



# WHITE COLLAR

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

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## OPEIU announces 1989-90 Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship winners

The OPEIU's second annual competition for the Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship has been completed. International President John Kelly has announced the 1989-1990 scholarship recipients and notified each of their local unions.

The newly created Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship awards six scholarships in the U.S. of \$4,000 each to members in good standing, or associate members, or to their children.

To be eligible an applicant must be either a high school student or high school graduate entering college, university or a recognized technical or vocational post-secondary school as a full-time student; or presently in college, university or a recognized technical or vocational post-secondary school as a full-time student.

A panel of impartial educators from universities in the Washington, D.C. area had the unenviable task of selecting the six of those most highly qualified applicants to receive scholarships from the OPEIU Scholarship Fund.

We are proud to announce the winners here:



### Rane Chatterjee

College: Vanderbilt University

OPEIU parent: Kalpana Chatterjee, Local 268, Knoxville, Tennessee



### James Chattra

College: Harvard University

OPEIU parent: Yulai Chattra, Local 153, New York, New York



### Philip H. Huang

College: Cornell University

OPEIU parent: Yueh-Hwa Huang, Local 32, Union, New Jersey

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## Hofstra University clericals strike for and win pay equity

Office employees at Hofstra University ended their 39-day walkout October 13, 1989, when almost 400 OPEIU Local 153 members approved the union's hard-won settlement.

International Vice President Michael Goodwin said, "We accomplished what we set out to do in addressing the issue of pay equity."

In fact, 97 percent of the clerical workers in the strike were women. They were angered by the fact

that they made 58 to 68 percent of the salaries earned by custodians, groundskeepers, painters and locksmiths—most of whom are men.

The cashiers, computers operators, secretaries and mailroom clerks, however, made major pay equity gains in their new three-year contract, Goodwin said. They will receive an 8 percent pay raise or a minimum of \$1,200 the first year; 7.5 percent or at

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OPEIU Local 153 members with their Business Representative John Dunn appear on the Hofstra University picket line.

## OTEU wages 'user-friendly strike' at B.C. Hydro

The Office & Technical Employees Local 378 recently mounted a 'corporate campaign' against B.C. Hydro which included a one-on-one canvas to build membership involvement and a flexible approach to job action tactics.

A four-person strategy team varied the tactics on a daily basis, pulling members away from key jobs, putting up picket lines, sending employees back to work and moving picket lines around the province.

The OTEU corporate campaign resulted in a settlement that achieved landmark language on job security which provides no lay-offs for regular employees and complete salary protection for contracting out and technological change. Other key demands were also met.

"Usually a public sector strike's success is judged on how much union members can disrupt the public. OTEU members at Hydro developed a very different approach—the User-Friendly Strike," said OTEU President Anne Harvey.

"We applied many of the ideas and skills we learned at the 1988 OPEIU Staff Conference on In-



OTEU/B.C. Hydro negotiators Jeannie Greatbatch, left, and Local 378 President Anne Harvey, front left, stand with members of the job action committee. Shown left to right are Brian White, Sherry Matheos and Doug Leaney from B.C. Hydro.

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Work and Health  
by Press Associates, Inc.

## Walking: Best Bargain in Health

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

Director, Western Institute for  
Occupational/Environmental Sciences

Everybody will agree that good health is priceless.

Still, most of us know that some of the things we have to do to take care of our health usually carry a price tag: checkups, medicines your doctor prescribes for various conditions and so on.

But how about something you can do for your health that is truly "price-less"—it doesn't cost a cent? What is this bargain?

Walking. And it's especially recommended for those who are getting on in years, America's seniors who often bear the brunt of rising health costs.

According to the American Medical Association, walking may help to improve blood cholesterol levels, control high blood pressure (hypertension), and slow the process of osteoporosis—a loss of bony substances producing soft and brittle bones, a particular problem for many elderly people.

The AMA also says that walking can reduce anxiety and tension and can aid in weight loss.

(A national survey found that the highest percentage of regular walkers—39.4 percent—for any group was among people 65 and over.)

For most other people, walking not only is the cheapest form of exercise, it's also the safest. Seniors benefit particularly because:

- Regular walking can help to reduce arthritis pain, stiffness and muscle aches.

- Walking enhances circulation by improving the heart's pumping ability and expanding lung capacity. It is sometimes prescribed for patients undergoing cardiac rehabilitation.

Dr. James M. Rippe, a heart specialist, says that what makes walking a beneficial workout is largely a matter of pace.

"Depending on the pace one moves, walking can have the same aerobic benefits as running, and burn virtually the same number of calories per mile," he says.

The cardiologist is assistant professor of medicine and director of the exercise physiology laboratory at the University of Massachusetts Medical Center.

To find your right pace, the experts suggest using the "talk test." You should be able to carry on a conversation (even with yourself) while walking. If you get too breathless to talk, you're going to fast.

Here are some tips to help you develop an efficient walking style from "Senior Status," the journal of healthful aging. (But remember, you don't have to wait until you're older to benefit from walking. It's good for you at any age.)

- Hold your head erect. Keep your back straight and your abdomen flat. Arms should swing loosely at the sides. Toes should point straight ahead.

- Land on the heel of the foot and roll forward to drive off the ball of the foot. Walking in a flat-footed style, or walking only on the ball of the foot, may cause fatigue and soreness.

- Take long, easy strides, but don't strain for distance. When walking up or down hills or at a very rapid pace, lean forward slightly.

- Breathe deeply. Keep your mouth open, if that is more comfortable for you.



Jimmy Caudillo died of leukemia last March. He would have been 4 in September. His parents, Jaime and Maria, work in table grape vineyards near the Central Valley town of Earlimart, where they live. Jaime Caudillo said on the day his younger son died, he asked if he could go out and play. The Caudillos don't want other parents to suffer as they have.

### UFW grape boycott

## More tragedies while officials waste time

On September 14, the United Farm Workers announced they had found a cancer cluster in Earlimart, California—yet another of the pesticide-contaminated towns in the grape region of the San Joaquin Valley.

UFW President Cesar Chavez recalled McFarland, the town 20 minutes south of Earlimart where six children have died.

"In recent years," said Chavez, "children in McFarland have contracted cancer at 800 percent above the expected rate. Now the children in Earlimart are being afflicted at 1200 percent above the expected rate."

Chavez spoke of four families victimized by the pesticide abuse of California grape growers: the Ramirez's, whose daughter Natalie lost one kidney to the cancer that now threatens the remaining kidney; Maria Quijada, whose son Mario is afflicted with lymphoma; Maria Castellanos, whose daughter, Mayra, has rhabdomyosarcoma; and Maria Caudillo, attending in memory of her son Jimmy, who died of leukemia in March.

"These families are here to share their anger and their pain," Chavez said. "And they are here to fix the blame for these tragedies. I commend their courage in coming today, it is not an easy thing."

The parents spoke by turn, each expressing sadness about their children and concern for others who are threatened by pesticide poisoning.

Maria De Jesus Caudillo spoke only briefly, but she summarized the tragic living conditions of farmworker communities. "We are surrounded by fields, we work on them, and the pesticides are harming our families," she said.

The Earlimart cases are the latest found by the UFW, but probably aren't the last. "We're in the midst of God knows how many other clusters," Chavez said. "If they're not there now statistically, they are now in reality. More kids will get cancer, and more will be born with birth defects."

Chavez said that the UFW will be closely observing the response of various official

agencies—county, state and federal—to the continuing cancer crisis in California. In the past, these agencies have done nothing to help stop the frightening increase of disease in the communities devastated by toxic farming.

"We are convinced that the only way to stop this attack on our people is to stop the growers from using pesticides . . ."

Responding to questions about the UFW's boycott, Chavez reminded the press that the farmworker union has always been at the forefront of the battle against chemical farming and that this boycott, like past boycotts, is the most effective way to stop poisoning children, endangering the environment and threatening the food supply.

"Our fight isn't anything new. We started back in 1958, but no one believed us. Then in 1965, when we fought to stop DDT, people thought we were crazy. But we won those battles. We had union members working under contracts that prohibited DDT even before the government banned the chemical."

Dolores Huerta (UFW 1st Vice President) said, "One of the pesticides we pinpointed early on was Dinoseb," she said. "The growers have already stopped using Dinoseb."

"Right now in the industry there is a lot of talk of pesticides, but not about stopping their use. They are talking about how they can fool the public into believing that they are doing something," she said.

Chavez emphasized that the children of the cancer clusters are warnings for everyone. "Years ago," he related, "miners carried canaries with them to warn against poison gases in the shafts. The miners depended on the birds for their lives. If a canary died, a miner knew he was in danger."

"Farmworkers and their children are now society's innocent canaries," he said. "They demonstrate the effects of pesticide poisoning before anyone else. Their suffering is a sad message to all of us."

**OPEIU Supports the UFW—Boycott California Table Grapes!**

## 1989 Scholarship

### Winners (Continued from page 1)



#### Michelle C. Nguyen

College: University of Virginia

OPEIU parent: Phuong Thi Nguyen, Local 2, Washington, D.C.



#### Lisa L. Reinke

College: University of Wisconsin-Madison

OPEIU parent: Nathalie M. Reinke, Local 95, Wisconsin Rapids, WI



#### Andrew Stern

College: University of Pennsylvania-Wharton School

OPEIU parent: Hannah F. Stern, Local 32, Union, New Jersey



Pictured here is the academic committee for the Howard Coughlin Memorial Scholarship Fund. Left-to-right are Professor Grace Palladino, University of Maryland; OPEIU Secretary-Treasurer Gilles Beauregard; John MacKenzie, Director of Labor Studies Center-UDC; Anne Marie Nash, OPEIU Washington staff; and Dr. Leonard Cain, Catholic University.

## B.C. Hydro (Continued from page 1)

ternal Organizing in New York," she said.

In our User-Friendly Strike, job actions were aimed at hitting Hydro's corporate image, internal operations and finances, but did not impact the public or consumers in British Columbia. A maximum of 125 OTEU members out of 2300 were off the job at any one time.

Once job action began, OTEU members began phoning in suggestions for tactics and formed a province-wide think tank. Members told the union office how to impact Hydro the most, with the fewest people off the job.

B.C. Hydro workers vital to company operations were pulled off the job one by one, with individual names being suggested by Hydro employees who are members of the OTEU.

Closed down were areas such as the Accounts Payable department which sends out millions of dollars in cheques to Hydro suppliers, a construction parts stores in Surrey where contractors on Hydro projects normally picked up their materials, and substation maintenance and construction projects.

The substation closures affected power being transmitted from northern B.C. for sale to the United States. B.C. Hydro had a contract to supply California utilities with power, beginning September 1, 1989. Hydro management was concerned they would have to buy power elsewhere and export it at a loss.

In addition, under the terms of the construction contracts, B.C. Hydro could have been liable for cash penalties to big business customers if the transmission lines were not operating on schedule.

#### Contract offer

The OTEU began taking an escalating series of job actions at B.C. Hydro on August 7th, and it was so effective, the two sides reached a tentative settlement in mediated talks on August 31. The OTEU negotiating team was led by Anne Harvey and Jeannie Greatbatch.

The tentative agreement is for a two-year contract with a 4% pay raise retroactive to April 1, 1989, an additional 2% retroactive to July 1, 1989 and 6% on April 1, 1990, plus a \$600 signing bonus for people at the maximum step of their salary scales.

OTEU demands for a master collective agreement covering employees at Hydro and its subsidiaries were met.

Hydro and its three subsidiary companies agreed to full portability of seniority, pension and benefit rights between the four companies. As well, all job vacancies will be posted in the four bargaining units.

The language on contracting out provides for no lay-offs and no loss of salary for contracting out. If contracting out does occur, the company must give three months advance notice to the union.

"This will give the union more time to research the impact of contracting out projects and to mount mini-corporate campaigns. We have been fighting contracting out for the last two years but one of the difficulties has been getting information in advance," said Jeannie Greatbatch, chief staff negotiator on the OTEU/Hydro team.

Other highlights include improved vacations, double time pay for overtime hours, better leave for education and a better maternity leave package. There is also an 18-month job sharing trial which guarantees no loss of seniority or benefits and full job security for both partners if they decide to end job sharing.

Another major victory was negotiating language which provides that employees do not have to move or quit if their job is transferred more than 50 km. The union had lost an arbitration based on the old contract language on this issue and it was important for members because Hydro is decentralizing and reorganizing many jobs.

#### OTEU media coverage

The OTEU corporate campaign resulted in a lot more media coverage than in previous labour disputes at B.C. Hydro. Union members were pleased to hear about their dispute on TV, radio and in newspapers throughout the province.

Again, members phoned in information for media stories. For example, workers from the picket line at a substation construction project provided the news that Hydro had its power cut off at that site due to non-payment of bills to a contractor.

Reporters chuckled at that irony and the story was carried all over B.C.

Getting the jump on reporting events in the media often left Hydro in the position of having to react to the union's statements.

However, getting good publicity took an unbelievable amount of time and effort. The OTEU Communications Director Paula Stromberg worked full-time on media relations only for the duration of the dispute. She came up with the name for the job action, "user-friendly strike." It proved popular with reporters.

Stromberg also designed an OTEU communications program which co-opted Hydro's employee PR program. When the company mounted an internal PR campaign that they were a "Best Employer," the OTEU slogan became "Bargaining '89—Achieving

the Promise," with the tag line "OTEU—dedicated to making Hydro a Best Employer."

Once job action began, there were three additional people assigned to membership communications. They provided daily updates on the telephone hotline, wrote membership bulletins and coordinated picket line information.

Technology like fax machines, cellular phones on picket lines, pagers and portable computers helped speed communications.

To impact B.C. Hydro's slick corporate image and million dollar media advertising campaign, the OTEU put out flyers that talked about a hidden tax Hydro was collecting for the provincial government. The message in the flyers negatively impacted Hydro's corporate image and therefore put pressure on the company to reach a settlement.

The OTEU was able to finance the job action through a Member's Benefit Fund. The constitution didn't allow the normal strike fund to cover anything except a full-scale walk out. Instead, all members contributed 10% of their salaries to fund strike pay of 70% of salary for the 125 members who were selectively pulled off their jobs. The members pulled off their jobs either picketed or came into the union office to help run the strike.

"When I first started working with Hydro members two years ago, people felt there was nothing we could do about privatization and contracting out," said Jeannie Greatbatch.

"We started originally with a few people who were prepared to fight. Now, we are seeing a real change, an optimism, people coming forward with suggestions."

Anne Harvey added, "This is the first good contract we've had since Hydro began down-sizing in 1982. Over the last two years, our campaigns against privatization and contracting out, as well as our recent job action, have strengthened our union at B.C. Hydro."

## Hofstra University

(Continued from page 1)

least \$1,100 the second year; and 6.5 percent or \$1,000 the third year.

It also gives pay equity to office staff in the same classification. Employees earning less than maximum in their classification will get additional increases through an increment program of \$260 every eight months until the top rate is achieved.

"The union was also successful in resisting a university demand to pass along an increase in health care costs to employees," he said. In fact during the strike, the university cancelled health coverage for these women and their families. During this period, Local 153 through its strike fund was able to continue their coverage. Part of the final settlement was reimbursement of these monies.

The strike was successful, he said, because of the complete support of a dedicated bargaining committee as well as a supportive membership. The negotiating committee consisted of Chief Representative Adelaide Berg, Ann Lobardi, Kathryn Oxberry, Elaine Pierce, Ruth Spannhake, Joan Tiedge, Edith Weig, along with Anne Noonan and Eleanor Geddes. Throughout these arduous negotiations the committee worked under the leadership of John Dunn, Local 153 Business Representative.

In closing Goodwin said, "The success of this strike was due to the faith and confidence the members had in their union. They made it the great victory it was—a victory strengthening the membership more than ever."

At a victory rally held after the successful conclusion of the strike several hundred members made it their goal to organize the colleges and universities in the area.

Hofstra University is located in Hempstead, Long Island. It is one of 17 universities and colleges represented by Local 153 throughout New York, New Jersey and Connecticut.

# Sears employees wage campaign for OPEIU representation

In September of 1989 representatives of 14 Sears retail stores met at the Rutgers University Labor Education Center to file a class action lawsuit against their employers.

Director of Organization Mark Reader and Local 32 Shop Steward Fuji also attended. Sears employees were told class actions are only one way to deal with management's injustices, but the most effective way is to organize.

Two stores formed committees immediately and began signing authorization cards for OPEIU Local 32. Within weeks petitions for an election were filed by employees at Quakerbridge and Hamilton mall stores with the National Labor Relations Board. The Local filed to represent employees storewide in sales, clerical, warehouse, mechanics, and service center positions.

Sears management promptly responded with a vigorous in-house, anti-union campaign. Out of 800 stores only about 6 stores are organized. Sears put managers and security personnel from all over the country into the campaign. One-on-one meetings with employees and captive audience meetings of four hours in length highlighted management's tactics.

Sears biggest effort came in the last five days with a blitz of misinformation. Under recent court decisions in the United States an employer may make misrepresentations as part of an employer's right to freedom of speech.

Sears employees were told specifically that, if they voted this union in, they would lose all benefits and bargaining would start from zero. All the while, employees would be forced to pay union initiation fees and dues.

Copies of the union's financial report were circulated to reinforce Sear's claim that employees would lose benefits and have to pay for it. Sections on trials and discipline from the union's constitution were read out-of-context. Finally, employees were told if they



One of Local 32's campaign tactics included roving vehicles sporting the union message.

struck, they would be permanently replaced.

The election at the Quakerbridge mall was close—115 yes to 158 no. Mary Armour and Joe Layman, stewards from Local 32, worked tirelessly to refute management lies. They were supervised by International Representatives Jennifer McClead, Pat Jeney, Tony Viren, Jim Sheridan, Margaret Montgomery under the direction of International Vice President Pat Tully and Director of Organization Mark Reader.

OPEIU quickly filed charges with the NLRB

against Sears and moved into high gear at Hamilton Mall where the election was scheduled for November 10, 1989. Meeting Sears tactics head on, OPEIU research showed how Sears employees under union contracts at other facilities had better wages and benefits. Dues deduction was a negotiable issue, effective only after an agreement was voted on by the employees.

In an unusual and imaginative gesture, Sears salesman Jeff Bell painted "Union Yes" on his car and parked it in front of the Sears entrance. Employee response was so favorable that the committee painted a big truck with "Union Yes" and drove around day and night advertising the union message.

Sears management panicked and had Sears trucks surround the store.

But you can't hide from good organizers. Thursday before the election, in the pouring rain, shoppers were greeted with free "Union Yes" balloons and buttons by Joe Layman, Jim Sheridan, Jennifer McClead, and Donna Shaffer. Seven out of ten shoppers took buttons and walked through the store, showing Sears employees it pays to be union. The vote on Friday, November 10th was 153 OPEIU to 140 No, with 27 union challenges. Sears promptly filed charges against the NLRB for misconduct of the election.

The union is now determining how to capitalize on what we have learned from these elections, Reader said. Clearly, Sears is a formidable opponent, but they are beatable. They have badly mistreated their employees. But in organizing an entire store it is necessary to address the needs of each department and job classification.

Sears management is very quick to exploit these differences and play each group off against each other—part-time vs. full-time, warehouse vs. sales and so forth. A broad-based representative committee is best, and the use of rank-and-file members from similar units is essential to success. Early community and labor participation showing who buys from Sears cannot be underestimated. "Our thanks go to the New Jersey AFL and the Atlantic County Central Labor Council for their invaluable assistance," said International Vice President Pat Tully.

## Electronic monitoring

# Telephone taping stopped in ICBC customer service

The OTEU Local 378 recently prevented telephone taping of union members at the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia in Vancouver, Canada. Before the union stepped in, ICBC had plans underway to electronically monitor employees' telephone calls with voice-activated tape recorder equipment.

"When the union learned ICBC management planned to implement the electronic surveillance equipment in customer service, we reminded them about a tech change clause in our union contract that says the company had to notify us when new equipment is introduced," said Local Representative Sue Fisher.

At first, ICBC said the employees themselves requested the taping as a result of quality circle suggestions. "Because we thought the employees wanted the taping and we are a democratic or member-driven union, we looked for ways to alleviate any negative impact on the group slated for monitoring."

The union-proposed guidelines included ways to reduce stress for union members. For example, one guideline suggested ICBC had to tag every phone hooked to recorders so that union members knew they might be taped. Also, the equipment was to be disconnected during coffee and lunch breaks and members should always have access to a secure phone.

"Then when we met with the union members in customer service to discuss the proposed guidelines, we heard a drastically different story. The employees denied ever asking for electronic surveillance, however there had been discussions about taping for training purposes. They were concerned about this kind of voice-activated taping and considered it an invasion of privacy," Fisher said.

"We dropped the guidelines and met again with the company. Management claimed they wanted to identify employee problem areas for training purposes. They also said they wanted to use the tapes to evaluate job performance."

The bottom line was that the company was on a fishing expedition about employee job performance.

The company always had the right to use their regular electronic equipment that tracked the number and length of calls. Workers in many companies are monitored on how long they are away from their work station, how long each call takes, how many calls they receive and how many outgoing calls they made.

Nevertheless, this equipment isn't as invasive because most supervisors don't have time to listen in on their employees constantly. With voice-activated recordings however, the tape runs only when you are speaking, so a whole day's conversations can be caught on a one hour tape.



"We discovered that, perhaps from TV police shows, many people think it is illegal to tape record someone's phone without their knowledge. As a result, they couldn't believe a company would do such a thing.

"However, ICBC told us they had a legal opinion that as long as the originators of telephone calls are not pursued through the legal system about what they say in the phone conversation, it is not a criminal act to make recordings without informing them."

The union resolved the situation by getting the company to remove voice-activated taping from the department. Instead, the company is developing a training workshop which individual employees may be required to take and they may be taped during the training.

"If the members in Customer Service hadn't been so adamant themselves, we would have had to live with the guidelines that merely reduced the stress caused by the taping. Instead, because they were so strong, we were able to eliminate it. This is a perfect example of the collective strength of unions. We can achieve a lot when we stick together."

Without a union's intervention, employees would be powerless to stop the company. They could either protest to their manager and probably would be refer-

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**Newsmakers • Newsmakers • Newsmakers • Newsmakers**

**Wittal honoured by Local 397**

OPEIU member working for the New Democratic Party caucus in Regina, Saskatchewan, have made OPEIU Vice President Emeritus Bill Wittal "an honorary employee" at their office.



Shop Stewards Cheryl Deitrich and Debbie Hartung place a plaque on the wall of NDP caucus office naming Bill Wittal an honorary employee.

Wittal is a former President of Local 397, as well as International Vice President and full-time representative. When he retired a year ago he was awarded a lifetime membership in the union.

Wittal helped the NDP caucus office staff to organize and negotiated their first two contracts. "He made himself a good friend of the people here," says Shop Steward Debbie Hartung. "The honorary employee plaque is meant to show our appreciation of Bill Wittal as a union rep and as a friend."

Shop Steward Cheryl Dietrich noted that negotiating with the NDP was something Wittal handled with mixed emotions. "He always got us the best settlement possible," she said, "but Bill is one of the strongest New Democrats around."

The plaque will hang in the public reception room of the Legislative Building.

**Local 277 helped elect Pete Geren**

Local 277 members helped Congressman Pete Geren in his recent victory for the congressional

seat in District 12 in Texas. Left to right are Terri Brigman, Congressman Geren, Brenda Brimer, Ronnie Jones and Mildred Jones.



**Members Phillips and Brimer receive long-term pins**

Pictured below member Carolyn Phillips (right) receives her 30-year OPEIU union pin at the annual meeting of Local 489 in Hattiesburg, Mississippi. Local 489 President Donna Cochran (left) made the presentation. Phillips has been employed with the Mississippi AFL-CIO since November 1, 1958, and joined OPEIU Local 204 on April 30, 1959. She was then a charter member of Local 489 when it was founded in 1975.



J. B. Moss, president of Local 277 Fort Worth, Texas, presented Brenda Brimer with a 25-year pin for her loyal support of the union. Brimer also holds the positions of vice president of the Tarrant County Central Labor Council, legislative chairperson of the Coalition of Labor Union Women,



chairperson of the judicial committee of Tarrant County, precinct chairman and also member of the Democratic Womans Club and member of the Tarrant County Womans Club.

**Local 378 wins award for labour journalism**

Local 378's newspaper has won a national award for Best Overall Publication from the Canadian Association of Labour Media.

*OPEIU News*, produced by Communications Director Paula Stromberg for 7000 union members throughout British Columbia, received the CALM award "in recognition of outstanding achievement in labour journalism".



One of the judges, David Gersovitz of the Canadian Wire Service Guild, noted in his written comments: "This competition was extremely close. All the entrants had notable strengths.

"However the overall quality of *OPEIU News* carried the day. It scores high in several departments. From issue to issue, the newsletter has a sense of style and consistency. From cover to cover, it is a substantial read.

"Rarely gimmicky, it serves its membership quite well, even brilliantly at times. Visually, the product is very easy to read. The type is plain, the layout basic. But it works. While there are a few graphics and charts, the editor makes abundant use of photos. Photo quality varies widely, but the pictures have the virtue of being printed large enough to be effective."

OPEIU President Anne Harvey was pleased with the CALM award. "Good communication is very important to OPEIU members. That is the reason we hired Paula as a Communications Director. We're pleased to see that CALM has recognized her achievements."

This is the third CALM award won by Local 378 newspapers. The first award went to Anne Harvey when she handled OPEIU communications in 1982 and in 1988, Stromberg received an award for feature writing.

**OPEIU mourns loss of Local 179's President Smith**

Spencer Smith was raised as a mineworker's son and, therefore, as a child learned the struggles of working people. Those lessons served him well, causing him ultimately to dedicate his adult life to fighting for improved working conditions and dignity on the job for workers.

According to current Local 179 President Faye Orr, he also learned good work habits and developed an attitude of "do the best you can in all you do" early in life. In fact, he won a basketball scholarship. But, his family, not wanting him far from home, sent him to college in Nashville. In six months he completed studies for an Associate of Science Degree in accounting.

Smith joined OPEIU in 1961. Immediately he became active, occupying various positions from job steward, committeemen, executive board member to president. He served as president for the last 10 years.

In a memorial service recently given by the membership for his family, Vice President Riley Huckabee described Smith as one who always had a smile on his face. He possessed the ability to find the brighter side of a situation for the members regardless of the severity of the situation. "The members and officers of Local 179, as well as all of us at the International that had the privilege of working with Spencer Smith, will greatly miss his leadership and guidance," said International President John Kelly.



Local 378 Communications Director Paula Stromberg has won her second award from the Canadian Association of Labour Media. The latest CALM award is for Best Overall Publication (over 5000 circulation) for *OPEIU News*.

# OPEIU membership has its privileges

## Union privilege legal corner: be a smart mail order buyer

By Bill Bolger

Shopping by mail has become extremely popular because more Americans are working outside the home and are finding shopping time harder to come by.

While mail order shopping has become more familiar and more efficient and less trouble prone than it used to be, there is still a chance that you may encounter a problem.

You can minimize the likelihood of encountering a problem and resolving troubles if you know your rights and buy wisely.

Some rules to know:

• **Unordered.** You do not have to pay for or return unordered merchandise. Sending it is illegal except for free samples or from charities to encourage donations.

• **Late.** You should receive goods within 30 days unless another time was advertised or you were notified after ordering. If you receive them late you may refuse or return them. If you're notified that a shipment will be delayed, you have a right to cancel or modify your order. Doing nothing means you accept the delay.

• **Clubs.** Book, record, and similar "clubs" can make you pay for selections they ship because you failed to respond to their mailing, provided you had 10 days to act. Most clubs will let you return unwanted items if you write a polite explanatory letter, because they want to keep you as a member.

• **Returns.** You may return any goods that are not what you ordered or that don't confirm to the catalog description for a refund.

• **Complaints.** If you can't resolve a problem with a mail order company and want to complain to the government, write your state consumer protection agency, which is usually part of the attorney general's office.



Send a copy of the complaint to the Federal Trade Commission (Washington, D.C. 20580) as well. The FTC won't respond to individual complaints but may investigate a pattern of possibly illegal practices.

If you suspect intentional fraud, also contact the U.S. Postal Inspector nearest you. Look in the phone book or inquire at your post office.

*Bill Bolger, an attorney, is executive director of the National Resource Center for Consumers of Legal Services, administrator of the Union Privilege Legal Service.)*

• **Shopping Tips**  
—Include shipping and handling charges (and perhaps subtract sales taxes) when comparing prices.

—Consider making your first order a small one from a company you haven't dealt with before.

—Prices and products that seem to good to be true probably are.

—Ordering by credit card can sometimes give you additional leverage.

You have certain rights to dispute credit card billing errors, plus you don't immediately pay for the merchandise.

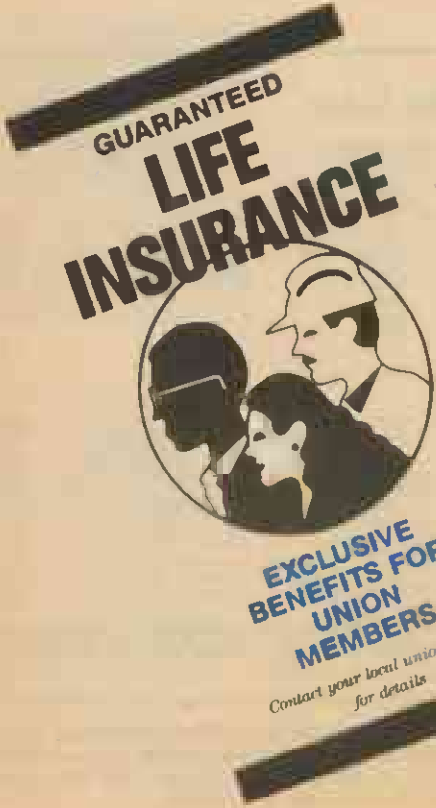
However, paying by check prevents unscrupulous persons from overcharging you or misusing your card number.

—Keep careful track of what you order from whom, and when.

—Check all merchandise as soon as you receive it. Notify the company immediately of errors or breakage and follow its instructions about returns.

• **Your Legal Service.** If you can't resolve a problem through normal channels a Union Privilege Legal Service attorney may be able to help you. As a OPEIU member you're entitled to a free initial consultation with a participating lawyer who may be able to resolve your problem at no charge. Contact your local leader for details or call (202) 842-3500 for the Union Privilege Legal Service lawyer nearest you.

## Adequate life insurance coverage is important



Members of OPEIU can protect their families with affordable term life insurance.

"This supplemental insurance is designed to guarantee your family more protection, because many families are underinsured," OPEIU International President John Kelly said. "Few employers provide their employees with sufficient coverage to adequately protect the employees' families."

Adequate life insurance coverage is important to help survivors avoid financial hardship after a death. A family may still need funds to cover such costs as basic living expenses, education for children, mortgage and car payments, outstanding debts, funeral expenses and more.

Your life insurance coverage should increase to cover the growing value of your assets and the rising cost of living. What you considered full protection just a few years ago, may not protect your family today.

The Union Privilege Term Life Insurance Program offers guaranteed coverage to all members ages 18 through 84 with rates that are up to 25 percent less than similar mass marketed plans. No medical exam is necessary to submit an application. And there

is a special union-only benefit that can waive premium payments during lay-offs, lockouts or union-sanctioned strikes.

Depending on which of the three plans you qualify for, coverage amounts of up to \$100,000 may be purchased.

• **Basic Life Plan**—For most members ages 18-64, with coverage from \$10,000 to \$100,000. Coverage for your spouse and children also available.

• **Guaranteed Benefit Life**—This plan guarantees protection for members aged 18-64 who, due to health, do not qualify for the basic plan. Increasing term life coverage grows to \$10,000. Spouse coverage is also available.

• **Senior Benefit Life**—For members age 65-84. Term life coverage up to \$5,000 at a fixed rate of just \$12.50 a month. A new feature is a double benefit due to death by accidental cause.

Contact your local leader or call the insurance services offices toll-free at 1-800-327-4349 for an application. This program is another benefit of belonging to your union—working to improve the quality of your life—at home and on the job.



## Reflecting back over the year 1989

by John Kelly, International President

As 1989 draws to a close OPEIU has many things to be proud of: successful negotiations that have improved wages and working conditions; successful resistance to management's attempts at takeaways including Local 787's dramatic resistance to such a program by Wisconsin Blue Cross/Blue Shield; a successful national boycott of the City of Hope; continued organizational victories; and a successful 18th Triennial Convention.

### City of Hope

At the City of Hope, it was obvious from the start of negotiations that the employer was insistent on radical changes in Local 30's contract. They were demanding givebacks of conditions that had been achieved over a long history of collective bargaining. They hired a union busting law firm to represent them. The local, rather than disrupt the care given to the patients at the City of Hope, decided to mobilize the community and requested that City of Hope be placed on the AFL-CIO boycott list. The success of the boycott through the support that was received from the labor movement resulted in the employer finally agreeing to a contract that was ratified by our members.

It was poignant when at the recently concluded AFL-CIO convention Vice President Gwen Newton arose to thank the entire convention for its support on behalf of the OPEIU. I now want to personally take this opportunity to thank all of the leaders of our locals for their participation in this dramatic struggle. Without your help and the labor movement's, Local 30's members would not have a collective bargaining agreement today.

### Blue Cross/Blue Shield

Local 787 in Milwaukee faced a similar situation with Wisconsin Blue Cross/Blue Shield when it appeared they would be forced into a difficult strike. Realizing this, they looked to other avenues for achieving a contract. They involved the Milwaukee community, political leaders and, of course, the Milwaukee labor movement in this struggle.

The International union had two members from Local 29 in Oakland, California take leave from their employer, Blue Cross of California, to tell the story

of what the company had done in Oakland. It was very inspiring to attend a rally of several hundred Local 787 BC/BS members, addressed by local community and political leaders, but, most importantly, by these two trade unionists from Local 29 BC in Oakland. At all of our rallies the members of Local 787 reiterated their support of their union seeking a decent contract. All of these activities, I'm happy to say, did result in such an agreement.

### OPEIU Convention

Having attended many conventions of our union, I'd like to report that our last convention was one of the most enthusiastic I have ever seen. Several hundred delegates—from the northern part of Canada through the United States and Puerto Rico—met to review our union's policies and to chart programs for the future. Policy papers and local union resolutions were introduced on such subjects as privatization, minimum wage, health care, child care, exportation of jobs, drug testing, and electronic monitoring. They were discussed and adopted in committees at the convention and then brought to the floor where action was taken.

Among the programs advanced by the International were such items as improved educational programs, strike fund, and organization. I would urge local officers, upon receipt of the final documents of the convention, to reread the activities of the convention, and work towards implementing those programs.

### Strikes and the alternatives

While many of our locals have adopted alternative ways to negotiate short of strikes (see the BC Hydro article in this issue, as one example), many of you could be forced to use this final weapon. I propose to the convention that the strike benefits of our union be increased from the present \$90 per week in incremental steps to \$120. It has been my experience that our strike fund can be used not only as a direct benefit to our striking members, but also as a means to reduce the number of strikes that we have. Employers, knowing that benefits are available to their employees, are often reluctant to provoke a strike.

On that subject, I again urge that each local facing a potential strike use the International's strike manual which explains what steps should be taken when facing the possibility of a strike. Such preparation in many instances can also prevent strikes and definitely will reduce their duration. Frequently, the threat of a strike is more effective a weapon than the strike itself.

In the last few years, our regional educational programs have been dramatically improved, going from Saturday and one-half day Sunday to two or 2½ days. From being conducted by field staff to professional educators with specialized techniques for dealing with the specific issues facing our local unions day-to-day. However, I have found that some locals were finding it—because of the financial constraints—difficult to participate. It was recommended, therefore, that an educational fund be established which would be similar to the convention fund. Each local participating in the educational conference will be entitled to receive a share of the monies generated in the region to be used to defray the cost of attendance at the conference. The International will continue to pay the cost of educators, training materials, a reception and a working lunch. This program will enable

a much greater participation in this important educational activity.

### Organizing new members

Most of our locals know that in addition to servicing our members it is important to organize. While large segments of office clerical employees remain unorganized, wages and working conditions of the present membership will be held down. The cost of organizing though makes it difficult for many locals to undertake organizing activity. To assist our locals, it was recommended that an organizing manual be made available to our locals and more importantly, monies to help be allocated. It was recommended to the convention that such a program be established.

First, in order that potential targets be brought to the attention of the local union, a financial reward will be given to the member who brings that information to their local. Upon the local receiving recognition or certification of a unit, the local will receive financial aid on a scale based on the size of the group organized. If the local incurs extraordinary legal expenses, there are provisions made for further assistance.

Unorganized workers are involved in these activities and have access to the International's defense fund. This well-rounded program of individual and legal union assistance and financial protection to the unorganized should result in success for our locals. I am confident that many locals, through use of the program, will see their membership grow.

The participants in our 18th triennial convention represented the most dedicated and activist trade unionists that I have seen anywhere in many years. This dedication and the struggles of our last eight years resulting in pent-up trade union emotions, makes me believe that the next few years will see a renaissance of our union and the rest of the labor movement. We are truly a union which is on the move.

### Telephone taping stopped

(Continued from page 5)

red to the Human Rights Branch which is fairly toothless in B.C.—or they could leave their jobs.

Many business forecasters predict the demise of white collar unions in the next few decades. OTEU President Anne Harvey says that is management's wishful thinking. "Of course, like other segments of society, unions need to change and adapt to changing technology but it is only collective strength that can protect workers. Unions speak up for people. The need will always be there for unions to protect workers' dignity and improve our working lives."

U.S. Price Index			Canadian Index	
U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics New Base 1982-84 = 100			Statistics Canada New Base 1981 = 100	
1988	Old*	New*	1988	
March	343.0	115.1	March	142.0
April	344.7	115.7	April	142.5
May	346.1	116.2	May	143.4
June	347.6	116.7	June	143.6
July	349.1	117.2	July	144.5
August	350.7	117.7	August	144.9
September	353.0	118.5	September	145.0
October	354.2	118.9	October	145.7
November	354.6	119.0	November	146.1
December	355.0	119.2		
1989			1989	
January	356.7	119.7	January	146.8
February	358.0	120.2	February	147.8
March	360.0	120.8	March	148.5
April	362.9	121.8	April	149.0
May	364.9	122.5	May	150.5
June	365.9	122.8	June	151.3
July	366.8	123.2	July	152.3
August	367.0	123.2	August	152.4
September	368.3	123.6	September	152.6
October	369.8	124.2	October	153.2
November	370.6	124.4	November	153.7

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

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

## WHITE COLLAR

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GWEN WELLS  
Managing Editor



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