Little Rock

In conjunction with National Secretaries’ Day, Local 105 saluted the secretaries of Little Rock on April 23 by setting up a booth and distributing 500 pamphlets to office workers in the heart of Little Rock’s business and banking district.

According to the local’s President Melba Fiser, most of the members participated in the event. Also assisting were State AFL-CIO President J. Bill Becker and Secretary-Treasurer Jerald Jacoby; AFL-CIO Representative Gene Harris; Business Agent Marty Schuller of the Machinists; and others from various unions in the city.

The pamphlet which the local had printed for the occasion emphasized “Raises, Not Roses,” and listed information about OPEIU. The pamphlet emphasized the large gap between organized and unorganized office workers’ salaries.

President Fiser said of the event: “We feel our efforts were very successful and we possibly will gain some organizing leads from the venture. But, more important our membership benefited from the experience of working together.”

New York City

In the heart of the nation’s financial district—Wall Street—Local 13 held a rally in celebration of National Secretaries’ Day. The Federal Hall rally was aimed at helping bosses change their tune and grant their secretaries more respect, as emphasized by the theme “Raises, Not Roses.”

Featured speakers at the event included City Councilmen Carol Greitzer, Ruth Messinger, and Miriam Friedlander, Vice Chair of the City Commission on the Status of Women Lynn Scharfen; and Mary Burke Nicholas, Director of the Women’s Division of New York State.

Councilman Greitzer told the crowd: “Unionizing office workers is what is essential. It’s a harder thing to do than unionizing other groups because many office workers are just a few people working in an office who are less apt to organize. But, down here on Wall Street they do have larger firms and it may be a good place to start. This is the area where women have been more oppressed than in most other places.”

One of the hundreds of secretaries who stopped to listen to the folk-singing and speeches said, “I think it would be fantastic if at the bank we had a union.” Another commented: “Well, we do get raises once a year, but I think it should be more often. We just don’t get that much respect. That’s the whole problem, no respect. They don’t see you as an individual, just a cog in the machine.”

San Francisco

Local 3 President Kathleen Kinnick participated in an hour-long radio broadcast Wednesday, April 23, commemorating National Secretaries’ Day. Appearing on the program with her were the Chairpersons of Women Organized for Employment’s Pay Committee and the President of the San Francisco chapter of the National Secretaries’ Association.

Following an informal discussion concerning the plight of the white collar clerical workers in today’s society, the participants responded to audience call-in questions. Most of the questions were directed to President Kinnick, and she did not miss the opportunity of advocating union organization as the only effective means for clericals to improve their economic position in the workplace and achieve the many other benefits working women today are seeking.

Raises not Roses

Secretaries Unite to Gain Respect

To celebrate the contribution made by secretaries and other clericals to the nation’s economy and to draw attention to the fact that secretaries have been typically undervalued—underpaid—OPEIU locals across the country held rallies, interviews, set up booths, and marched on National Secretaries’ Day, April 23. (See related articles on this page.)

One purpose of the demonstrations was “to let these women know there is a way to solve their problems,” according to OPEIU President John Kelly. That way is, of course, organizing.

The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics figures on clerical workers prove two points: Many office workers are not members of unions, and those who are unionized do make more money. Last year, there were 19.1 percent of employees including clerks, bank tellers, secretaries, cashiers and others in similar occupations. According to 1977 statistics, the latest available, only 19.1 percent, or 2.9 million, were union members.

Since OPEIU represents some 100,000 of these U.S. workers, “we’re still just a small percentage,” said Kelly. “How can anyone say they don’t need a union when they see the average salaries of the organized versus the unorganized?”

A Union Wage

The government figures show that, in 1977, the average unionized female clerical worker earned $192 per week, 21 percent more than the unorganized worker, who was paid only $159.

While the inflation rate soared 18 percent the past year, an urban secretary’s pay after inflation rose only 2.1 percent—resulting in almost a 16 percent decline in real wages. Only unionized workers with cost-of-living clauses were able to keep pace with inflation.

Discrimination

In addition to declining standards of living, women continue to receive discriminatory wages. Women continue to earn only 60 percent of men’s salaries in equivalent positions. This is true of both clerical and professional positions.

Under OPEIU contracts the gap has considerably narrowed, if not been outright eliminated. OPEIU, in fact, was highly instrumental in establishing the legal concept “equal pay for equal work.” We are now in the forefront of the “equal pay for comparable work” movement.

Employers in the past—and today—have assigned different job titles to justify differences in pay. As a result, we have to understand the unequal evaluation of jobs held predominantly by women and those held predominantly by men. A neutral evaluation system must be devised to evaluate jobs—to compare the relative value of men’s and women’s jobs.

Unions now have cases in the courts to establish the “equal pay for comparable work” concept. It remains to be seen how successful these efforts will be. But, without unions like OPEIU there is no hope at all.

(Continued on page 2)
**Secretaries Organize**

(continued from page 1)

**Sexual Harrassment**

Another form of discrimination women have experienced on the job is sexual harassment. Sex has been used as a weapon on the job. Complaining against sexual advances has often meant loss of a job or no chance for promotion for the women. Ignoring or enduring it often has meant development of related illnesses.

OPEIU and other unions have defended such women in arbitration cases and in the courts for years. Because of these efforts the EEOC recently released guidelines against sexual harassment, making it a violation of Title VII.

OPEIU will continue to defend women under contract clauses prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sex. The union will also strive to obtain stronger language to define the issue and make it explicitly grievable under the contract.

**Automation**

The office is becoming more and more automated. Predictions have been made that between 19 and 40 percent of all clericals will be threatened by job displacement due to new technology.

With the introduction of the video display terminal (cathode ray tubes), commonly known as VDTs or CRTs, we are already seeing the move toward the "paperless office" and reduced workforce requirements. In banks automatic cash dispensers have replaced many tellers.

The impact of microelectronics, however, will not only be job displacement. Many of the remaining jobs will and have been affected in other ways.

Involuntary deskilling. Secretarial staff is usually split into two groups—those handling administrative duties and those who type. The danger is that the majority of secretarial staff, even if they have been members of a typing pool before, would likely be cut. One that was comparatively varied work has become little more than concentrated drudgery.

Promotional opportunities are also likely to diminish. Being confined to a very narrow range of job activities, there is less opportunity for developing wider skills and knowledge which might be the beginnings of career development.

**Office Hazards**

In addition, safety and health problems—never before associated with office work—have arisen, largely due to employers' emphasis on productivity with little regard being paid to effects on the workers.

The VDTs which have television-type screens that display information to keyboard operators—and which are changing the office more than any other piece of machinery at present—are causing serious problems for office workers.

The operators of the VDTs are complaining of eye strain and irritation, neck and back pains, dull headaches, seeing blurred or double images, dizziness and nausea, problems with eyeglasses and contact lenses.

There is a possible radiation hazard associated with the VDTs. To date very limited testing has been conducted by the government and industry. Conclusions of the few tests have been made by OPEIU and independent health specialists. For one, manufacturing defects or poor maintenance could cause higher levels of radiation to be emitted. In addition, to date there has been proven to be some element of exposure.

Even at very low levels of radiation, OPEIU maintains, the worker's health could be seriously jeopardized.

**The Solution**

Offices have, therefore, tended to grow larger, more impersonal, automated, and even unsafe. Many have started to seem like assembly-line factories, requiring dull and repetitious work, without the chance of advancement that white collar work traditionally promised.

White collar work has lost many of its old advantages in pay, job security and a pleasant work environment, which were supposed to make organizing unnecessary.

As a result, clerical workers have become the fastest-unionizing group in the country. Clericals have flocked into OPEIU

- because its contracts provide a union wage—"a living and saving wage;"
- because its contracts contain technological change clauses guaranteeing employees retraining in new technology;
- because of its work in protecting employees from safety and health hazards in the office;
- because of its fight against sexual discrimination;
- because of its seniority and promotion clauses guaranteeing women opportunity for advancement and protection from job loss.

Because clericals are growing angrier and angrier for all of the above listed reasons and more. Because clericals are organizing to protect themselves, to better their working conditions, to gain some control over their work environment, and to demand recognition of their accomplishments.
Local 444 Gains 
26.3% at Magic Chef

Local 444 members at Admiral's Magic Chef division in Galesburg, Illinois voted overwhelmingly to accept a new three-year agreement. The contract calls for a cumulative salary increase of 26.3 percent. A cost-of-living clause was also reached which called for an adjustment in the second year of one cent per hour for each 4 percent increase in the CPI, with a 15-cent maximum for the year. During the third year, the same one-cent hourly increase for each 4 percent increase in the CPI with a 20-cent maximum increase allowable, was negotiated. Members also gained a new dental plan completely paid for by the corporation. This was $500 per person and $5000 maximum payments, with $250 deductible for each person yearly. The benefits would cover 80 percent of customary services.

Rights Gained

Gains, too, were made in the major medical program which increased from $20,000 to $25,000 paid annually, with the corporation paying 90 percent of the cost. The medical plan will cover all dependent children who are full-time students to age 25.

An improvement in accident and sickness benefits was also agreed upon. The weekly disability benefits were increased to $3000 per week the second year of the contract and $1050 beginning the third year. Negotiating for Local 444 were Local President Marvin L. Masters, members Helen Wilds, Ronald Lindner, Tom Moorehead and Terry Roote.

SGI Members Score

Wages and Hours

Local 397 members at Saskatchewan Government Insurance have negotiated a new two-year agreement providing a cumulative salary increase of 15.25 percent, plus cost-of-living protection in each year. Classification adjustments were also won.

A major break-through, according to International Vice President Bill Wittal, is a reduction in hours of work for the Labour and Trades component to an average 36 hours per week, retaining the alternating 3-day and 2-day weekends.

Members also achieved educational upgrading incentives which provide 30 hours pay for each credit obtained by an employee in the Insurance Institute of Canada Program, and 20 hours pay for each credit in the RIA Program. As a result, an employee will now receive, on the basis of the present average salary, in excess of $4300 for attainment of a fellowship in the Insurance Institute.

An improved vacation definition providing an additional one or two days of paid vacation for every employee was also included. All employees currently work nine 8-hour days in a fortnight, but while on vacation will receive five working days of vacation for each week of entitlement.

Increased shift differential and road allowance for field staff, improved compassionate leave provisions, and an increase in sickness insurance benefits from 66/4 to 70 percent of salary round out the package.

At the SGI contract signing are left to right the Honorable Wes Batters, Minister of Gross; Honorable David Maki, Local 397 Representative; W. P. Wittal, President of Local 397; John Green, Q.C., General Manager of SGI. Seated is Harry VanVicker, Treasurer of Local 397.

B.C. Hydro Members

Report Major Gains

The 3,600 British Columbia Hydro members of Local 398 ratified a new contract recommended to them by their negotiating committee, reports Local President Bill Trotter. The new 2-year agreement provides a cumulative wage increase of 16.64 percent.

Highlights of the new agreement include major steps forward in definitions of part-time and temporary positions. Temporary positions existing for more than a year will have to be posted as regular jobs. Part-time regular employees will be assigned a regular shift which cannot be changed without 2-weeks notice, unless the member agrees to the change.

Another important change was the proposed new job evaluation scheme, which provides an agreement process open to the individual employees through groups of employees who feel their jobs have not been correctly evaluated.

Members asked to start work 2 hours earlier than the standard starting time will, under the new contract, be entitled to a paid meal break, like employees working 2 hours overtime or more at the end of the day.

Overtime payments for Saturday, Sunday and statutory holidays and for shift workers working on days scheduled in lieu of Saturday, Sunday or their holidays were increased to straight double time.

Senior employees will also get improved vacation remuneration. The entitlement was increased from 5 to 6 weeks for members in their 30th year of service and members with 5 years of service will be able to bank up to one of their 3 weeks for taking at a later date.

Numerous other gains were made in travel expenses, dental plans, and maternity leave.

Wage Gain Highlights

Local 12 Agreement

Group Health Plan, Inc., Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, and Local 12 members have agreed on a new three-year contract, Business Manager H. R. Markusen reports. Substantial gains were made by the members—most noticeably in wage improvements.

The contract, covering some 290 workers at the HMO's eight clinics, provides a cumulative 25.5 percent increase for employees not at the top of their salary grade, plus an additional 6 percent for step increases.

Employees who are at the top of their salary grade will receive a cumulative 25.5 percent increase, with an additional 2 percent cost-of-living adjustment if the Consumer Price Index rises 10 percent or more during the 24 months preceding the beginning of each of those years.

An additional personal holiday was added to the contract. Also, under the new agreement the employee's contribution to dependent health insurance coverage is frozen so any increases will be picked up by Group Health.

Canadians Blaze New Contract Trails

Members of Local 397 have achieved innovative contract gains which include flex-hour provisions and seniority leave of three days with pay and/or two weeks without pay.

The ground-breaking agreement was reached between the local and Struthers and Associates, a Regina public relations and advertising firm, reports Vice President Bill Wittal.

Other changes negotiated include an across-the-board salary increase of $112 per month, averaging 10.2 percent, and an additional paid holiday for each year.

As part of the settlement Local 397 won the right to represent employees in the new printshop recently opened by the company's management.
Democracy in Action

The Fifteenth Triennial Convention of the Office & Professional Employees International Union will be held at the Sheraton Centre in New York City June 9-13, 1980. We expect this Convention to be the finest in our 35-year history.

Our Conventions, like membership meetings of our local unions, establish the basic policies of our International and define the direction of organization for the ensuing three years. Over 500 delegates representing more than 300 local unions will be in attendance and will be informed that our membership totals are now the highest in the history of our International Union.

The Convention will deal with a host of resolutions covering a myriad of subjects. These will include proposed constitutional changes, per capita tax increases, and numerous legislative proposals dealing with the economy, equal pay for comparable worth, changes in the National Labor Relations Act, occupational safety and health, and repeal of Section 14(b) of the Taft-Hartley Act.

How It Works

In order to have our Convention operate both expeditiously and efficiently, members of all committees will be appointed prior to the Convention and will be asked to meet on Saturday and Sunday just prior to its opening.

The committees will be asked to report favorably or unfavorably on numerous resolutions submitted to each such committee.

Each committee chairman reports, delegates will have an opportunity to debate the pros and cons of the committee’s recommendation.

The Convention then decides to adopt or reject the recommendations of the committee, usually by a voice vote. Any delegates, however, may require a division of the house through a show of hands. One-tenth of the delegates present may demand or obtain a roll call, based on the voting strength of each local, as provided in the OPEIU Constitution.

Each local union in good standing is entitled to one vote in the Convention for each 100 members, or major fraction thereof, on which per capita tax has been paid for the 12-month period ending with March 31 preceding the Convention. While local will have the right to cast all of their votes for or against a particular resolution, all locals are limited to a total of five delegates each.

Election of Officers

While the following is subject to actions taken by the Rules Committee, nominations for the offices of President, Secretary-Treasurer, and Vice Presidents generally take place on the third day of the Convention. Elections conducted by a committee of delegates who are not candidates for any office are held on the fourth day. These elections are held by secret ballot. OPEIU proudly boasts that its Convention elections have been held by secret ballot since our Union was chartered by the American Federation of Labor in 1945.

In order to insure representation from all parts of the United States and Canada, Vice Presidents must be elected from various geographic regions of both countries. The fourteen Vice Presidents include three from Canada. These Vice Presidents and the Executive Officers comprise the Executive Board of the International Union which administers the union between conventions.

It is essential that all local unions be represented at the Fifteenth Triennial Convention of OPEIU. Only in this way can the thinking of each local, which may represent varying shades of opinion, be brought to the attention of the Convention. A well-attended Convention, representing most of the locals of the OPEIU, will tend to result in well-discussed, well-thought-out resolutions which will reflect the majority opinion of the delegates in attendance.

The Canadian Labour Congress asks all trade unionists to boycott Michelin tires. The company has prevented its employees from joining the United Rubber Workers Union by pressuring the government in Nova Scotia to legislate away workers’ basic rights to organize.

President Carter Greets 1980 Convention Delegates

President Carter Greets 1980 Convention Delegates

May 7, 1980

In the Office and Professional Employees International Union holds its 15th Triennial Meeting, we can reflect on the great deal of satisfaction on the progress we have made toward the goals we share for all American workers.

Since your organization last met, workers protections have been strengthened dramatically under existing laws which provide but have not always delivered safe and healthful workplaces, equal employment opportunity, retirement income security, decent minimum wages, and other basic rights.

Workers have also been assured of safety administration’s commitment to those policies, laws and programs that will expand job opportunities for our growing labor force. All else involved commitment to the conflicts of shared and democratic principles of free collective bargaining.

A key factor in our sustained success will be your cooperation and that of all the American labor movement. Its organized labor has worked over the years to improve conditions for its own members, it has also advanced social and economic progress for many other actions and our country as a whole. Your contributions have never been more important today at labor, business, government and individuals join forces to consult inflation.

In the ranks of skilled, talented, well-trained blue-collar workers continue to grow in both industry and government, and that which our welfare and health challenges, as well as new rewards in serving this dynamic segment of our labor force.

I hope these deliberations will help strengthen your effective leadership on behalf of your own members and of all working people.

Milwaukee Holds Seminar

Approximately 100 delegates from the five local unions comprising the Milwaukee Council participated in a one-day seminar on April 12. Topics discussed ranged from union busting and collective bargaining to safety in the workplace and equal pay for equal work. Topics selected were based on the problems the locals were experiencing.

Watch Pressure

Twenty-five percent of people suffering from hypertension don't know it, says Dr. Norman Kaplan, University of Texas Health Center. There may be no symptoms for ten years, then angina or stroke may occur. Early signs to watch for are high blood pressure and obesity. Check pressure yearly and control weight, he advises.

Heart Exercise

Recent studies show a strong correlation between lowering of coronary risks and aerobic exercise programs, such as long-distance bicycling (short, fast cycle trips to the corner drugstore won't do), brisk walking and jogging, according to Dr. Bengt Saltin of Copenhagen. Regular walking or running programs averaging about 25 miles a week, he said, strengthens the cardiovascular pulmonary system.

from “Here’s To Your Health,” Public TV.

U.S. Price Index

Bureau of Labor Statistics
New Base 1913 = 100

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>1979</th>
<th>1980</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>184.1</td>
<td>184.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>184.0</td>
<td>184.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>186.4</td>
<td>186.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>188.8</td>
<td>189.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>190.5</td>
<td>190.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>192.0</td>
<td>192.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>194.5</td>
<td>194.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>197.0</td>
<td>197.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>197.7</td>
<td>197.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>198.0</td>
<td>198.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>200.1</td>
<td>200.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>201.3</td>
<td>201.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Canadian Price Index

Statistics Canada
New Base 1971 = 100

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>1979</th>
<th>1980</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>182.7</td>
<td>182.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>186.4</td>
<td>186.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March</td>
<td>188.8</td>
<td>188.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>April</td>
<td>190.5</td>
<td>190.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>192.0</td>
<td>192.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>194.5</td>
<td>194.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>197.0</td>
<td>197.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>197.7</td>
<td>197.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>198.0</td>
<td>198.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>200.1</td>
<td>200.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>201.3</td>
<td>201.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>201.3</td>
<td>201.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LOCAL11 stewards listen to speaker Jim Gallagher (standing at left) discuss the importance of past practices in arbitration cases where contract language is not clear. Gallagher is on the faculty of the Labor Education & Research Center at the University of Oregon in Eugene. LOCAL11 shop stewards met for the one-day seminar in Vancouver, Washington.