



# WHITE COLLAR

OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION, AFL-CIO AND CLC

No. 462

Issue 1, 1997

## Thousands of Podiatrists Join OPEIU Forming First National Union for Doctors

“With doctors struggling to cope with the sweeping changes brought about by managed care, associations representing most of the nation’s podiatrists announced yesterday that they were forming the first nationwide labor union for doctors,” wrote Steven Greenhouse in his page one story in the *New York Times*. The story appeared October 25, 1996.

At a news conference the previous day, podiatrist leaders, OPEIU International President Michael Goodwin, Organizing Director Jay Porcaro and President of the New York State AFL-CIO Ed Cleary announced the formation of the new union under the OPEIU banner — the First National Guild for Health Care Providers of the Lower Extremities.

Goodwin pointed out that managed care was forcing doctors to organize because it had pushed doctors into employee status, rather than that of independent contractors. Also he said, “patient care has diminished as nonphysicians are making more decisions on patient care.”

Dr. John Mattiacci, the Pennsylvania podiatrist who is president of the new union, said unionizing was a way to give podiatrists

and other doctors increased power to joust with managed care organizations (MCOs).

“In the past five years, we the deliverers of health care have watched our ability to control our professions and practices usurped by managed-care organizations,” he said. “Big business has taken over the medical field.”

Porcaro said: “...the union, where appropriate, could negotiate traditional labor agreements when the doctors truly meet the criteria as employees of a managed care organization or medical institution, including a governmental agency. The majority, however, will be served through legislative and lobbying efforts in conjunction with the AFL-CIO, coalition building with major consumer groups to present a

united voice to express concerns with the many negative issues involved with for-profit managed care, and by OPEIU open-



Photo by Gary Schoichet

OPEIU International President Michael Goodwin presents John Mattiacci, DPM, the OPEIU charter for the new union for podiatrists, the National Guild for Health Care Providers of the Lower Extremities. Dr. Mattiacci is president of the Guild and president of the National Council of Health Care Providers. With them (left to right) are Hy Chirel (DPM, NY), Mike Wodka (DPM, NY), John Marty (DPM, PA), John Hare (CEO, Newman Medical Center), President of the New York AFL-CIO Ed Cleary, Steve Monaco (DPM, PA), OPEIU Director of Organization Jay Porcaro, Louis Levine (president of the New York College of Podiatric Medicine, NY), Roy LaBarbera (DPM, NJ), and International Vice President Richard Lanigan.

ing doors for dialogue with union trustees and negotiators of ERISA and Taft Hartley Plans.”

“We will bring physicians into the House

of Labor as equal partners, to educate union leadership and provide meaningful input into the concerns physicians have regarding

*Continued on page 13*

## Executive Board Adds Three New Seats: Gender and Ethnic Diversity Considered



OPEIU President Michael Goodwin swears in two new International Vice Presidents Anita Roy and Cathy Wittenbrook.

The International Union Executive Board unanimously approved the expansion of the Board to 18, adding three new seats to promote gender and ethnic diversity. This change was recommended by International President Michael Goodwin and was well received both in the United States and Canada. It required the Executive Board and ultimately the convention, to consider the gender and ethnic diversity of already elected members in filling these three new posi-

tions. Carolyn Combs, Chairperson of the subcommittee on the broader participation of women on the Executive Board said, “The entire women’s committee is pleased that the International Union’s Executive Board has the vision to diversify leadership of our members. The addition of women and minorities to the Board will provide added voices from different perspectives in the decisionmaking and policy-setting process. I’m proud to have been a part of

*Continued on page 13*

**Roméo Corbeil Scholarship**  
see page 8

4/5

Canadian News

8/9

Organizing & Other Victories

11

President’s \$500 Club (AIL)

12

New MemberGram

I N S I D E

# Union Continues Successful Training

*Continued from page 6*

behalf of the International. Leading discussions on organizing were International Staff Ron Hutson, Donna Shaffer, Bonnie Strauss, Rob Garvin, Jerry Ashlock and Annemarie Purdy. Katherine Sciacchitano conducted the training on bargaining.

## Subsidy

All local unions sending delegates took advantage of the union's \$400 education subsidy, one the union hopes to increase each year in order to encourage participation in additional training for members and activists.



Above: Members Roxie Simpson and Evelyn Brooks from Local 42 celebrate 50 years of OPEIU membership at Detroit's Erie Conference.



OPEIU General Counsel Mel Schwarzwald explains the law of organizing to delegates at each of the regional conferences.

International Vice President Anita Roy (Local 12, Minneapolis) opens the North Central Conference.



Vice President Patrick Tully welcomes OPEIU delegates at the Northeast Conference to New Jersey. Local 32 recently organized the court employees throughout the State.



International Vice President Cathy Wittenbrook welcomes members to the Erie Regional Conference in Detroit with a personal story about her family's history with the labor movement.



Susan Watson, a representative of The Newspaper Guild, updates delegates at the Erie Conference on the Detroit newspaper strike and illicit their support with donations and purchases.



Members participate in role playing exercises in First Contract Bargaining training.



**Scott Alexander**  
Maryland



**Gerald Brown**  
Texas



**Dick Carrera**  
Texas



**Lisa Damico**  
Pennsylvania



**Larry Geneser**  
Missouri



**Ed Goings**  
Florida



**Dean Hoff**  
Nebraska



**Scott Latta**  
Missouri



**Joe Manone**  
Wisconsin



**David Morehead**  
North Carolina



**Richard Neal**  
Arkansas



**Eddie Norman**  
Iowa



**Kevin Pawlowski**  
Texas



**Chris Phillipe**  
Florida



**Dan Rubio**  
Alabama



**Fred Silverman**  
Ohio



**Jim Surace**  
Ohio



**Howard Walter**  
Maryland



**Stanley Zeidner**  
Michigan



**Marc Zipper**  
Florida

## All Members Know the Importance of Political Donations

It takes money to win political campaigns. The same is true whether it's a national campaign, like this past November, or for state or local office. It's also true for campaigns to win progressive legislation to protect our members.

Local 277 members — state general agents for American Income Life Insurance Co. — led by International Vice President J.B. Moss, know the importance of these political donations. They, in fact, are so aware of the need that they contribute \$500 and more yearly to the union's political action fund, Voice of the Electorate. Together they give approximately \$100,000 to the fund each year.

Local 277 and American Income Life Insurance Co. were among the first unions

and companies in the nation to negotiate voluntary political checkoff many years ago.

Once again, we take our hats off to these members. On the heels of a national election, it is important to applaud them again. We publish here several photos that we have not before, but listed below are all insurance agents at AIL contributing to the President's \$500 Club:

Richard Altig (WA), David Cohen (CA), Larry Geneser (MO), Eric Giglione (NJ), John Jatoft (CA), David Morehead (NC), Cindy Furer and Robert Whittinghill (CA), Michael Hunter and Mark Hancock (IN), Robert Falvo (PA), Howard Walter (MD), Scott Latta (MO), William Sauers (FL), Scott Alexander (MD), William

Boyle (LA), Phil Bizar (IL), Gerald Brown (TX), Richard Carrera (TX), Lisa Damico (PA), Ed Goings (FL), David Hausman (GA), Dean Hoff (NE), Joseph Manone (WI), Richard Neal (AR).

Eddie Norman (IA), Kevin Pawlowski (TX), Christopher Phillipe (FL), Edward Dan Rubio (AL), Fred Silverman (OH), Roger Smith (IL), James Surace (OH), Stanley Zeidner and Jane Cowan (MI), Marc Zipper (FL), Bruce Gilpatrick (OR), Gary Bleier (WI), Robert Brown (CT), Arthur Dubowy (MA), Robert McKenzie (RI), Richard Rutt (RI) and Don Weathers (AL).

As you can see from their states, the AIL members cover the entire U.S., which means they are donating to electoral and

political campaigns in your own state to help you and your families. It's the responsibility of the rest of us to contribute as well. It always makes a difference.

### Executive Board Applauds AIL

The AIL contributors were honored at the recent OPEIU executive board meeting with the passage of a resolution saluting them and American Income Life Insurance Company "for their steadfast support and contributions to this worthy cause." Watch next issue for the full text of this resolution.

## AFL-CIO President Sweeney Visits New York Stock Exchange with President Goodwin



AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney visits the New York Stock Exchange. With him here are Richard Grasso, Chairman of the Board of the NYSE, Local 153 Executive Board Member Abe Goldstein, and OPEIU International President Michael Goodwin.

OPEIU President Michael Goodwin visited the New York Stock Exchange with AFL-CIO President John J. Sweeney on January 7, 1997, to meet the NYSE Chairman of the Board Richard Grasso.

New York Stock Exchange Senior Vice President Frank Ashen coordinated the visit, working with Goodwin and Local 153 Business Representative Paul Greenspan.

OPEIU Local 153 represents the workers on the floor of the Exchange who record the stock transactions. Members, including William Marrell, demonstrated their work to President Sweeney.

Goodwin is also Local 153 Business Manager.

## Local 11's Kirkland Meets with Lech Walesa

When the Portland Celebrity Forum invited Lech Walesa, the first president of the Polish Republic, to speak, OPEIU Local 11 and Northwest Natural Gas seized the opportunity to share their labor relations partnership with the Nobel Peace Prize winner.

Prior to his speech Walesa met with OPEIU Vice President Gary Kirkland (also Secretary-Treasurer of Local 11) and gas company executives in a private reception.

Walesa, Kirkland said, is the man most credited with the overthrow of Communism in Europe. He is quick to share credit with the Pope and President Reagan. When Kirkland asked him what role the Catholic Church played in his release from prison, as a result of leading the union Solidarity movement in Poland, he gave two reasons.

First, the Communist regime in Poland had allowed the Church to remain active. He said, "The Communists were red on the outside and white on the inside." Also, candles burned in thousands of windows around the world, including those of the Vatican and White House. "Those candles burned daily during the months Walesa spent in prison, representing a worldwide statement of soli-

arity for the man who lit a spark in the darkness of Communism," Kirkland said.

Kirkland noted: "To follow the pathway of Walesa's political influence is to gain an understanding of the emergence of Poland in European and world history. His is a leadership of inspiration rather than insinuation or intimidation. That same leadership of inspiration is what has produced the nationally acclaimed Joint Accord between OPEIU Local 11 and Northwest Natural Gas Co."



Here Lech Walesa holds the business card of OPEIU Vice President Gary Kirkland when the two meet. He is also wearing an OPEIU Local 11 lapel pin.

Want the hottest news?

## Sign Up for the OPEIU MemberGram

Sometimes the news is too important. There's legislation coming up for a vote that will affect you and your families, and you have to contact your legislator quickly. There's a rally or march scheduled to fight an abusive employer. Or, a new court decision or governmental regulation will have immediate effects on your job.

It's times like these when the new OPEIU MemberGram will be invaluable.

President Michael Goodwin will express the MemberGram to interested local union activists whenever important issues arise. Just sign the form below, which duplicates the MemberGram design, and watch the mails.

"It's important to improve our communications with you the members, to involve you more actively in decisionmaking and in actions of the union. And communications should never be one-way. I, therefore, look forward to your responses on the effectiveness of the MemberGram as well as the subjects we cover," President Goodwin said, as he urged members to sign up.



From the desk of President Michael Goodwin

# MemberGram

Yes, sign me up to receive the MemberGram whenever hot topics come up. I want to be kept informed on issues, activities, and decisions that affect me, my family and my local union.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Local Union \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Daytime) \_\_\_\_\_ (Evening) \_\_\_\_\_

FAX \_\_\_\_\_

Complete and send to MemberGram, OPEIU, 265 W. 14th St., New York, NY 10011.

## The Consumer Price Index for Canada and the U.S.

	Jan.	Feb.	Mar.	Apr.	May	June	July	Aug.	Sept.	Oct.	Nov.	Dec.
1995 Canada CPI	132.1	132.7	133.0	133.4	133.7	133.7	134.0	133.8	133.9	133.8	134.1	133.9
% Change from Prior Month	0.4	0.5	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.0	0.2	-0.1	0.1	-0.1	0.2	-0.1
% Change from Year Earlier	0.6	1.8	2.2	2.5	2.9	2.7	2.5	2.3	2.3	2.4	2.1	-1.7
1996 Canada CPI	134.2	134.4	134.9	135.3	135.7	135.6	135.7	135.9	136.2	136.8		
% Change from Prior Month	0.2	0.1	0.4	0.3	-0.1	-0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.4	
% Change from Year Earlier	1.6	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.4	1.5	1.8	2.0	
1995 U.S. CPI-W	*440.2	441.7	443.0	444.6	445.6	446.5	446.5	447.4	448.5	449.6	449.5	449.5
**147.8	148.3	148.7	149.3	149.6	149.9	149.9	150.2	150.6	151.0	150.9	150.9	
% Change from Prior Month	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.3	-0.1	0.0
% Change from Year Earlier	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.2	3.2	3.1	2.8	2.5	2.5	2.7	2.4	2.5
*CPI-W figured on a 1967 base												
** CPI-W figured on a 1982-84 base												
1996 U.S. CPI-W	451.9	453.2	455.6	457.6	458.7	459.1	459.7	460.2	461.9	463.2	464.2	464.3
151.7	152.2	152.9	153.6	154.0	154.1	154.3	154.5	155.1	155.5	155.9	155.9	
% Change from Prior Month	0.5	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.3	0.0
% Change from Year Earlier	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.3	3.3

# Thousands of Podiatrists Join OPEIU Forming First National Union for Doctors

*Continued from page 1*

profit MCO operations. Since there is no better lobbying group on behalf of consumers and workers, joining OPEIU means a win-win relationship—an effective blending of consumer and health care provider—to address managed care issues. This also brings together the physicians with organized labor as an economic force since unions directly affect some 40 million covered lives. That's a lot of clout to add to the voice of doctors."

One way of achieving this goal is using

the combined power of the 13 million American trade unionists in union health-plans to pressure health maintenance organizations and state legislatures to insure that managed care focuses more on quality and less on profits.

Many of the podiatrists at the meeting spoke angrily about the decline in health care's quality and doctors' ability to direct that care, lacking access to patients within MCOs, finding it difficult to pay large student education loans and mortgages. They charged managed care plans with cutting

their incomes, making it impossible to build a practice, reducing consumer access to health care and running up huge administrative costs.

"This is indentured servitude for the American medical community," said Louis L. Levine, president of the New York College of Podiatric Medicine. "There is no redress of grievances. If a physician has a grievance, he is forced out of the HMO."

Mattiacci said that by March 31 the new union expected to have 5,000 podiatrists on-board out of 14,000 podiatrists nationwide,

since podiatric associations from many states had signed letters of intent to join. Just a few include California, Florida, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New Hampshire.

Goodwin said that OPEIU had already been called by other doctors' groups interested in unionizing. He said, "Doctors are realizing that to create a level playing field for themselves and their patients, they need a strong and effective voice and arm to deal with managed care organizations. OPEIU provides just that."

## Women Elected to Board

*Continued from page 1*

this historic development." Millie Hall, President of the Metropolitan Detroit Coalition of Labor Union Women, an active member of Local 494, Detroit, Michigan, and one of the three newly appointed members added, "I'm so proud of my union for its progressiveness and consistent work to be inclusive, involving all members at all levels."

This brings to seven the number of women on the Board following five consecutive appointments. It also catapults OPEIU to the top position among the largest AFL-CIO unions. OPEIU is ranked as the twenty-ninth largest union in the AFL-CIO and no other union of its size or greater has a higher percentage of women on the Board. With the expansion approved, President Goodwin announced that the International Union Executive Board voted to fill these seats with three long-time union activists and Local Union leaders: Claude Grenier, President of Local 434 (Montreal, Quebec); Millie Hall, Local 494 member (Detroit, MI); and Patricia Priloh, President of Local 457 (Brownsville, PA).

At the June 1995 convention, the resolutions committee recommended the appointment of a subcommittee on the broader participation of women on the Executive Board. After a hearty discussion and debate, the International endorsed resolution passed. The committee has since met several times to consider the issue resulting in the addition of the new positions. "We will continue to be a leading union with progressive ideas," President Goodwin said. He also expressed his appreciation for the support he has received in taking this giant step. "Our local unions can be proud of their International and take the message to unorganized workers that by joining the OPEIU they are joining an organization where everyone is included," Goodwin said.

### New Board Members: Grenier, Hall and Priloh Claude Grenier

Grenier has long been considered a leader in the Quebec and Canadian labor movements. She has served as president of Local



Claude Grenier

434, representing the 1,500 members at Laurentian Bank of Canada, since 1993. She has been a Local 434 member since 1975, while an employee at the bank.

Members of the Eastern Canada Council of OPEIU elected her their president in 1994. As president she coordinates activities of locals throughout the region.

From 1979 to 1980 she was director of the Local 434 executive committee; from 1980 to 1993, Local 434 vice president; and since the early 1980s until today, she has consistently served as a member of the negotiating committee for Laurentian Bank members.

In 1981 she became director of the General Council of the Quebec Federation of Labour. From 1987 to 1989 she advanced to vice president of the Quebec Federation of Labour, assuming one of the three seats reserved for women.

She has a long, highly-regarded history in the labor movement, clearly making her an excellent addition to the executive board.

Grenier has little time for "outside" interests and cites her number one priority: "improving the services for our members." But upon rare occasion she can be found on the golf course or atop her rollerblades or in the theatre.

### Millie Hall

Hall describes herself as a trade union activist, community activist and feminist. "I grew up in the Greater Quinn A.M.E. Church, singing in the choir, reciting poetry and giving speeches — not realizing then that I was preparing to become an advocate for women's rights, human rights and the labor

movement." And a strong voice she became.

Currently she is the President of the Metro-Detroit Chapter of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, one of the most active of the CLUW chapters; executive board member, Detroit Branch of the NAACP and American Civil Liberties Union; member, International Women's Day Committee, Michigan Democratic Party, Michigan Pay Equity Network and the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

She formerly served OPEIU Local 494 as president and recording secretary. She is a former vice president of the Detroit Chapter of the National Organization for Women, the Michigan Conference NOW state political action chair, board member of YWCA of Metropolitan Detroit, the Metro Detroit



Millie Hall

AFL-CIO and the Southeast Michigan Coalition for Occupational Safety and Health.

Since 1977 Hall has worked as secretary at UAW's national headquarters, currently in the Health and Safety Department.

She is the mother of three: Angela, a practicing psychiatrist/pediatrician in Macon, Georgia; Derrick, a newly elected state representative in Michigan; and Jason, a student at Oakland Community College.

### Patricia Priloh

Patricia Priloh was born and has worked in Brownsville, Pennsylvania, most of her life. It's where she married and had three daughters, one stepdaughter and three grandchildren. Plus, it's where she leads OPEIU local



Patricia Priloh

union members in Local 457.

Priloh graduated from St. Francis Hospital School of Nursing in Pittsburgh in 1959.

While working as a registered nurse at Centerville Clinic in Centerville, Pennsylvania, she joined Local 457. Ultimately she was elected in 1980 to the position of Local Union President, a title that she still holds today.

Over the years she has worked as a volunteer on many International Union organizing campaigns, mostly involving hospitals and health care workers. The International Union knew a competent, dedicated organizer and leader when it saw one and hired Priloh as an International Representative in September 1983.

### Wittenbrook Joins Cleveland AFL-CIO Federation

Cathy Wittenbrook, OPEIU International Vice President, was recently elected vice president of the Cleveland AFL-CIO Federation. Wittenbrook is president of both Locals 17 in Cleveland, representing Kaiser employees, and 513 which represents Elyria United Methodist Village, a nursing facility.

Wittenbrook is herself a nurse who says she is very honored to represent OPEIU members at the federation.

T H I N K I N G A B O U T

# Buying, Selling or Refinancing a Home?

Here Are Five Great  
Reasons to Give Union  
Member Mortgage  
and Real Estate  
a Try:

1. It's easy. You can do everything over the phone—including applying for a mortgage—at your own convenience.
2. It's "union-unique." With this program, you get two important union-only advantages: strike protection and assistance-fund benefits. Plus, you get a special \$250 rebate at closing.



3. It saves you money when you buy. If you buy your home and finance it through the program, you can save as much as \$350 on closing costs.

4. It saves you money when you sell. The program's real estate benefit offers home sellers one half of one percentage point off the commission\* paid to the real estate agent (amounting to a \$500 savings on a \$100,000 home).

5. It's great for first-time buyers. Qualified buyers who have been union members for one year or more may be able to put as little as 2 percent down.

The new and improved **Union Member Mortgage and Real Estate Program** now provides you and your family with even more opportunities to save money. The program offers competitive mortgage rates, refinancing packages and low down payments. Plus, it makes available **Federal Housing Administration (FHA)** loans, **Veterans Administration (VA)** loans and local bond programs (in many states). Coupled with the program's home-seller benefits, these money-saving features can end up saving you an average of **\$1,100** when you take full advantage of all that's offered. So don't wait. **Call Union Member Mortgage and Real Estate at 1-800-848-6466 today!**

Se habla español. Call before or after work, Monday - Thursday, 8 am to 10 pm; Friday, 8 am to 9 pm; Saturday, 9 am to 1 pm (ET)



**UNION MEMBER  
MORTGAGE &  
REAL ESTATE**

**1-800-848-6466**

\*The discount on the real estate commission is not available in Alaska, Kansas, Missouri, Nebraska or West Virginia. Financing provided through The Chase Manhattan Bank (National Association), Member FDIC, an equal housing lender. The union has no involvement in loan decisions.

## Walt Disney World Resort Hotel Discount Offered to Union Members

The unionized Hotel Royal Plaza, located in the heart of Walt Disney World Village, is offering a special discount rate to union members. The 1997 members-only rate is \$99 per night low season (January 1 through February 15, 1997, and April 14 through December 21, 1997) and \$119 per night high season (February 16 through April 13, 1997).

The discounted rate is good for single through quad occupancy through December 21, 1997, and is subject to availability. To obtain the discount, call the hotel's reservations department at (800) 248-7890, ask for the union rate when you make your reservation, and show your union card when you check in.

The Hotel Royal Plaza offers complimentary transportation to all Disney theme parks — including Magic Kingdom, EPCOT Center, Disney-MGM Studios Theme Park and Typhoon Lagoon — as well as preferred status at Disney's five championship golf courses.

The hotel is within walking distance of the Disney Village Marketplace and Pleasure Island. Other nearby attractions in the Orlando, Florida area include Universal Studios Florida, Sea World and Wet 'n' Wild. And Kennedy Space Center, Busch Gardens and Cypress Gardens are within an easy drive. (When renting a car, use the Hertz discount. Call (800) 654-2200; the union ID number is 205666.)

The Hotel Royal Plaza discount is another money-saving benefit brought to you exclusively through Union Family Savers.

## New, Improved Union Member Discount Prescriptions Program Offers Greater Savings

Union Privilege has launched Union Member Discount Prescriptions, a new and improved mail-order prescription program that offers union members and their families discounts on most prescription drugs. Members who use the program pay less than typical drug store prices—plus they enjoy convenient mail-order delivery service.

Union Member Discount Prescriptions is available to all union members and their families, including parents and other relatives not living at home. No insurance or pharmacy benefit plan is necessary to take advantage of the program, which makes it ideal for ordering prescriptions not covered by insurance and long-term maintenance medications, such as blood pressure pills or insulin. And union members who use doctor-approved generic drugs can save even more through the program.

"Union Member Discount Prescriptions is a valuable addition to the benefits of union membership", said Union Privilege President Charles McDonald. "We have worked closely with First-Class Pharmacy, our partner provider, to design a state-of-the-art program that delivers real savings and quality service for union members and their families—and are proud of the end result."

In addition to cost savings, Union Member Discount Prescriptions offers union members the convenience of shopping by mail and having their prescriptions delivered right to their homes. Orders are shipped within 24 hours of receipt, and each prescription includes a patient information and instruction insert. Plus, there is also a toll-free phone line that offers access to registered pharmacy professionals, so members can call if they have questions about a drug or a prescription order—any time, day or night.

To find out more about the Union Member Discount Prescriptions Program, members should call 1-888-UNION-RX (1-888-864-6679).

## Justice for Strawberry Workers

Continued from page 16

suade the entire \$650-million-a-year California strawberry industry to recognize pickers rights to organize under the UFW's banner and to improve their pay and working conditions. Eighty percent of the strawberries sold in the U.S. and Canada are produced by the California industry.

The pickers' \$8,000 a year average pay could be increased by half — by 50 percent — with no more than a five-cent increase in the price of a pint of strawberries, according to an analysis by the California Institute of Rural Studies.

The finding is central to the campaign for justice for the strawberry workers.

A consumer pledge endorsing the worker's rights, reproduced on this page for signing, clipping and mailing to Rodriguez at UFW headquarters (P.O. Box 62, La Paz, Keene, CA 93531; phone 888-235-2460; fax 406-728-4590).

Rodriguez and several strawberry work-

ers began a series of visits to East Coast cities in November to meet with religious, political, union and community leaders to increase support for the campaign. While in New York he met with International President Michael Goodwin and Vice President Richard Lanigan (Local 153) who promised OPEIU's support in the struggle (see photo here). Several UFW organizers, in fact, have been provided space in the union offices for the campaign.

### I endorse these rights for strawberry workers

A living wage ★ Clean drinking water and clean toilets in the fields ★ Protection from arbitrary firing and discipline ★ Health insurance ★ An end to sexual harassment and other abuses

NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
 UNION \_\_\_\_\_ POSITION \_\_\_\_\_  
 ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
 CITY, STATE, ZIP \_\_\_\_\_  
 PHONE \_\_\_\_\_ FAX \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to: Arturo S. Rodriguez, President, United Farm Workers, AFL-CIO,  
 P.O. Box 62, La Paz, Keene, CA 93531 Fax: 408-728-4590



**The OPEIU Executive Board passed a resolution at its January 1997 meeting urging locals to support the strawberry workers at their Watsonville, CA march on April 13, 1997.**

## Notice to Employees Subject to Union Security Clauses

This Notice is for all employees working in the United States under an OPEIU contract containing a union security clause which requires, as a condition of employment, that an employee pay dues or fees to the Union. This is the only obligation under such clause regardless of the wording of the clause. Individuals who are members pay dues, while individuals who are nonmembers pay equivalent fees. These dues or fees, which are authorized by law, are your fair share of sustaining your Union's broad range of programs in support of you and your co-workers, but nonmembers may file objections to funding expenditures that are nongermane to the collective bargaining process, and thereby be obligated to pay fees representing only expenditures germane to the collective bargaining process.

Only if you are not a member of the Union or if you resign your membership, and you file an objection to the funding of expenditures that are nongermane to the collective bargaining process, may you pay fees representing only expenditures germane to the collective bargaining process. If you resign your membership, the many rights and opportunities available to Union members will not be open to you. For example, if you resign your membership you will no longer be able to:

- vote on the terms of your contract;
- participate in the development of contract proposals;
- nominate, vote for, or serve as an officer of your Local Union;
- nominate, vote for, or serve as a delegate to the International Convention;
- participate in strike votes; and
- enjoy discounts and other benefits available only to members, including eligibility for OPEIU scholarships for you and your family.

Individuals who are employed by public employers in the states of New Jersey and Minnesota are covered by the demand and return system applicable to them, and are not covered by this procedure. Other individuals who elect to be nonmembers may object to funding expenditures which are not germane to the collective bargaining process. Expenditures germane to the collective bargaining process ("chargeable" expenditures) represent that portion of the Union's expenditures devoted to collective bargaining, contract administration, grievances and arbitration, and other matters affecting wages, hours, and other conditions of employment. Examples of "chargeable" expenditures include: the costs of negotiations with employers; contract administration expenses; communication with employers in regard to work-related issues; handling employees' work-related problems through the grievance and arbitration procedure; lobbying on matters directly related to conditions of employment; and Union administration.

Examples of expenditures nongermane to the collective bargaining process ("non-chargeable" expenditures) are those made for community services, for lobbying on issues that benefit represented employees and their families as citizens rather than as workers; for political purposes; for certain affiliation fees; and for benefits available only to members and their families. The fee reduction will represent these non-chargeable expenditures. The International Union's Voice of the Electorate fund ("VOTE"), an independent, segregated fund that receives voluntary donations, contributes to political candidates who support the needs of working men and women. No money received from dues or fees goes to the VOTE fund. Accordingly, the VOTE fund is not considered in the calculation of

the percentage of expenditures that is spent on non-chargeable expenses.

Individuals who choose to file an objection will receive a rebate of their fees equal to the percentage of expenditures that is spent on non-chargeable expenses. The percentage of non-chargeable expenses of the International Union, which will be effective for the months of July 1997 through August 1998, is 25.69%. Studies show that the percentage of reduction for the Local Unions ranges between 0% and 8%. The major portion of an objector's fees remains with the Local Union.

In addition to any other avenue of relief available under the law, an objector may challenge the International Union's and/or the Local Union's classification or calculation of expenditures before a neutral arbitrator appointed by the American Arbitration Association pursuant to its Rules for Impartial Determination of Union Fees. Any challenge a nonmember makes may be coordinated or consolidated with other challenges to the Local Union or International Union determinations before a single arbitrator selected by the American Arbitration Association. Such challenges may also be coordinated or consolidated with challenges to other OPEIU Local Union calculations.

The Unions shall bear the burden of justifying their calculations. If a hearing at which the parties or witnesses may be present is held by the arbitrator, it will be held at a location most convenient to the largest number of involved challengers. The cost of any arbitration proceedings will be paid for by the Unions. However, a challenger will have to pay his or her own lost time and travel expenses, and the fees, costs, and expenses of any persons they involve in the proceedings.

Once a written challenge is received

from an objector, the Local Union will place an amount equal to the requested reduction in the fee into an interest-bearing escrow account. It shall remain in that account until the arbitrator issues a decision. Should the decision lower the percentage of chargeable expenditures, the appropriate portion of the escrowed fees, plus the interest earned on the escrow account, will be refunded to the challenger. All reduced service fee payers in each Local Union affected by the decision of the arbitrator will then pay the adjusted amount as determined by the arbitrator. If the arbitrator approves the Unions' calculations, the escrowed money and interest will revert to the Local and International Unions.

Individuals who choose to file objections to funding expenditures that are nongermane to the collective bargaining process should file them in writing with the Office and Professional Employees International Union at 1660 L Street, N.W., Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20036, Attn: Gilles Beauregard, Secretary-Treasurer. The objection must include your name, home address, Social Security number, employer, job title, department, work location, local union number, and business telephone number.

In order for an objection to be recognized at this time, it must be postmarked during the month of April, 1997. This objection will be effective July 1, 1997 through August 31, 1998. All objections must be renewed each year in writing. In 1998 and all years thereafter, future objections or renewed objections must be postmarked during the month of June to be recognized. All timely future or renewed objections will be effective September 1, 1998 through August 31, 1999, or September 1 through August 31 of each year thereafter for which an objection is filed.

## Editorial



# OPEIU: A Leader on Women's Representation

by Michael Goodwin, International President

I was very pleased when the Executive Board approved the recommendation to expand the number of Vice Presidents from 15 to 18 in an effort to promote gender and ethnic diversity on the Board. The present Board consists of 11 Vice Presidents from the United States and four from Canada. The constitutional provisions associated with this change will be submitted to the 1998 Convention. Along with approving the expansion, the Executive Board voted to seat Millie Hall, President of the Metropolitan Detroit Coalition of Labor Union Women and a member of Local 494, Detroit, MI; Patricia Priloh, President of Local 457, Centerville, PA and an International Senior Representative; and Claude Grenier, President of Local 434, Montreal, PQ and a member of the Canadian Consultative Committee, as Vice Presidents.

In evaluating candidates for these positions, the Executive Board considered the gender and ethnic diversity of the Executive Board officers who have already been elected. The convention delegates will also be asked to make these same considerations after the constitution is amended to provide for the three additional seats. I believe that this is the most democratic approach. These appointments follow the two previous appointments of Anita Roy (Local 12) and Cathy Wittenbrook (Local 513) from Region VII, bringing the total to seven women on the Board. In addition, Carolyn Combs will continue to serve as Chairperson of the Subcommittee on the Broader Participation

of Women on the Executive Board through the 1998 convention.

OPEIU is now a leader in the AFL-CIO family of unions in the representation of women on its Executive Board. We should be very proud of this fact and proud of the qualified women that are now part of the decisionmaking process at the highest levels of our organization. I have been advocating the advancement of women since first assuming office in 1994, but I soon realized that it wasn't going to happen through the normal

process. It was clear to me that an affirmative action type remedy was required. That is why the expansion approach was the quickest and the most efficient way to accomplish this objective.

Keep in mind that it is the local unions

who elect local union officers who often become candidates for the International Executive Board. The International Union has no say in who is elected to those local union positions but we continue to encourage the participation of women as officers in their local unions at all levels. We also encourage the creation of a women's committee in all local

unions where such committees do not already exist. Working at the grassroots of the local union is the best way to proceed in the furtherance of women's goals.

The International Union's strategy to broaden the participation of women as officers of the International Executive Board has worked well and we will continue to guide the OPEIU as the most open and democratic union of all. We appreciate the written recommendations that were submitted by local unions and participation in the survey that was distributed by Director of Research and Education Gwen Wells. The information received was very helpful in analyzing the needs of our organization. I would especially like to thank Carolyn Combs, Kathleen Kinnick, Janice Best, Anita Roy, and Cathy Wittenbrook for all the work they did within the Executive Board on behalf of the issue.

Be assured that OPEIU will continue to

### Women Vice Presidents on the Executive Board

Janice Best (Local 343, Toronto, Ont.)

Claude Grenier (Local 434, Montreal, Que.)

Millie Hall (Local 494, Detroit, MI)

Kathleen Kinnick (Local 3, San Francisco, CA)

Patricia Priloh (Local 457, Centerville, PA)

Anita Roy (Local 12, Minneapolis, MN)

Cathy Wittenbrook (Local 17, Cleveland, and 513, Elyria, OH)

### Chair, Subcommittee on the Broader Participation of Women on the Executive Board:

Carolyn Combs (Local 391, Chicago, IL)

...OPEIU as the most open and democratic union of all.

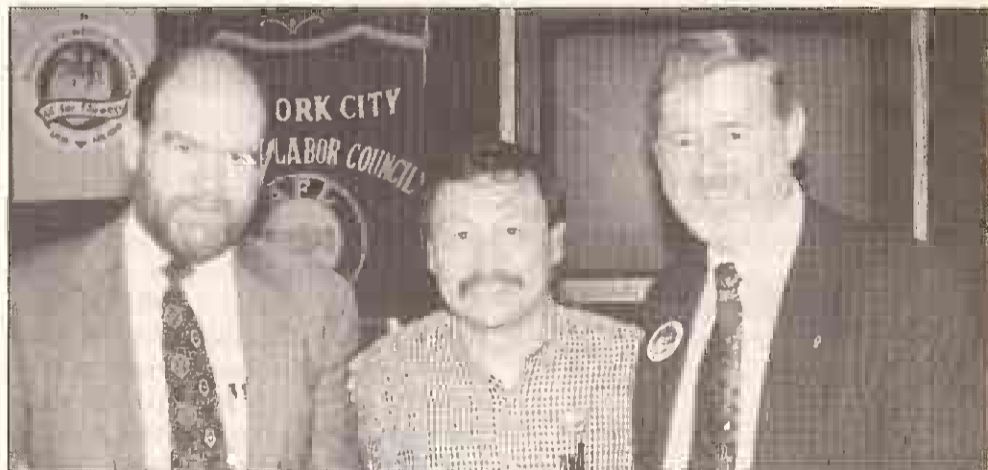
## Justice for Strawberry Workers is Aim of Nationwide Campaign

The United Farm Workers (UFW), backed by OPEIU, the AFL-CIO, central labor councils across the U.S., civil rights, women's, religious, academic, civic and other groups, is calling on consumers across the nation to join the union's campaign for justice and dignity for California's 20,000 strawberry pickers.

The pickers are among the most exploited workers in the country, UFW President Arturo Rodriguez said.

They reported widespread sexual harassment, inadequate bathroom facilities in the fields, wage and child-labor law violations, polluted drinking water for the workers, exposure to pesticides and mistreatment and firing of those who support the union. Rodriguez explained.

"And that's just to name a few," he added. The pickers work the fields 10 to 12 hours a day, six days a week. Pay for the eight-month, March-October strawberry season averages \$8,000.



International Vice President Richard Lanigan (left) and President Michael Goodwin (right) pledge the union's support to the United Farm Workers and its President Arturo Rodriguez (center) in their struggle for justice of strawberry workers.

Each oversized California strawberry that gets dipped in chocolate and sold in gourmet shops gets a price "almost equal to what some pickers earn an hour," a New

York Times reporter wrote last summer.

The campaign aims to change all that by generating enough public support to per-

Continued on page 15



Printed in USA

Our DC office has moved. Make a note of the new address: OPEIU, 1660 L St., NW, Suite 801, Washington, DC 20036



## Letters to the Editor



Again, we reprint letters from our members on various issues. We invite our readers to continue to share their opinions with us, whether in support of or in opposition to our own. Debate is healthy and welcome in this union. Letters are edited for length only, not content. Remember: anonymous letters will not be printed.

### Workers vs. Corporate Rights

Let me start by saying I was tickled by the depiction of workers' rights in comparison to corporate rights, the labor cartoonist R. Flores drew in Issue 3, #456. It couldn't be more true as I've been a victim of this same unfortunate game of cat and mouse.

...13 million families and God knows how many single people really take the brunt of this Medicare (Medicaid) charade. Mainly, the amount of money paid as a whole doesn't compare to the lack of medical services rendered. It's redundant to think after all these years ("26" and counting) that this would balance the budget now or even in 7 years.

...\$270 billion in tax revenue, just to pay the interest on our national deficit is a smoke screen aimed to keep monies in dead-lock to give the impression our government is strapped, based on a \$9 trillion deficit.

Cutting vital programs, i.e., education, EIC (earned income credit), welfare or veterans' assistance, won't balance the budget, not now or ever as long as America has labor and trade contracts abroad. Sadly our children incur a debt of \$187,000 in taxes over a lifetime "trying to save the sinking ship."

Clearly corporations and medical institutions pockets are swelling as well as bank monopolies and insurance companies. Correct me if I'm wrong, but that's where funds are available for a tax reforming structure that will reduce the deficit and allow better programs for creating jobs and building our economy.

Put stricter guidelines on borrowing, spending and appropriations to and from

banks, outside interests and our government. Stop attacking single and working families, including those less fortunate who are not working, who very much would like to.

One final note: All of us need to make a change in ourselves to precipitate positive moral obligations owed to self, others and, most importantly, our children and our children's children.

Wallace Kesti  
Wellsburg, WV

[Editor's note: We actually received Brother Kesti's letter some time ago, but the sentiments remain timely. Write us your thoughts on the subject. Where do you stand?]

### Canadian news

The current issue of "White Collar" (No. 460) arrived and what a pleasant surprise to read the "Canadian Locals in the News" pages. I would appreciate very much if you could send me two or three additional copies of this issue. I would proudly like to send copies to friends in the U.S.A.

I shall write Paula Stromberg of Local 378 in Burnaby, B.C. to thank her for submitting the interesting "write-ups." In the meantime, warm greetings to all my brothers and sisters in the OPEIU. Continue the struggles and thanks.

Lil Greene  
Toronto, Ontario

### Bridgestone/Firestone

Yesterday, our members voted overwhelmingly to ratify the tentative agreement we reached with Bridgestone/Firestone Corp., bringing to conclusion a more than two-year dispute with the company.

Our dramatic victory in this struggle, which comes after an unprecedented worldwide campaign, is a victory for the entire labor movement and working people and their supporters in the United States and around the world. It proves that even in an

age when it often seems that the forces of greed and indifference are winning, that the old labor adage remains true: Solidarity Works!

...We thank you for your support. It has been a privilege to join arms with you and achieve this victory.

George Becker  
International President  
United Steelworkers of America

### Correction noted

I would like you to make a correction in the next issue of the White Collar. In the last issue you showed a picture of Dr. Thomas Hartnett and me and identified Dr. Hartnett as Robert Croce. Dr. Thomas Hartnett is the President of Blue Cross & Blue Shield of WNY, Inc. Thank you for your cooperation in this matter.

Gerald Skrzeczkowski  
International Vice President  
Buffalo, New York

## DON'T BUY

<p><b>DON'T BUY - U.S.</b></p> <p><b>ACME BOOT CO.</b> Western style boots: Acme, Dan Post, Dingo brands @ Steelworkers</p> <p><b>DECKERS CORP.</b> Sandals: Deckers, Sensl and Teva brands @ Machinists</p> <p><b>HOWE K. SIPES CO.</b> Athletic apparel (chiefly baseball and softball uniforms, satin and wool jackets). Label: Howe Athletic Apparel @ Electronic Workers</p>	<p><b>MASTER APPAREL</b> Men's and boys pants. Labels include Botany 500, Hills and Archer, and Blair. @ Electronic Workers</p> <p><b>DON'T BUY - CANADA</b></p> <p><b>CALIFORNIA TABLE GRAPES</b> @ United Farm Workers</p> <p><b>ELECTROLUX</b> @ Steelworkers</p>
---	--

### Save these dates

## 1997 Education Schedule

### Regional training

The new year 1997 is here and the regional education conferences have been scheduled. Mark your calendars for the training. The International will send details on individual conferences shortly to the respective local unions, officers and staff. Ask your local for more information.

Southeast/Southwest	May 16-18	The Crockett Hotel, San Antonio, Texas \$105 single/double, \$115 triple/quad (210) 225-6500
West/Northwest	June 6-8	Holiday Inn Union Square, San Francisco, CA \$119 single/double
Erie	September 12-14	Holiday Inn Lakeside, Cleveland, Ohio \$82 single/double, \$92 triple/quad, (216) 241-5100
Northeast	September 19-21	Meadowlands Hilton, Secaucus, New Jersey \$99 single/double, (201) 348-6900
North Central	October 17-19	The Marquette, Minneapolis, MN \$89 single/double, (800) 328-4782 or (612) 333-4545

### Full-time staff conference

April 17-20, 1997 • Knickerbocker Hotel  
Chicago, Illinois • \$120 single/double

In addition to the upcoming mailings on class content, White Collar and Research News will continue to carry information as well.

### Don't Forget:

Each local union receives a \$400 subsidy to send delegates to regional conferences.

**WHITE COLLAR**  
Official Organ of  
OFFICE AND PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES  
INTERNATIONAL UNION  
affiliated with the AFL-CIO, CLC

MICHAEL GOODWIN      GILLES BEAUREGARD  
President                      Secretary-Treasurer

GWEN WELLS  
Managing Editor

**ILCA**                      **CALM**  
                                      **ACPS**

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

White Collar (ISSN 0043-4876) is published quarterly by Office and Professional Employees International Union, 1660 L.St., N.W., Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20036. Periodical postage paid at Washington, D.C. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Office and Professional Employees International Union, 1660 L.St., N.W., Suite 801, Washington, D.C. 20036.  
Reproduction by the Labor Press of any or all material herein contained is not only permitted, but wholly desirable in the interest of workers' education.  
Subscription Price \$1 a Year

## Work and Health

### Everyday Eye Problems

by Phillip L. Polakoff, M.D.

All things considered — their up front position, their vulnerability, the demands we make of them — it's a wonder our eyes don't give us more everyday problems than they do.

Here are some typical causes of eye discomfort and what you can do to help relieve the symptoms:

**Foreign bodies.** The list of things that can get in your eyes seems endless — at work, at home, at play. Air pollution is the major offender, including smoke, soot, dust, dirt, chemical particles.

**Larger and potentially more harmful** is debris from tools you may be using, particularly power tools. This is why it's always a good idea to wear safety goggles.

Healthy eyes respond to such invasions with their own defense — tears. If this natural flood of tears doesn't wash the object out, try artificial tears. These solutions are available at your pharmacy.

If the particle is stuck to the surface, try grasping the lashes of the upper lid and pull it down over the lower lid.

Not everybody can do this, particularly people with short eyelashes or extra-sensitive eyes.

If you can't get the irritating object out — or if you think your cornea is scratched — consult a doctor.

Never rub your eye when something is in it.

**Dry eyes.** This is a condition just the opposite of eyes that flood with tears in an effort to wash out something in the eye.

Dry eyes are a frequent complaint of post-menopausal women. Production of tears, the eyes' natural lubricant, decreases at this time.

Other factors can also cause the problem,

such as oral contraceptives, antihistamines and anti-anxiety medications.

People who work at computers, or who read for long periods of time, often experience dry eyes because their blink rate slows down.

We're usually unaware of how often we blink. But if we don't blink every eight to 10 seconds, the surface of the eyes begin to dry.

Artificial tears can help. For severe dryness, your doctor may recommend a bed-time lubricant.

At work, try to rest the eyes when doing close tasks. Look away and blink.

At home, make sure the house doesn't get too dry. This can be a problem when the humidity falls too low, particularly in over-heated houses in winter.

If these self-help measures don't help, see your eye doctor.

**Cosmetics.** Eye makeup can cause problems if not handled with care. Generally, cosmetics will cause an allergic reaction rather than an eye infection. You can usually tell if allergy is the problem if the eyes become red, teary, or the lids become puffy.

If you suspect you're allergic to your eye makeup, stop using all cosmetics. After symptoms clear, reintroduce cosmetics one at a time to determine which is causing the reaction.

If the irritations continue, consult a doctor.

Products used near the eyes — mascara, eye liner and shadow — should be discarded after six months. Thrifty tip: buy the small sizes.

If you have any questions or suggestions for future articles, write to me at IHMA, 2200 Powell St., Watergate Tower II, Suite 395, Emeryville, CA 94608.



## Washington Window

### Big Business Goes After Social Security

Just as Senator Daniel P. Moynihan predicted, big business isn't satisfied with cutting aid for mothers with dependent children and savaging Medicare. Now it's taking aim at that key pillar of the New Deal, Social Security.

The business cloak for its drive to dismantle the system is an innocent-sounding word, "privatization." Their stalking horses are retiring Senator Alan Simpson (R-WY) and the Cato Institute, a supposedly non-partisan — but in reality, business-backed — think tank.

Business took its privatization crusade to a Senate committee hearing in late September, with Cato's Michael Tanner leading the charge. To put workers on alert about what business wants, we present some of what Tanner had to say:

"Social Security should be privatized, allowing people the freedom to invest their Social Security taxes in financial assets such as stocks and bonds. A privatized Social Security system would essentially be a mandatory savings program. The 10.52 percent payroll tax that is the combined employer-employee contribution to the Old-Age and Survivors Insurance portion of Social Security would be redirected towards a personal security account chosen by the individual employee."

And while the worker would invest the money, and take the risk with it, who would actually get the billions upon billions of dollars in workers' cash that Tanner talks about? Business.

"Personal security accounts would be managed by the private investment industry in the same way as 401K plans or individual retirement accounts," he said. "Individuals could not withdraw funds from their accounts prior to retirement, determined either by age or by personal security account balance requirements."

In other words, business gets your money, business hangs on to your money, and you won't see it until you retire — assuming business doesn't lose your money.

Tanner, speaking for his business allies, trumpets the values of "privatizing" Social Security by saying workers would get higher returns on money

invested in stocks and bonds than the Social Security system now earns by investing its money in federal government securities.

Tanner skillfully avoided a few issues: stocks and bonds go wildly up and down; businesses go broke; and stock and bond dividends, unlike Social Security payments (except to the wealthy) are taxed. Tanner offered few answers to a key question: If Social Security is privatized, and money stops coming into the system, how do we pay benefits to present retirees? In so many words, he suggested welfare payments.

Former Social Security Commissioner Robert Ball didn't avoid the questions. He highlighted them:

"Advocates of privatization of Social Security argue that the high real rates of investment return will far more than offset additional expenses," he said. "As a result, they assert that much higher retirement protection will be provided than under Social Security. However, when quoting the numerical results, a much higher real interest rate is used than really seems possible under the circumstances."

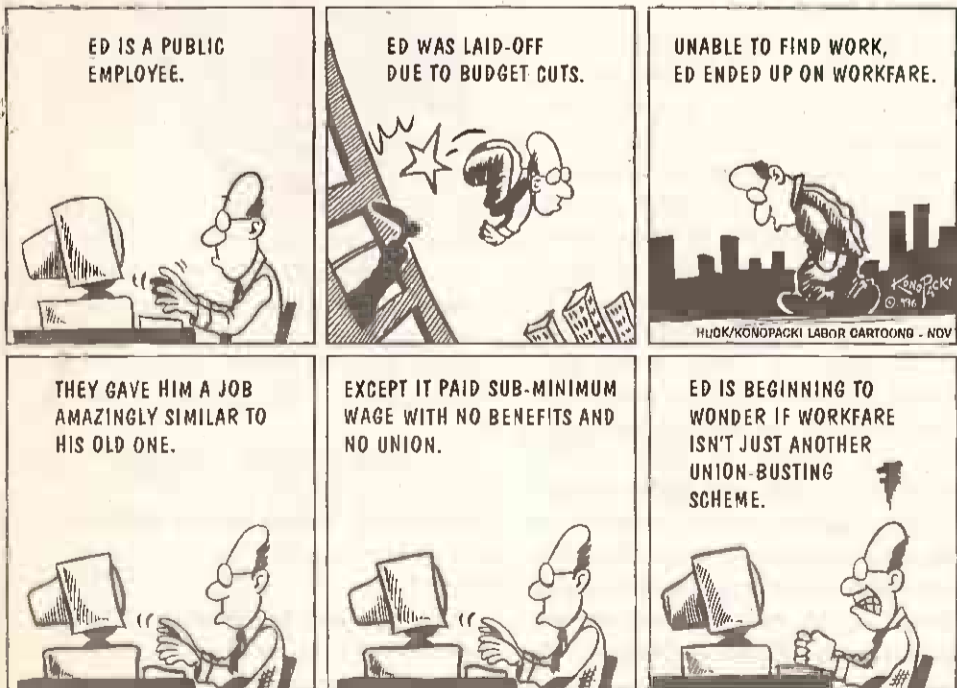
In other words, the privatizers' rosy scenario for getting big money out of the stock market for future retirees is a lie.

And how about the present retirees, or those who invest — under privatization — in stocks that go belly-up? "The existing beneficiaries would have their benefits continued at the expense of the government," Ball reminded the committee. And for older, and low-paid workers, "benefits would be so small as to require some public assistance."

In other words, Ball said, the business privatization plan would throw future low-wage workers onto welfare when they retire — with all the stigma and rules the word "welfare" implies.

The Senate committee reached no conclusion about the privatization plans. Indeed, Chairman William Cohen (R-ME) said no conclusion was planned. He just wanted to air alternatives and discuss the topic so that lawmakers and workers would be ready to tackle the issue in coming years.

But privatization — putting Social Security and workers' futures in the hands of business — is not the way to go.



# Canadian Locals in the News

## Canadian Locals Confront No-fault Auto Insurance

as reported by Paula Stromberg, Local 378

### OPEIU jobs remain intact after no-fault introduction in Saskatchewan

No-fault auto insurance was introduced in January 1995 in Saskatchewan. Initially, OPEIU Local 397 members who worked at Saskatchewan Government Insurance (SGI) were concerned that if the number of claims or the workload dropped as a result of the new system, staff reductions would be inevitable. Instead, SGI staff numbers have risen slightly because of a need for increased file management.

OPEIU Local 397 President Nick Kapell works as a bodily injury adjuster at SGI in Regina. He explained that the SGI no-fault program concentrates on spending money to rehabilitate motor crash victims rather than on simply making cash payouts for injuries.

The SGI no-fault scheme, known as the Personal Injury Protection Program (PIPP) sets rates of compensation for particular permanent injuries and there is no compensation for whiplash. Claimants cannot sue for damages.

"SGI has a \$50,000 cap on income replacement and claimants can sue for extra top-up income over \$50,000," explained Kapell.

Unless there is permanent disability or scarring, claimants do not receive cash payments and there is no cash for pain and suffering. Death benefits have been improved.

"The first year after the program was introduced was confusing and stressful for SGI workers, but 19 months later it seems safe to say no-fault has not meant a loss of OPEIU jobs.

"We've expanded since no-fault was introduced. SGI staff have to keep in touch with claimants. We follow files very closely as claimants progress through their rehabilitation programs and the work has become more time-consuming," said Kapell who added that one group of adjusters and clericals at SGI still deal with old outstanding tort claims.

Local 397 Union Rep Dave Miller said that despite initial fears, there has been no job loss for the 1,300 OPEIU members as a result of no-fault. "We've hired staff and had marginal increases in our numbers since PIPP was introduced."

The biggest plus for SGI and the public is the cost savings. In Saskatchewan, in-

surance rates would have had to increase eight percent a year. However, the first year after no-fault was introduced, claims costs were reduced by \$100 million. "Rates have not gone up," said Kapell.

Saskatchewan lawyers are lobbying strongly to have no-fault repealed. "Their livelihoods are affected. SGI saved \$100 million in 1995 and at least 20% of that goes to the legal profession.

"For Local 397 members, no-fault has created a new class of work that required an increase in peoples' skills," Miller said. "That change is positive, especially for members who felt dead-ended or at the top of their profession."

He said there have been some shifts in duties which is problematic from an OPEIU perspective. "For example, the union doesn't agree with the corporation's decision to have clericals rather than adjusters processing payments.

"Adjusters used to do the processing from start to finish. Now, adjusters prepare the statements and the actual processing of payments is done by clericals. The OPEIU sees this as a devolution of responsibility," said Miller who is past president of Local 397 and a former SGI property underwriter in Regina.

"OPEIU members at SGI have undergone a major system change however stress levels have jumped substantially.

"The union worked with SGI to provide training courses that helped staff make the transition from the old tort system to no-fault. Because they work so closely with claimants over prolonged periods, staff needed to learn how to deal very empathetically with claimants, understand the dynamics of people going through a crisis, and how to detach from often heart-wrenching situations when they got home from the office."

Overall, Local 397 officials say the changes brought by the new auto insurance system have been positive.

### No-fault auto insurance rumored for British Columbia

Rumors about a new, no-fault auto insurance plan being considered at the Insurance Corporation of B.C. just won't go away.

OPEIU members at ICBC, particularly the adjusting staff, are concerned about the potential impact a no-fault system could have on their job security.



Ron Tuckwood,  
International Vice President

There has been a lot of discussion that some form of no-fault auto insurance system will be introduced. "We don't have any specific information but we are monitoring the situation," said OPEIU Local 378 President Ron Tuckwood.

"We are calling for a consultative process on behalf of OPEIU members at ICBC as well as all the other stakeholders such as B.C. motorists, Autoplan brokers and trial lawyers," said OPEIU Senior

Union Rep Dave McPherson.

"We are requesting consultations with the provincial government and ICBC management before a new, no-fault auto insurance system is introduced in this province. Changing the way car insurance and accident victims are handled should not be taken lightly.

"Obviously there is a potential for job loss and 'de-skilling' of adjusting responsibilities at ICBC. If adjusters no longer determine who is at fault in motor crashes, their jobs may require fewer skills. No-fault systems also allow more computerization of the claims process. These are serious concerns."

McPherson said there should be a human resources plan along with an insurance plan if and when no-fault is introduced at ICBC.

"With the new atmosphere of improved union/management relations, we are optimistic that any potentially negative impact on our members can be alleviated if a new auto insurance system is introduced."

Tuckwood added that in discussions with ICBC and the government, senior officials have indicated any new insurance scheme will be a made-in-B.C. program.

*Editor's note: Ron Tuckwood and Nick Kapell also both serve as OPEIU International Vice Presidents.*

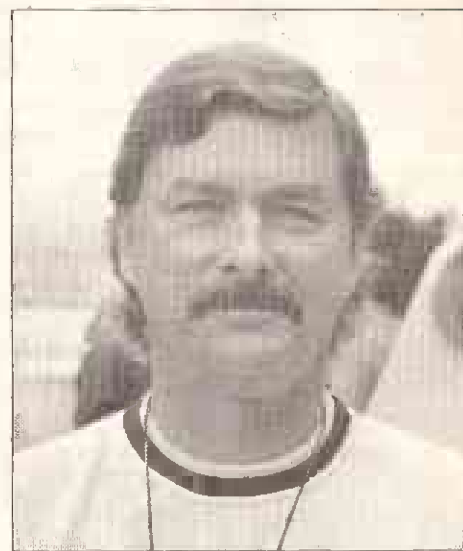
## Introducing the new Canadian VP for Region IX: Nick Kapell

The International Union's executive board unanimously appointed Nick Kapell to fill the vacant position of International Vice President for Region IX.

The board officially recognized the dedication and abilities Kapell has shown over his many years with Saskatchewan's Local 397 in making this appointment.

As Kapell describes it, his involvement with the labor movement began with the Steelworkers in Thompson, Manitoba, when he worked for INCO in about 1972. Although he admits to not being active in the union at that time, Kapell believes the experience peaked his interest in organized labor.

He became a member of Local 397 in January of 1974 and then a shop steward the same year. Since, he has held various executive positions within the local and within the labor movement at large. For example, he serves on the executive of the Saskatoon Labour Council, chairing several committees over the years, most notably the Women's Committee and the Education Committee, as well as sitting on the Union Centre's Board of Directors. "I



Nick Kapell,  
International Vice President

couldn't possibly recount the committees and panels that I've sat on," Kapell said.

To date, his service has culminated in his election as president of Local 397 in Saskatchewan, followed by the appointment as International Vice President of Region IX.

We congratulate him on this appointment.

# Canadian Locals in the News

## Canadian Protest Cuts to Safety Net

Thousands of angry Canadians, many of them trade unionists, paralyzed parts of Canada's largest city to protest government actions that threaten the core of what Canada stands for.

Protesters managed to shut down Toronto's subway, bus and streetcar systems. Highways leading to the airport were jammed by drivers who deliberately slowed traffic to a standstill.

The direct target of the protests was the new provincial government and its leader Mike Harris who has become a darling of Wall Street by slashing almost \$1 billion from Ontario's budget, dropping more than 180,000 people from welfare rolls and promising to shrink income taxes 30 percent. Eventually the spending cuts will reach nearly \$6 billion, but achieving that goal will mean closing hospitals, raising university tuition and laying off civil servants, among other measures.

Labor unions, and

community groups wanted to send Harris a message that we consider the cuts mean-spirited and excessive.

The "Metro Action Days of Action" took place October 25 and 26, 1996. On Friday, OPEIU members took to the streets for picket duty (see photos here).

Carol Dupuis, staff representative for the OPEIU Central Ontario Council, created the human billboard displayed here, filling the 17 spots with members from OPEIU locals throughout Canada, at the Saturday mass demonstration.



Local 96 (Thunder Bay) joins in Toronto demonstrations.



## Fighting for the Union in the Courts



Pierre Gingras, legal counsel to the OPEIU for Canadian Affairs and to Local 57 in Montreal, appears before the Montreal Justice Hall on November 6, 1996. To the left is Serge Cadieux, lawyer for the OPEIU Eastern Canada Council. The two argued before the court the issue that an employer—the City of Pointe-Claire—is, for labor relations purposes, the true employer of an employee hired from an employee leasing agency by the City to perform union work.

## Local 434 ratifies new contract

### Stormy Talks End in Victory

After voting 92% in favor of strike action over job security and to prevent the transfer of workers into non-unionized positions, the 1,650 Local 434 members at Laurentian Bank of Canada in Montreal ratified a three-year contract on January 5, 1997. The contract includes a 2% signing bonus and a shorter workweek for full-time employees.

The Bank plan was to reassign almost all of Local 434 membership into non-unionized financial adviser positions to be more competitive in the Canadian banking industry.

"We have to give credit to our members whose strong determination to protect their rights showed the Bank that Canada's only unionized bank employees stick together," said Local 434 President and International Vice President Claude Grenier.

Their last contract expired at the end of December 1995.

## Tilden Joins Local 378

Employees at National Tilden in Vancouver voted in August 1996 to join our union. Negotiations for a first collective agreement likely have begun by the time this issue reaches you.

There are approximately 75 members at Tilden. "This is the third car rental agency we've organized. We hope other workers in the rental industry will consider joining Local 378 as well," said OPEIU International Vice President Ron Tuckwood. Tuckwood is also Local 378's president.

# Union Continues Successful Organizing and Bargaining Training in the Fall

**M**embers continued throughout the fall to attend volunteer organizing training and study first contract bargaining at the union's regional education conferences.

*Members are most effective organizing new members.*

*We have to participate in organizing to make our union grow.*

*If we don't learn to apply pressures on employers to settle, we'll either have to strike or sign contracts we don't like.*

These are just a few of the reasons members gave for why they attended the training sessions and were becoming more active in their local unions. All were pleased with the program and the skills they had gained or refined.

Photos here are representative of that training and the delegates attending.

OPEIU General Counsel Mel Schwarzwald presented an overview of labor law as it applies to organizing at all regional education conferences.

## Northeast

Members from the following local unions took part in the Northeast Regional Education Confer-

ence, held at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey, October 4 to 6, 1996:

Locals 2 (Washington, DC); 6 (Boston, MA); 32 (Union, NJ); 106 (Groton, CT); 153 (New York, NY); 426 (Bristol, PA); 471 (Brownsville, PA); 600 (Boston); 1057 (Andover, ME); and 1295 (Woburn, MA).

President Michael Goodwin; Vice Presidents Patrick Tully, Walter Allen and Richard Lanigan; and Education Director Gwen Wells represented the International Union. International Representatives and Organizers Donna Shaffer and Ron Hutson led discussions on organizing, assisted by Local Organizers John Lynch (153) and Virginia Lavesque (6). Jessica Govea from Rutgers led the bargaining program.

## Erie

Members from the following local unions attended the Erie Regional Education Conference, held at the Westin Renaissance Center in Detroit, Michigan, October 18 to 20, 1996: Locals 1 (Indianapolis, IN); 17 (Cleveland, OH); 19 (Toledo, OH); 40 and 42 (Detroit, MI); 53 (Omaha, NE); 339 (Akron, OH); 457 (Brownsville, PA); 459

(Lansing, MI); 494 (Detroit); 502 (Oberlin, OH); 512 (State of MI); 513 (Elyria, OH); 1794 (Cleveland); and 2001 (Little Rock, AR).

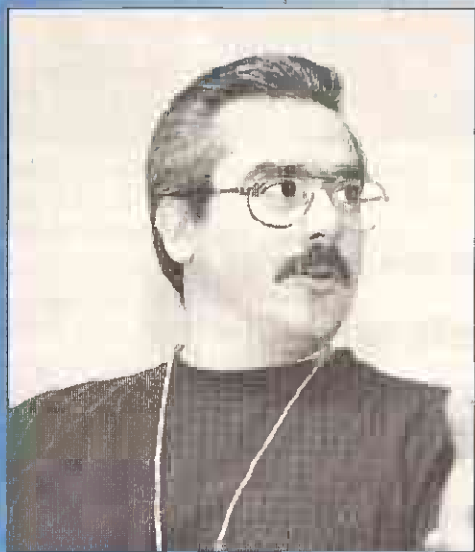
President Michael Goodwin, Vice President Cathy Wittenbrook and Education Director Gwen Wells represented the International Union. International Staff Ron Hutson, Donna Shaffer, Patricia Priloh, Rob Garvin and Sandy Naples led the volunteer organizing class; while John Beck from Michigan State University led discussions on bargaining.

## North Central

Members from the following local unions attended the North Central Regional Education Conference, held at the University of Wisconsin's School for Workers in Madison, Wisconsin, November 1 to 3, 1996: Locals 9 (Milwaukee, WI); 12 (Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN); 28 (Chicago, IL); 39 (Madison, WI); 95 (Wisconsin Rapids, WI); 391 (Chicago, IL); and 787 (Milwaukee).

President Michael Goodwin, Vice President Anita Roy, Director of Organization Jay Porcaro and Education Director Gwen Wells attended on

*Continued on page 10*



Photos by Gary Schoichet



"Passing on" a message helps teach volunteer organizers the art of listening.



Roleplaying in Detroit brings a laugh to participants.



International staff and organizing instructors at the North Central Conference (left to right) were Annemarie Purdy, Donna Shaffer, Ron Hutson, Bonnie Strauss and Rob Garvin.

Photos by Gwen Wells or Gary Schoichet



North Central delegates develop consensus.



Other participants in Madison work on charting and assessments.

## Women on the Job Honors 153 at Hofstra with Winn Newman Pay Equity Award

OPEIU Local 153 was honored on November 24, 1996, by Women on the Job (WOJ), a nationally respected employment rights advocacy group based in Port Washington, New York. The Winn Newman Award, which the local received, was established by WOJ three years ago to recognize women on Long Island who are fighting for pay equity.

According to WOJ, "Local 153 of OPEIU has been on the Hofstra campus since 1973. Because of this affiliation, the mostly female clerical and support staff members have gained many benefits and pay raises.

"However, despite two rancorous strikes (1989 and 1995) pay equity is not a fait accompli on the campus. The Hofstra administration insists that the clerical workers salaries are not gender-related, but simply a 'condition of the market.'

"In the fall of 1995 the union struck for seven long weeks in an effort to keep their hard-won medical benefits and raise their salaries to the level of the male-dominated crafts groups.

"At that time a clerical worker employed

for seven years averaged \$22,000 per year; the male-dominated groups earned starting salaries that were much higher: custodian — \$26,000; gardener — \$29,000; painter — \$36,000.

"Because of their strength during the two strikes, the Local 153 members have gained the respect and support of faculty and students alike. They have begun to close the wage gap, due primarily to a series of negotiated wage increments, but still they are far from being compensated according to the value of their work. They will continue to remain united in their quest for pay equity.

"With this award Women on the Job honors Local 153's courage, resilience and persistence in fighting for their right to fair pay."

### Winn Newman Award

WOJ's pay equity award was named in honor of Winn Newman, a labor and civil rights lawyer in Washington, DC. His most important contribution in the legal field was his work on behalf of AFL-CIO unions in cases of discrimination against women and



Pictured here are the Local 153 members at Hofstra University who accepted the Winn Newman Award on behalf of the union. Top row (left-to-right) are Lucille Masciarelli, Maureen Brown, Catherine Dugo and Bill Jordan. Seated (left-to-right) are Sue Kaufman, Anne Noonan, Anne Nagrowski and Stephanie Colace.

minorities, particularly in the area of equal pay for equal work. He won several notable cases against corporations who finally came to accept the thesis that women should be paid the same as men. He was on the cutting edge of the pay equity movement.

On Long Island he pioneered WOJ's efforts to win pay equity for clerical workers

in school districts. Thanks to the methods and strategies Newman developed, a new frontier was opened through the New York State Division of Human Rights under NYSHR Law. There are hundreds of women who learned how to negotiate for equal pay for work of equal value because of the work he did with WOJ.

## Local 8 Wins Unfair Labor Practice Charge

### Gains Greater Access to Unorganized Workers

Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act gives workers the right to organize, join or assist any union without interference from their employer. But what happens to employees who work in isolated settings with no opportunity to exercise their collective rights because they have little or no contact with each other? How can they hope to organize if they don't see each other? Research shows that while professional union organizers serve as expert consultants in helping workers to organize, workers organizing other workers is most effective.

With creative and expert assistance from Seattle Attorney Christine Mrak and support from OPEIU's Organizing Department, Local 8 found a way to challenge the limitations of organizing law, said Business Manager Maureen Bo.

In a charge filed with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in September 1995, Local 8 made the case that the employer violated the law and interfered with workers' right to organize by refusing to provide the union and other homecare workers with a means of communicating with isolated employees at Okanogan County Senior Citizens Association.

The homecare workers at the Association in Omak, Washington, are a good example of the impossibility in organizing workers who are totally isolated from one another. These workers provide services in the

homes of elderly clients spread over six large, rural counties in Eastern Washington. They never come to a central office or have an opportunity to meet other workers. Without knowing their co-workers or how to reach them, there's virtually no way for them to exercise their rights to organize a union, said Local 8 Organizer Cindy Schu.

Schu and union homecare workers Lucinda Clark, Dave Westphal, Colleen Stern, Joanne Kaye and Deanna Bell tried various ways to contact workers, including newspaper and radio ads. They even traveled to Eastern Washington to request assistance from the employer in person. After receiving a "flat-out refusal", the local went to the NLRB.

Following a lengthy investigation, reviewed in Washington, DC, the Board ruled in Local 8's favor. The NLRB issued a complaint against the employer and set a trial date. But on the eve of the trial, the employer agreed to settle.

The settlement agreement gives Local 8 and other homecare workers a full list of employee names and addresses with monthly updates. The employer was also required to send out a notice from the NLRB to all employees informing them of their rights to organize.

Two weeks after the settlement, the employer also sent anti-union letters to employees and gave everyone a \$.60 per hour wage increase from agency money they



The "Notice to Employees" the employer was forced to send each employee is shown here by homecare worker Dave Westphal and Local 8 executive board member Lucinda Clark.

"unexpectedly found."

This case, Schu says, paves the way for all kinds of workers in isolated settings to gain greater access to each other for the purposes of organizing.

## Portland Local Finds New Scholarship

International Vice-President Gary Kirkland suggested to the Local 11 executive board that monies collected in the building fund might better serve members through a union scholarship. The scholarship would be available to members and their families.

The board approved his recommendation and the members ratified it at the September 24 membership meeting.

Kirkland had donated speaking fees that he earned to creating the building fund. However, he saw that it would take years before the local could actually afford to build. He, therefore, concluded that the money today would have greater benefit for the members if used as a scholarship program.

The executive board requested that Gary and Nancy Kirkland allow them to establish the fund in the memory of their son Kristian R. Kirkland.

Local 11 members can obtain details on the Kristian R. Kirkland Memorial Scholarship in future issues of their newspaper.

### Roméo Corbeil Scholarship

The International Executive Board has created the Roméo Corbeil Scholarship in honor of our recently departed Secretary-Treasurer Emeritus and former Canadian Director. Watch for details and deadlines in future issues of *White Collar*.

## Local 8 Battles Anti-Union Seattle Housing Authority



Members of Local 8 in Seattle are waging an on-going battle with the Seattle Housing Authority (SHA) over the Authority's anti-union and abusive tactics.

According to Business Manager Maureen Bo, the SHA is wasting tens of thousands of taxpayer dollars in "totally unnecessary private fees for so-called labor consulting."

"In reality \$90 dollar-an-hour consultants have billed the public for months of anti-union tactics denying office workers a fair union contract. The Board of the SHA should realize how counter-productive their anti-labor policies have become.

"The union has proposed a simple cost effective plan — to put 35 newly organized

employees under the contract with 65 currently covered employees. The union would be happy to work out details of any differences. Instead, SHA demands two separate groups, pitting workers against workers and giving their favorite 'consultants' long-term employment," Bo said.

In addition to delaying tactics, the SHA's labor policies have included illegal lie detector tests that target union activists involved in grievance handling, under the guise of a burglary investigation. The SHA additionally hired a detective agency, resulting in the waste of several more thousands of dollars for a bungled investigation that created even more distrust, she added.

"A final insult is the Housing Authority's increase in rents for low-income seniors. The SHA tried to blame unions for the rent increase. That's an outrage in the face of the agency's waste of thousands in labor consultant fees," Bo charged.

The Local is holding rallies and protests, beginning a public campaign to pressure the agency to stop wasting money and bar-

## Members at American Income Life's Home Office Gain New Contract

Members of Local 277 working in the home office of American Income Life Insurance Company (AIL) ratified a new three-year labor agreement. Workers won an entire array of improvements in wages and benefits. Some of the highlights in the new contract, as reported by International Vice President J.B. Moss, are:

- \* general wage increases from 5% to 8% to the minimum and maximum range in the first year; across-the-board general wage increases for the second and third years

- \* cost-of-living index clause with a \$.15 cap yearly

- \* approximately 11% increase in pension benefits

- \* improvements in bereavement leave for the immediate family

- \* improvements in the selection of floating holidays for a total of 10 holidays

- \* an increase in the Christmas bonus for employees with 12 or more years of service

- \* 7 1/2 hour work day



At the contract signing: (seated) Local 277 Vice President Becky Turner, President of AIL Bernard Rappaport and International Vice President J.B. Moss; (standing, left-to-right) Mary Schronk, Beverly Ramsey, Susan Woolbright, Joyce Lillard, Yvonne Faust, Debbie Day and Linda Harper.

- \* bonus days off for marriage and/or perfect attendance

- \* supplemental child care allowance for working mothers who must work overtime

- \* contract duration: three years.

"The Local 277 members, based in Waco, Texas, can be particularly proud of their new agreement and their union membership," Moss said.

## Committee and Volunteers Make the Difference in UCP Victory

The nearly 200 employees at United Cerebral Palsy of Nassau County overwhelmingly voted to be represented by Local 153 on November 7, 1996. These new members realized that they needed a strong voice to speak for them on benefits, wages, job descriptions, sick time and other working conditions, said International Vice President and 153 Secretary-Treasurer Richard Lanigan.

The organizers who worked with these employees cited a representative employee organizing committee and 153 volunteer organizers from other 153 offices and shops as determinants in the election's success:

"The key to the victory was the involvement of the UCP internal organizing committee," explains Local 153 Organizer John Lynch. "Every day, regardless of the obstacles in front of them, the committee would

reach out to their co-workers and keep them focused on the issues of why they needed a union at UCP."

"Once again Local 153 members, acting as volunteer organizers, were vital to the success of our campaign," said Local 153 Organizer Bob Dooner. "Local 153 members were active speaking one-to-one with UCP employees. They also gave testimonials, beside their photos, on flyers and leaflets about the benefits of Local 153 membership."

United Cerebral Palsy of Nassau County is an agency for educating and caring for individuals with cerebral palsy. It is located in Roosevelt and Bayville, New York. It is the largest UCP location in the area.

Our new 153 members include aides who care for the clients, cafeteria workers, couriers and others, Lanigan said.

## Employees at City of North Port, Florida Win a Union

The 54 municipal clerical workers in North Port, Florida, voted for representation by OPEIU Local 46, announced International Representative Ron Hutson. The votes from the mail ballot were tabulated on November 8, 1996. "There were only two votes against unionizing," Hutson said.

According to Local 46 Vice President Judy Rodriguez, the main impetus for organizing was money. Unionized workers in the city have received wage raises when these unorganized workers did not. "They (nonunion workers) felt like they were being overlooked," she said.

Rodriguez said that the employee-elected bargaining committee will negotiate the first contract at the start of the new year. The committee and members are currently working on contract ideas, but money is expected to be chief among workers' concerns.

According to Rodriguez, the grassroots organizing committee, that steered employees through the election process, was formed in April, 1996. After only four weeks, the committee knew that 95% of the employees wanted a union. On May 7, 1996 Carl Blevins, president of Local 46, filed an election petition with the State.

Thanks to the hard work of that committee, Blevins, Rodriguez, Local 46 Recording Secretary Debbie Lee Smith and Treasurer Beth Syckles, the clerical employees



The organizing committee in a lighter moment — celebrating victory.



Here is the North Port organizing committee responsible for the election's success, with International Representative Ron Hutson (kneeling in front).

at North Port, Florida, will soon be covered by an OPEIU collective bargaining agreement.