OPEIU Led Field in 1977 Office Organizing

Tripled 1966 Results Although Others Fell Behind, Survey Finds

The Office & Professional Employees International Union in 1977 won bargaining rights for more white-collar employees than any other union, according to the Bureau of National Affairs, Inc., annual survey. The survey covers only elections held under the auspices of the National Labor Relations Board.

Last year, the OPEIU was successful in 41 NLRB elections, gaining bargaining rights for 3,525 employees. In the previous year it won 33 of 65 elections in units totaling 1,035 employees.

The survey found that the OPEIU's largest victory in 1977 among previously unrepresented employees was a unit of 1,286 at Blue Cross of Northern California, in Oakland. It was also victorious in a unit of 529 clerical and technical employees at Martin Place Hospital in Detroit, Mich.

During all of last year, the survey shows, unions won bargaining rights for a total of 23,820 white-collar employees. The total was 630 lower than the record total of 24,450 in 1976, and marked the first decrease since 1973. In previously unrepresented units, unions won 613 of 1,173 elections, or 52.3%, and lost 560 in units totaling a record 35,435 employees. The number of union victories was below the 648 recorded in the previous year, while the number of union defeats was up from 539 in units comprising 33,375 white-collar employees in 1976.

The percentage of union victories was down from 1976 when unions won 54.6% of all elections. The average size of the new white-collar bargaining units was 38.9 employees, exceeding the 1976 average of 37.7 employees. Approximately 10,200, or 43%, of the newly-represented white-collar employees were concentrated in the health care industry.

Included in the survey are office and plant clerical employees, and those defined as "technical" by NLRB, such as draftsman and survey crews, etc.

It is noted that while the NLRB figures show almost the entire extent of organizing in private industry, they do not reflect organizing in elections conducted by state and other agencies, through voluntary recognition, or through other procedures. Nor do they reflect unionization of public employees.

Buffalo OPEIU Wins Record Pact at Blue Cross/Blue Shield

Wage boosts averaging approximately $3,700 per individual were won in a three-year agreement renegotiated at Local 212 in Buffalo, N.Y., for its 475-member office unit at Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Western New York, Inc., according to Business Manager Gerry Skrzeczewski, who headed the negotiating team.

He says the bargaining sessions were unusually dramatic, particularly since the Buffalo members had learned through White Collar that an initial contract at Milwaukee Blue Shield had raised hourly average pay there from a pre-union scale of $3.89 to $6.08 over a three year period.

"From then on we were under tremendous pressure from our Buffalo unit members," Skrzeczewski explained. "Bargaining sessions were even bombarded by phone calls telling us that nothing below the Milwaukee average would be acceptable. We had a difficult time holding the militant members in line."

As the pressure built up, both management and the OPEIU bargaining team bent all efforts to devise a formula that would be satisfactory to both sides. As a result, a complicated one was worked out that raised the average pay rate for the Buffalo unit to $6.45 an hour, 35¢ more than the Milwaukee average.

The Buffalo agreement calls for increases across-the-board of 31¢ an hour to $1.21 in the first year; 20¢ in each of the following two years with a COLA of 8¢ an hour in each of those years. In addition, the work day was cut by 15 minutes without any loss in pay. It was also agreed to install a flextime system.

Inflation, Rising Taxes Squeeze Family Budgets

Inflation and rising taxes have been squeezing the household budget so hard that the average family has had to raise its protection income by more than a third to maintain a 1970 standard of living, according to the Conference Board's latest economic "road maps."

The nonprofit business research organization says that its consumer price index shot up by 56 percent between 1970 and 1977 and is expected to rise about 6 percent in 1978. This means that 51 will be needed to buy this year what 60 cents purchased in 1970.

Family earnings have increased but the Federal income tax takes a larger share of higher incomes, the board said, adding that Social Security tax rates have also grown sharply since 1970.

As a result of these pressures, the board estimated that a family of four earning $11,000-plus in 1978 needs more than $52,500 now to maintain the same standard of living. This is up from $21,000 last year.

OPEIU Unit at Y.W.C.A. Wins $4,680 Per Member

Wage gains totaling $4,680 per unit member were won in a new three-year agreement renegotiated by Local 11 for its office unit at the Y.W.C.A. in Portland, Ore., according to Sec.-Treas. Gary D. Kirkland.

It calls for an across-the-board increase of 40¢ an hour in the first year and 35¢ in each of the two following years. In the final contract year, it sets a minimum starting rate of $4.28 an hour in the lowest classification, and $4.68 in the top grade. Moreover, it reduces the time element for an employee to reach the top of scale from eight to three years. A new clause stipulates that any employee who works a full shift in a higher classification shall be paid for the entire shift at the rate for that grade.

The negotiating team comprised Business Representative Johnnie Ruth Sore and Shop Steward Cleo Rasmussen. The agreement runs to April 1, 1981.

June 1978
The Cave-Men Return

They're not really cave-men. They eat with proper utensils. They wear shirts, shirts, neckties. They do not grunt, speak clearly. It's just their ideas that go back to the cave, and they want to drug us all back there with them.

We've been talking about a whole batch of candidates for Congress this year, recruited, richly-financed, and master-minded by right-wing union-haters. Not only are they talking on pro-worker Democrats, they are even trying to dump Reagan-friendly Republicans in GOP primary races.

What kind of political cave do they want us to lead back to? One without union contracts to protect workers. They want to destroy your union and shred your contract and put employers back in full control of working people — like they were before the mid-1930's.

They want to destroy job safety laws. They think such laws are an imposition on business people. They don't really care that much about protection for workers. It might cost money.

They would dismantle the Social Security program, job-creating measures, housing programs. They'd repeal the Wagner Act and everything but apple pie and Mom.

It is a sad situation that might cost money. You could have other candidates like that and the groups behind them. Not any more. They now have money and political know-how.

But we can beat them . . . at the polls on November 7.

You've been given an opportunity to help. You've been given 12 votes if voting for candidates of your choice to Congress? Will you be sure to vote election day?

Three easy steps . . . away from the cave.

National Health Insurance

Every American family is familiar with the cruel cost of health care. Doctors bills go higher and higher, and the fee-for-service system is the basic reason.

President Carter's Council on Wage & Price Stability in a recent study raises some serious questions about the fee-for-service system. It finds that last year alone, physician fees rose 9.3%, some 50% more than the consumer price index. Since 1950, health care outlays have soared from 4.5% of the Gross National Product to the current 9.3%.

Ten years ago, Canadians were also under a fee-for-service system in which prices were fixed. However, despite the current inflationary trend, Canada under national health insurance has leveled off its health outlays to 7% of its GNP.

Recent Harris poll found Canadians 84% satisfied with national health insurance. A similar question to U.S. citizens brought a 51% negative reply to our present approach to health care.

The Council study noted that the median income of self-employed physicians, $63,000 in 1976, is higher and has risen faster than any other occupational group for which historical data are available.

A factor in the rapidly rising physician's fees is the growth in private and public health insurance coverage, and changes in method of insuror payment for physician services. Private insurance, particularly, does not offer any incentives for holding down physician fees any more for holding down hospital costs.

But health insurance may be the only way to deal with the inflationary effects of the fee-for-service system and hospital costs.

The Carter administration has shown a willingness to join with organized labor and legislative leaders to work out a proposal so congressional hearings can begin this summer.

As a result, universal and comprehensive health care, after some 40 years of struggle by organized labor, may become a reality in the next couple of years.

Coughlin Reelected AAA Board Chairman

Howard Coughlin was re-elected as chairman of the board of the American Arbitration Association for a second term at its annual meeting.

Coughlin, who has been a member of the AAA board since 1962. In March 1974 he was appointed chairman of its Executive Committee, the first union leader to serve in this capacity.

30 1/2% Pay Boost Won at Paper Firm

Salary boosts totaling 30 1/2% over three years, an additional paid holiday, and greatly improved health-welfare and pension plans, were won by Local 89 for its office unit in a renegotiated contract with Crown Zellerbach Corp., in Bellingham, Wash.

The president of the local, Lorraine Latino, reports that it calls for a 10 1/4% across-the-board salary boost in the first year, and 10% in each of the following two years. In the final contract year, it sets a starting minimum rate of $218 per week for the lowest grade rising to a $272.50 maximum. In the top classification, the starting rate will be $324.50 rising to a $410.50 maximum.

Good Friday was gained as an additional paid holiday, bringing the annual total to 11. The company guaranteed at least three days off on "back-to-back" holidays.

Substantial improvements were made in pension plan benefits retroactive to July 1, 1977.

On that date these were increased to $13.50 per month times times of service from the previous $9. Effective September 1, 1979, the benefit will be increased again to $14 per month.

Gains were also made in group life, AD&D coverage and accident and sickness insurance, the latter paying benefits ranging from $105 to $175 in the final year. The hospital-surgical plan was amended to provide Major Medical coverage to a $50,000 maximum, effective May 1, 1978, with a $1,000 deductible and not more than $300 for a family in any calendar year.

The new agreement runs to September 1, 1980.

Anti-Union Caper Backfires

Philad. Local Fights Back and Beats City Credit Union

A classic example of how employers attempt to undermine and bankrupt unions by forcing them to needless arbitrations emerged in Philadelphia where, happily, Local 14 fought back and turned the tables on the Philadelphia City Employees Credit Union.

The harassment began on April 1, 1977, when the credit union fired two employees on the false pretext that they had complained to the previous Board of Directors. The new board then dismissed four additional employees as "no longer needed," violating the seniority and bumping provisions of Local 14's contract.

All six cases were taken to arbitration. Last July, an arbitrator ordered the first two employees reinstated without back pay. But the credit union reinstated only one, compelling Local 14 to invoke court action to enforce the arbitrator's decision in the second case.

Then in October, different arbitrators ordered the other four employees reinstated but the credit union refused. The credit union fired two employees on the false pretext that they had complained to the previous Board of Directors.

As a result, universal and comprehensive health care, after some 40 years of struggle by organized labor, may become a reality in the next couple of years.

Crown Zellerbach also Yields Fatter Fringe Benefits

Crown Zellerbach, in Bellingham, Wash., has agreed to a $13.50 per month increase in annual employee benefits retroactive to July 1, 1977.

The company guaranteed the benefit at least three days off on "back-to-back" holidays. Substantial improvements were made in pension plan benefits retroactive to July 1, 1977.

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Wage Talk Wins 45c Hourly

SUCCESSFUL REOPENER: A 45c an hour increase for all 160 employees of Local 428 in a wage re-opener with the Baton Rouge Water Works and Parish Water Companies in Baton Rouge, La., one of the so-called "right-to-work" states. The negotiating team (from left) are Don Guilhot, OPEIU member; Local 428 President R. L. Matheny, Local 99 President; Silas Mayor, former Local 99 President, John Brunfield, Local 99 vice president, and Cooper Hall, assistant personnel supervisor of mill division.

The credit union finally began to see the light that its anti-union tactics were proving too weak.

(Continued on page 3)
OPEIU Staff Members Hold Annual Meeting In Atlanta

Shown above during one of their business sessions at the Hyatt Regency Hotel are International Representatives and Business Representatives from Locals in the United States and Canada. Insert shows International President Howard Coughlin and Secretary-Treasurer William A. Lowe on dares.

Boycott Sours Coors Beer Profits

Political Candidates Asked to Serve None at Functions

Sales of Coors Beer suffered a drastic drop of 66% in the first 1978 quarter, as a result of the national AFL-CIO boycott of the product because of the company's anti-union bias and its refusal to bargain with its workers who have now been on strike for more than a year.

The Brewery Union's Local 346 urges all other unions to intensify the boycott with press releases of support. It also requests letters to all political candidates, seeking labor support, asking them not to have any Coors Scab Beer at any of their functions.

The Coors Brothers, Bill and Joe, belong to a long list of right-wing organizations which include the John Birch Society, the Heritage Foundation and the so-called National Right-to-Work (for less) Committee. The following quotes reflect their anti-union attitudes:

1. "If organized labor is in command, we no longer have a free society, because organized labor can't control itself."
2. "The free enterprise system is better defended by labor and the government—with some help from higher education."
3. "Labor has no real use for society."
4. "For 40 years, we've reluctantly granted a Union Shop or Closed Shop, voluntarily, we've always been against it."
5. "Industry can build a POWER BASE or the environmentalists and other radicals will build one for us."
6. "If we don't own the industry, it's on probation."
7. "We have a long history of battles with Union labor, but we've never asked the Treasurer, Courtroom, Electricians and many others."

AFL-CIO Cares for Union Retirees
Its National Council of Senior Citizens Fills Their Needs

Many retired union members, without realizing it, are recruited by anti-union senior citizen groups who are working against the very things for which unions have fought for a century.

They are unaware that the National Council of Senior Citizens, founded and endorsed by the AFL-CIO, is the only national organization that has brought together union retirees to work for the same kind of social action for which organized Labor works.

Approximately 4% of NCSC's dues-paying members are union retirees. They are now 316,000 strong, with 3,800 senior citizens clubs all over America playing active roles in community services.

When you see those special discount rates on food, clothing, and transportation for senior citizens, you can thank NCSC for calling public attention to the financial plight of hundreds of thousands of our elderly citizens and bringing about these discounts.

Gold Card Membership in NCSC includes low-cost rates for travel, low-cost health insurance to supplement Medicare, motel and car rental discounts, a prescription drug service, and a national newspaper.

Unfortunately, once a good thing gets going, a lot of imitators spring up. The NCSC's success in getting Medicare and other legislation passed caused other organizations for the elderly to be formed—some good, some bad.

The elderly, particularly the elderly poor, have been victimized since time immemorial, and this is true to some extent today. They have been lured into insurance schemes, inadequate retirement programs, get-rich-quick propositions of many styles and sizes...some of these anti-union.

A report on NCSC's experience and clout came recently when President Jimmy Carter named the Council's president, Bert Seidman, to the job of chairman of the White House Advisory Board on problems of the aged.

Bert Seidman, director of the AFL-CIO's Department of Social Security, says: "NCSC is labor's kind of retiree organization. Older and retired union members should be given an opportunity to learn about the National Council for Senior Citizens and how it can help them. Before they get lured by expensive direct-mail appeals or television advertising to join other senior citizen organizations which do not serve their best interests."

For more information about NCSC write: Membership Services, National Council of Senior Citizens, 1511 K Street, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20005.

West Coast Credit Union Signs Initial OPEIU Pact

A $50 a month across-the-board salary boost in addition to improved fringe benefits were gained by Portland Local 11 in an initial one-year agreement covering employment at the Weyerhaeuser Credit Union in Longview, Wash.

Sec-Treas. Gary D. Kirkland reports that it provides one additional holiday, bringing the annual total to 10; two weeks vacation after one year; three after five; four after 11 and five after 16 years. Bereavement leave was also improved.

A vision care plan was added to the existing health-welfare benefits, which includes $500 for prescription glasses or contact lenses for the employee. The employer also agreed to maintain or improve the existing CUNA Retirement Savings Plan.

Business Representative Johnnie Ruth Storer negotiated the agreement, assisted by Shop steward Therese Geier.

Pension Plan Clericals Gain 16% Salary Increases

Wage boosts total 16% over two years across-the-board were gained by Local 11 for its office unit at the Administrative & Insurance Office, Inc., which administers pension plans and fringe benefits in Portland, Ore., Sec-Treas., Gary D. Kirkland reports. The agreement calls for an 8% raise in each year.

In the second contract year, a minimum starting rate of $769 per month is established with a maximum of $1,027. Employees also are entitled to a 5% longevity increase after five years of service. A minimum of $4 an hour was set for temporary employees.

The employer also agreed to pay for full family coverage for improved hospital-surgical, dental and optical plans during the life of the agreement which runs to March 1, 1980.

The unit negotiating team comprised Business Representative Johnnie Ruth Storer and Stewart Mary Ann Perrythe.

Mining Clericals Hit Jackpot Pay Scales

First-grade clerks will earn $293.20 a week and clerk-typists $266.40 in the final year of a three-year contract renegotiated by Local 410 for its office unit at Climax Molybdenum Co., a mining concern in Climax, Colo., Local 410 President Earlene Hell reports.

The agreement includes a COLA clause providing a 1% an hour increase for each 0.4 point rise in the consumer price index, with a 20¢ cap in 1978 and a 25¢ cap in 1979.

It calls for ten paid holidays per year, including separate three-day holidays at Christmas and New Year's. Vacation leaves range from one week per year to two weeks after five years of service to five weeks after 20 years.

A tuition plan provides reimbursement of one-half the cost of tuition and related expenses to employees who enroll in job-related courses.

Hospital-surgical costs of insurance for employees and dependents are to be paid in full by the company, the plan including prescription drugs and dental coverage. The latter was changed to an incentive plan requiring employees and dependents to undergo an annual dental checkup.

On January 1, 1979, the company agreed to pay 100% coverage for dental insurance.

Group life insurance coverage was increased to $15,000 per individual. Benefits under a new Skeik and Accident policy will pay $125 a week for the first two weeks, and $150 thereafter to a total of 52 weeks.

The company also agreed to improve pension plan benefits to $14 per month times years of service on November 1, 1978, and $15 on the same 1979 date.

Assisting President Hell on the negotiating team were Vice President Ruth Niles, Sec-Treas. Sylvia Ball trip, and Steward Glen Bremer. The agreement runs to November 1, 1980.

Buffalo Blue Cross/Blue Shield
(Continued from page 1)

step progression from minimum to maximum was reduced to four steps in the new agreement. Under the old contract, it took 6½ years from hiring date to reach top pay in a particular grade. In future, this can be accomplished in some 12 months thus ensuring faster promotion for all the employees.

The sick leave clause was rewritten and, where days are unused, they will be cumulative to 105 days.

Other gains are the adoption of an expedited arbitration with a single arbitrator instead of a three-person board to save time and expense; a high option dental program with greater benefits, and a more liberal health-welfare plan.

The agreement, reached after an all-night session, was ratified by a 94%-to-0 vote, a
**Employer Penalizes Kind Act But Backs Off Fast When Union Takes Up Issue**

Without a union to check them, management can be brutally callous to their employees. Local 153 members recently discovered at Sea-Land Services, Inc. the world's largest container ship company, which will be discussed further.

**American University Honors Betty Southard Murphy**

Betty Southard Murphy, member of the National Labor Relations Board, received a Distinguished Alumni Award from the American University in Washington in 1978, and is a member of the American Federation of Teachers. She was nominated for the honor by Dean Nicholas N. Kritikos of the Washington College of Law. The citation was presented by University Provost Richard Berendzen.

It cited her accomplishments in private law practice for defense of newsmen and their rights under the First Amendment, her service as a member and past chairman of the NLRA, and her service as a union trustee and volunteer teacher of an advanced labor law course.

The annual convocation recognizes members of the university community, faculty, students and staff, and alumni from the five AU colleges and schools who have distinguished themselves and the university.

**Conn. OPEIU Locals Gain Status in Communities**

Connecticut OPEIU Locals continue active in community affairs and are extending union influence through various public bodies.

Frank Fallon, Local 123 member, has completed another successful labor counseling course, the largest yet for members of Locals 329 and 466.

Dominic Furco, of Local 466, has been named to the Board of Directors of the Community Union Center in West Haven, the first OPEIU placement on that board.

Retired International Representative "Bud" Manning is now a member of the American Arbitration Association's National Labor Panel, and has been selected by Gov. Ella Grasso as an alternate panelist on the State Board of Arbitration.

President Claire Pluff of Local 329, and Brother Furco, coordinated a goodwill drive during the recent long strike of the United Mine Workers.

**Thanks OPEIU Members**

President Howard Coughlin has received a letter from John W. Hanley, chairman of the United Way of America board, thanking OPEIU members for their support in its 1977-78 fund raising campaign. The letter added: "I look forward to continuing our joint efforts to meet the human needs of our citizens, our communities and our country."

Indicated that the steel industry's unfunded pension liabilities have been the principal roadblock in the way of replacing outdated plants with new plants and modern technology. The degree to which present pension accounting understates unfunded pension liabilities was graphically demonstrated by the 1977 plant closings at Bethlehem Steel.

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TEN of the top 100 companies have unfunded vested liabilities in their pension plans equal to one-third or more of their net worth. Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel, for example, has vested liabilities of $274 million which is more than seven times its recent stock market value.

In a recent article published in The Wall Street Journal, it was reported that the company's management has been criticized for its handling of pension and other employee benefit plans.

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