Oakland Blue Cross

Gains New Contract

Blue Cross employees and members of OPEIU Local 29 in Oakland, California, voted by a 4-to-1 margin to ratify a new three-year agreement. The employees gain wage increases of 25 percent over the life of the contract, reports Local President Edith Witt. Because of the large number of employees working on the line, according to Witt, the ratifying vote was held in several places, and operators of potential hazards, the union sought health protections. In this first effort to gain contract language, the following was obtained: "Whenever there is any maintenance work done on CRT (cathode ray tube) machines, the machine is to be tested for radiation emission, the result of these tests to be given to the Health and Safety Committee." This makes Local 29 one of the first to gain protection for VDT operations.

In addition, the employees gained a new dental plan that pays 100 percent for preventive dental services, 80 percent for surgery services, and 50 percent for prosthetics. Increased paid time for stewards was also achieved.

The following served on the negotiations committee: Chief Negotiator Alice Bartley led the negotiations and was assisted by Local Representative Leo Heller, Jr., Oakley; Kirkland; Delores Pierce; Pearl Fleming; James Johnson; Susan Clark; and Bernadine Lewis.

Metro Employees

Choose Local 2

OPEIU Local 2 has won the right to represent over 500 professional, technical and clerical employees at the Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority, more commonly known as OPEIU. International Vice President and Local 2 President J. L. Sheridan said he was pleased with the final outcome, "which has been too long delayed by ATU challenges.

On March 27, Local 2 was certified by the American Arbitration Association (AAA) as the collective bargaining representative for approximately 300 clerical employees of the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. Certification was also given by the AAA for a unit of 210 professional employees on January 21, 1981.

Certification resulted from secret ballot elections conducted on January 16. Certification was delayed while challenges filed in both professional and clerical units by another union were resolved.

Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority is not subject to the National Labor Relations Act, and ten days of hearings before an arbitrator were necessary to resolve the questions of unit eligibility.

Local 2 has begun developing contract proposals for both units and has elected employee negotiating committees.

More Than 500 DOE Employees Vote OPEIU

Department of Energy Employees voted by a 3-to-1 margin for OPEIU as their bargaining representative. According to International Representative Jon Heller, the decision to overwhelmingly support OPEIU resulted from the Union's highly successful track record in Tennessee, representing some 6,000 white-collar workers at the Tennessee Valley Authority.

"These employees," according to Heller, "were not rushing into anything wide-eyed. They shopped among unions representing white-collar employees nationwide. There, in fact, was originally another group on the ballot. Because of our track record representing white-collar nationwide and because we addressed issues with which they had particular concerns, they overwhelmingly chose OPEIU," Heller stated.

Heller said there were 528 employees—professional, technical, clerical and warehouse—eligible to vote in the election. "The election results were decisive," Heller said. "We received 309 for OPEIU and 107 for no union. We had only two challenged ballots. This is a clearcut victory for these employees and for OPEIU." When asked if any particular issues had spurred the organizing drive by employees, Heller cited a recent employee grade review in which many of the employees were downgraded (almost 40%), causing widespread discontent. "They realized that with a Union like OPEIU such unilateral and discriminatory action could not have occurred," he said.

The employees come from two facilities, according to Heller. They work at the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Technical Information Center (TIC) in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. TIC produces pamphlets and technical papers for DOE.

Following the election Heller said the employees were electing their bargaining committee, setting up their local union, and preparing for contract talks with DOE.

Heller said that this was actually the second election. The first was held last fall between OPEIU and another group, NAGE. That election resulted in a deadlock, since neither union received a majority of votes. A runoff was scheduled, but NAGE withdrew.

Clearly NAGE sensed the support of the workers for the white collar union—OPEIU.
OPEIU Officers and Staff
Focus: Organizing, Safety,

“The purpose of the annual full-time staff training sessions is to better prepare ourselves to serve our members and the American labor movement, to become more effective labor representatives,” stated OPEIU International President John Kelly in opening the 1981 session held February 15 to 18. The session, held at the Graduate Center of Labor Studies in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Over 85 participants gathered from across the nation to acquire greater education on topics of particular post-election organizational, decertification, and arbitration issues. "The topics were selected," said OPEIU Research Director Gwen Wells, "as a result of a local union survey. The most frequently requested topics were those which now comprise this training session."

Dick Wilson, assistant to the director of the AFL-CIO Department of Organization and Field Services, leads discussions on decertifications and forced strikes.

The majority of the session focused on two subjects: post-election organizing, and arbitration. The topics discussed were decertifications, arbitration, and union organizing. An evening session on legislative issues and a morning session on workplace safety and health, however, were also held.

Post-Election Organizing

In introducing the session on post-election organizing, OPEIU Director of Organization Mark Reader said, "Today in organizing our battle is only half won once we reach an election. Labor relations committees—the union buster—frequently remain on the scene. Or, they enter the scene in a company with which we have had a bargaining relationship for many years. Through various insidious tactics they encourage our members to decertify or to go out on unnecessary strikes. Because these tactics are becoming more prevalent, we thought it particularly appropriate to hold a session on these union-busting strategies and ways to counter them."

Charlie McDonald, executive assistant to AFL-CIO Director of Organization and Field Services, began with a discussion of an employer's refusal to bargain. Frequently, he said, after an election and prior to bargaining, employers will institute unilateral changes and refuse to bargain. They, he said, will try to circumvent the union and to discredit it. McDonald then went into various means for the union to anticipate such tactics, plus legal remedies the union could pursue.

Dick Wilson, assistant to the AFL-CIO Director of Organization and Field Services and instructor for the session on bargaining, led discussions on bargaining, decertifications, arbitration, and the other issues of the session. Wilson introduced a new checklist for unions who face organizing and bargaining issues, a self-help checklist on organizing made available to the participants, a strike preparation manual and a checklist for unions who believe themselves about to be forced into a no-strike strike. Both can be obtained from the AFL-CIO Department of Organization. The session also brought together hands-on discussions at the regional educational conferences which will automatically receive copies. At these conferences Organizing Director Mark Reader will lead a workshop on forced strikes.

Job Evaluation

Because job classifications systems are being negotiated more and more, because of their increased complexity, and because many officers and staff have indicated a need for more expertise in this area, a major session was devoted to the topic. John Zalusky, economist from the AFL-CIO Department of Economic Research and one of the few experts in the field, led the discussions.

John Zalusky, economist with the AFL-CIO Department of Economic Research, leads job evaluation workshop.

Zalusky defined "Job Evaluation" as "a systematic method of comparing jobs within an organization." He described the various systems – rating, classification, point systems, factor comparison plans, and consultants' plans – and illustrated how they are used. He concluded that although there is no one way to do job evaluation, Zalusky is not scientific, in fact, they are all very subjective. They all require deciding what people should be paid, and that requires a value judgment. Because of the subjectivity involved, Zalusky recommended that all unions conduct their own job analyses, and not rely on the analysis made by management. He then outlined how exactly unions could do that, including how to write job descriptions and how to use them in grievance handling.

"The issue of the eighties will be equal pay for work of comparable value," according to Zalusky. This has a particular impact on job evaluation systems currently used, he said. Whereas, job evaluation is based on measuring skills, comparable worth requires measuring responsibilities. There is a considerable difference.

Legislative Issues

One evening during the training session was devoted to upcoming legislative issues in the Canadian Parliament and in the U.S. Congress. In opening OPEIU President John Kelly said, "This is very new to us. In the past we have had a London Curriculum in U.S. legislative issues. I, however, believe it is important that we share these discussions, that we understand each other's systems of government, that we cooperate on common goals, and that we learn from each other's successes and failures."

The two Canadian speakers began the session. Robin Slemen, Federal Secretary of the New Democratic Party, described the Party as being Social Democrats, a Party for all Canadians and not for corporations or special interest groups. He
Attend Training Session Evaluation, and Politics

OPEIU Full-time Officers and Staff Attended Training Session at George Meany Center for Labor Studies.

went on to outline the gains the Party has made, which include the establishment of a publicly-owned electric company (PetroCanada), a national health care system, and jobs programs. He also said, however, that Canada, too, has an increasingly conservative political climate; and, many of the programs are now under attack.

George Nakkas, National Representative of the Canadian Labour Congress, described the Congress' new "on-the-job canvassing" program. According to Nakkas, using the old-style political campaign methods only allowed Canadian unions to reach 10 to 20 percent of their membership. The new program has been extremely successful and was described as on-going, long-term and issue-oriented. As a means of grassroots political organizing, Nakkas highly recommended the program to U.S. unions.

Howard Marlowe, associate director of the AFL-CIO Legislative Department, described the new phenomenon of corporate and conservative organizing. "We lost the last campaign because they out-organized us at the grass roots level largely because of their greater financial resources," Marlowe said. He went on to describe the attacks workers could expect to see such groups make in the current legislature—attacks on social programs, on minimum wage, on Davis-Bacon, on Civil Rights legislation, on OSHA. We will have to fight again for every piece of legislation it took us years to achieve, Marlowe stated.

Local Union Business Representatives John Brady (153) and Don Wright (277) made a plea that everyone begin organizing on the grass roots level and that everyone seek VOTE Check off in their contracts. "Members are willing to contribute," John Brady said. "The problem is that no one has ever told them you can do it? The worst that can happen is that they will say no."

(Continued on page 4)

Regional Educational Conferences Scheduled

Each year OPEIU holds five educational conferences for the six U.S. regions—combined Southeast and Southwest, Erie, Western, Northeast and North Central. As the same time, the Canadian regions will be holding their own conferences.

This year the workshops cover nuts-and-bolts topics; that is, they will provide information which can be used day-to-day by local officers and shop stewards. Although all should gain a great deal from the sessions, they will be particularly relevant to any newly installed officers, stewards, or rank-and-file members. More information on topics can be found below.

The 1981 OPEIU Regional Educational Conferences have been scheduled as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Place</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Southwest and Southeast</td>
<td>April 24</td>
<td>San Antonio, Texas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Erie</td>
<td>May 1-3</td>
<td>William Penn Hotel</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western</td>
<td>Sept. 17-19</td>
<td>Pittsburgh, Pa.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>Sept. 24-26</td>
<td>Salt Lake City, Utah (place to be determined)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Central</td>
<td>Oct. 8-10</td>
<td>Knickebarger Hotel</td>
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The program content varies from conference to conference, depending on regional needs. To give you some idea, however, the Southwest and Southeast Conference will cover the following topics: grievance handling, arbitration, busting unions with forced strikes, the local's obligations to its members under the law, and how to run local union meetings and increase member involvement in local activities.

The format this year is new in that two workshops will run concurrently. In that way, participants will be able to choose the workshops and topics which appeal to them most or in which they need greater familiarity.

The International and the host locals have either already contacted you with the specifics of your educational conference or will be contacting you shortly. All are encouraged to attend, since we expect the conferences to be valuable learning experiences.

LOCAL BRIEFS

Local 13 in Hazelwood, Missouri, has scored another election victory. This time the employers of the Cuivre River Electric Cooperative, Inc. have voted for OPEIU representation. The unit includes all clerical workers at the facility, according to Local 95 President Pat Douglas.

Another union, an independent, was also on the ballot, but received no votes.

Local 100's 110 members at J. A. Jones Construction Services Company have gained record-breaking wage increase. The Pipers, Washington employees gained a 20 percent wage increase in the first year, a 9.5 percent increase in both the 2nd and 3rd years—for a total of 39 percent over the contract life. The above was reported by Local 100 Business Representative James W. Hennes.

Following a 41 to 5 election victory at American Seaway Foods in Bedford Heights, Ohio, Local 17 was faced with a refusal to bargain by the employer. The employer admitted its refusal on the grounds that the unit certified was inappropriate.

The National Labor Relations Board, however, ruled in favor of Local 17 and issued cease-and-desist and bargaining orders.

Local 13 has filed nine unfair labor practice charges against Rexall Drug in St. Louis, according to Local Business Manager Pat O'Toole. An election was held, but the ballots impounded over challenges from both the local and Rexall regarding eligibility of voters.

In the meantime, O'Toole reports they have filed the charges against this "St. Louis J. P. Stevens" for threatening workers with loss of benefits, plant closings, and discharge, interrogations, and promises of benefits if the union lost. "They violated just about every labor law in existence," O'Toole said. "Regardless of the election outcome," he said, "Local 13 will use every resource it has to protect the rights of office workers at Rexall to exercise their democratic right of choosing their bargaining representative."

Local 306 extends special thanks to International Vice President J. B. Moss and International Representative Bill Kirby for the "fantastic job" they did in negotiating the Panex plant agreement. Over the life of the three-year agreement, employees will gain between $100 and $132.50 per week.

Shift diets, entials were also significantly improved: from 154 pounds to 155 on the 2nd shift, and from 304 to $1.00 per hour on the 3rd shift.

Panex employs 1,400 employees and is located in Amarillo, Texas. OPEIU negotiated with several other unions through the Metal Trades Council for these employees.

Local 382 members have asked the International to extend special thanks to their President Al Fraser who is retiring. The International needs no encouragement to thank such a long-term, dedicated, and hardworking local officer. But, perhaps the comments of one of his members at American Can in Houston will express it best:

"He has always had the members' interest in mind when fighting for our problems. He is always generous and sincere when dealing with anyone."

The International can offer no greater tribute. Al Fraser has been a valuable asset to his local. Who would know better than his own members? Best of luck from all of us in your retirement, Brother Fraser.
We Are Organizing
In July of 1980, the OPEIU won an election for 2,700 clerical, technical and professional employees in the Massachusetts court system against the Steelworkers, APSCME, SEIU, Teamsters, NAGE and no union.
In this campaign, each union was asked to debate their merits and in the approximately 100 court houses in Massachusetts OPEIU won these debates and the election resulting in white collar organizing.
None of the blue collar unions mentioned above could compete with the prestige of the OPEIU in the white collar field or with the appeal of forming a white collar organization whose entire resources, staff and membership are committed to the cause of the white collar employee in society.
Thus, we welcome the arrival of blue collar unions on the scene because it publicizes the problems and concerns of white collar employees. It gives recognition to the concept of white collar unionism and it gives the OPEIU the tremendous opportunity to publicize our achievements and growth.
The decade of the 80s should be a watershed period of organization. The white collar employee is facing more and more problems on the job. New technology, such as visual display terminals, and computer relay terminals have turned the office workplace into white collar assembly lines. Job stress, health, and safety hazards are becoming increasing concerns. The women's movement and the importance of women's income to the support of the family have made women more and more aware that they have to have unions to better their lot—that only through collective bargaining can they achieve equality in the workplace.
We Have Led the Way
The OPEIU has been in the vanguard of the trade union movement in developing progressive practical approaches in solving these problems, and will continue to be. We negotiated the contract language, political structure, and labor relations, the four-day work week, and VDT/CRT health safeguards before anybody thought that they were a problem. The experts are now turning to us for advice and the white collar employee will turn to us for organization.

Oops! Our Error
The last edition of White Collar contained an error for which we now apologize. The article on the National Bank of Washington included erroneous figures for their final contract settlement. The figures inadvertently cited were those from an union proposal to management, not the final settlement.
Thanks to members who pointed out our slips. Please continue to keep us informed. We want our publication to be as accurate and professional as possible.

100 Wisconsin School District Employees Win OPEIU Election
The 104 employees at the Wisconsin Rapids School District have voted 72 to 24 for representation by OPEIU Local 95, reports Local Business Representative Larry Cross. According to Cross, it was the gains made by the Local in other public sector units that turned the tide.
"The employees of the School District could easily see in black and white the kinds of achievements made," said Cross. "OPEIU members at Mid-Straits Technical Institute and Portage County Human Service Department have contracts which include job security, strict procedures regarding promotions and seniority, and substantial wage increases," he added, "all of which were serious concerns in Wisconsin Rapids."
Another concern had been paid time off. "It seems related Cross, that although many employees work 40 weeks per year (the school year) they do not receive paid benefits. In instances, in other OPEIU agreements 40-week workers receive 80% of vacation (10 to 20 days depending on years of service) and of holidays (8 paid holidays). The Wisconsin Rapids employees meanwhile received no vacation time and only 3 holidays. These, said Cross, were only a few of the reasons the employees were forced to organize.
Cross gave much of the credit for the success of the negotiations, according to Burnick, "The members of Local 9 have gotten the Company to agree to address the VDT problems through the regular grievance procedure provided. When first elected, he said, is to gain an effective safety and health committee to deal with these special hazards. "Because of the spirit of these members, no doubt we will move in this area," he said.

How Does It All Happen?
Recordbreaking contracts never fall out of existence. They are put together by dedicated members and staff working together. Hundreds of hours are spent on research and negotiations. Endless meetings, on the organizing committee and the committee with management take place.
International Representative Judy Burnick and Local Business Representative Gene Holt report that Local 9's members worked tirelessly to bring about this monumental victory. They asked that special thanks be given to the negotiating team which included: Joan Borowski, Gail Kuehl, Luella Musche, Cindy Olsson, Louise Rosier, and Jannie Tuite.
To all of them we extend special congratulations. They have provided another clear example of what organized employees can achieve and of how it pays to belong to OPEIU.

Training Session
The last morning of the conference was devoted to workplace safety and health and workers' rights under the law. A movie, "OSHA," described the responsibilities of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration to protect workers. Vernon McDougall, OSHA Project Director for the Workers' Institute for Safety and Health, then fielded questions from the audience. Such questions covered how to get a workplace inspection, how such inspections were conducted, what was the role of OSHA, what is the role of the worker, hygiene training, and what hazards are most common to white collar workers.

Future
The morning sessions, OPEIU held a "graduation luncheon" for participants. Each then received a George Meany Center certificate for the training session. It became abundantly clear that all had found the sessions enlightening. Instructors and topics were both applauded. And, all found the Meany Center highly conducive to learning. "It (the Center)," said one participant, "was so quiet and beautiful. And, because it was away from any city, it enabled us to spend more time with each other than usual—to share experiences and just to become better acquainted."

Participants
International Vice Presidents in attendance included Bill Adams, Giles Benetone, Romeo Cordoba, Michael Goodwin, Gary Kirkland, and Jim Sheridan.
International Staff included Director of Organization Mark Reader and Director of Research Kevin Wells, as well as International Representatives George Gmack, Jim Bronk, Dan Bronk, Gary Hull, Jim Burnick, John Connolly, Joe Heflin, Ann O'Hara, George Pocock, Joe Selly, and Michael Walker.
The 77 Local Councils were frequently represented by more than one officer or staff person. Because of space constraints these will be listed in the next issue.

BC/BS Record Pact
(Continued from page 1)
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