Blue Cross/Blue Shield:
Large Gains Scored in Two New Coast Contracts
3,000 Employees in Oakland, San Francisco Win Big Pay Boosts

A 38%-hr. workweek with annual paid holidays worth $960 per member in the first year, depending on classification, and vastly improved fringe benefits, were gained by Local 29 in an initial three-year negotiated contract for its new unit of 3,000 office employees at Blue Cross of Northern California in Oakland, according to Business Manager Dick Delaney.

The agreement also covers across-the-board wage increases of 5% in each of the following two years with cost-of-living adjustments. These provide three cents an hour for each 1% increase in the CPI, in excess of 5%, with a maximum of 12c. The starting pay for lowest rated clerical employees in the first year is $718 per month and $1,065 in the top classification.

OPEIU Tops in Office Organizing
Led White Collar Field in Jan.-Sept. Period, Says B.N.A.

The Office & Professional Employees International Union topped all other unions in the white-collar field by organizing 3,365 employees in 31 new units, according to a tabulation by the Bureau of National Affairs, Inc., of NLRA elections during the first nine months of 1978.

It also scored the largest victory of the year when Local 29 won a unit of 1,287 office and technical employees at Blue Cross of Northern California in Oakland, Cal., last June. A first contract for this new unit has just been signed.

Despite the usual summer lull, the wage-price freeze in Canada, and a wait-and-see attitude on the part of many prospective groups in the U.S. pending the outcome of the Labor Law Reform bill, Director of Organization Art Lewandowski reveals that nevertheless new OPEIU membership continues to grow steadily.

532 More Join Rankes

Since his last report, he discloses that another 532 new members were organized in the U.S. They include a 194-member union of office employees at Oberlin College in Cleveland, who voted overwhelmingly to affiliate with that OPEIU. The unit has been granted a charter as Local 502.

He says three new units were organized among public employees. Detroit Local 10 gained a group of 12 at Muskegon Hts., in Mich.; Philadelphia Local 14 a 75-member unit among Ocean County engineers in South New Jersey, and Seattle Local 8 a 20-member unit of Kittitas City employees in Ellensburg, Wash. The latter local also organized a 13-member unit at Cirque Dinner Theater in Seattle.

Other victories were scored among employees of credit unions, the largest being a 50-member unit at Bankside Federal Credit Union in Des Moines, Iowa, and a 14-member unit of Kittitas City employees in Ellensburg, Wash. The latter local also organized a 13-member unit at Cirque Dinner Theater in Seattle.

The vacation schedule calls for two weeks after one year; three after three, and four after 12 years. Eleven paid holidays are provided, including the day after Thanksgiving, the employee's birthday, and a floating holiday. Sick leave is cumulative at the rate of one day per month to a 60-day maximum.

Major issues included an automatic wage progression system and promotions based on seniority rather than on merit. The automatic wage progression system was won. In addition, the parties agreed that seniority would be "one factor" to be used in determining qualifications for promotion. The contract also provides for agency shops.

Other highlights include a new high-level vision care program to cover costs of eye glasses and frames; a dental plan with 50% deductible; a shift differential of 45c an hour for the second shift and 55c for the third.

Management also agreed to liberalize dress rules. Under the agreement, male employees who do not "fit the public" no longer are required to wear neckties.

The initial contract runs to January 1, 1981, and was ratified by a vote of 65 to 1. The union president, an apprentice, and the prominent member of the membership, was particularly pleased with inclusion of language dealing with automatic wage progression and promotions based on seniority, Delaney reported.

Pay increases ranging from 20% to 24%, sick pay for pregnancy, paid half day and other fringe benefits improvements were gained by Francisco Local 3 in a new three-year agreement renegotiated for its 1,700 member office and technical unit at Blue Shield of California.

According to Local 3 Sec.-Treas. George A. Davis, it was ratified by a more than 3-to-1 vote. He reports that in the first year it calls for across-the-board pay raises of 35c an hour for those in the lowest grade, and an extra one-cent an hour in each succeeding grade up to 45c an hour for those in the top classification, retroactive to November 14.

In the second contract year, employees are guaranteed a minimum 5% general increase, plus the increase in the cost-of-living, whichever is greater.

In the third contract year starting November 14, 1979, the wage formula used in the second year will be applied, he said.

Effective February 1, 1978, employees are given the choice of 30 mins., 45 mins., or one hour for lunch. Flexitime will continue in effect.

Starting January 1, 1978, vision care became effective for employees and their dependents, and a new clause provides sick pay for maternity leave.

Under the new agreement, Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve, which were previously half holidays, become full paid holidays, bringing the annual total to 124.

A new job security clause provides that where an employee is reclassified and downgraded as a result of reduction in force, the new classification and salary will be based on classification and salary at the time that the employee was reclassified.

(Continued on Page 4)
**Banks Out to Kill Reform Bill**

ABA Throws Weight Behind Move to Sway U.S. Senate

Bankers like their own union of employers but they are unanimously opposed to any union for their workers. But the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) is now considering a proposal that would grant the NLRB authority to issue rules covering all industries on such topics as voter eligibility and bargaining units. The NLRB has already disposed of this question, and now it is considering the case as a whole.

**New Low in Dirty Tricks**

Five NLRB regional directors who accepted invitations to sit in what were described as "informal meetings to discuss labor-management relations" found they had been billed as key participants in seminars advising businesspeople on how to bust unions.

But as soon as they found out that union-busters were playing a dirty trick on them, all five withdrew. "They were suckered," said an official at NLRB headquarters in Washington, D.C.

By law, the NLRB is not supposed to take sides in labor-management issues. The invitations were issued by a group identified as the AFL-CIO Labor Management Practices Institute of New York, which White Collar expressed in a recent editorial. AMPI charges fees ranging from $835 to $410 to businessmen who attend its two-day union-busting seminars.

The matter came to light through the efforts of an OPEIU member, John Henning, who is executive secretary-treasurer of the California State AFL-CIO. He obtained a copy of an AMPI brochure announcing one of its seminars, in which the NLRB regional director was billed as a participant.

He also learned of other AMPI meetings already held or scheduled for Dallas, Atlanta, Kansas City and Cherry Hill, N.J., with NLRB regional directors listed as participants in each case.

He promptly dashed off a letter to NLRB Chairman John Fanning to "vigorously protest the cooperation by the NLRB with this blatantly union-busting program in any way, shape or form," adding that it is "philosophically indefensible to have the NLRB associated with such a purpose."

Fanning replied telling him the regional directors had learned the true intent of the AMPI sessions before any had actually been conducted, and had withdrawn.

As we pointed out previously, these unscrupulous union-busting outfits will stop at nothing to gain their ends--fancy fees from gullible businessmen willing to use their dirty tricks to keep employees from organizing into unions.

**New Cost-of-Living Index**

We call the attention of all OPEIU members to the new Consumer Price Index (CPI), particularly those who will be on unit during the months when it will be issued by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics starting next month. Both the new and old indexes will continue to be published until June, when that month's figures are released in the following month. (See story on Page 3.)

Bargaining units that have contracts containing cost-of-living adjustments based on the old CPI will have to negotiate with employers to make appropriate recomputations to bring these in line with the new figures.

Some OPEIU contracts have cost-of-living adjustments based on area figures for their specific regions. For these units, the matter becomes more complicated. However, the BLS has agreed to make "official estimates" available on request for the two months that will be missing for a certain period of time.

Each bargaining unit using the area figures will have to write to their Regional BLS Director, requesting the data, and designating employer with the "official estimates" for the missing month which will result when the area index is issued bi-monthly instead of quarterly.

The BLS has also recommended that all locals use the All City, or national CPI figure, or modify its contract to provide for six CPI adjustments instead of four, during the year.

We are publishing all the information we have on the subject to date. It is estimated that the CPI adjustments for the next two months will be revised to account for an increase in the cost of living of about 1.5 percent.

Sick leave is increased to nine days, based on a formula of one day for each 260 hours worked, and can accumulate indefinitely. When an employee terminates, he or she will be allowed one-half of the earned sick leave to a maximum of 10 days. One half-day can be used for a doctor's appointment.

The company agreed to provide major medical coverage for each employee and dependents of $125,000 (was $100,000) at no cost to the employee, except $8.30 per month for dependents.

Other clauses governing job posting and promotions were liberalized, including that on bereavement leave, which will provide three days to attend the funeral of a brother or sister, and one day for an employee's grandparents.

The unit negotiating team, consisting of Markussen including Stewards Karen W. Marx, Valoree Ness and Joan Anderson, held new agreement runs to November 14, 1980.

**Hospital Supply Unit Scores**

**Twin Cities Group Wins $8,694 Pay Boost Per Member**

Wage gains totaling some $8,694 per employee over three years, plus greatly improved fringe benefits, were won by Twin Cities Local 14, N.W., for its 46-member office unit at Physicians & Hospital Supply Co., representing workers of pharmaceuticals, chemicals and hospital equipment in Plymouth, Minn.

Business Manager H. R. Markusen reports that it calls for a 4½% increase in the first year, and 7% in each of the following two years. The company is required to re-bid the labor agreement after the third year.

In the first year, Good Friday is added to the list of paid holidays, and eligibility for vacation with pay was increased. Rest periods were increased to 15 minutes in mornings and afternoons, and lunch periods were maintained.

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**Paper Clericals Leap Into 5-Figure Brackets**

Two additional holidays in 1978 were gained, July 5 and December 23, and the vacation schedule was liberalized to provide five weeks after 20 years of service.

The company agreed to boost health-welfare coverage to 18% per month for each employee, and up to $30 for dependents. In the second year, employee coverage will be increased to $20. Life insurance was raised to $13,000 for each employee.

Sickness and accident benefits go to $124 per week in the first year and to a $150 maximum in the second. Other improvements were also negotiated in the retirement plan.
New U.S. Cost-of-Living Index Due Next Month
Bargaining Units Must Study Contracts to Make Adjustments

Starting with the January figures to be released around February 27, two new Consumer Price Indexes (CPI) will be published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The existing index will continue until June and then will be dropped.

1. The all new All Urban Consumers CPI will receive a lot of attention in the press, and will appear to differ very little from the other CPIs. But, it is different. This index reflects the spending patterns of retirees, the unemployed and executives, as well as the urban wage and salary workers that are included in the existing CPI.

2. At the same time, the BLS will publish two urban Wage Earners and Clerical Workers CPIs, for the months of January, February, March, April and May 1978. One, the older one, will be discontinued with the July publication of the June index, and the new revised CPI will be the continuing index.

3. Each union will have to assess its own position with regard to its own contract language. But generally those whose contracts provide for an adjustment based on a particular city index have quarterly adjustments. However, a city that is included in the new CPI will have to work with the BLS Regional Director in advance of the release date.

4. The index number will be a little higher than the 1954 level of the index in November 1977. The base year remains 1967 = 100.

Two Members in Tacoma Win Top Labor Offices

Joe Davis, a member of Local 23, was reelected...
Cold Facts on Union Dues

The most difficult task our Local Unions face today in their internal affairs concerns the adoption of a dues increase. Most of our Local Union leaders postpone action on dues increases until December, since at that time the Local Unions involved deteriorate to the point where they are sometimes deeply in debt.

The reluctance of our Local Union leadership to bring matters of this kind to the attention of membership is historical. Despite the fact that leaders are required to do far more today than ever before in the history of unionism, and despite the increasing complexities of labor union leadership which involve considerable added expense, Local Union members for some unknown reason, still vote against dues increases.

Unions and collective bargaining have been beset with many problems in the past ten years. Arbitration costs have skyrocketed. Arbitrators will very seldom work for less than $250 a day, plus time and travel expenses. These are used to take care of the arbitrated grievance and time spent in preparing the decision.

Legal fees have also risen dramatically. In addition, unions are facing legal obstacles never encountered in prior years. Failure to represent its rights against union management by its members is the source of these problems. It is not unusual to have a dozen or more attorneys on the rise throughout the country. EEOC actions, many without merit by members against their unions, appear to be the order of the day.

So-called "right-to-work" (for less) laws in 20 states of the United States, plus attempts to place these Heinous laws on the statute books of other states, in addition to numerous other anti-union proposals in various state legislatures, have caused per capita taxes to our city and state labor bodies to accelerate.

The per capita taxes paid to the Canadian Labour Congress and the AFL-CIO have been increased at each succeeding Convention of those organizations in recent years. This money is used by both of those national organizations to protect the rights of workers in the United States and Canada.

If union members did not face up to the task of increased dues, they would not have the per capita tax money to aid our national organizations, leaders of industry would soon deprive working people of the legal rights they now enjoy.

Recently, the National Association of Manufacturers announced the formation of a national organization intended to help employers keep unions out of their factories, stores and offices. The new group is called the Council on Union-Free Environment.

In its formation, in part, a response to growing business concern over pending changes in the National Labor Law, which are considered likely to help labor's organizing efforts, and increased organizing activity by unions, according to Heath Larry, president of N.A.M.

When asked why it was desirable to have a union-free environment, Mr. Larry replied that management was able to operate more efficiently without unions. Mr. Larry is selling us in no uncertain terms that management wants the right to unilaterally fix wages, hours and working conditions.

Mr. Larry is, in effect, stating that management does not want to negotiate with workers through their union-organized activities. He states the right to hire, promote, discipline, discipline and discipline whatever changes they please in their respective work forces.

In the face of this ever-growing fight by employer organizations against unions, organized labor, not only in the factories of the United States and Canada but city, state and provincial governments as well, it is difficult to understand the reluctance of union membership to increase dues rates to a point that Local Unions can effectively combat organized management activity.

Historically, most of our Local Unions have operated on a flat dues rate basis. As a consequence, despite the fact that memberships have achieved substantial wage increases throughout the country, the result of collective bargaining and have accomplished this with pre-inflation dues schedules, Local Unions must from time to time ask their members for dues increases of $1 or $2 per month.

It is time that our Local Unions realistically face up to the problems of dues and adopt schedules which will permanently eliminate the embarrassment faced by union officials who periodically must ask for dues increases.

The adoption of a schedule based on a percentage of wages will not only take care of our Local Unions' present needs but will automatically increase dues income as members' wages rise through collective bargaining. A number of our Local Unions have adopted this type of system with successful results.

One effect of such percentage dues schedules is that those members with the greatest income pay higher fees than those in low wage categories. In addition, a percentage schedule would not only eliminate the need for dues increase requests from time to time, but would also be in the minds of union members permanently equate wages and dues payments.

U.S. Study Finds Four-Day Week Gains Across Nation

Four-day workweeks edged up in the year ended May 1977 to 1.4 percent of all full-time workers, according to the U.S. Department of Labor which said the number of wage and salary earners increased from about 75,000 to 850,000 since May 1973.

A national survey of 1,000 organizations, found that the vast majority of workers (more than 80 percent) remain on five-day schedules.

Weekly schedules increased from 3.3 percent in 1975 to 9.3 percent in 1977, a gain of almost one-half million workers per year. Nevertheless, six-day workers were still less numerous in 1977 than in 1973, despite a substantial growth in total employment over the period.

Promotions, Higher Pay Highlight Museum Pact

Across-the-board gains of 35¢ an hour, or some $600 million in raises included in the contract and three employees upgraded, were among the gains scored in a one-year contract renewal renegotiated by Twin Cities Local 12 for its 65-member unit at the Minneapolis Society of Fine Arts, which operates a museum.

Business Manager H. R. Markussen reports that contract changes provide an additional 10 days sick leave; overtime for anyone working more than 7½ hours; the lower wage categories. In addition, a clause to insure pay raises for promotions.

The unit negotiating team comprised W en d e n y Knight, Perry Courtoise, Fran Singwald, and Susan Jacobsen. They were assisted by Local Union Sr. Sec.-Treas. Larry Norville, Wolberg, Ronald Schain, Beulah Smith and June Zeman.

OPEIU Tops in Organizing (Continued from Page 1)

ditional 73 percent over previous years, he said. Regional Director J. Oscar Bloodworth reports that Local 445 in Savannah, Ga., at J. C. Lewis Ford had won a unit of 30 employees.

New Growth in Canada

In Canada, Local 37 had organized more than 350 office employees at the head office and three branches of B.C. Savings Bank, a banking institution in Quebec.

He reports also that Vancouver, B.C. Local 15 had been recognized to represent 40-member unit at the Vancouver B.C. Savings Bank, and two small groups in branches of the Bank of Nova Scotia and the Bank of Montreal, outside Vancouver.

U.S. Price Index

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