One interesting aspect was the trend toward "positive discipline" as a perceived threat to the union's ability to grieve.

2) Bargaining unit work and its assignment to lower-graded employees, management and exempt employees.

3) Attrition and the changing composition of the workforce.

4) Automation of jobs, such as computerized dispatching, and computer monitoring of employees.

5) Child care in those unions having negotiated this benefit on premises, those that have agreed to pay all or part of the cost, and the general climate for child care legislation at the state and local levels.

6) Recent trends in clerical negotiations.

7) Comparable worth attempts and the Canadian experience with legislation.

8) Improvements in ergonomics (workplace design).

The second day of the workshop covered:

1) Forced overtime and how some locals have dealt with the problem.

2) Flexible work schedules and compressed workweeks, Saturday as a regularly scheduled workday, shifts and changes, and the effect on home life and outside responsibilities.

3) Management attempts to merge and combine jobs to reduce the workforce and blur distinctions between classifications.

4) A comparison of job evaluation systems and the basis of writing job descriptions.

5) Maternity leaves of absence, absence length and the benefits.

6) Changes in meter reading, such as computerized (inscan) reading and reading in inclement weather.

7) Office safety.

8) The effect of part-time employees on the full-time workforce and union-negotiated benefits for part-timers.

9) Personal computers and word processors and their effect on job classification, wage rates and the potential for at-home work via telecommunications. Also, the use of suburban offices to decentralize the workforce and to inhibit organizing and contract enforcement.

The final day was spent discussing:

1) Layoffs and their effects on employees and on negotiations.

2) Temporary workers under union contract versus temporary agency hires.

3) Qualifications and psychological testing.

4) Two-tier wage and benefit systems.

5) Wage negotiations: lump sum versus across-the-board increases.

6) Video display terminals and the potential health hazards.

(Anyone needing additional information on any of these topics is welcome to contact Dan Dyer at OPEIU Local 2.)

TVA employees earn \$8.9 million health plan rebate

The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)—which provides affordable energy to seven Southern states—and the Salary Policy Employee Panel agreed to changes in 1989 negotiations which include a three-year basic medical plan design and cost-sharing arrangement through September 1992, said International Representative Faye Orr.

The Salary Policy Employee Panel is composed of OPEIU, TVA Engineering Association, Service Employees International Union, TVA Association of Professional Chemist and Chemical Engineers and Public Safety Service Employees Union. The Panel bargains for thousands of clerical and professional employees throughout the TVA system.

Under the new agreement TVA and the employees covered by the plan pay 80 and 20 percent respectively for the plan's monthly cost (individual or family). Should the plan have a deficit, it will be the responsibility of TVA. However, if during the year the plan incurs a surplus, the surplus monies will be rebated to the employees and retirees, as determined by TVA and the Panel, Orr explained.

In the plan year 1990 a surplus of \$8.9 million resulted, and the monies were rebated to employees during December 1990. Employees enrolled in the family plan received \$630, while those in individual plans received \$243 before taxes.

The surplus resulted from lower anticipated expenses. The lower costs, in turn, have been attributed to employees seeking quality medical care in a cost-effective manner, Orr said. She added that other factors were: (1) savings to the plan of more than \$4 million due to the use of the preferred provider networks; (2) significant reduction in the percentage of in-patient hospital care for the plan year; and (3) a decrease in out-patient use of the plan year.

Employees were justly rewarded for their efforts.

Local 153 contract

(Continued from page 1)

The settlement

Goodwin reported that the members have won 4 percent wage increases in each of the contract years. The first is retroactive to October 28, 1990; whereas other increases will take effect October 27, 1991, and November 1, 1992. In addition, all the progression increases are adjusted by 4 percent yearly. SIAC members will gain an equity adjustment as well.

Other benefit gains were made. Pensions were improved, including a new accrual formula, according to Goodwin. Spousal dependent coverage will now be available at the death of the retiree. And, normal retirement was improved.

Severance allowances were changed to reflect improvements:

1 to 9 years of service	1 week pay/year of service
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10 to 14 years of service	1.25 weeks/year
15 or more years of service	1.50 weeks/year

These and other improvements in their new Local 153 contract will greatly improve the worklives of our members at NYSE, Futures and SIAC.



Local 153 members who work at the New York Stock Exchange, Securities Industry Automation Corp. and the New York Futures Exchange attend a recent contract ratification meeting in New York City. Business Representative Paul Greenspan led the meeting.

There must be another way—a Blue Cross success story

(Continued from page 1)

International Assistance

The International Union sent International Vice President Michael Walker and Representative Jay Porcaro. Walker took charge of the media/public relations campaign, while Porcaro concentrated on negotiations with Blue Cross.

This latter proved a major challenge when the notorious union-busting law firm Jackson, Lewis, Schnitzler were brought in as company spokesmen at the bargaining table.

Ski said that he was impressed with Porcaro's expertise at the table against the hatchetmen, as well as extremely grateful to the International for its moral and financial support during the crisis. He thanked specifically President John Kelly for his guidance and Gwen Wells, research director, for her technical assistance.

Corporate Campaign Heats Up

Walker organized numerous media events to focus public attention on the struggle and to demonstrate members' solidarity.

One day employees would all wear red as a symbol of unity, another armbands. One day they would hold informational pickets at the worksite, another they would distribute bumper stickers. Buttons appeared and reappeared continually. All employees would apply for a particular posted position, adding administrative nightmares to the company's mounting problems.

Mike Walker, who had created this style of corporate campaign during OPEIU negotiations with Blue Cross in Milwaukee, developed a task force of employees to mobilize the members and coordinate these activities. He says it is the key element in the campaign. At least one member for each 10 employees served on the task force, keeping members involved and informed.

They developed union newsletters, held rallies, and set up a 24-hour hot line to give employees the latest update. They contacted politicians, as well as Blue Cross subscribers, and members of organized labor.

The Issue

Although the members had several contract issues outstanding, the campaign focussed on subcontracting. Blue Cross had established a company called Appalachian Computer Services in Kentucky. Much of Blue Cross' claims processing was transferred from Buffalo to this non-union company. They had literally taken work away from members of OPEIU and threatened their job security.

In radio spots aired daily in the Buffalo area, Local 212 depicted Blue Cross as the runaway shop it was becoming. Community groups and local politicians united behind OPEIU to save jobs for Buffalo.

The Buffalo City Council passed a resolution stating that if Blue Cross continued to ship work outside the City, it would cost them city insurance business. Numerous labor unions wrote to Blue Cross' President that they would look to other insurance carriers for their coverage

if Blue Cross did not settle their contract with OPEIU.

Scoring Touchdowns

Yellow handbills were everywhere, as Local 212 and its task force leafleted the 80,000 spectators at a Buffalo Bills and Denver Broncos football game. Blue Cross cosponsored the game for its salaried employees. The company was caught completely off guard by the union's handbilling, and by the sympathetic response from the crowd.

They were more than surprised, even appalled, when later in the game an airplane flew overhead trailing a banner that read, "Blue Cross Unfair to Union Employees."

The outpouring of support from politicians and citizens of Buffalo following the game was a morale boost to the employees of Blue Cross.

But, the biggest boost of all occurred in early November when President Rath resigned. As one employee described it, "They were dancing and clapping in the halls of Blue Cross. Even the salaried employees and managers were cheering."

"Immediately we began to see progress at the bargaining table," President Ski said. This was true to the conclusion of the negotiations on December 12, 1990. On December 16 with a 390-to-2 vote, the contract overwhelming was ratified.

The new Blue Cross contract

At the top of the list, the company guaranteed that no jobs would be lost due to subcontracting. Although unable to win a total halt to all subcontracting, the members were delighted with the improved job security guarantees.

Employees immediately won a 5% across-the-board wage raise, retroactive to April 25, 1990, with another 5% due in April 1991. They will also receive a 2% lump sum payment based on 12-months earnings December 31, 1991, a 5% wage hike in April 1992, and another 2% lump sum payment on December 15, 1992.

RNs at Lansing General (Continued from page 1)

imum of \$50,000 in penalties per year.

The penalty monies will be put into a fund to be distributed to the RNs at the end of each year. Since the union team believes that any short staffing has a ripple effect throughout the entire hospital, the fund will be divided among all RNs not just those in the short-staffed units.

Wilensky said that these penalties present an unprecedented obligation to the hospital. The union team could not find similar contractual language in the State of Michigan.

In attempting to iron out the final settlement on wages, tied to staffing levels, the members and LGH came perilously close to a strike. But in the final hours, on December 26, a tentative agreement was reached. The union team had won a 7% increase in base wages, effective February 3, with some employees receiving as much as 12%. In addition, a weekend differential was added (equaling a 3% raise for all weekend hours). The evening shift dif-



Above are pictured the Local 212 bargaining committee members, who played a crucial role in obtaining the hard-fought victory at Blue Cross of Western New York. They are left-to-right: Sally Burke, Peter Forcucci, Brenda St. John, Bob Newhardt and Valerie Dove.

Ski also announced that the four-year wage progression will be reduced to three years. That is, employees will reach maximum salary in their job classification within three years rather than four. Ski pointed out that there is approximately \$1.00 per hour difference between each step in the progression.

This excellent agreement was a struggle, but the result of the members' hard work, dedication and creativity.

The success of a corporate campaign

Mike Walker said that the campaign for "another way" worked because everyone was totally committed from the beginning—the task force, the bargaining committee, the local union, the International Union, the Buffalo and New York State labor movements, the local and state politicians, and the community.

"The members," he said, now enjoy a contract that is just, containing the job protections they struggled so hard to win. It may have taken eight months, but we did it without a strike. We did it without the hardships a strike causes everyone; we did it with commitment and with flair. I would recommend an "another way" campaign to any union. It works."

ferential was also increased.

The four-hour bonus, which approximately 50% of the nurses receive, was capped at a maximum of \$60 per week. The health care co-pay (the employee's share of health care premiums) was changed from the current flat dollar amount to 5½% of the premium. Personal leave, bereavement leave and on-call pay were also increased.

The new contract has a wage reopener, effective July 1, 1992. The reopener is for the negotiations of wages and shift differentials only.

The tentative agreement was overwhelmingly ratified by the membership on January 8. A record 85% of the membership voted, Wilensky said, and the tally was 96-21 to approve.

The union negotiating team was composed of Ginger Kyer, Judy Tubbs, Katrina Mallek, Marge Gregory, Ellen Weaver, Ginny Smith, Sherri Gregurek and Josephy Marutiak.

Executive Board fetes VP Gwen Newton for 30 years of service

Vice President Gwen Newton celebrates 30 years of service with OPEIU this year. To honor her dedication, hard work, and continual caring for members and workers, the OPEIU executive board honored her with an anniversary dinner as well as a commemorative plaque.

The executive board, said International President John Kelly, also passed a resolution in her honor which read:

WHEREAS Gwen NEWTON was elected Vice President of Office and Professional Employees International Union in 1965 to serve on its Executive Board, and

WHEREAS she has been re-elected Vice President at eight consecutive conventions of the OPEIU, and

WHEREAS Gwen NEWTON has served with distinction for these past twenty-five years, making her the most senior member of the Board, and

WHEREAS the officers and members of the OPEIU wish to express their appreciation to her for her outstanding service to the membership of the OPEIU and to the labor movement, and

WHEREAS a resolution will be introduced at the next OPEIU convention detailing Gwen NEWTON's lifetime efforts on behalf of working women and men with a unanimous recommendation of the Executive Board for its passage, now therefore be it

RESOLVED that the Executive Board of the OPEIU commend Gwen NEWTON for her twenty-five years of distinguished service on behalf of the members of this Organization, and be it further

RESOLVED that the OPEIU expresses its gratitude and appreciation to Gwen NEWTON for her dedication to the cause of trade unionism.

Just as she was the first OPEIU female executive board member, she has always stood head-and-shoulders above most labor union leaders. She has a remarkable history of "firsts" and is responsible for the growth and success of OPEIU Local 30, based in Los Angeles and San Diego.

The official history of the union *White Collar Union* describes her background and rise within the union this way:

She came to Los Angeles in 1950 in search of a job, forced to withdraw from San Diego State



International Vice President Gwen Newton appears with International President John Kelly at a dinner in honor of her 30th anniversary as an OPEIU member.

College because she had no money. A friend told her that the Office Employees Union might help, and Gwen Newton "wandered in off the street," as she said, with no training or skills and little knowledge of the business or trade union world. Karl Shoes, a Los Angeles company headed by Harry Karl, who had a well-known affinity for glamorous movie star wives, was expressing its social concern for job opportunities for black people. Local 30 had a contract with Karl; word was passed to the union that there might be openings for qualified black clericals. Anne Sweet, who was then the Local 30 business representative, interviewed Gwen Newton and sent her immediately to Karl Shoes, where she was hired. When she was asked if she could operate a comptometer, her answer was no, but she wanted to learn. She took a week at a comptometer school and came back to Karl Shoes to work for five years.

As a new member of Local 30, Gwen Newton started attending meetings, learning about how a union operated, serving on committees, and almost immediately became shop steward and negotiator for the Karl Shoes unit. She aspired to a supervisory job at Karl, for which she believed she was eminently qualified; when a man was hired ahead of her, she resigned. She soon found a job with the Sheet Metal Apprenticeship Committee in Los Angeles helping train young sheet metal workers; she took the course herself and

became a qualified sheet metal worker, too, although she never worked at the trade.

When in 1961 a vacancy on the Local 30 staff for a business agent's job arose, Gwen Newton applied for it and was hired. In 1964 she decided to run for the local's top position of secretary-treasurer and business representative. She endured an ugly racist campaign to win handily and oust the incumbent; she has never been opposed thereafter. In 1965, she was elected an International vice-president, to become for several years both the only woman and the only black holding high office in the Union.

But the presence of Gwen Newton on the Executive Board was far from tokenism toward either women or blacks. She had fought her internal trade union battles... defeating entrenched male leadership in her own local union. She demonstrated strong executive ability, directing a staff of three full-time representatives and working devotedly to build her local union. Local 30 had approximately 1100 members when she became its head; despite several losses of units, the local grew to approximately 2500 members by 1974... [Local 30 now has 5,300 members in hospitals, law firms, colleges, credit unions and trust fund offices. Today, she stands secure as one of the most able and highly regarded leaders of the OPEIU.]

Newton is recognized outside of OPEIU as well for her outstanding abilities. She has served many years on the National Board as vice president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, a national women's organization within the labor movement.

"Gwen Newton has made an indelible impression on OPEIU, as an organizer, negotiator, administrator, fighter for minority and women's rights. We could not have come so far, so fast without her," said International President John Kelly.

Newton was also honored recently for giving "unselfishly of herself in the service of others," at a dinner sponsored by the Los Angeles Federation of Labor. The dinner was a fund-raising event for the Los Angeles Labor Community Services Food and Emergency Program and Food Bank, which assists in alleviating the hardships and suffering of needy families, especially during strikes, layoffs and plant closings.

"Gwen's compassion, leadership ability and dedication has long been recognized by OPEIU, but also by the entire labor movement. We are proud of her accomplishments. I am pleased to call her my colleague and friend," President Kelly said.

In memoriam

Wallace Brown

We are sad to announce the death of former OPEIU Local 375 Vice President Wallace Brown (known as Wally). He passed away suddenly February 23, 1991, at his home in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Brown was born in Cincinnati. He was a 2nd lieutenant with the U.S. Army and served during World War II. His employment at the U.S. Postal Service lasted until his retirement in 1971. He had been a member of Toastmasters International. He was active with OPEIU Ushers Local Union 375, as an usher, steward and ultimately vice president, when he worked for the Cincinnati Reds, Cincinnati Bengals and the Cincinnati Gardens. Recently he served on the Minority Recruitment Committee for the Ohio National Guard.

He was an active member of the men's club and the Bible Study Group, as well as an usher, in his church St. Andrew's.

He leaves his son Philip, his daughter Merriel, and his former wife Clara Gibson Brown.

Elenore Palyu

Dolores Jablonski, retired member of OPEIU Local 10 in Detroit, reports the death of Sister Palyu. She said that Palyu had been a "staunch believer in the labor movement from a young girl to the time of her passing. Her mother Thelma O'Dell was her mentor—her positions in the union consisting of executive board, secretary-treasurer and business agent. Her knowledge of the union was something to behold."

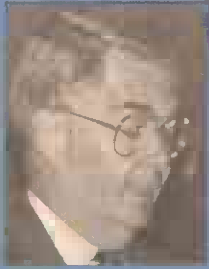
She held her position in the Pattern Makers until her illness in 1989.

Buena D. Brady

Buena D. Brady, former trustee of OPEIU 53 in Omaha, Nebraska, passed away in January of 1991, reports Local 53 Recording Secretary Jody Monahan.

According to her obituary, published by Local 53, "she was a past worthy matron of the Order of Eastern Star and a retired executive secretary and office manager of the Omaha Construction Industry Health and Welfare Plan."

All three—Brown, Palyu and Brady—will be greatly missed by their families, coworkers, unionists and friends. We will hold them in our thoughts and prayers.



OPEIU locals assist members called to active duty

by John Kelly...

Whether or not people supported the war in the Gulf, everyone supported the troops. A number of our locals made special efforts to support our men and women sent to the Gulf, but a few stand out because of the size of their efforts or the creativity they showed in assisting our own members called up to duty. We honor those locals, as well as those members, here.

Local 153 creates grant for members

They usually work at the computer updating insurance claims, on the reservation desk checking in hotel guests, running stock bids to the brokers, handling students' registration questions, or taking blood samples from their patients.

But Local 153 began serving America in the Persian Gulf and had to leave behind families who depended on them for support.

"Since these members were serving all of us, we wanted to show them that we were in full support of them and their families. We also wanted to ease the strain that this separation caused," said OPEIU International Vice President Michael Goodwin, who also serves as Local 153 Secretary-Treasurer. He was reporting on a new benefit for members serving in the Gulf.

\$500 grant

Local 153 became the first union in the country to try to ease the financial burdens of members called to serve in the Persian Gulf by granting \$500 to their dependent families. "This," President John Kelly said, "lessened the financial pinch caused by the absence of a family member earning a good union salary."

The first check had been presented to Yvette Ortiz, wife of Angel Ortiz who worked as a page at the New York Stock Exchange, until his reserve unit was called to active duty in Saudia Arabia. Ortiz is serving in the Army Intelligence Branch.



OPEIU International President and Local 153 Business Manager John Kelly awards the first \$500 grant to Yvette Ortiz, wife of member Angel Ortiz who was assigned to the Persian Gulf.

Connecticut members rally for U.S. troops

Workers at the General Dynamics Electric Boat Division rallied in support of the troops in the Persian Gulf on a cold, blustery day. In spite of the weather, members of OPEIU Local 106 gave up their lunch hours to demonstrate their

support, as did all of the unions that comprise the Metal Trades Council at Electric Boat in Groton, Connecticut. All are glad that hostilities have now ceased and those serving will soon be reunited with their families.



Steve Hancock, vice president of OPEIU Local 106, sings the Star Spangled Banner at Connecticut rally.



Thousands of Electric Boat workers rally in support of U.S. troops in the Persian Gulf.

U.S. Price Index

U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics
New Base 1982-84 = 100

1989	
January	356.7
February	358.0
March	360.0
April	362.9
May	364.9
June	365.9
July	366.8
August	367.0
September	368.3
October	369.8
November	370.6
December	371.1

Canadian Index

Statistics Canada
New Base 1986 = 100

1989	
January	110.9
February	111.6
March	112.2
April	112.5
May	113.7
June	114.3
July	115.0
August	115.1
September	115.3
October	115.7
November	116.1
December	116.0

1990	
January	375.0
February	376.6
March	378.5
April	379.2
May	379.9
June	382.1
July	383.4
August	386.9
September	390.5
October	393.0
November	393.8

1990	
January	117.0
February	117.7
March	118.1
April	118.1
May	118.7
June	119.2*
July	119.8
August	119.9
September	120.2
October	121.2
November	121.9

* The old CPI-W (U.S.) figures are being replaced with a new series (New base 1982-84 = 100). We will continue to publish the old while everyone converts it.

If you move, send your old and new address, including zip code and social security or social insurance number and Local Union number to: Gilles Beauregard, Sec.-Treas., 815 16th Street, N.W., Suite 606, Washington, D.C. 20006.