

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Grateful acknowledgment is made for the many contributions of the dedicated Press Secretaries who sent articles to the I.B.E.W. Electrical Workers Journal since 1904. That correspondence and the San Diego Labor Leader Newspapers are the major sources of information on the early years of Labor in San Diego.

We would like to extend a very special thanks to Brother Jerry Hartnett for his creation, the 'TRANSMITTER'. It was and will continue to be an accurate research tool for information concerning Local Union 569.

We acknowledge Brother Hartnett's concept, research and written work in the Local Union 569's Golden Anniversary booklet, parts of which we have shamelessly plagiarized and thus appear in this document. Thanks, Jerry.

We acknowledge Brother Paul Blackwood for his many months of research in compiling the information in this booklet. Thanks, Paul.

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## 1881 - 1920 The Beginning

Thomas A. Edison is primarily remembered for his inventive genius. However, he was also a major player in the application of the generation, distribution and utilization of electricity in the United States, if not in the world. One example is the first electrically powered trolley was constructed at his Menlo Park Laboratory in 1880.

The electric powered trolley was a force behind the expansion of the use of electricity in this country. The conversion of horse drawn trolleys to electrical powered trolleys required the expansion of electrical generating capacity and the installation of electrical distribution lines. San Diego was no different from other cities in that respect.



Station B as it appeared in  
1999

The San Diego Electric Railway Co. constructed Station "B" in 1881. San Diego Consolidated Gas & Electric later purchased it and Station "B" became the primary source for electricity for San Diego. Generating units were added to the Station "B" until the first unit at Silvergate Station was built in 1938.

After the completion, Station B's original dynamos, electric power lines could be seen radiating from it along the city streets. The primary reason for those lines was to provide power for the trolleys. But as the power lines were extended along the streets, a desire was created in the public to have this "Unseen Magic" installed in their buildings. This, in turn, created a demand for a new kind of lineman, an "inside man." This name was later replaced by the more descriptive title of "wireman."

Apparently, one of those enterprising wiremen recognized an opportunity. He quit his job with the Electric Railway Company and offered his services to the public to install electrical apparatus in their buildings. Our first electrical contractor was in business and a new industry had emerged in San Diego.

*The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers*

PRESIDENT -- H Miller

J T Kelly, W Hedding, C L Sutter, M Dorsey, T J Fennell, E Haetung,  
F Heizleman, J Berlowitz, F Fisher

The nucleus of our Brotherhood was formed in 1890. An exposition was held in St. Louis that year featuring "a glorious display of electrical wonders." Wiremen and linemen from all over the United States flocked to Missouri's queen city to wire the buildings and erect the exhibits which were the "spectaculars" of their era.



The men got together at the end of each long workday and talked about the toil and conditions for workers in the electrical industry. A union was the logical answer; so this small group, meeting in St. Louis, sought help from the American Federation of Labor (AFL). An organizer named Charles Cassel was assigned to help them and chartered the group as the Electrical Wiremen and Linemen's Union, No. 5221, of the AFL.

The founders of our union met in a small room above Stolley's Dance Hall in a poor section of St. Louis. It was a humble beginning. The handwritten report of that First Convention in our Archives records Henry Miller's thoughts:

- ◇ "At such a diminutive showing, there naturally existed a feeling of almost despair. Those who attended the Convention will well remember the time we had hiding from the reporters and trying to make it appear that we had a great delegation."

In 1891, a new constitution and name was adopted. The name selected for the organization was National Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. The NBEW became an international union when jurisdiction was extended to include Canada. In 1899, the name was changed to International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.

The above information was extracted from The History of the I.B.E.W. published by the International Office in Washington, D.C. (<http://ibew.org>)

## 1904

## Local Union 465

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To complete this picture a final piece was necessary. The San Diego electricians who were working in this new industry soon found a need for a spokesman. To provide that voice, the electricians selected the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers as the organization to be their representative. Local Union 465 was chartered in San Diego by the I.B.E.W. in 1904.

## 1918

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The year was 1918, and World War I was in full swing. San Diego was then the naval seaport of the West Coast and aviation was the newest military weapon. Government and private construction were both contributing factors as more electrical contracting shops opened. This created a demand for more wiremen which in turn, resulted in an increase in the membership of Local 465.

The inside wiremen from Local 465 were quick to realize the growth potential for the new industry. As a result, they began a drive to organize the San Diego electrical contracting industry. These dedicated unionists were determined that only contractors signed to an agreement with the I.B.E.W. would perform electrical work in San Diego. Parallel with that management organizing effort, those inside wiremen also opened a drive to establish a local union for wiremen.

By mid-1918, the San Diego Labor Leader newspaper reported the following items. These items appeared to confirm that a drive for a separate local union for wiremen was well under way.

- ◇ A Building Trades Council committee began looking into the formation of a permanent council in San Diego. The business agent from Local 465's inside wiremen was appointed to be the leader of that committee.
- ◇ Local Union 465's inside wiremen participated in a Metal Trades Council. The goal of this council was to establish control of shipyard and ship construction work in San Diego. This also brought recognition by shipyard operators of the capabilities of inside electricians.
- ◇ Separate prevailing wage agreements for the inside wiremen had begun to emerge in the San Diego area. This established a pattern of work covered by inside agreements. The wages for the inside wiremen were improved from \$5.50 per 8-hour day to \$6.00 per 8-hour day
- ◇ The Labor Leader also indicated that Local Union 465 meetings were now held twice a month at one site, however, the Business

Agent maintained his offices at another site. (That site was the old San Diego Labor Temple located on Market Street).

November 1918 brought an Armistice and the end of World War I. Fears of an economic recession in the San Diego construction industry were quickly put to rest. A Federal Government announcement guaranteed the completion of all projects already begun. The announcement also included the Navy's plans to expand their San Diego Naval Facilities to make San Diego a prime West Coast military base.

Hard on the heels of this good news came the great flu epidemic of 1918. The Officers of Local Union 465 were quick to feel its effect. The Public Health Board issued an emergency order that banned all public meetings. However, the Executive Board of Local 465 was empowered to carry on all actions for the membership for the duration of the emergency.

Articles appeared in the Labor Leader that implied internal strife existed in Local 465. Apparently, conflicts had developed between the inside electricians and the linemen. Copies of the Labor Leader show that the Local 465 members were divided to the point that "fisticuffs" occurred at one meeting. Some of the areas of disagreement are illustrated in the following quotations:



December 1918 - "The boys of 465 don't want anything that might look like a stone wall around their trade so long as a man is competent. Motion made to reduce the initiation fee from \$50.00 to \$15.00 was held over."

## ***1919***

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January 1919 - "465 withdraws from the Metal Trades Council, due to trade conditions."

April 1919 - "Members will now elect officers to the Executive Board, not appoint these seven, as in the past."

April 1919 - "The question of formation of a Building Trades Council came in for considerable discussion. The organization voted to favor the proposition along lines heretofore outlined, so far as the wiremen were concerned, as the linemen do not come in contact or would be eligible to this council."

April 1919 - "Wiremen notify all contractors to terminate agreement, not for purpose of securing a raise, the purpose being to change working rules and conditions."

April 1919 - "The new rules (by-laws) being prepared for the government of the wiremen of Local Union 465 are progressing and they may be ready most any day now. Local 465 has sent, as its first wireman, delegates to the newly formed San Diego County Building and Construction Trades Council. They are: B. C. Sprenger, Clark Myers and R. L. Reyburn."

(All three of the above-mentioned men were wiremen. B. C. Sprenger and Clark Myers were later signers of Local 569's charter. R. L. Reyburn may have been Business Agent at this time, although the records are indefinite, due to the financial turmoil that existed at that time.)

With persistence, a streak of stubbornness and a refusal to accept failure, the wiremen of Local 465 wore down the opposition. The members of Local Union 465 finally accepted the concept of a separate local union for wiremen. A Labor Leader Newspaper article covering a Local 465 membership meeting reported this marked change in August 1919.

- ◇ "Electricians had a very good meeting last Monday night, most of the meeting being given over the question of granting the inside men of Local 465 the right to form a new union, to be composed entirely of men in that branch of the trade."


There were about 60 or more inside men in Local 465, with more coming in. A local of this kind existed in San Diego some time earlier, but all San Diego local unions were merged into the mixed Local Union 465.

- ◇ "It was decided to recommend to the International that the wiremen be issued a charter. That charter was to be effective after the first Monday in September. It was expected that the new union would be installed about that time."

But also in August 1919, an article in the Electrical Workers Journal from Local 465 and signed by one Glenn Lilly, stated the following:

- ◇ "The inside wiremen (not including inside telephone men) have just started a movement to secure a separate charter, but it is not expected that same will be installed until after the Convention."

Apparently, nothing concrete came of the mandate to have the new local union installed by the first Monday in September. However, there is an area of confusion around the whole matter. Sketchy International Office records do show that a charter was issued to San Diego in 1919. But this is complicated by the fact that no records of that time are in existence in either of the two I.B.E.W. Locals 569 or 465. The date recorded for this local union is given as September 26, 1919. A charter was issued to San Diego for Local Union 586 it did not see a very long life, and Local 586 was dissolved.

By mid-September, Labor Leader stories reported that the membership of Local 465 had voted to send two delegates from San Diego to the 1919 I.B.E.W. Convention in New Orleans. The two men carried a definite set of instructions. Brothers Shook and Whitney were sent "to carry the argument for separation". These were the first delegates from San Diego to go to an  I.B.E.W. Convention.

In October, President Shook returned to San Diego from the convention. He reported to the membership that no action was taken on the division of Local Union 465.

## 1920

But on February 11, 1920, Local Union 569 was granted an Official Charter that proudly states:

*To Whom It May Concern:*

*Grant this Charter, issued by authority of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, does hereby grant to the following persons:*

*H. C. Norgaard*

*B. C Sprenger*

*Clark Myers*

*A. B. Chess*

*G. N. Adams*

*J N. Graham*

*Louis C. DeSelm*

*V. R. Knight*

*M. L. Ratcliff*

*J. H. Fernald*

*and to their successors, power to establish and hold a Union of the Brotherhood, in the State of California, to be located at San Diego, to be known as Union No. B-569, with jurisdiction over the following territory: San Diego.*

*In witness thereof, we have hereunto set our hands and the seal of the International Union, this seventh day of February, in the year of one thousand, nine hundred and twenty.*

*Signed, President, J. P. Noonan*

*Secretary, Charles Ford*





Thus was Local Union 569 born, and so it grew. Not by great leaps, but in a crabbed struggle for existence. Created in strife, this local union has borne a burden of a fight for its very life. In the depression years the members gave directly from their pockets to maintain the Business Manager as a full-time paid employee. The elected officers served long hours with no compensation - not because the membership would not remunerate them - but because of simple economics. There was no money available to pay them.



The first communications in 1920 to the Electrical Workers Journal from Local Union 569 was one of cautious optimism.

- ◇ "As you are no doubt aware, we have been having about the same trouble in this city in regard to the open shop fight and the M.M. & E. proposition as they have most all over the country. For a time, things looked pretty black here and a Building Trades strike looked almost certain."
- ◇ "V. P. Bro Grasser and Bro Rhode came into this jurisdiction and by some very able work succeeded in avoiding trouble and although we have no written agreement with our local contractors at this time, we are getting the scale asked for and practically all the working conditions we demanded."

In 1920, the Council on Industrial Relations (CIR) for the unionized electrical construction industry in the United States was established in Washington, D.C.

The Council is composed of six representatives of the National Electrical Contractors Association and six representatives of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers. It has been a medium by which Labor and Management settle major differences peaceably in the unionized electrical construction industry.

## **1920 – 1945 THE EARLY YEARS**

### **1926**

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With the chartering of an inside wiremen's local union good things began to happen to the new local union and its members. First, Local 569 proudly reported a membership of 125 members, but was growing fast. Second, they had also signed an agreement with the electrical contractors that included a five-day workweek. And finally, Organized Labor in San Diego had earned the respect of the city's political



establishment. In a drive coordinated by Central Labor, they had elected a union man to the San Diego City Council.

Work was so good in San Diego in 1926, and conditions were such that the members thought they should get a larger share of the pot.

- ◇ "So we told the contractors we expected them to come through with another one dollar per day, starting January. Some of the shops agreed to the demands, A few larger shops did not agree because of the availability of a pool of 'rat snow birds'. A strike was called and the Brothers came out and stayed out."
- ◇ "We have been able to straighten up one shop within a few days and since then our strike committee has been busy working on the others, but up to the present writing has been able to make little headway, but we are not in the least discouraged and know that sooner or later we will get them straightened up."

The separation from Local Union 465 and the desire to have a "Home of Our Own" had made a "labor union gypsy" out of Local 569. The Local had moved from the Labor Temple at Sixth and Market about 1929. Meetings were held at Eagles Hall for a long time until they moved into the Butcher's Hall at 3<sup>rd</sup> & E Street about 1940.

## 1927

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Organized labor in San Diego started the year of 1927 with a positive note. They succeeded in capturing a seat on the San Diego City Council for one of their own. This was a first for union labor in San Diego.

- ◇ "Union labor picked a real man to run for councilman, long-term Brother E. H. Dowell, Secretary of the San Diego Federated Trades and Labor Council. And what do you think? Running against three well known opponents he led the field by over 6000 votes."

One of the earlier reports in the Journal from Local Union 569 contains a picture of some of the members of the Local. The accompanying caption stated that some seventy plus wiremen from Local Union 569 had volunteered their time to rewire the San Diego Boy Scouts headquarters in Balboa Park. It would be safe to assume that almost all, if not all, of the original members of Local 569 participated in the event since it was reported that there were only sixty plus members in that exclusive group. The donation of labor to the Boy Scouts of America would be repeated in years to come.



## 1929

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The year of 1929 was a precursor for things to come as it signaled an end to the "good times." The citizens of the United States would be forced to deal with the after effects of the crash of the New York Stock Market in late October of that year.

Any doubts that there was still life in Local Union 569 were soon put to rest with the report of another "open meeting." These meetings served the purpose of encouraging and promoting brotherhood within the membership. They also provided a forum to discuss industry problems with community participation. This open meeting must have been the mother of all open meetings according to the following description of it in the Journal.

- ◇ "We had an open meeting on January 10, and invited all the contractors and jobbers and anyone else interested in the industry in town to come. I never saw so many contractors in one place before. If each one would keep one man busy we would have to put on a membership drive to fill the jobs. They had the pleasure of listening to the best list of speakers ever heard in the labor temple and the meeting was a grand success. Ex-brother V. R. 'Pinkie' Knight assisted Brother James Cummings in getting the speakers lined up, and acted as chairman for the evening. 'Pinkie' was one of the fathers of this local and although he has a large business (California Electric) of his own he has never lost interest in the welfare of the old gang."



- ◇ "Mr. Edward R. Connack gave us a good talk on the benefits of organization and brought out the points that a community with good wages is always prosperous while poor wages make a poor community. He especially urged the contractors to organize and stabilize their prices instead of submitting to the cut-throat conditions we now have here."
- ◇ "The Chief Building Inspector, the Chief Electrical Inspector and a City councilman completed the list of speakers. Our correspondent completed his report by stating, "Brother C. J. Brown was appointed to the city examining board filling a vacancy."

*The major causative factor of the 1929 stock market crash was the easy money policies that led to over-expansion of credit and fantastic speculation on the stock market. This crash was one of the major causes of the Great Depression.*

## 1933

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*The Great Depression was a severe U.S. economic crisis of the 1930s. At the depth of the Great Depression, 16 million people—one third of the labor force--were unemployed. The effects were felt in Europe and contributed to Adolph Hitler's rise in Germany. The policies of the Franklin D. Roosevelt's "New Deal" relieved the situation in the United States.*

Having passed through the depth of the Depression, the new year was eagerly awaited in San Diego. With the election of a new President of the United States, 1933 was a year of great hope and anticipation for the members of Local Union 569.

- ◇ "Well, may we be thankful for a new year and a New Deal and new hopes, for with the spirit that is in the air, and written on the faces of the very men who a few short months ago, were singing the blues, and are now singing their praises, not alone for the New Deal but for the chance our wonderful President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, has extended to us to be men once more."
- ◇ "The merchants are loud in their praise for the President and the able assistants who have made this one of the best years due to the fact that workers have had the distribution of money and not the big bankers."

The establishment of the California Works Authority (CWA) under President Roosevelt's "New Deal" Public Works Administration (PWA) was a godsend for the men of Local 569. However, the icing on the cake was that a local man from organized labor was chosen to lead. He was placed in charge of the placement of workers in the San Diego area.



- "We members of organized labor in San Diego, and especially members of L.U. 569, are to be congratulated upon having, as a brother member, a man who has had the placing of the forces of the CWA in this district. At the end of the first week, he had some 3000 of the quota at work, and by the end of the second week, he had the quota of 4600 men all placed."


The year finished on an upbeat note with the report of returning members.

- ◇ "We have been able to bring back to our local some of the men who were compelled to sacrifice their cards on account of the Depression. I am happy to state that they did not scab on the trade."

## 1935

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A landmark in legislation favorable to trade unions was achieved in the Wagner Act of 1935, which established the right of workers to organize and required employers to accept collective bargaining.

 1935 was the first year of the California Pacific International Exposition in San Diego. The Exposition utilized the existing buildings in Balboa Park that were constructed for the 1915 Pan-American Exposition. The remodeling of these buildings along with a few new ones provided the majority of the work for the construction trades in San Diego in 1935. One of those new buildings was the Ford Building. It was reported that two shifts of 63 wiremen worked on the electrical system of that building which provided 2,490,000 watts of power for lighting.



The quality and safety on the electrical lighting installations was something to be proud of. Electrical experts, representing all parts of the country, assembled in San Diego and said:

- ◇ "Outstanding features in the development of electric services in the United States are displayed at the exposition. On our visit to the Chicago Century of Progress exposition, we surveyed the electrical work, and while the illuminating features were fine, the whole job lacked the safety measures that are so marked here. And the illumination of the grounds is superior and officials of fairs should come to San Diego and see for themselves."

But the year of 1935 was one of mixed emotions for the members of Local Union 569. With the Fair work starting in Balboa Park, it was the beginning of the end of the hard times in "Exposition City". However, the good times also attracted waves of the unemployed seeking work in San Diego. The Business Manager was hard pressed when he tried to ensure that work on the California Pacific International Exposition was performed by union members. At the same time, he had to discourage the waves of traveling brothers from coming to San Diego seeking that work. Each article in the Journal of that era contained a warning similar to the following one that appeared in a 1935 February issue of the Journal:

- ◇ "The exposition's grounds and buildings, which were used in the exposition in 1915, are or have been rehabilitated. So, Brothers who are planning to come to San Diego in hopes of getting work on the exposition, please have the return fare or a return ticket."

The winters were especially discouraging when the snowbirds came to spend their winters in San Diego. These included traveling brothers, non-union electricians, and worst of all, "the skates". Apparently the

skates were electricians who were members of other I.B.E.W. local unions. They hid their union ticket 'in their shoe' and worked non-union without reporting to the Local Union. One answer to this influx of workers was a city license as reported in the Journal of February of 1935.

- ◇ "As a measure of self-preservation, and a precaution to see that local labor is protected in this regard, a city ordinance was passed requiring all men doing electrical work in the City of San Diego to pass an examination. If they are qualified, they are given a certificate of competency."

The first year of the Exposition was such a great success that a second year was planned with bigger and better lighting projects. The superior quality and quantity of the work performed by the I.B.E.W. electricians on the 1935 Fair was recognized by the Exposition's Board of Directors. This resulted in a commitment to man the 1936 construction and maintenance work with union crews.

## 1936

The Exposition was also doing its job of promoting San Diego to the rest of the United States. They came to see the Exposition and saw the beauty of the area and experienced its sub-tropical climate with its mild winters. Someone who was attracted to San Diego was a Mr. Fleet of Buffalo, New York. He was the CEO of the Consolidated Aircraft factory. He liked what he saw and as a result he moved the entire business to San Diego in 1936. As it grew ever larger it became the Consolidated Vultee Aircraft Corporation, Convair and then General Dynamics.

Members from Southern California sister locals gratefully filled any need for more electricians. But since open shops existed in San Diego at this time, there was a large contingent of non-union electricians working on jobs with union electricians. However, 'mixed crew' jobs were in the minority with more and more projects going with 100 percent union crews.

Several other projects in the San Diego Area were mentioned as having 100 percent Local 569 member crews. They were the Sears and Roebuck remodel job, the Walker store and 'we are not forgetting some 15 or 16 other contractors who are working 100 percent union crews'



(Above) The Local Union 569 1936 Exposition electrical crew. A few officials also were invited to participate in the event. The numbers written at the bottom of the picture are the only identifying marks surviving today. They are as follows: 1) F D Hauser-Executive Board, 2) W B Smith-inspector, 3) E E Shafer-inspector, 4) S V Monsees-President, 5) Claude Cyren-Executive Board, 6) A H Johnson-Executive Board, 7) Herbert Ogden-Executive Board, 8) M L Ratcliff-Business Manager, 9) C S Harper-CPIE , 10) Walter Graham-CPIE , 11) H H Barter-CPIE. .

## 1937

As the work on the Exposition wound down in San Diego, talk began to circulate about the All-American Canal and the Imperial Dam projects in the Imperial Valley. In February of 1937, the Business Manager of Local Union 569 went to the Imperial Valley to check things out and found two or three I.B.E.W members working at the Imperial Dam site. With the help of these members, Unit 1 of Local Union 569 was formed in Yuma, Arizona. In May of 1937, the contractors working on the project were signed to a union agreement. Since that date, the A F of L craft unions enjoyed a closed shop on almost all of the work on that project.



An amended charter was issued to Local Union 569 in 1937. The new charter permitted Local Union 569 to represent not only wiremen, but also other electrical craft workers. This charter, now a battered and fire scarred document, is displayed in the second floor lobby of the meeting hall at 215 West Washington Street.

See - [A Friendly Misunderstanding – in the Addendum](#)

The next monthly Journal article from Local 569 told of the genesis of the SDG&E's Special Construction Unit.

- ◇ "In August, 1937, Vice President J. Scott Milne was successful in the negotiation of an agreement with the San Diego Consolidated Gas and Electric Company and Local B-465. As part of the terms of the agreement, the company agreed, in connection with new construction work on central stations or substations requiring more than three temporary journeyman electricians at any one time, that the rate for such temporary electricians shall be the rate of the inside wireman's local union."

San Diego Gas and Electric was a pioneer in constructing its power plants with its own in-house crews. By special dispensation from Local Union 465, the San Diego Building Trades crews performed all construction work for SDG&E until the construction of the San Onofre Power Plant.

## 1938

In 1938, the Fair Labor Standards Act provided for minimum wages and overtime payments for workers in interstate commerce.

A 1938 report opened with the news of successful industrywide organizing by Local Union 569.

- ◇ "Local Union B-569 has been quite busy for the last few months organizing the inside wiremen - which are practically 95 percent organized at present. We were also successful in organizing two of the boat building yards here and securing a union shop for the electrical worker. Organizing was also progressing in the neon sign industry, with two shops signed up with 100 percent union electricians. Two other shops' employees were 50 percent Local B-569 members."

On the workfront in San Diego, the report stated that the Civic Center (WPA) project in San Diego was roughed in and a new contract would be let for pulling the wire. In addition, SDG&E's Station B's additional units were progressing nicely.

By 1938, the newly formed Local Union 569 Unit 1 in the Imperial Valley had grown to 45 members. These members "had done a very good job" when they installed the largest lead cable job on the Pacific Coast. They also had completed the installation of the electrical power and controls for one master and three individual desilting basins control houses. The Local was hoping to control the balance of the work on the All-American Canal. That work consisted mainly of five power drops that was scheduled to start the next year.





(Above) Members of Local Union B-569, Unit 1 San Diego working on the Imperial Dam (1938)



With the All-American Canal and the Imperial Dam completed, the Local's leadership turned their attention to unionizing the construction of the power station and the distribution system in the valley. The contractor that had the job of enlarging the powerhouse at Brawley and building eight new substations had already signified their intention to use all union men on the job. The contractor for the line work for the electrical distribution system to the cities in the valley had also declared that their project would only hire I.B.E.W. linemen. This only left the REA's electrical distribution lines to be undeclared about using all union members in line construction.



One unexpected bonus in all of the Imperial Valley work was the granting of a charter by the International for a local union to a group of linemen who had built the distribution system in the valley.

## 1939

By 1939, the problems of the Depression-related problems had swiftly receded into the past. With the stability and security provided by an adequate supply of jobs, came the luxury to consider other options. One of those options was a Women's Auxiliary for Local Union 569.

- ◇ "In June 1939, a number of wives of (the members of) Local Union Number B-569 gathered at the home of Mrs. Purdy Alcaraz to discuss the formation of a women's auxiliary. It was decided that an auxiliary could be formed (that would be) beneficial to both the wives and members of L. U. No. B-569. On the evening of No-



vember 8, 1939, the president of the local union presented the charter and installed the permanent officers."

The years of 1940 and 1941 brought the Atlantic Charter, the Dies Committee, Lend Lease, the Draft, Defense Plants and Defense Housing Projects. The United States was preparing to fight a war.

"Defense" was the new buzzword in the United States. San Diego, being a major naval seaport and an aircraft-manufacturing center, received more than its share of new defense projects. Those projects included a dock, shops and a pier for the Destroyer Base. San Diego was also the site of a new defense plant. The Consolidated Parts Plant on the East Side of Highway 101 had eight buildings under construction.

Defense Housing Projects to provide living quarters for the horde of new defense workers and their families were under construction. Those housing projects required 3000 buildings to be completed in 300 days.

With all this expansion underway, Local B-569 was not to be left behind. A 1940 Journal report stated that a new Assistant Business Agent had been hired. This was in addition to "an office assistant previously engaged" and new facilities in the Butchers Hall at Third and E Streets in downtown San Diego.

- ◇ "The local has gone modern in a big way, new office and office furnishings, new meeting hall, well lighted, high ceilings, so well ventilated that no one need suffer for bad air during meetings, and best of all is the new public address system."

## 1941

In 1941, the Local's membership had grown to 600 members.

And, for the first time, there is mention of an apprenticeship in the following note in the Education Committee's report. But, apparently, World War II must have put apprenticeship on hold, for we hear nothing more of it until 1945.

- ◇ "The educational committee reported progress in installing a well equipped laboratory where theory and practice can both be taught."

However, the Educational Committee evidently had start-up problems. It seems the Local had to use the threat of a big stick on both the journeymen and the apprentices.

- ◇ "L. U. No. 569 has found it necessary to apply disciplinary measures to those (apprentices) who have not lived up to their agreement to attend classes. The committee has also served notice on some of the journeymen members, that they must cease their derogatory remarks in regard to the training program."

With a booming economy, the members' thoughts also turned to obtaining a "home of their own". The March, 1941 issue of the Journal contained the following report from the first of many building committees.

- ◇ "We have a building committee busy working out ways and means to acquire a site and erect a building benefiting our craft."

*On December 7, 1941, Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, bringing the United States into World War II.*

## 1942

1942 saw the total mobilization of the population of the United States. If you were not serving in some branch of military service, you went to work in an industry essential to the "war effort". There was a job for both Rosie the Riveter and GI Joe.

But let's hear it from one who lived it.

"I will try to tell you some of the vital things that have taken place in San Diego – the 'heaven on earth' spot in the United States. Like the rest of the population, we were jolted out of the doldrums December 7, 1941, to a realization that the United States was not exempted in this thing called war.

Everything seemed to break at once, and on Monday morning we began receiving calls from the Eleventh Naval District for electrical workers to convert some of the exposition buildings in Balboa Park into quarters for the wounded who were to be returned from Pearl Harbor.

We called upon all local unions in the surrounding areas for all available manpower and in about 48 hours we had cleared about 200 electrical workers (all members of the I.B.E.W.) to some of the more pertinent work, where they were working 14, 16 and 18 hour shifts to get everything in readiness for the boys who were to be returned for hospitalization.

Everything moved along very smoothly with an enlarged program on every Navy project in this area; Marine Base, Naval Training Station, North Island and the Destroyer Base.

At this time, the housing situation for the influx of building trades mechanics began to get acute and we had to man three or four housing projects ranging from 500 units to 1700 units, so that by early in June, we had nearly a thousand clearance men in the district.

These projects began to finish up and the pressure began easing off, and the office began to settle to more or less routine existence with everyone able to breathe a little easier.

Still, the Navy was enlarging all its bases and camps in the area, as well as the Army, the aircraft industry and the Coast Guard. So we were still hard-pressed to furnish all of the manpower required, as the adjoining districts were beginning to call back some of their men at a higher rate of pay. We, however, were negotiating with our contractors for an equivalent raise in pay (\$1.70 per hour for journeymen wiremen and linemen), but, as usual, with the Navy, they would not approve the new scale, and this made matters no better.

Then, to make matters worse, on August 13, one of the largest projects the Navy had in the area, Camp Pendleton (about 40 miles from San Diego), decided to cut the wages 12½ cents per hour which we were receiving in lieu of subsistence. After much effort on the part of the International Office and the Local Union, we were able to have the 12½ cents restored to the job at Camp Pendleton on December 1, 1942, but it was too late, as all the housing projects had been paying the new scale of \$1.70 per hour since June 22, and the men all wanted to get on these projects.

The small boatyards, during the early part of the year, began to clamor for men at the wage scale of \$1.12 1/2, so we had to negotiate a new scale for them in conformity with the master marine zone scale, which was accomplished on August 10, and made retroactive to August 1, 1942, so that now, we had that part of the program quite in hand.

Hoping everyone will have a very prosperous New Year, and wishing our members in the armed forces the very best of luck and a safe trip home, where they will always be welcome."

See - The Growth of Local Union 569 – in the Addendum

## 1945 – 1980 THE MODERN ERA

### 1945

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*The unconditional surrender of Japan in August of 1945 ended World War II.*

In the year 1945, an old philosophy was revisited. This philosophy concerned itself with the importance of the relationship between a well-trained member and the Union's ability to demand and receive top wages at the negotiating table.

- I. "We can expect many new uses for electricity in the future and a very great increase in its application through them in the future. So, more than ever, it will be important to have our members well trained, so that we will be justified in demanding top wages for qualified men."



- II. "After considerable investigation into the proper and best method to proceed with classes in electronics, the first meeting of the class was held April 21. More than 60 members were present. And we were the first to start an apprenticeship program in San Diego after World War II, which was recognized by the State and National Apprenticeship Program."

The apprenticeship mentioned above was the start of the "modern era" of apprenticeship in San Diego. The I.B.E.W. joined with NECA in a working relationship in apprenticeship training. That partnership has continued uninterrupted since 1945.

For more information see "The First Apprenticeship Class" in the addendum.

### 1946

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The national election in 1946 resulted in the first Republican majority in Congress in 15 years. This event created the opportunity for the Conservatives to reverse the hard won gains made by labor in the previous 15 years. The anti-labor forces, led by archconservative Senator Taft, launched a drive that culminated in the passage of the Taft-Hartley Labor Act (1947). This law declared illegal such union practices as the secondary boycott, the closed shop, jurisdictional strikes and many other weapons of the working man. The playing field was, once again, tilted in favor of the employers.

In San Diego, the local achieved a milestone of its own. The first contract covering the inside work was successfully negotiated with a contractors association. Local Union 569 and the San Diego Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) reached an agreement on a contract that covered Imperial and San Diego Counties. The complete document was contained on two pages of notebook sized paper.

## 1950

The invasion of South Korea by North Korean forces in June 1950 started the Korean War. The people of San Diego had hardly unwound from the mobilization of World War II, when the thunder of military trucks and equipment was heard again on Highway 101. The Marines at Camp Pendleton were among the first military units to go to Korea using the Port of San Diego as their embarkation point.



The harbor still contained fleets of war ships from World War II resting at anchor. Submarines, destroyers and their tenders were moored to buoys that stretched the length of the bay. The larger ships lined the piers at both North Island and the Destroyer Base. The military was in a time of transition. It had, if you will, just released a great sigh of relief when word came to suck it up again.

The cold war had turned hot. The military-industrial complex had started to flex its muscles. It was the beginning of a period marked by a massive military buildup of manpower and the materials of war. The new emphasis was on nuclear weaponry and missiles.

San Diego was right in the middle of it again. The first barrel to bring Colorado River water to San Diego was in place, and a water supply for San Diego was assured. With that restrictive problem solved, the years from 1950 through 1959 were years of unprecedented growth. San Diego extended its boundaries north, east and south. Construction programs were never greater. Huge housing tracts seemed to mushroom overnight. Row after row of houses marched like ants across ridges and through gullies. Shopping centers dotted likely corner lots at the confluence of boulevards. Members of 569 were employed fully for what looked like a never-ending construction boom.

Military construction kept pace at North Island Naval Air Station, Miramar Air Station, Camp Pendleton and other installations in the area. This alone added millions of dollars to the construction market.

In the 1950's, Convair vaulted into a leadership position in the aerospace industry. Convair was on the cutting edge with such products as the 440 and 880 airliners, the XC-99 transport, the 102 and 106 interceptors, the B-36 bomber, the VTOL Pogo, the Sea Dart and the ICBM Atlas missile. Then, with a change in top management came a series of disastrous corporate decisions. Convair had entered the decade like

a lion and, by 1959, left it like a proverbial lamb, with all of the above programs in disarray. The result was massive layoffs in San Diego.

The story at National Steel and Shipbuilding was the reverse of Convair. The decade started with NASSCO building tuna boats, and ended with them building commercial and military ships.

## 1953

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*The Korean War ended with the signing of the Truce Accords at P'anmunjum.*

A Bloody Party? ? ? One might reasonably assume the local had participated in a "knock down and drag out," but that was not the case. The original "Bloody Party" in 1953 was the answer to a nagging problem facing the members of Local Union 569.

- ◇ "The situation was critical in regards to L. U. 569 and the Blood Bank. The Business Manager and the Assistant Business Manager went into a huddle and came up with what they thought was a good idea."
- ◇ "A call went out and volunteers met at the blood bank and donated blood. After the last pint was duly drawn, the donors adjourned to a nearby restaurant, and enjoyed a meal of red cabbage, red wine, a rare steak and good fellowship."

Brother Ratcliff left the Office of Business Manager & Financial Secretary in July of 1953. He had served the Local Union in that office for twenty years. He saw wages rise from \$7.00 per day in 1919, to \$3.10 per hour in 1953. This achievement was accomplished through the Great Depression and the wage freezes of the war years. He stayed the course when, at times, the only salary he received was from the voluntary contributions from members.



He received this local union when it was just barely beyond an idea. He left us with a mature functioning Union. His name appears on the 1920 charter of Local Union 569. In the opinion of this writer, if any one person deserved to be called the 'FATHER' of Local Union 569, it is this man called M. L. Ratcliff.

## 1954

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(Right) The Officers of Local Union 569 standing in front of the addition to the Boy Scout Headquarters in Balboa Park. They had just completed the installation of the electrical finish on a rainy Sunday in May 1954. Left to right: Garvin; Small; Schultz; Williams; Ruckle; Collins; Cyren; Dudley; Garnett; Kennedy; Alcaraz (squatting); Myers behind the camera.

As San Diego grew, Local Union 569 also grew. The administration decided it was time to restructure the By-laws to more accurately reflect Local 569's organization.

- ◇ "One of the highlights of the new By-laws is the grouping of the various trades within the trade as follows: 569-1, Neon Signs; 569-2, Industrial Maintenance (Aircraft Plants); 569-3, Marine Electricians; 569-4, Motor Shops; 569-5, Radio, Sound and Television Technicians (RST). Each group is headed by a chairman, recorder and Executive Committee, and will hold regular monthly meetings."



While discussing the plans for the Local 569's Wiremens' 1954 negotiations with NECA, the leadership of the local noted a growing problem confronting the members. They found, that while some of the members might be covered by employer sponsored health insurance, many of the members were not. They also found that few, if any, of the members' families were covered. The leadership recognized that this situation, along with the rising cost in the medical delivery system, could become a serious problem for a member. They set a goal to obtain employer paid health insurance for all the members and their families. One result of this drive was the creation of one of the first San Diego Construction Industry Health and Welfare Plans in 1954.

The employers agreed to establish the San Diego Electric Industry Health And Welfare Trust. They also agreed to deposit 10 cents per hour into that Trust for each hour worked by a covered employee. With this money, a member and his family were covered with hospital and medical insurance provided by the Trust.





"The Local's new modern quarters" at Five Points – December 1955.

It was a great day in early 1954 when Local Union 569's Officers paid the princely sum of \$45,000 for an existing building and lot at Five Points. The gypsy local union finally had a "home of their own." A bank that was in the process of building at a new location occupied the building. This meant there would be a year's delay before the local would move into its new quarters.

That event occurred in late 1955, and was duly acclaimed in the celebrations profiled below.

- ◇ "The greatest event within the year was moving into our new home. Formerly a bank, it was remodeled to give us a hall that will seat 330 comfortably. It also has modern offices for our staff, with area lighting installed by electricians in the main office."
- ◇ "Our meeting hall is used nearly every night for one or more of the functions of our local. The dedication of our own home ended 15 years of wishing and planning. Our units are finding it an excellent meeting hall, and are using it for dances and social functions. Its complete kitchen makes the building ideal for many uses."

The ladies of the auxiliary also put their stamp of approval on the new hall.

- ◇ "Our ladies auxiliary started this month off with a 'bang'. On November 5th, they sponsored what they called a bazaar, chili dinner and piñata at our new headquarters. The ladies worked all day Friday setting up, and all day Saturday selling and serving dinners. All proceeds are to go into their relief fund that they have established for needy members of our local union, or to assist our community agencies. A job well done, but our ladies are not the kind





to rest on their laurels. They are now working on our annual Children's Christmas Party."

## 1956

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The San Diego area economy had started to cool down by the end of 1955. Then came a major break-through in space and ballistic missile technology. This break-through and two events that occurred in Russia contributed greatly to the 'mythical missile gap'.

Sputnik I was launched by the Soviet Union on October 4, 1957. It was the world's first manmade earth satellite. The 184-pound sphere orbited the Earth once every 90 minutes in an elliptical orbit. This event was followed in November by Sputnik II. That satellite weighed more than 1,000 pounds and carried a live dog.

These three events resulted in an almost hysterical acceleration in the research and production of ballistic missiles by the United States. Vast amounts of money were spent on San Diego space programs. Among the first was the Convair-General Dynamics Test Facility at Sycamore Canyon. From mid-1956, one test facility after another was added to this vital aerospace tool. Members of 569 have been on every addition, as well as every modification, at Sycamore since its inception.

The Air Force had also laid the groundwork for the West Coast missile factory with funds appropriated by Congress. Convair-General Dynamics began construction of the Convair Astronautics' giant missile plant in Kearny Mesa in late 1956. This facility was later increased in size, remodeled, and Convair Electronics was added to the site. Constant new missile programs required more and more new on-site buildings. It seemed that it would never reach completion. At its peak in late 1958, over 200 Local Union 569 electricians at the job site were employed by the many contractors' projects on that site.

## 1958

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Once again, we see the officers of Local 569 had recognized the necessity of the members being well-educated in their craft. Although shielded somewhat by the contractor, this was in recognition of the pressure that the marketplace exerted on the member.



◇ "Classes were instigated and placed into operation for Industrial Electronics, Electric Code and four full Apprenticeship classes. We are now embarking on the latest venture, a class for Electrical Foremen."

With the completion of the new Convair Astronautics complex, the task for its electrical maintenance was awarded to Local 569's Industrial Unit in 1958.

- ◇ "They signed the first I.B.E.W. agreement to cover electrical maintenance employees for the new Astronautics Plant in San Diego, California. Astronautics, a division of Convair, a division of General Dynamics, is the manufacturer of the Atlas Intercontinental Ballistic Missile."

This maintenance unit included personnel who were permanently stationed at Vandenberg Air Force Base in California, and at Cape Canaveral in Florida.

## 1960

The decade of the 1960's was a divisive yet productive ten years for the nation; a walk on the moon, the Civil Rights Acts, the age of the hippies, long hair and communes, the Cuban missile crisis, the assassination of a sitting President of the United States, the Vietnam War and a protest movement. At home, San Diego celebrated its 200th birthday.

The economic engine that was driving San Diego came to an abrupt halt in late 1959. Inept top management at General Dynamics resulted in reverses for that firm. Those losses translated into massive layoffs in its San Diego workforce. Local newspaper headlines announced the lay-offs of thousands of employees. National newspapers and magazines referred to San Diego as the "Bust Town".

The years from 1961 through 1967 were lean years in San Diego. At various times 569 had as many as 350 men on the bench or working out of town. Often, as work in construction would slacken, work in the shipyards would improve.

NASSCO was a bright spot in the marine employment picture. They proudly announced the launch of a 350-ton tuna boat in 1957. Three short years later they announced the building of the first of six 10,000-ton American Export Line freighters. Also in the works, was a state of the art coastal mapping ship for the Coast and Geodetic Survey. This was the beginning of the yard's construction of major ships.

Times were hard in the early sixties and apparently a good meal was hard to come by. The Journal reported the following statistics about the Local 569's annual picnic at the Del Mar Fair Grounds in 1960.



- ◇ "The Business Manager and Financial Secretary stated that the 3,000 electrical workers and family members who attended consumed the following pile of food:"

Hot dogs ---6,800	Fruit punch---2,600 cups
Beer---4,920 cans	Ice cream---3,000 cups

See –The Oldest Permanent Floating Crap Game- in the Addendum.

## 1961

The San Diego area construction picture was bleak in 1961. Many members traveled to the nuclear test site north of Las Vegas seeking work, while others found work at the Pacific Northwest missile base construction sites. The situation in San Diego was reported in the March Journal as follows:

- ◇ "As of this writing, the book is still suffering from the effects of a seven-week cement strike and an extreme slowing of housing construction. It will be several weeks before all our members will be back to work."

Local 569 joined with other segments of the San Diego Electrical Industry to help jump-start the local electrical industry. The vehicle chosen was a new innovation in lighting; the luminous and integrated ceiling. This new method of commercial lighting was presented at the "Spring Fair of Modern Home Ideas" as reported below. That event was held annually at the Electric Building in Balboa Park.

- ◇ "Local segments of the industry wanted a medium to promote the latest lighting concepts and products. Four areas on the floor were set up where a typical luminous and integrated ceiling installation could be used; two office spaces, manufacturing plant and engineering layout work. It certainly proved that the formula for any area's electrical industry success is for the various elements to work together."

## 1962

A new freeway was planned to accommodate the increased traffic in the downtown area of San Diego in 1962. The route for the new freeway was directly over the Local 569's Meeting Hall at Five Points. It soon became obvious that the building would have to go.



Once again, a building committee swung into action. Sites were examined, rejected and new sites examined. Recommendations of the committee were made to and rejected by the membership. Eventually out of seeming confusion, endless bickering and repeated referrals back to committee, a site was selected and plans

and specifications were completed. Contracts were signed and a new building was constructed. On March 13, 1962, Local 569 moved into its new home at 215 West Washington Street.

See –They Really Built Them in the Good Old Days- in the addendum.

## 1963

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The move into the new hall was great, but it could have been better. The San Diego economy was still in its own private 2 1/2 year recession and the bench was full. In fact, "benchers" had time to hold chess tournaments at the referral hall.

However, there was hope in the future, even if it was the distant future. The following appeared in the March 1963 Journal:

- ◇ "The Business Manager reported to the members on a recent business trip to Sacramento, the purpose of which was to insure construction in this jurisdiction of the recently announced Atomic Power Plant." (SONGS Unit 1)

## 1964

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As the Wiremen's negotiations drew near in 1964, the leadership of Local 569 were given their marching orders. Those orders were that the membership wanted a local pension for the members working in construction. When those negotiations were concluded, the resulting agreement embodied a pension plan, as ordered. It was the first I.B.E.W. WestCoast Pension Plan. With the approval of the plan by the Internal Revenue Service, the employers and the local union's membership, it became a fact in 1964.



## 1969

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Almost ten years after the General Dynamics' Management disaster, the San Diego economy finally looked brighter in 1969. But good things did happen in San Diego in the Sixties.

San Diego now had a new Civic Center that housed the offices for the City of San Diego, a new Convention Center, a new Civic Theater, a new County Operations Center, and a new campus of the University of California had also been constructed. The San Diego area entered the decade of the seventies by celebrating the 200th anniversary of the founding of San Diego in 1969.

The referral book system utilized by I.B.E.W. local unions was changed in the late 1960's. This system was used to dispatch construction people to jobs. The International Office mandated the installation of what was then referred to as an I. O. Book. This change was necessary to standardize the operation of the referral halls throughout the I.B.E.W. local unions.

See -The I. O. Book -in the addendum.

An article in a 1969 Transmitter, proclaimed the establishment of a Vacation Saving Plan for the construction units' members. The individual accounts established by the plan were first established at a commercial bank. They were later transferred to the Electricians Federal Credit Union to bolster that institution in its early years. The Vacation Saving Plan was later abandoned in the mid-1980's by popular demand.

## 1970

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The 1970's were a mixed bag for San Diego. In the early part of the decade, San Diego was the announced site of the upcoming Republican National Convention, only to have it withdrawn under a cloud of accusations against the sitting President's party. The convention site was then moved to Miami.

This was followed by a national fuel shortage in 1973. The fuel shortage was the result of an OPEC instituted oil boycott against the United States. This boycott was in retaliation for the United States' position of support of Israel in the 1973 Arab-Israeli War.

However, for construction workers in San Diego, the year 1974 also ushered in a decade of plentiful work. Construction was started on two large megawatt generating units at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station. (SONGS units 2 and 3.)



Local Union 569 opened the Seventies with a dinner-dance in celebration of the Local Union's golden anniversary. The following details were reported in the Journal.

- ◇ "Our local celebrated its 50th anniversary this year with a dinner dance at the El Cortez Hotel on February 7th. Maybe some of our members don't know how our local was chartered. Fifty years ago, a small group of wiremen belonging to Local 465 was granted a charter to start a separate local. The local has grown from this small beginning to its present membership size of 2,100."
- ◇ "That the declaration of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers to all the world be our goal. This declaration states:



*Our cause is the cause of human justice, human rights, and human security.*

*We refuse, and will always refuse, to condone or tolerate dictatorship or oppression of any kind.*

*We will find and expel from our midst any that might attempt to destroy by subversion all that we stand for.*

*The Brotherhood will continue to oppose communism, nazism or any other subversion.*

*We will support our God, our Nation, our Union.*

The Environmental Impact Statement was born at Mammoth Lakes, California, and came of age in the early Seventies. It was, and still is, used by groups to stop or delay unwanted construction projects. Construction unions vigorously fought those groups when it first appeared. An example of that was the following statement by the Business manager in a 1970 issue of the Transmitter.

- ◇ "The State, the Counties, the Cities cannot tell you what an environmental impact report is, and to construct any building you must have this report."
- ◇ "In the meantime, your skill as a craftsman should not be regulated by special groups and clubs who do not have the answers, but will resort to the courts to tie everything up in an unbelievable maze of words."

Adopting an "if you can't lick them, join them" attitude, the unions later adopted the same tactics to harass non-union projects.

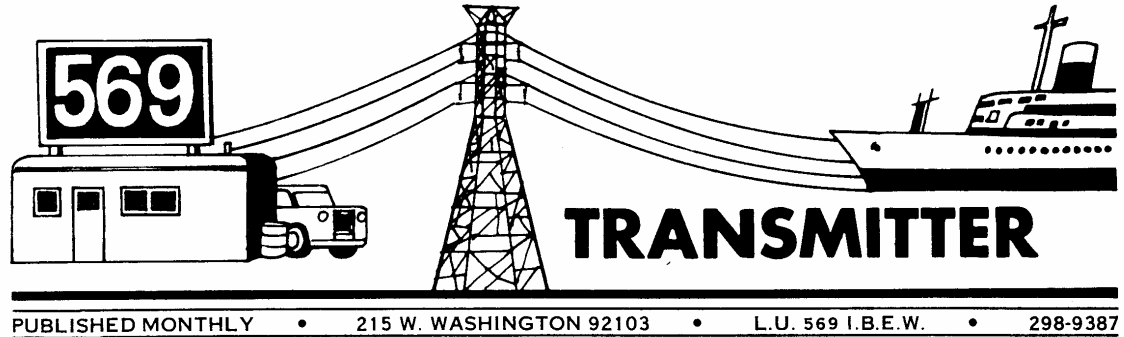
**See- The Environmental Impact Statement -in the addendum.**

New contracts to build U. S. Navy LST's at NASSCO equated to an expanding Marine Unit at Local 569. This, in turn, resulted in added recognition by the Local 569's Press Secretary.

- ◇ "I think it is time we give recognition to the Marine Unit of our local. This is the second largest unit with a membership of over 500 members. These brothers are the men who wire the new ships built in our shipyards here, and who perform the overhaul and repair on some of the warships that have San Diego for their home port."

## 1971

NOVEMBER, 1971



(Above) The Transmitter Banner from the November, 1971 Transmitter.

In August 1971, the regular issue of the Local 569's newsletter was replaced with a new professional local union paper. The name and banner of the new paper was left for the membership to decide. The banner reproduced above was selected from the many entries submitted by the membership. The following paragraph introduced the new paper to the membership.



- ◇ "With this issue we go to press in a completely revised form. All subsequent issues will be printed by members of the Allied Printing Trades Crafts and will carry the bug of that craft. Much talk concerning the quality and content of the previous monthly publication between the members and the staff has uncovered feelings of the need for improvement."

## 1973

1973 saw the creation of two additional assets for Local Union 569. The first event was the establishment of a retired electricians club.

- ◇ "In January, a group of senior retired members of Local Union 569 assembled to form a club composed of retirees and their wives. The purpose of this group has many facets. We will be able to keep track of how things are going in the electrical field. Taking the name, RETIRED ELECTRICIANS CLUB 569, as their first official act."

The second new organization for Local 569 started with a simple statement by the Business Manager in the August 1972 edition of the Transmitter:

- ◇ "Many times in the past, I have been asked why we don't have a credit union."

Seven short months later, the March 1973 issue of the Journal announced:

- ◇ "The Electricians Federal Credit Union of San Diego was granted a charter from the Bureau of Federal Credit Unions, December 14, 1972."

Nine months after the August 1972 statement by the Business Manager, the April 1973 issue of the Transmitter stated:

- ◇ "The ELECTRICIANS FEDERAL CREDIT UNION of San Diego had its first regular meeting with the election of officers this past month."

## 1974

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- ◇ A growth in the number of Local Union 569 members once again mandated the expansion of the union hall. Discussions on the subject were held between the Officers of Local 569 and the Officers of the ELTA Corporation (Electrical Trade Association). It was decided that a two-story addition, including a basement, would be added to the existing building. The Business Manager stated:
  - ◇ "For some time now, we have been crowded in the present facilities. As our membership has increased, the need for additional space has grown, so the ELTA Board of Directors elected to add two new stories. We are proud to show off our new offices and Executive Board Meeting Room to all visitors. Local Union 465 has occupied the second floor."

See –The Redwood Table- in the addendum.

OPEC's boycott of the shipment of oil to the United States in 1974 brought home the dependency of this country on foreign oil. Long waiting lines at gas stations were SOP, and if the station had gas when you reached the pumps, it was increasingly more expensive with each visit.

Problems resulting from the boycott began to affect our members' ability to make a living. "Major construction firms are finding it difficult to commence earth moving for new projects."

Nevertheless, the Business Manager found ways to alleviate some problems as noted in the Transmitter.

- ◇ "I know it is a hardship for an 'out of work' member to be forced by our present dispatching system to report to the hiring hall every morning - compounded with no job - the member is faced with the



realization that he has spent his precious gasoline reporting to the hiring hall. I am changing the dispatch system. All job dispatching will be done by telephone."

June 1970: Southern California Edison (SCE), announced its plans to build a \$450 million dollar addition to the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS). In turn, the Anti-Nuclear Coalition announced its opposition to the expansion of SONGS.

The Coalition fought a delaying action through the courts with challenges in the complicated permit process. Delays in granting the necessary construction permits started to affect construction schedules and endangered the entire project.

The last of those many barriers was the newly created California Coastal Commission. This body reversed a previous decision when it approved the construction in March, 1974. The Transmitter informed the members of Local 569, "GOOD NEWS . . . After several years of haggling, the Nuclear Generating Plant at San Onofre has been given the green light."

See -An Alliance to be reckoned with -in the addendum.

## 1975

*The Vietnam War ends with the surrender of the Republic of Vietnam.*

The seventies had brought more employment for electricians in San Diego. But the decade also brought the seeds of destruction for the organized labor movement in the United States, as well as San Diego. Gains made on behalf of the working man in the Thirties, Forties and Fifties were systematically wiped out. This was accomplished by adverse judicial and National Labor Relations Board decisions the Seventies, and by a union-busting United States President in the Eighties.

The Business Manager summed it all up in the Transmitter.

- ◇ "Today, unions, especially construction unions, are under severe attack by almost every conceivable group in the country, ranging from building contractor associations, right-to-work advocates, anti-labor groups, to government agencies, the general public, and lastly, our own members."

The hiring of a full-time Administrator and staff for the Health & Welfare and Pension Trusts was announced in 1978. This triggered the following series of events:

In 1980, the Health & Welfare Trust became self-insured by contracting with an outside firm to process the members' medical claims thereby eliminating the insurance companies. The Trustees then took the second step by moving the Trust's offices out of the NECA Building on First Avenue to new quarters at 3750 Fifth Avenue.

In addition to extra office space, the larger quarters also provided space for the storage of all the Trust participants' health related files. That consolidation of the Trusts' activities at a single site permitted the Health & Welfare Trustees to make the next important step.

Even at the height of the attacks by the conservative forces, the union was still a popular career choice among the younger people. This was attested to in the following Transmitter article.

◇ "Over 800 young men and women applied for our apprenticeship program this year. The joint Labor Management Apprenticeship Committee has been busy this past month interviewing the qualified candidates."



The Local put a new twist on an old idea. Facing a future of a rapidly changing technology in the electrical and electronic fields, the Local proposed the establishment of a Taft-Hartley Training Trust with NECA. The money generated by the trust would be utilized to build, equip and staff a state of the art training center for Local 569's members. The idea was accepted by NECA and with the approval of the membership, the San Diego Electrical Industry Training Trust was established on June 5, 1976.

## 1978

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Work was also plentiful in the shipyards in the late seventies. Campbell Marine was producing a tuna boat that was considered the standard of the industry. NASSCO had progressed from building tuna boats, to building freighters, to building tankers, to building warships, and were now building giant ships, the "Super Tankers".



(Above) The B. T. Alaska on her trial run in 1978.

The 953-foot B. T. Alaska, with Local Union 569 Marine Unit electricians aboard, slides through San Diego Harbor blotting out the city skyline.

- ◇ "The B. T. Alaska, owned by Shell Oil, is the first of two huge Nassco-built tankers capable of carrying 7,390,000 barrels of oil on a single run from the North Slope."
- ◇ "A completely self-contained ship, she is a veritable city at sea with a generating plant, wired by our Brother and Sister members, that is the equivalent of plants needed by many small cities."
- ◇ "The ship is almost entirely automated, from her one-man operated engine room to her automatic bilge pumps. The automation wiring required thousands of man-hour skills of Local Union 569 members and will steam the oceans as a permanent monument to them."

Her sister ship was the Exxon Valdez.

The purpose of the super tankers was to pick-up oil from the North Slope of Alaska and transport that oil to the Panama Canal for trans-shipment through the canal. There, it would be transferred to a fleet of smaller tankers that were especially designed to be the largest tankers that could pass through the locks of the Panama Canal. These smaller tankers were also designed and built by Nassco.

## **1980 – 1999 THE RENAISSANCE**

### **1980**

Several events converged in the early 1980's to impact the lifestyle of I.B.E.W. union members in San Diego and El Centro. Most of the events were beyond the control of the local San Diego unions.

On the positive side, was the welcoming of the members of our sister Local Union 477 (El Centro) into Local Union 569 once again. The amalgamation of the two local unions was recommended by the International Office and approved by a vote of the membership of the two local unions.


The JATC hired its first full-time Training Director, whose duties would include building, equipping and staffing a training facility for the use of Local Union 569's members. Wilmer "Sam" Bass set up a 4500 square foot temporary facility in the Kearny Mesa area, while plans were being developed to build a permanent structure nearby on Viewridge Avenue. The temporary facility consisted of 2 classrooms, a small shop and an administrative office with one secretary.

On the negative side, was the inauguration of a very popular President who proved to be very anti-union. His *hidden* and unhidden agenda was the evisceration of unions in the United States. He tilted the 'proverbial playing field' between labor and management far in favor of management. Almost all contractor associations took advantage of the 'tilted playing field' to bash unions. Some of these events were:



- ◇ Conservative Judges began reversing long-standing decisions of labor law. The Supreme Court's radical decisions in the

1970's saw fruition in the 1980's. One particularly devastating ruling by the United States Supreme Court concerned the sub-contracting clauses in labor agreements. Organized Labor was exempted from the Sherman Anti-Trust Act by the Law when it was passed by Congress. The Court, nevertheless, ruled that the sub-contracting clause in labor agreements were subject to that Act and were illegal.

- ◇ "TERMINATION . . . \$50,000.00" was the rallying cry in the San Diego construction industry's in-house journals. After a large degree of success in the destruction of unionized labor in the Phoenix area, the anti-union lawyers moved their "dog and pony show" to San Diego in the mid 1980s.
- ◇ A new look emerged by the National Electrical Contractors Association (NECA) in 1980. The San Diego NECA Chapter made the decision to recruit non-union electrical contractors for membership in their organization. NECA also gave their unspoken approval to the double-breasted operations of some of their member contractors.
-  ◇ The San Diego NECA Chapter offered support to any of its members who wanted to get out of their union contracts. This support included detailed instructions of the procedure necessary to terminate a union agreement. They also offered individual consultation and expert assistance at the negotiating table against Local Union 569. All of this was done with the goal of those NECA Contractors to have the ability to operate non-union.
- ◇ Mr. Reagan's election triggered a very deep and lengthy recession that caused widespread unemployment among the working class. This set the stage for his covert attack to weaken organized labor in the United States. Because of the Reagan recession, work was at a standstill across the entire nation. With the exception of New York City, traveling to seek a job was not possible.
- ◇ With the completion of SONGS Units 2 and 3, the wiremen's referral book list grew to include some 600 plus wiremen. The average time from the date of a wireman signing the books until the first offer of a job was nine months. Apprentice wiremen could no longer be guaranteed 40 hours of work a week.

All of these events combined to place the Wiremen's Negotiating Committee for Local Union 569 in an unenviable negotiating position in 1984.

See - Mr. Reagan's Promise- in the addendum.

A full-time administrator and staff for the Health and Welfare Trust were hired.

See -The First PPO in San Diego -in the addendum.

Local Union 569 continued to be leaders in organized labor in San Diego.

- ◇ "Electricians are one of 20 unions now involved in the San Diego County Port Council, according to the Business Manager of Local 569 and Secretary-Treasurer of the Port Council."
- ◇ "The Council is composed of labor organizations which represent workers on the San Diego waterfront, and is affiliated with The Maritime Trades Department in Washington, D.C."

The President's column in the Transmitter makes note of the formation of a Local 569 committee. The goal of the committee was to start a dialogue with management. The topic of discussion would be the various ways and means to combat non-union contractors operating in San Diego and Imperial Counties. This was reported in the September, 1980 issue of the Transmitter.

- ◇ "I don't think most of you know what a Unity Committee is, so I will try to give you some idea of what it is and what it hopes to accomplish."
- ◇ "Composition: Consists of Labor and Management. 14 from each side."
- ◇ "Origin: During negotiations for the wiremen's agreement there were ongoing discussions about the non-union problem in San Diego and Imperial Counties. It was brought up that the negotiating table was not the place to discuss this. It was suggested that the Labor and Management Committee form a joint committee to see in what areas we could work together to combat non-union."
- ◇ "Goal: To get rid of non-union in 569's jurisdiction."
- ◇ "Method: This is what the committee is all about."

## 1981

In 1981, the Unity Committee announced its first success.

- ◇ "The implementation of the recommendations of the Unity Committee was advanced another step at the February general meeting. The membership placed its stamp of approval on the concept of the 'one-man shop' and approved in principle some variances in the manner contractors could man their projects on the Fourth Fridays."

March 1981. "UNION ELECTRICIANS OPERATE BRAWLEY PLANT."

- ◇ "Members of I.B.E.W. Local 569 are working at the Brawley Geothermal Electric Project, the first venture to demonstrate the commercial utilization of the Imperial Valley's highly saline geothermal fluids to power an electrical generating plant."
- ◇ "Southern California Edison Company has built an electrical generating plant to utilize the geothermal energy from the Brawley

reservoirs. The initial 10,000 kilowatt demonstration plant will produce enough electric power for a community of 6,000."

## 1982

The 1982 Wiremen's negotiations with NECA produced a two-year agreement with record wage increases, as reported below.

- ◇ "Local Union 569 wiremen voted by a 92 percent margin to extend their contract for two years with no changes in language. Wage increases will be \$1 on June 1, 1982, an additional \$1 on December 1, 1982, another additional \$1 on June 1, 1983, and still another additional \$1 on December 1, 1983."

February 1982 - Plans were drawn, contracts were signed and ground was broken for a new two-story building. When completed in 1983, this building housed the Training Center, the Training Trust, the Health and Welfare Trust, the Pension Trust and the Electricians Federal Credit Union.

- ◇ "The architectural firm of HCH was selected by the San Diego Electrical Training Trust to design the new Training Facility. Also selected was the Nielson Construction Company as the General Contractor."

And later, in October 1982, a groundbreaking ceremony was reported:

- ◇ "A major step to strengthen the future of the union electrical industry took place August 28 with groundbreaking ceremonies, for the Joint Apprenticeship and Journeyman Training Facility on Viewridge Avenue."



(Above) Groundbreaking ceremony for the two-story, 31,485 square foot building located at 4675 Viewridge Avenue, Paul Blackwood (Local 569 Business Manager) and Joe Mansolello (NECA Manager) holding shovels.

The Training Center could accommodate training for about 265 students at one time. The Center was the area's first jointly funded center built specifically for training.



And, in October 1983, the JATC appointed a new Training Director. Robert White's duties would include equipping and staffing the new Training Center.

The Transmitter reported the dedication of the new Training Center.

The \$2.5 million facility in Kearny Mesa was funded by The San Diego Electrical Training Trust. This was a Taft-Hartley Trust founded in 1976 by the San Diego I.B.E.W. Local Union 569 and the San Diego Chapter of the National Electrical Contractors Association.

## 1984

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The Training Center accepted its first classes in January 1984. The opening catalogue listed twenty-nine journeymen training classes from high voltage to semi-conductor devices with welding thrown in for good measure. The apprenticeship classes were still conducted under the sponsorship of San Diego City College in their downtown facilities.

The August 1984 issue of the Journal reported:

- ◇ "The news regarding our apprentices is of major importance due to the non-union gaining access to our classes at City College. The classes have been moved to our Training Center. Classrooms were added to the unfinished part of the building. This is a move toward the future our local has envisioned. After decades of classes at City, we bid farewell."

See -The Local 569's Apprenticeship- in the addendum.

Following his service on the County Land Use and Planning Board, the Business Manager accepted another civic appointment in 1984 as reported in the Labor Leader.



- ◇ "The Business Manager is an outstanding labor official who has worked hard for the benefit of both the Labor Council and his Union during extremely difficult times. His contributions have been an integral part of the development and progress of both groups and I am sure his tenure will be recognized in a similar manner on the Convention Center Board of Directors. The Business Manager was the first labor leader to be appointed to a city board in 12 years."

November 1984 - The following are excerpts from an article that appeared in the Transmitter. The article was written by the Local Union 569's Legislative Committee Chairman and was titled "Ronald Reagan and the Unions."

- ◇ "Brothers and Sisters,"
- ◇ "Most of the federal administrative agencies have been staffed with Reagan appointees with a clear anti-union bias. The Department of Labor is one such example. Among other actions hostile

to organized labor and to workers, the Labor Department has done the following:"

- ◇ "A. It has issued regulations designed to destroy the effectiveness of the Davis-Bacon Act and the Service Contracts Act which protect our rates on Federally financed work."
- ◇ "B. It has virtually stopped the funding for and the enforcement of Federal Health and Safety Laws."
- ◇ "C. It has turned its union auditing program from one of assistance to unions into a criminal witch-hunt directed at union officials."

This article finished with a lengthy list of injustices perpetrated against Organized Labor by a Reagan appointed National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

See - Ronald Reagan and The Unions - in the addendum.



A sign of the times -- A California Governor-appointed Del Mar Fair Board destroyed a labor-management relationship of many years standing. Conservative appointees arbitrarily and unilaterally cut Del Mar Fair employees' wages. This resulted in the first strike action in the more than thirty years that local unions had supplied workers to the fair.

The details were in the following Transmitter article:

- ◇ "Unions Call for Boycott of Fair."
- ◇ "The 22<sup>nd</sup> District Agricultural Association reportedly lost \$290,000 in extending the 1980-81 Del Mar racing season. It then asked unions involved in the Del Mar Fair operation to make economic concessions for the 1983 Fair. The unions agreed."
- ◇ "The Board later met with a coordinated labor negotiating team only to announce that wages had already been arbitrarily determined. The new wage scale is approximately 40-60 percent lower than in past years and includes no fringe benefits. Since that time the board has refused to meet with the unions."

## 1985

The Business Manager reviewed the past year's negotiations of the Local Union in this 1985 report to the membership. The year of 1984 was probably the most intensive year in many years as far as negotiations are concerned. The number of members involved, the man-hours spent and the possible long-term effects on the future of the Local were never greater.

- ◇ "We entered the year negotiating with 66 individual contractors and ended the year negotiating the General President's Project Maintenance Agreement at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station (SONGS). In between, we negotiated industry agreements for



Inside and Outside Construction, Shipyards, Aerospace and Utilities."

- ◇ "Sixty-seven Local Union members were involved in the negotiations with the following firms: Campbell, General Dynamics, Con-Rock, IID, G.P.P.M.A., Linemen (NECA), NASSCO, Pac-Ord, Sign Shops (NECA), Solar, Sylvania and the Wiremen (NECA)."
- ◇ "The negotiations for SONGS were the most frustrating and potentially the most dangerous. These negotiations actually started in 1982 and were completed for the electricians on December 31, 1984."

See -The 1984 SONGS Negotiations- in the addendum.

The 1984 wiremen's (NECA) negotiation results were very different from those of 1982. The wiremen approved of the sacrifice of many hard-won favorable clauses in the agreement and a Five Dollar and Ten Cent reduction in wages over two years. The Local was faced with a mass submission of termination letters from NECA Contractors. The Local's goal in the negotiations was to retain as many of the signatory contractors as possible. Although the local union wiremen lost some signatory contractors, the negotiations were, to a great degree, successful. The confirmation was in the December 1986 Transmitter:

- ◇ "The good news is that over 200 fair contractors recognized the memberships' willingness to address the problems and needs of the industry."

See -The 1984 Wiremen's Negotiations- in the addendum.

There were two accomplishments of which we can be proud. The following article may be found in a 1985 issue of the Transmitter:

- ◇ "Our wiremen have a right to be proud of their part in building the new Naval Hospital Complex. It will be the largest facility of its type in the military. However, it will not be the largest Naval Hospital when it is completed."



- ◇ "Our Brothers and Sisters who are employed at NASSCO will proudly hold that title. Two tankers are presently being gutted of their product-carrying capability and each will be rebuilt as 1000 bed hospital ships."

## 1987

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In 1987, both the national and local economies saw the beginning of the end of the Reagan recession. The Business Manager reported the good news in the transmitter.

- ◇ "I'm happy to report that this month's message will carry a positive tone, beginning with news that work in our jurisdiction is continuing to rise."

- ◇ "One example can be found in the increase of reported pension contributions for hours worked. In May, the number was 108,721, in June, it jumped to 113,442 and it rose again in July to 115,304."

And the Business Manager continued his report with the announcement that Local 465 had assumed the jurisdiction of the IID in the Imperial Valley:

- ◇ "With mixed emotions, I report that the jurisdiction of the Imperial Irrigation District has been transferred from Local Union 569 to Local Union 465 (I.B.E.W.). Local Union 569 received that jurisdiction in 1980 when Local 569 and Local 447 merged into one Local Union."

But negotiating with NECA was still tough in 1986 and 1987 as the Business Manager tried to negotiate a proposal that was acceptable to the wiremen and apprentices. The third time was the charm.

1982        "In October, the Inside Wiremen's Agreement was settled by a 300 to 150 vote on the third proposal with NECA before the members. The first two proposals were unacceptable to the members voting."

Later that year, the Business Manager answered the contractors' appeal for immediate help and instituted a residential agreement with NECA, bypassing an approval of the membership. The brief report in the Transmitter stated: "Most notable, the local will institute a Residential Agreement for the first time."

In June of 1987, James Westfall was hired to fill the vacant position of Training Director at the Training Center.

Although the economic conditions were improving by 1988, the Reagan era was still triumphant. To counter the non-union gains, the Business Manager felt it necessary to institute an UNFUNDED Market Recovery Program in 1988. In a bold move, the Business Manager instituted a new classification of 'Commercial Wireman' at the reduced rate of compensation. The rate of pay was \$6.00 per hour less than the journeyman wireman's rate of pay per hour.

Local 569's softball team, under the leadership of Sam Padilla, takes another first place award in Central Labor Council's Annual Softball Tournament. Eighteen teams from various local unions participated in the annual two-day event. ."



## 1988

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The Training Director negotiates and signs a five-year renewable contract with Palomar College to extend college credits to all apprentices and journeyman taking classes at the IBEW/NECA Training Center.

In May of 1988, the Local 569's article in the Journal reports:

- ◇ "We are getting some work from the non-union shops. The area is seeing an expansion in building and, with the Market Recovery Program, union electricians will get some of it. Contractors and electricians will have to retool, retrain and rethink for taking the work back."



The Business Manager's efforts to improve labor-management relations were duly noted in the May 1989 issue of the Journal:

- ◇ "A special award was presented to the Business Manager for his efforts on improving labor-management relations at the 1989 Installation of Officers Dinner for the National Electrical Contractors Association. The 'Big Ring' went to him for his industry dedication and hard work as Business Manager."

The seven unions who had members working at Nassco agreed to management's proposal to convert Nassco to an Employee Stock Option Plan Employer. This was Local Union 569's first ESOP Employer. The Business Manager promised good times ahead:

- ◇ "At NASSCO the employee-ownership plan has recently become a reality. The company and the shipyard workers have begun a new period of cooperation, and the economic prospects are very promising for all."

## 1989

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*The end of the Cold War was dramatized by the removal of a symbol of that period. The Berlin Wall was a highly visible symbol of the Cold War. During the night of August 13, 1961, East German soldiers and members of its militia surrounded West Berlin with temporary fortifications. These were rapidly replaced by a concrete wall 12-ft. high and 103 miles long of which 28 miles lay between two sides of the city. On November 9, 1989 enthusiastic private citizens began to demolish whole sections of the wall without interference from government officials.*

*On August 2, 1990, Iraqi troops invaded Kuwait to start the United Nations "Desert Storm" war. In April, 1991, Iraq agreed to the United Nations terms to end the conflict.*

## 1990

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Our Training Center is host to the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual National Electrical Training Directors Association Conference. Over 300 people from around the United States and Canada were present for the week long event. This gave Local 569 the chance to show off our Training Center and the hospitality of our local.



**(Left)** The two-story, 31,485 square foot building is located at 4675 Viewridge Avenue.

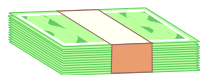
## 1991

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The Business Manager proclaimed a "New Partnership" between Local Union 569 and the San Diego Chapter of NECA. A feeling of new hope and the promise of industry cooperation accompanied a new policy change announced by NECA in 1991. The new policy stated that the San Diego Chapter of NECA would accept only electrical contractors signatory with the I.B.E.W. into membership. The announced policy reversed an earlier policy instituted in the 1980's that actively recruited non-union electrical contractors for membership in NECA.

"Local 569 of The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and the National Electrical Contractors Association are proclaiming themselves 'the team that lights up San Diego' on 20 billboard displays around town. Local 569's Business Manager said the billboards, many of which will be moved to new locations after a month, are intended to demonstrate that 'we're in a cooperative mood'.



Groundwork for a FUNDED Market Recovery Program was laid in August 1990. To accomplish this, the Business Manager requested and received a dues increase from the construction members of Local 569.

"The purpose is to establish a FUNDED Market Recovery Program. I think that this kind of a program can do three things. One would be to recover OUR WORK and this would put you back in control so you will be able to determine your own destiny. Another would be to put all of us back working together again, working toward a common goal,

(higher wages and better working conditions). Last, but not least, would be to attempt to rid ourselves of the current non-funded program. Some of us have been forced economically to work for \$6.00 per hour less than our brothers and sisters."

"At a Special Called Meeting on July 10, 1990, those Journeymen and apprentice members working under the terms of the Wiremen's Agreement approved a dues increase of 2% for Wiremen and 1/2% for Apprentices, for the sole purpose of funding a Market Recovery Program."

"The Local Union President will establish a committee of 12 members, (8 appointed), the Business Manager and President and 2 Executive Board members to oversee the operation of the Market Recovery Plan."

See - To build a better mousetrap - in the addendum.

The Training Center is recognized, by the International, as one of the top five Training Centers in the United States and Canada.

## 1992

With the end of the Cold War in 1989, came the dismantling of the military-industrial complex in the United States. This downsizing was to have a major affect on the Greater San Diego area and its residents. The largest shock was the loss of the San Diego Division of General Dynamics.

The Consolidated Aircraft Company moved to San Diego from Buffalo, New York, in 1936. World War II, with the need for 50,000 warplanes, funded the explosive expansion of the aircraft industry. The Cold War continued to fund that expansion for the aerospace industry, and by 1992 the Consolidated Aircraft Company had metamorphosed into the huge General Dynamics Corporation with headquarters in Washington, D.C.

General Dynamics was the dominant corporation in San Diego. The corporation employed over 40,000 people. It was the major employer of Local Union 569's Industrial Unit members. In the 1950's, this unit had about 500 members and was the second largest group in Local 569. The size of this work force was reduced considerably by 1992.

The sale of the first major division of General Dynamics, the Convair/Electronics Division, to Hughes resulted in problems for some employees. The affected Local Union 569's members filed grievances as the Business Agent explained below:

- ◇ "The Company has exercised its options to transfer some of our members to Space Systems. This has raised the ire of our members both working for Space Systems and those working for Convair. Two grievances have been filed."

## 1993

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The Funded Market Recovery Program had lived up to its billing. That was confirmed in this report in a 1993 Transmitter:

◇ "The Business Manager reported that the Funded Market Recovery Program is a great success. As of Jan. 31, 1993, we had funded 43 jobs generating more than 127,223 wiremen man-hours. This figure does not include apprentice hours or other related hours (such as sound, underground and material handlers)."

Not to be outdone, the International Office showcased its new Educational and Organizing program. It was so successful, that it was adopted by almost all of the other Building Trades International Unions. The following is an excerpt from the June 1993 issue of the Transmitter:

◇ "Have you ever heard of 'COMET'? It is the 'Construction Organizers Membership Education and Training.' Cornell University and the George Meany School for Labor Studies have designed a program of seminars and classes to provide each I.B.E.W. member with access to the things we need to know, about having a better union and a stronger control over our future. This I.B.E.W. sponsored class will soon be made available to you in San Diego and it's free. It's a great way to get powerful insights into the potentials you have to create your own future. All of the International Unions are now starting to put these classes on for all of their members."

The Training Center Board of Trustees unanimously voted to rename the Training Center Building in honor of Paul Blackwood for his dedication to labor-management cooperation and the lifetime emphasis he placed on quality education for the union electrical construction industry. The building is now named "NECA-IBEW Paul Blackwood Electrical Industry Building".



## 1994

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Local 569 members donated their skills and labor to wire the Boys and Girls Club of National City. In this endeavor, they joined the members of other crafts in the San Diego Building Trades in constructing the new building. The following is a quote from the Transmitter:

- ◇ "Members in the San Diego Building Trades are volunteering their labor to build a new National City Boys and Girls Club. At the time of this writing, Local 569 journeymen and apprentices had donated countless hours of labor over a six-month period, putting in the underground and completing eighty percent of the conduit and junction boxes in the walls."



National City Boys & Girls Club

The Training Center is growing: both in numbers and in the quality of training. Local 569 is offering the latest state of the art courses, many of which are being developed at the Training Center. These courses are being shared with our sister locals throughout the State of California. Our Training Director's efforts do not go unrecognized. At the January Installation of Officers Dinner for the National Electrical Contractors Association our Training Director is the first recipient of the new "Electrical Industry Progress Award".

## 1995

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A 401 (k) Annuity Program was started for members working under various Collective Bargaining Agreements.

From the January 1995 issue of the Transmitter, we hear of the sale of the second largest San Diego division of General Dynamics.

- ◇ "As many of you are aware through the news media, the transition/sale of the General Dynamics/Space Division to Martin Marietta has resulted in a downsizing of operations in San Diego. This transition has had some effect on the number of our members who will remain in San Diego working for Martin."



## 1996

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The year 1996 saw the continuation of the war with the non-union contractor. But the battlefield was redirected to the marketplace with the introduction of a professionally generated ad campaign that was focused on the customer. This strategy marketed the member's superior skills to the consumer. This program started with billboards in 1990 with NECA. The Local Union later widened their audience with radio advertising targeting the general public. In 1996, they added direct mail to industry professionals.

- ◇ "As 1996 begins, look for a new program of advertising and marketing for our training and skills. Local 569 has begun 'direct mail' marketing to reach a select group of industry professionals and customers. The word for 1996 is SELL ourselves and our training."

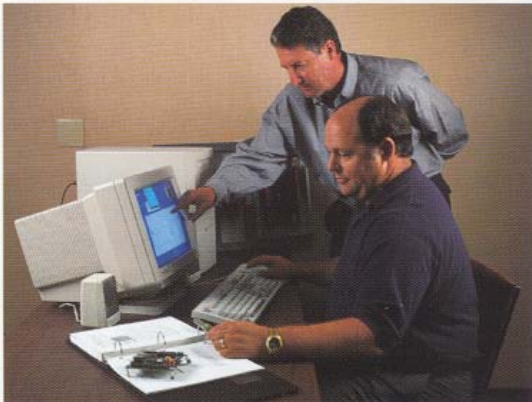
The Training Center installed a state of the art smart building system designed by a team of our graduate journeymen. This made the Training Center a "one of a kind" building. Visitors came from throughout the U.S. and Canada for the Grand Re-opening of our Training Center. The Training Center is now being used as a focal point for marketing and advertising the quality craftsmen and women of Local 569. .

The Training Center receives the "National Excellence in Training Award" for Journeyman Training.

**It's Positively Electric!**

**The San Diego Electrical Training Center**

# THE 'THINKING BUILDING'



It's one of the first buildings with a non-proprietary open system of automation in the nation. Find out about this 'thinking' building of the future—and how IBEW Local 569 and NECA can bring this technology to your projects, too.

**IBEW**  
LOCAL 569

**NECA**  
SAN DIEGO



4675-D Viewridge Avenue, San Diego, CA 92123

The first major national political party convention was held in San Diego by the Republican Party. Local 569 members performed all electrical work for setup at the Convention Center and worked through the entire week of the event.



Work crew on the national convention

## 1997

Local Union 569 went high tech with a world-class website on the Internet in 1997. This placed Local 569 among the very few unions to have a website. Local 569's members and non-union electricians can now talk to the officers and staff in privacy. It could prove to be a powerful tool. Its uses are limited only by the computers connected to it and the imagination of the members of the Local Union.

The Business Manager issued the following invitation:



- ◇ "If you, or your family, have access to the Internet and the World Wide Web, check out our Local Union's website at <http://www.ibew569.org>. We hope to make this the best UNION site on the net."

The membership agreed to a new sub-journeyman classification to replace the Commercial Wiremen that were instituted in the 1988 Market Recovery Program. The Transmitter reported the following statement that was attributed to the Business Manager.

- ◇ "There have been a number of journeymen wiremen and apprentices approach the Inside Negotiations Committee with concerns about the Intermediate Wiremen Addendum. The IW replaces the old Commercial Wiremen addendum. Unlike the old Agreement that was intended to make job opportunities for Journeymen to work at a lesser scale, the IW Addendum will allow us to pursue jobs and contractors in markets we've not been in for years. A lot of non-union electrical workers out there have many years of experience, but are not yet 'Journeymen'. We must find a way for contractors to sign up with us and bring their people into the I.B.E.W..

In keeping with its long-standing tradition of being a good civic neighbor, Local Union 569 members achieved a record in both diversity and numbers of events of community service in 1997.

- ◇ "We have been very busy the last several months. Local 569 has received many awards, and we have been recognized for our service by the community."
- ◇ "In September 1997, our JATC was recognized by the NJATC for our training program. In November, one of our employers donated materials, and Local 569 members donated labor, to build a computer center at a 450 unit HUD housing complex. For our help with the center, the local received the "Starfish Award" from the Sweetwater Union High School District."
- ◇ "We were also recognized by the County of San Diego for our Drug Free Work Force Program."
- ◇ "Local 569, on behalf of the employees of the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station, also received an award for the 4.4 million safe hours worked from Bechtel Construction."
- ◇ "We continued our involvement with Central Labor's Holiday Food and Toy Drive, donating supplies and volunteers."





Local 569 Business Manager Al Shur (left) receives the Starfish Award from Tom Williams of the Sweetwater Union High School District. This award acknowledged the Local's donation of labor to build the Career Computer Center.

On the workfront, the Business Manager announced that construction on Legoland had begun and Local

569 members would do all the electrical work.

## 1998

According to the May Journal report, 1998 was a busy time for Local Union 569. In the never-ending war against the non-union employers, the members of Local 569 opened a broad offensive to maintain and regain their fair share of the jobs. An aggressive leadership, with strong support of the members, was fighting back on three fronts.

On the very vital political front, from whence all blessings or hardships flow, Local 569 joined their sisters and brothers in organized labor.

- ◇ "We are also gearing up for the California June primary. Proposition 226, the 'Gag the Worker Initiative' has qualified for the June ballot. We are joining the Central Labor Council's Labor-to-Neighbor Program to reach out to every union household in San Diego and Imperial Counties. In addition, each building trade local will be sending a video tape to each of its members telling them about the importance of voting in the upcoming election."

While this was going on, other members were involved in an equally important area. They were literally 'putting their money where their mouths were in the market place.

- ◇ "We have begun sponsoring a TV advertisement to promote our training program and our journeymen wiremen. This ad is featured during the evening news' time slot. We have received a tremendous amount of response from both our radio and TV commercials."

The results of our election of officers, in June, showed the first woman President of Local 569 to be Emily Davis.

And, finally, the members took time from their leisure hours to join with other building trades' union members to spread the word about the benefits of being a union member.

- ◇ "The building trades' unions have joined us on the first and third Wednesdays of every month for an open house at the Local Union 569's hall. In February, we had more than 75 nonunion workers in attendance for a discussion about what the building trades' unions have to offer them."

## 1999

In the Spring, the 128 acre Legoland facility was completed. This project was a featured story in the IBEW Journal, July issue:

- "Local 569 electricians, employed by NECA contractor Morrow-Meadows Corp., spent 18 months wiring the project. The job peaked out at 139 workers and accumulated a total of 180,000 work-hours. The Morrow-Meadows IBEW electrical crew worked on a tight schedule to install all of the electrical wiring at the park, including the lighting control, voice and data connections, and outdoor lighting on the LEGOLAND rides and other attractions. The price of the light fixture package was \$3 million, and the lighting, dimming and control package totaled \$3.5 million.



Legoland work crew

The JATC announced the opening of the new Sound Technician Apprenticeship and indentured the first class. It is a four year program designed to meet the growing demand for Voice, Data and Video electricians. This is the fastest growing market in the IBEW.

The growth of the Training Center, and the programs associated with it, have been more than ever expected. There are over three hundred apprentices in the Wireman Program, 15 apprentices in the Sound Technician program, and 750 Journeymen attending classes at the Training Center. The staff consists of a Training Director, Assistant Training Director, four clerical, one part time maintenance man and 40 part time instructors. Classroom space is at a premium and day-time school for apprentices is being discussed. Classes are held Monday through Saturday.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>LOCAL UNION 569 DATA</i></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b><i>The International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.</i></b></p>
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**1890** The nucleus of our Brotherhood was formed in Saint Louis, Missouri in 1890. A charter was granted to a group of electricians for the "Electrical Wiremen and Linemen's Union, No. 5221, of the AFL."

**1891** In 1891, the new union gained a Constitution and a new name. "Local No. 5221 became the 'National Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.'"

**1899** The National Brotherhood of Electrical Workers' name was changed again in 1899. With the addition of Canadian electrical workers, it became the 'International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers.'"

**1904** I.B.E.W. Local Union No. 465 was chartered in 1904. Its geographical jurisdiction was San Diego and Imperial Counties.

**1920** Local Union 569 geographical jurisdiction was San Diego County. Its first members were from the Mother Local Union 465.

**1926** Local Union 569 Membership--125

**1937** On July 20, 1937, this handwritten amendment was added directly to the charter of Local Union 569:

*"Amended to mixed Class 'B' (Inside) 7/20/37 G. M. Bugniazet – I. S. together with workers coming under such Class 'B' jurisdiction and approved by the International Office."*

This amendment permitted Local 569 to include other workmen, such as Shipyard Electricians, Motor Shop Employees, Radio Operators, Neon Sign Erectors, Glass Blowers, Electrical Product Manufacturing Workers and many others.

**1941** Local Union 569 Membership--600



**1980** In 1980, Local Union 477 (El Centro) was amalgamated with Local Union 569 (San Diego) with the approval of the members. Once again, the jurisdiction of Local Union 569 was the San Diego and Imperial Counties

**1970** Local Union 569 Membership--1200

**1982** Union 569 Membership--3200

# Chronological List Of Officers of Local Union 569 page 1

Year	Business Manager	President
1920	Norgaard, H.C.	Kopple, W.C.
	"	Norgaard, H.C.
	"	Kopple, W.C.
	"	Wolfe, F.M.
1920/1921	Adams, G.W.	DeSelm, L.
1921	Sivel, W.S.	Caldwell, C.C.
1921/1922	"	Adams, G.W.
1922	"	"
1922/1923	DeSelm, L.	Sprenger, B.C
1923	"	"
1923/1924	Adams, G.W.	Brown, C.J.
1924	Brown, C.J.	Cummings, J.W.
1924/1925	"	Ratcliff, M.L.
1925	"	"
1925/1926	"	"
1926	Wright, R.	"
1926/1927	Harris, J.E.	Johson, H.C.
1927	"	"
1927/1928	Kilcoyne, E.P.	Gloss, R.A.
1928	Cummings J.W./Shepard, C.G.	Mc Cullough, J.J.
1928/1929	Cummings J.W.	Knudson, I.
1929	Brown, C.J.	Nothwang, C.A.
1929/1930	"	Iddings, C.
1930	"	"
1930/1931	"	Snyder, G.D.
1931	"	"
1931/1932	"	"
1932	"	"
1932/1933	"	Monsees, S.V.
1933	Ratcliff, M.L.	"
1933/1934	"	"
1934	"	"
1934/1935	"	"
1935	"	"
1935/1936	"	"
1936	"	"
1936/1937	"	"
1937	"	"
1937/1938	"	"
1938	"	"
1938/1939	"	Johnson, A.H.
1939	"	"
1939/1940	"	"
1940	"	"
1940/1941	"	"
1941	"	"
1941/1942	"	Nipper, A.H.
1942	"	"
1942/1943	"	"
1943	"	Cyren, C.

# Chronological List Of Officers of Local Union 569 page 2

Year	Business Manager	President
1943/1944	Ratcliff, M.L.	Cyren, C.
1944	"	"
1944/1945	"	"
1945	"	"
1945/1946	"	Gallion, M.R.
1946	"	"
1946/1947	"	"
1947	"	"
1947/1948	"	Wickman, A.
1948	"	"
1948/1949	"	"
1949	"	"
1949/1950	"	"
1950	"	"
1950/1951	"	"
1951	"	"
1951/1952	"	"
1952	"	Barrett, W.
1952/1953	"	Schulz, J.O.
1953	"	"
1953/1954	Collins, M.J.	"
1954	"	"
1954/1955	"	"
1955	"	"
1955/1956	"	Garnett, K. E.
1956	"	"
1956/1957	"	"
1957	"	"
1957/1958	"	"
1958	"	"
1958/1959	"	"
1959	"	"
1959/1960	"	Underhill, F.R.
1960	"	"
1960/1961	"	"
1961	"	"
1961/1962	"	Mc Geary, M.
1962	"	"
1962/1963	"	"
1963	"	"
1963/1964	"	Underhill, F.R.
1964	"	"
1964/1965	"	"
1965	"	"
1965/1966	Volz, H.J.	Wright, C.R.
1966	"	"
1966/1967	"	"
1967	"	"
1967/1968	"	"
1968	"	"

# Chronological List Of Officers of Local Union 569 page 3

Year	Business Manager	President
1968/1969	Volz, H.J.	Wright, C. R.
1969	"	"
1969/1970	"	"
1970	"	"
1970/1971	"	"
1971	"	"
1971/1972	"	"
1972	"	"
1972/1973	"	Swim, J.K.
1973	"	"
1973/1974	"	"
1974	"	"
1974/1975	"	Blackwood, P.
1975	"	"
1975/1976	"	"
1976	"	Godshalk, T.A.
1976/1977	"	"
1977	"	"
1977/1978	"	"
1978	Underhill, F.R.	"
1978/1979	"	"
1979	"	"
1979/1980	"	"
1980	"	"
1980/1981	Blackwood, P. H.	Pridemore, T.
1981	"	"
1981/1982	"	"
1982	"	"
1982/1983	"	"
1983	"	"
1983/1984	"	Heisler, J.
1984	"	"
1984/1985	"	"
1985	"	"
1985/1986	"	"
1986	"	"
1986/1987	Smith, D.	England, G.
1987	"	"
1987/1988	"	"
1988	"	"
1988/1989	"	Altmeyer, R.E.
1989	"	"
1989/1990	Pridemore, T.	Heisler, J.
1990	"	"
1990/1991	"	"
1991	"	"
1991/1992	"	"
1992	"	Aylsworth, J.
1992/1993	"	"

Chronological List Of Officers of Local Union 569			page 4
Year	Business Manager	President	
1993/1994	Pridemore, T.	Aylsworth, J.	
1994	"	"	
1994/1995	"	"	
1995	"	"	
1995/1996	Shur, A.	"	
1996	"	"	
1996/1997	"	"	
1997	"	"	
1997/1998	"	"	
1998	"	"	
1998/1999	"	Davis, E	
1999			
1999/2000			
2000			
2000/2001			

# **ADDENDUM**

## ***The Growth of Local Union 569***

Circa 1943

In 1933, Local Union No. 569 had about 36 members who had survived the Depression. We started to organize in the construction field, and in 1934, the San Diego Exposition was beginning to take shape and we jumped to over 200 members with this activity. In 1935, the Fair being concluded, we had the 1936 Fair which tided us over another year. Then came the electrification of the San Diego back country to utilize the power from Boulder Dam. Being granted the jurisdiction of Imperial County, we were successful in completing negotiations with the contractors for a closed shop on the Imperial Dam, and also the rural electrification of the Imperial Valley, and five subsequent power units that were to be built on the All American Canal. This work kept many of our old members employed, and brought us many new ones, so that by July 1939, when most of this work was completed and the early pre-war work was getting under way, we had grown to a local union with about 350 members.

In August 1939, the war work took on real significance, in that Camp Callan was started and our problems really began in regard to securing members of the I.B.E.W. to handle this closed shop job, along with several other camp jobs, Camp Elliott, Camp Pendelton and Camp Lockett, which were being started in this area. We put out a call for union electricians and worked all visiting brothers on a clearance basis, unless their cards were five years old or more.

With Pearl Harbor, and our close proximity to the war activities, the defense work in this area really boomed. The Navy started to increase the size of the Marine Base(s), an old institution in San Diego, more than doubling the size of the Naval Training Station, and taking almost the entire bay waterfront for the Destroyer Base. The Naval Hospital now occupies nearly all of Balboa Park (the former exposition site, some 1,400 acres). By July and August, 1942, we reached our peak with approximately 1,500 men working out of our office, and this peak continued until the first of 1943, when the work in the construction field began to wind up. At the present time we are working members of Local Union 569 only in this field, and our membership is slightly over 700.

In 1935, the Consolidated Aircraft decided to leave Buffalo, New York, and selected San Diego as the city with the greatest possibilities for the aircraft field, with the result that they now have one of the largest airplane factories in the world located here. All construction work for these plants was 100 percent union and some members of No. 569 have been employed on this job since the start of the project, and many of them have gone to work for the company on

maintenance. With the Consolidated Aircraft coming to San Diego, it was the incentive for other airplane factories starting to expand, and we now have Rohr, Solar, Ryan and many other parts plants doing business here that was unheard of before the war.

Then, because of being a coast city with a few small boat yards, the war brought us other things to think about, and with the Navy taking over many of the fishing boats on the coast, our boat yards took on a new appearance. Our three small boat yards that had employed from two to three electricians, now have from 10 to 15 men in the smallest, to over 100 in the largest. All told, something like 300 men are now working in the shipyard industry.

The concrete shipyard is rather unique in that they are building barges out of concrete and have successfully launched up to this time. Some of these barges have made more than one trip to the war theatre in the Solomons, loaded with oil, and have proved very satisfactory for this type of work.

M.L. Ratcliff

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## *A Friendly Misunderstanding*

Circa 194-?

About this time in local union history, so the legend goes, several Executive Board members, for whatever reason, wanted to examine the Local 569's books. The Business Manager, for whatever reason, refused to let them see the books.

The board members decided that they were going to look at the books, come hell or high water. After some nefarious reconnoitering and plotting, it came time to act. In the wee hours of the morning, these E-Board members entered the Local Union's office and with the help of some explosives, opened the safe. When the board members examined the books, they confirmed what the Business Manager had been telling them all along. That all transactions were correct and accounted for and the books were in order. He simply objected to the manner in which they demanded to see the books.

Unfortunately, not being professionals in this line of work, the boys not only blew the safe door open but also started a small fire in the safe.

And this is the story of how the Local acquired "An Official Charter, now a battered and fire charred document" that was inside the Local Union's safe at the time.

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## *The First Apprenticeship Classes*

Circa 1945

With the end of World War II, the local union leaders' thoughts were focused on the future. And the future of the Local Union B-569 in San Diego meant re-starting an apprenticeship. The shortage of manpower during World War II had decimated the apprenticeship and the Local Union faced a complete rebuilding job. An agreement was struck with NECA for a Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee and the members of JATC were appointed. Teachers were hired; the Local 569's staff actively recruited participants; a sponsor was selected and classes were started. The first class consisted almost entirely of returning veterans from World War II and was under the sponsorship of the San Diego Vocational High School. It was held in the fall semester of 1945 at the school's Market Street facilities.

Everything was in place except for the curriculum. This existed on paper only. With the exception of a couple of classes, instruction in the classroom consisted of discussions of problems that occurred on the jobs. Classes usually degenerated into B-S sessions. For example, one such session concerned the legal installations of three-way switches. The majority of that session was consumed trying to solve a problem presented by an apprentice. "How do you wire a legal three-way switch system using only two wires?"

There were no tests or examinations given. If an apprentice had the minimum number of required hours of classroom attendance he was turned out without taking one test. The mid-session coffee breaks played havoc with the attendance records. Once the apprentices had gained the security of a nearby pub, they never returned to class that night. One apprentice became bored with the situation and enrolled in a math class at the nearby evening high school. When he appeared before the JATC for his biannual review with 32 hours of classroom attendance, he was penalized one month. This may have provided the wake up call to the JATC because, shortly after, a written course of study was instituted and enforced. That curriculum included tests and final examinations. (It probably helped that by the time that curriculum was instituted the very independent classes of veterans had graduated.) The Local finally had the beginning of a quality apprenticeship.

The GI Bill supplied the veterans with all of the personal tools required by the trade. The only catch was that, to get the tools, they had to be required of all journeymen in the Local. To solve this problem the JATC had the list included in the I.B.E.W.-NECA Agreement but this created an unforeseen problem. Some contractors started to enforce this article in the Agreement with random toolbox inspections. You see, the list of tools was so comprehensive, the journeymen had never heard of some of the tools on the list. The result was the infamous "San Diego toolbox" that became known far and wide by travelers. This article in the Agreement was soon replaced with a much shorter tool list. However, by that time the veterans had their tools.

The first group of fourteen apprentices graduated in 1948.

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## **The Case of the Gypsy Local Union.**

Circa 1954

- ◆ “Committee after committee was appointed to look into the possibilities of either buying a lot with an existing building, or buying a lot and building a suitable structure. However, it was always the same story; price too high, wrong zoning, no parking available, etc.”
- ◆ A suitable structure was found.
- ◆ A new non-profit corporation was formed; the Electrical Trade Association Inc. (ELTA). Officers were elected from the stockholders that consisted of all Local Union members. The purpose of the new corporation was to buy, hold, maintain and manage property for Local Union 569.
- ◆ The procedure for transferring the moneys was as follows: The secretary presented a warrant to the treasurer; the treasurer wrote a check payable to the ELTA corporation; the president signed the check; the treasurer handed the check to the treasurer of ELTA; the treasurer of ELTA wrote a check; the president of ELTA signed the check that was then given in payment for the property.

The object of all of this attention was a building owned by the Bank of America located at what was known as "Five Points."

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## **The Oldest Permanent Floating Crap Game**

Circa 1960

The location of Local 569's annual picnic of this era was something of a gypsy itself. It seems that crap games had a way of springing up spontaneously at this event. This caused a great deal of unhappiness in the ranks of the local gendarmes. This unhappiness was, in turn, communicated to the officials of the chosen park. As a result, the officials did not exactly extend an open invitation to the Local Union to return to their park with this event the following year.

With each passing year, the number of suitable parks that would and could accommodate the annual picnic diminished. The picnic at the Del Mar Fairgrounds was among the last, if not the last that would accept the event.

The situation was desperate. Prayers were offered to all the gods in the heavens. Somewhere, somehow, something worked, for one year the announcement of the annual picnic's location was again a county park. But . . .

**THE OLDEST PERMANENT FLOATING CRAP GAME WAS NO MORE.**

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## ***They Really Built Them in the Good Ol' Days***

Circa 1962

The members had scarcely settled into their Five Points home when the exploding growth of the San Diego Area caught up with the Local. It seems the best route for a badly needed new freeway was right over the Local 569's building. And I do mean right over the building.

The roadbed is right above the building's old site. An earthen fill accomplished this, but specifications called for the demolition of the building first. All went well until the contractor's crews got to the bank's vault. It resisted the contractors best efforts but finally the solution was found.

According to the story, if you tunneled under the roadbed at Five Points you will find an old bank vault, built strong enough to support Interstate 5.

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## ***The I. O. Book.***

Circa 1969

The hiring/referral/dispatch halls of the Building Trades' Unions have long been a source of problems to organized labor. The distribution of jobs was, and still is, the measuring stick of a local union's integrity, honesty and fairness in its dealing with its members and non-members. Since a job probably defines the life style for a person, obtaining a good job was probably the major reason for most people joining a union in the first place. This placed a great deal of power and the accompanying responsibility on the person who establishes the rules that define the operation of the hiring hall. The goal of that person should be to level the proverbial playing field so that every member has an equal and fair chance to obtain the best job possible for which a person is qualified. However, what is fair to one member may seem unfair to another, and so the problems began.

In the I.B.E.W., the hiring hall has been under the authority of the Business Manager since time began. It is conceivable that a Business Manager might have used the hiring hall to discourage the entry of new members into the local union. In return, the Business Manager could have been assured reelection to the office of Business Manager. If this in fact happened, then the serving Business Manager could create a "country club" for the chosen few who were voting members.

The 1940's and 1950's were relatively good years for organized labor. With the control of the hiring hall, the local union members restricted the entrance of any new members into a local union. Organizing in that era had a different meaning to the membership. When a non-union electrical contractor was "organized", the union members eagerly accepted the company's current and future jobs. But the company's employees were refused membership into the union.

They were, in effect, fired by the union. This reinforced a "country club" in which membership was restricted to the chosen few.

Excesses such as these enabled the enemies of organized labor to persuade Congress to pass the Landrum-Griffin Bill in the late fifties. Enemies of labor were able to include in this law many things that were destructive to the working man under the guise of correcting injustices such as the "country clubs."

Hiring halls were one of the topics mentioned, but not addressed in detail, in this new law. Hoping to clarify what the new law required for compliance, the General Council for the I.B.E.W. wrote the General Council of the National Labor Relations Board a letter. In this letter, he posed a series of questions. Using the responses to these questions as a guide, the General Council of the I.B.E.W. formulated a set of rules to be used as guidelines in establishing the rules for hiring halls. This became known as an I. O. book.

The installation and enforcement of these new hiring hall procedures was the first step in the dismantling of the "Country Clubs." The International Office in local unions gradually installed I. O. books until all hiring halls operated with the same rules. An I. O. book was installed in Local Union 569 in 1969.

There were some local unions such as New York and Chicago that had third party hiring Halls and were not required to use the IO Book. Third party hiring halls were under the authority of a Local Union and NECA but were administered by an independent third party.

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## ***The Environmental Impact Statement***

Circa 1970

The Environmental Impact Statement was an analysis of the impact that a proposed development, usually industrial, would have on the natural and social environment. It included an assessment of long and short-term effects on the physical environment, such as air, water, and noise pollution, as well as effects on employment, living standards, and local services. The National Environmental Policy Act (1969), as well as many state and local laws enacted during the late 1960's and early 1970's mandate that these statements be completed before major development projects could begin.

The Environmental Impact Statement was utilized by opposition groups to stop major construction projects and became the target of many Business Managers in local union newsletters. Although the articles were well written and embraced some of the environmentalists goals, most of the environmentalists saw them as attacks. This only aggravated the credibility gap between some union members and their union leaders. Some of these leaders may have also underestimated the public support for the environmental movement by the public.

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## **An Alliance To Be Reckoned With**

Circa 1970

The 1970's saw the formation of a statewide alliance to fight the construction of nuclear power plants. This group hoped to accomplish this goal by making the building and operation of nuclear plants so costly that they would not be a viable option for power companies. This group went to the California State Legislature in an attempt to get legislation to accomplish this goal.

Upon conferring with their chosen legislators, they found they had little chance to pass such a bill at that time. It was suggested that they use the state referendum process to raise the public awareness of their cause. The Nuclear Power Plant Initiative of 1976 was placed on the ballot. It was defeated, but it had done its job.

The group was able to return to their state legislators, who passed a law which contained restrictive measures that effectively stopped the construction of nuclear power plants in California.

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## **The Redwood Executive Board Table**

Circa 1974

(It was the practice of the International Office to physically pick up a local union's charter when, for whatever reason, that local union ceased to exist.)

The new Executive Boardroom in the new addition had a new table. This new table was made of redwood. The 1920 Local Union 569 charter was placed upon the new table and the entire top of the table was then encapsulated in plastic.

During the open house held to celebrate the new addition to the hall, the International Vice-President was escorted on a tour through the new addition. When the party arrived at the new boardroom, a local union officer in the group was heard to remark that 'the IO would have a problem picking up that charter'. Whereupon, the Vice-President was heard to reply that he could always use a redwood table in his office.

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## **It's Later Than You Think**

Circa 1977

Everything is further away than it used to be. It is twice as far to the bus station as it used to be, and they have added a hill. I don't run for the bus anymore. It gets away faster than I do. Seems like stairways are steeper than they were. Have you noticed how small they are printing telephone directories and newspapers? My arms are getting too short to hold out a newspaper far enough to read. I have to squint to make out the words. No use to ask someone to read the news because they all speak so low I can hardly hear them.

The barber doesn't hold up the mirror behind me to show me the hair on the back of my head anymore. All my clothes are shrinking so much I can't get them around my waist. My shoelaces are so short I can hardly reach them. My feet are getting so small I can't even look down and see my toes. I am growing so tall I can hardly pick anything up off the ground. Even people are so much younger than when I was their age. People my age are so much older than I am. I saw an old classmate the other day and he was so old that he didn't even recognize me. I got to thinking about him this morning when I shaved and I looked at myself in the mirror and, you know, they don't even use good glass in the mirrors anymore. Even the air is so polluted that I can only walk a little way and then have to stop to catch my breath.

Considering how bad everything is, it is still kinda' nice to read the obituary column with a magnifying glass and not find my name in there and know that I'm going to be around a little while to enjoy the important thing -- that is, life itself.

Local Union 569 Retiree

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## **The Great Turkey Caper**

Circa 1979

Once upon a time, as this story goes, while working on one of the bigger jobs in Local 569's jurisdiction, our hero was watching two rocks grow. Suddenly, there appeared upon his shoulder a tiny green leprechaun. He was pointing at Hero's good buddy, who was standing a short distance away. Hero was seen shaking his head but "One knew that one dared not say no to a Tiny Green Leprechaun." Knowing this, Hero rushed off to consult with his tried and true friends. He told them of the Tiny Green Leprechaun's desire to ensnare Good Buddy in a caper. Naturally, Tried & True did not want to do this to Good Buddy either. But "One knew that one dared not say no to a Tiny Green Leprechaun." They agreed to help Hero.

Together, Hero and Tried & True developed the Tiny Green Leprechaun's plan. The three of them decided to spread the word that, since Thanksgiving was only one week away, the Company was going to distribute turkeys to all employees on the Bigger Jobs. Their goal was to obtain Good Buddy's signature on their "free turkey list".

They put their plan into action the very next day. Tried procured (if I may use the word) an official looking clipboard complete with sheets of notebook paper. The sheets had a grand title proclaiming them to be "The Official Thanksgiving Turkey Sign-up List". The sheets also contained a column for the employee's name, a column for the employee's identification number and, lastly, a column for the size of the turkey the employee requested (small, medium or large). It looked very official. With the Official Looking Clipboard in hand, Tried projected an image of authority, as he sought Good Buddy's signature.

Many of the employees of the Bigger Jobs eagerly committed the required information on the Official Looking Clipboard. In fact, the response was so great, that the Official Looking Clipboard's pages filled with signatures beyond all expectation. But, alas, that most coveted signature in all the land, "Good Buddy," was nowhere to be found. This did not discourage the stalwart three, Hero and Tried & True. They knew that Good Buddy had recently declared, before witnesses, that Hero would never again catch him in one of Hero's capers. Therefore, they reasoned that Good Buddy would be on high alert. You see, since Tried & True were involved with the Official Looking Clipboard and they were known to be friends of Hero, Good Buddy was very, very wary.

The second day's response was even better than the first day. The list grew until more pages were added to the Official Looking Clipboard. But still there was no sign of the elusive signature. The days passed. Hero and Tried & True stepped up their offensive with each passing day. They enlisted others to go to Good Buddy and encourage him to sign up before it was too late. All attempts proved unsuccessful, and panic began to creep into Hero and Tried & True's camp. It was beginning to look as if Good Buddy would actually resist Hero's best efforts this time. Then the official unofficial word was circulated around the Bigger Jobs. "The Company would close the list at quitting time that very day." The Official Unofficial word explained that this was necessary to assure that the company would have sufficient time to deliver the turkeys to the job the next day. For, you see, the very next day was the last working day before Thanksgiving.

By this time, the Official Looking Clipboard's list had grown to such proportions that its pages contained in excess of five hundred names. And still, no Good Buddy. Then, at the eleventh hour, Good Buddy was seen examining the Official Looking Clipboard's list, but then he had walked away. A dejected Hero and Tried & True looked at the list one last time and behold, the long sought name was there. Good Buddy. And joy reined supreme.

If there was any doubt that a Tiny Green Leprechaun was involved in the great turkey caper, it vanished the very next day. For when the employees went down the long ramp that lead to the Bigger Jobs, there sat a truck. Oh, but not just any truck, but a very special truck. It was a large cab-over tractor with a magnificent refrigerated trailer behind. When the employees saw the truck, it was obvious to all that it contained in excess of five hundred turkeys. When

Hero and Tried & True saw the truck their first thought was who was doing what to whom? But not one to look a gift horse in the mouth, Hero and Tried & True spent the day working on Good Buddy. They told him (in many ways and many times) that to get a large turkey, he would have to be among the first in line at quitting time.

That evening, as the employees walked up the long ramp from the Bigger Jobs, there stood Good Buddy, first in line. He was holding in his hands a large paper bag, with handles attached, to receive a large Thanksgiving Turkey.

He stood alone behind the truck that contained ice to be used in a concrete pour scheduled for later that night.

And once again the cry of "HEY RUBE" was heard throughout the land.

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## *The Good Ol' Days*

Circa 1979

ABC is going to field some pitchmen to travel around the country selling non-union. Of course, they don't call it non-union. They slant their status by calling it "merit shop". They also like to talk about such far away and romantic things as the "good ol' days before unions were strong" or the "good ol' days, when the boss could do what he darn well pleased". Well, that sounds good to some, but here is what "good ol' days" means to us who really remember. The "good ol' days" was when the National Association of Manufacturers anti-union goon squads lead "open-shop" drives, which cut union membership nearly in half.

The "good ol' days" of post World War I was the "American Plan", when 23 national industrial associations and 1665 chambers of commerce actually pushed this kind of rhetoric: "There is no use for labor unions. No benefit or advantage will accrue to anyone except labor leaders" . . . or . . . "every man ought to work out his own salvation and not be bound by the shackles of union organization. . ."

And remember the "good ol' days" of the "yellow dog contract," which is best understood in the words of the President of the Indiana Association of Manufacturers, "We will not employ any individual in any part of the plant who does not sign an individual contract in which it is expressed that he is not and will not become a member of a labor organization . . ."

And . . . oh, yes . . . those were the "good ol' days" when management so violently resisted a strike effort in a Pennsylvania steel mill, that it resulted in the shooting of fifteen strikers, the death of one and the gassing of hundreds of others.

ABC and its fellow travelers, the advocates of the open/merit shop-merit, all talk about the . . . "freedom to do this . . . freedom from that . . ." when they refer to the lack of a union contract. But what they really were mean about is that they want to return to the "good ol' days" when they held all the cards and

had the pick of the crop of skilled workers, who were forced to "stand hat in hand" and subserviently plead for a job.

Do you want those kind of "good ol' days"?

The Business Manager

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## **Mr. Reagan's Promise**

Circa 1980

In the fall of 1980, three members of Local Union 569's staff were visiting the site of the largest industrial employer of its' members. A member of the company's Industrial Relations (IR) team was a long time acquaintance of one member of Local Union 569's visiting staff. This IR member quietly took the acquaintance aside and informed him of a meeting he had recently attended at the employer's eastern headquarters.

The meeting's intent was to inform the company's IR personnel of the word recently received from Washington, D. C. They were assured that any problem concerning unions that was taken to any federal agency, would receive a favorable decision. It was understood that it was Mr. Reagan's promise to take care of the "union problem" once and for all.

It was a promise (bought and paid for) that he kept, at the expense of the working man, but one thing is certain,

MR. REAGAN DELIVERED THE GOODS TO CORPORATE AMERICA AND  
AMERICA WAS MUCH POORER FOR IT.

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## **The Local 569's Apprenticeship**

Circa 1984

When Local Union 569's apprenticeship was reestablished after World War II, the educational sponsor selected by the JATC was the San Diego City College System. This remained the choice of the JATC until problems surfaced in the early 1980's.

The first problem occurred in 1984. There was a demand by non-I.B.E.W. people to open the enrollment of the Local Union's apprenticeship classes to the public. Since they were being conducted in public school facilities, it was the legal consensus that there was some validity to their demand.

A second problem occurred with the refusal of the City College instructors to permit our apprentices to use the electrical laboratories at the college. The reason given, in the reply to the Local Union's request, was that it would create additional setup work for the public instructors. The request was denied.



The Training Director reported the situation to the Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee (JATC). The solution was obvious. The number of classrooms in the new Training Center were expanded to accommodate the apprenticeship classes. The existing labs at the Center solved the problem of the laboratories. These labs were superior to those at City College and were maintained at the cutting edge of technology. The sponsorship of San Diego City College was retained. It was a win-win solution for everyone except the non-union.

The problems appeared to be solved until a new one surfaced.

The State of California paid the educational sponsor, of any qualified apprenticeship program, money for those classes held under their sponsorship. The amount was based on the student hours of instruction performed.

The removal of our classes from City College had produced a windfall to City College. Aware of this windfall, the Training Director requested funds from City College to buy materials that would be consumed in the labs while training the apprentices. After much discussion, the Training Director was granted the sum of 500 dollars a year. The Training Director reported this to the JATC and was instructed to do some comparison-shopping. The Training Director's report to the JATC included an offer by the Grossmont school system to return \$32,000 a year to the Training Trust. In return, it would provide the same services to the Training Trust that was being provided by City College. It was another slam-dunk for the JATC.

The agreement had one weakness. This new sponsor was an adult education system, not a college. Although this was not a killer condition to the contract, it was a nagging problem. This problem was solved when another Training Director completed an agreement with Palomar College. Once again, the apprenticeship could offer a graduate apprentice the opportunity to apply the credits earned in the apprenticeship courses toward an Associate of Arts Degree.

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## **Ronald Reagan and the Unions**

Circa 1984

"Brothers and Sisters,

Most of the federal administrative agencies have been staffed with Reagan appointees with a clear anti-union bias. The Department of Labor is one such example. Among other actions hostile to organized labor and to workers, the Labor Department has done the following:

- A. It has issued regulations designed to destroy the effectiveness of the Davis-Bacon Act and the Service Contracts Act which protect our rates on federally financed work.
- B. It has virtually stopped the funding for and the enforcement of Federal Health and Safety laws.
- C. It has turned its union auditing program from one of assistance to unions into a criminal witch-hunt directed at union officials.

The situation at the National Labor Relations Board is even worse. Three of the present Board members are Reagan appointees. Almost every week, there is a new anti-labor decision by the Reagan Board that reverses earlier Board decisions which had previously upheld union and worker rights. Here are a few examples of the anti-labor, anti-worker decisions of the Reagan NLRB:

- 1) An employer no longer has to bargain about a decision to relocate bargaining unit work unless the decision "turns on" labor costs. (Otis Elevator.)
- 2) Even if a relocation does not turn on labor cost, an employer no longer needs the union's consent, even in mid-contract term, to transfer unit work to a non-union plant. (Milwaukee Spring.)

An employer no longer violates the Act by refusing to reinstate a sympathy striker, after his/her unconditional offer to return to work, even though the collective bargaining agreement states it is not cause for discipline if an employee refuses to cross a picket line at the employer's place of business. (Butterworth-Manning- Ashnore Mortuary.)

- 3) Verbal threats alone, directed by a striker to a non-striker, but unaccompanied by physical acts or gestures, may now be sufficiently serious misconduct to warrant the denial of reinstatement. Thus, a verbal exclamation in the heat of the picket line may now cost a striker his or her job. (Clear Pine Moldings.)
- 4) In a large number of cases, where the parties have a broad arbitration clause in their bargaining agreement, the Board will no longer even consider unfair labor practice charges filed against an employer. Under the new rule, you must take your case to arbitration. (United Technologies, Olin Corp.)

In short, the NLRB is no longer an objective forum where we can hope to succeed with our complaints against the employers.

There are many reasons for defeating Ronald Reagan in November. But none is more compelling than the need to halt the stripping away of the legal rights of unions and their members.

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## ***The 1984 Wiremen's Negotiations***

Circa 1984

The 1984 wiremen's contract negotiations with NECA actually began in the fall of 1983, when negotiating teams representing Local 569's Wiremen and NECA Contractors met. During the preliminary discussions, the members of the Union Negotiating Committee came to the realization that things had changed in San Diego as well as the nation. That change was not for the better.

Several events transpired in the 1970's and the early 1980's that forced changes in Organized Labor.

First and foremost, was the loss of public and political support for unions in the United States. This problem was predominately self-inflicted, however, since it

was encouraged by a persistent and well-funded campaign by the ultra-conservative enemies of organized labor.

Second, over the previous two decades, those same people had patiently packed the courts of the land with judges favorable to their cause. In those conservative court, they were successful in reversing several long-standing decisions in labor law.

Third, in 1979, those same people selected a charismatic front man to be their candidate for President of the United States. They were successful in electing him. Although he was not successful in destroying organized labor in the United States, Mr. Reagan did severely weaken labor. The irony of the situation was that his success sent a wake-up call to labor that was heard loud and clear.

Fourth, in San Diego, the completion of SONGS's unit 3, in 1983, magnified the problem for construction union members in San Diego. The number of unemployed wiremen on the Referral Hall list at Local 569 increased dramatically. Approximately 600 members were seeking a job with the prospect of a nine-month wait until one was offered. It was a "buyer's market" for the contractors, and operating non-union was an attractive option for both labor and management.

Faced with a threat of a disastrous loss of signatory contractors in the 1984 wiremen's negotiations, the leadership of Local Union 569 adopted a strategy of damage control. That goal was to retain as many as possible of the contractors who were signatory to a Local 569 agreement.

After preliminary meetings with the NECA Negotiating Team, the Local 569 Negotiating Team decided to remove many of the articles in the wiremen's agreement that restricted the signatory contractor's ability to compete with the non-union contractor. Many clauses were sacrificed that were won in an era when Organized Labor enjoyed strong public and political support.

The Local 569 Negotiating Team returned to the membership from those negotiations with a competitive proposal stripped of many clauses and contained provisions for a pre-apprentice classification. This sweeping proposal was presented to the membership without any formal effort to inform them of the problems facing organized labor in San Diego. The proposal met with a resounded defeat.

However, the problems remained and had to be addressed quickly. The Negotiating Committee decided to schedule a series of informational meetings to discuss the proposal with the wiremen members. On the night of the first meeting, an International Representative appeared at the union hall. He informed the Business Manager of a recent directive issued by the International President of the I.B.E.W.. This directive stated that any International Representative that serviced a local union, whose NECA agreement contained a provision for a "pre-apprentice," would be fired. The Business Manager informed the International Representative that the proposal the Local 569's Negotiating Committee intended to discuss at the membership meeting that night contained such a proposal.

The International Representative requested to speak to the Negotiating Committee before the meeting. He informed the committee members that the Business

Manager would be removed from office if the proposal containing the "pre-apprentice" clause was presented to the membership. The Business Manager and one Committee Member voted to continue with the proposed meeting as planned. A majority of the committee voted to cancel the meeting. The International Representative and the Negotiating Committee then went to the meeting and informed the members present what had occurred. The meeting was canceled.

The International Representative also informed the members present at that meeting that it was the International President's duty to protect the membership from such ill advised ideas of local union officers. Within three years, a succeeding International President made a complete reversal of policy. Those same forbidden articles were mandatory in all I.B.E.W. Local Union proposals in future negotiations with NECA. Not to do so would subject the Business Manager to removal from office. However, in the intervening two years, several Business Managers were sacrificed when they chose to make moves to position their members for a chance at a better future.

Before further action could be taken, the window opened for the submission of letters by signatory contractors requesting separate negotiations with Local 569. This was the required first step in terminating their contracts with Local 569. The union leadership's strategy was changed with the arrival of those letters. The Negotiating Committee's goal then was to achieve a membership-approved agreement with NECA before any of the individual contractor negotiations were completed.

First, an unprecedented effort was launched to inform the membership of the problems facing local 569's construction members. A public relations firm was retained to assist in organizing the presentation. Volunteers from the rank and file were trained in the art of making those presentations. Meetings were then held at the Training Center to inform the members of the problem.

Second, a group of members volunteered to take a crash course in negotiating and labor law. This group was given the thankless task of fighting a delaying action. They were assigned, in teams of two, to conduct the individual negotiations with those contractors who chose to terminate their union contracts. This action was successful in that it allowed the main negotiating committee to reach a tentative agreement with the NECA Contractors first. The Local 569 two-person negotiating teams then offered that NECA tentative agreement to the contractors who chose individual negotiations.

Those separate teams of union negotiators accomplished several objectives. The existence of those teams of negotiators prevented the Local 569 Negotiating Committee from being whipsawed by the NECA negotiators. This group also prevented successful unfair labor charges from being filed against Local 569. Without their efforts, it would have been unlikely to achieve one contract for all signatory contractors.

With the "pre-apprentice" option blocked by the International Office and a "sub-journeyman wireman's" classification unacceptable to the Business Manager, the Negotiating Committee had few tools left to use in the upcoming negotiations. In their internal discussions, the members of the Negotiating Committee were well aware that a wage concession would have an immediate and future negative effect on the quality of life of the members. They also knew

that money was probably the worst tool to use against the non-union contractors. However, if used correctly, it was the only tool left that had a chance to convince those signatory contractors to sign another agreement with Local 569. If money was to be the chosen tool, then it had to be an offer that the contractors COULD NOT REFUSE. A five-dollar per hour rollback in Journeymen Wiremen's wages was agreed to (At five dollars per hour, a signatory contractor that had uncompleted projects that had a total of 10,000 man-hours of work required to complete the projects, would receive a windfall of \$50,000.) but only if THE CONTRACTOR SIGNED A TWO-YEAR AGREEMENT WITH LOCAL 569. With the economy of that era, that amount of money probably meant the difference of surviving in business or bankruptcy. The NECA Committee accepted the proposal and it was approved by almost a two-to-one majority by Local 569's wiremen.

The end results were apparently successful as attested to by a Building Trades Council Official some two years later. He stated: "I thought you guys were all screwed up but you have more signature contractors than all of the other construction unions put together." That translated to jobs for Local 569's members.

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## **The General Presidents Project Maintenance Agreement (GPPMA)**

Circa 1984

The General Presidents Project Maintenance Agreement (GPPMA) is an agreement conceived in Washington, D.C., negotiated by Washington, D.C., administered by Washington, D.C. and controlled in Washington, D.C.. To the members of a local union that has jurisdiction of the area where a GPPMA has been negotiated, the GPPMA is a godsend. The work is usually first class, the conditions are great, the job is challenging and the workforce is usually stable. From the members' point of view, you could not find a better job.

From the Business Manager's point of view, the GPPMA is a pain in the a--. The Business Managers usually hear about it at a meeting on the day the agreement is instituted in his jurisdiction. As far as his members who work on the job are concerned, the Business Manager has the responsibility and the authority to enforce the GPPMA. They are only half right in that premise. He has all of the responsibility but none of the authority to police and enforce the agreement.

With that preface, I will relate the following story as well as I can remember the details.

The first scene in this little saga was the negotiations between Local Union 569 and NECA in 1984. The membership voted by an overwhelming majority to roll back the wages five dollars per hour. The ink had hardly dried on that agreement when the GPPMA Negotiating Committee announced an agreement that included a clause that stated the wages on SONGS would be 80% of the down-

town rate of pay. This meant that the I.B.E.W. members working at SONGS would experience a total of six-dollars per hour rollback in their wages.

The Business Manager of Local Union 569 immediately requested a meeting with the on-site Industrial Relations Representative of Bechtel. The Bechtel Representative explained that his first reaction was to exempt the electricians from the rollback in wages because they had already voluntarily rolled back more than the required amount. The Business Manager left the conference thinking that there was a Just God in the Heavens after all. However, he later received a call from the Bechtel Representative, who expressed his regrets that he would not be able to exempt the electricians after all. It seemed that some of the other Building Trades Local Unions' Business Managers would object to the electricians receiving an exemption and demanded the same exemption for their members.

Shortly after, the I. O. announced that a meeting would be held in Los Angeles in the following week to inform the participating local unions of the contents of the new GPPMA agreement for SONGS. When the wage clause of the agreement was read, it did not contain an exemption for the electricians. Although the Business Manager was well aware of the potential of a one million dollar a day fine for an illegal strike at SONGS, enough was enough. He sought out the I.B.E.W. International Representative at the meeting and informed him that he and his staff would be at the gates at SONGS the next morning to stop the Local Union 569 members from going to work. The IO representative asked him if he was serious and was he aware of the consequences for him and the Local Union if he went through with his threat. The Business Manager informed the International Representative that he was well aware of the consequences and that he was serious as a heart attack. The IO Representative then asked the Business Manager to accompany him to talk to some people.

At a small impromptu meeting with GPPMA Representatives, Bechtel Representatives, the I.B.E.W. International Representatives and the out-gunned Business Manager, the decision was made to restore the electricians' exemption from the wage rollback. With a great sigh of relief and a silent prayer of thanks, the Business Manager walked from the meeting never knowing if he could have pulled off the walk out or not. You see, the fact was he had lost a great deal of his ability to lead the membership with the five dollar roll back.

With that off my chest, I would like to say that I can fully understand why the GPPMA was negotiated and administrated in the manner it was, and I approve. If all of the concerns of all of the Building Trades Local Unions had to be considered, the work would be done by the non-union today. BUT IT IS STILL A PAIN IN THE A--.

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## **Problems with Full Disclosure**

Circa 1984

The Business Manager addressed a recurring problem that contributed to the members' distrust of their leaders. This was the problem of balancing the full disclosure of information to the membership against the need for security.

- ◇ "In their frustration, these members demanded everything the staff was doing TO be exposed at a general membership meeting. The staff will report the results of anything of this nature, but we cannot give all the information out until we know that it will not hurt the members involved."
- ◇ "As I said, patience must be present in a labor Leader today in large quantities, but that is not saying that persistence and a touch of stubbornness are not also assets. In times such as these, many of us let our emotions rule our actions and start following members who suddenly think they have the solution. These solutions are generally constructed around incomplete facts, self-serving motives, a gift of gab with little or no forethought or knowledge of the consequences."

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## **San Diego's First PPO**

Circa 1985

In the 1980's, the cost of the medical delivery system in San Diego was rising about seventeen percent a year. It was a great concern to the third party providers of medical insurance in San Diego. The Business Manager read a newspaper article that reported a group of the largest manufacturers in San Diego were banding together to study the situation. Their goal was to form a Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) in San Diego. He noted that Local 569 had a relationship of many years standing with all of the corporations mentioned in the article. The Business Manager decided to see if Local Union 569's Health and Welfare Trust join in the effort. He called the Industrial Relations Department at one of the firms mentioned and scheduled a meeting. At the meeting, he was informed that it was a management only effort and that labor would not be included. Trying a different tack, the Business Manager negotiated a deal with representatives of the corporations. They agreed to permit the Trust Administrator to attend the meetings of the group as an observer without a voice or vote.

The Health and Welfare Trust had hired a Trust Administrator in 1978 who was very knowledgeable in this field and had guided the Trust to a self-insured status with a considerable cost reduction to the participants. It did not take the management representatives long to realize that the Administrator would be a very valuable asset to the committee and the 'no voice, no vote' was quickly

trashed. Using their combined employee numbers as muscle, the committee negotiated a very favorable PPO with several hospital and doctor groups in the greater San Diego area. As acknowledgment of the Trust Administrator's valuable contributions to the PPO, the San Diego Electrical Industry Health and Welfare Trust was invited to be the only Labor group to participate in San Diego's first PPO.

Several months later, the PPO was working very well. The Health and Welfare's allocated reserves were fully funded and the amount of unallocated reserves had reached eight million dollars. This dictated that contribution rate the employers paid would have to be cut by the amount of twenty-three cents per hour. The only catch was that any reduction in the contribution rate would be refunded to the employer, not the member. Once the members of Local Union 569 approved an amount of money to be deducted from their rate of pay for the Health and Welfare contribution, the money belonged to the employer. Any money legally deducted in excess of the amount required by the Trust was, by law, the property of the employer.

With this fact in mind, the Business Manager put on his negotiating hat again, and scheduled a meeting with the NECA Chapter Manager. The end result was that twenty-three cents an hour went back on the members' paychecks.

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## *An Enigma for Leaders*

Circa 1985

The I.B.E.W. Journal and the Transmitters of this era had many articles mentioning union and non-union employer machinations to destroy organized labor. These destructive elements came with many names, Situs Picketing (two-gate system), Connell Case (sub-contracting Clause), Right to Work, Double Breasted Employers and Double Breasted Employer Associations.

One of the major problems of unions was the rigidity of the rules of their organizations. This, compared to the employer's flexibility to react quickly to current conditions, placed the unions at a disadvantage. Contrary to public perceptions, local unions are very democratic organizations. The local union membership represents a broad spectrum of the population, with political philosophies from the ultra-right to the ultra-left. To counter a new threat was a long and complex procedure.

To react to a threat to the members' well-being, the leaders had to first alert them, and then inform the membership about the problem. They then had to find a legal solution that did not conflict with their own internal rules and regulations or the contracts with their signatory employers. This solution also had to be one that a majority of the affected members could agree. The leaders then had to build a coalition from these members. Only then could they plan a strategy and start to try to correct the problem. All of this had to be accomplished in an open environment without the subject of the problem becoming unduly aware of their actions. It was a difficult task, at best, and it is remarkable that there were so many successes.



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## **To Build A Better Mousetrap**

Circa 1990

In the late 1970's and the early 1980's, construction unions were under continuous and heavy attack in the courts by the conservative element of society. A few I.B.E.W. local unions decided to go on the offensive and soon found themselves drawn into legal battles. The I.B.E.W. local at Walnut Creek, CA, took the lead in the legal battle against the two-gate system. San Diego, CA, (Local 569) was the point local in the battle against the double-breasted contractor. The I.B.E.W. local at Kansas City, MO, tried a new concept of what became known as the Funded Market Recovery (FMR). The point position was later transferred to the I.B.E.W. local in Joliet, IL, and this local built a plan that survived the legal challenges. I.B.E.W. local unions utilized that plan across the United States.

A similar program was used in San Diego in the late 1940's and/or the early 1950's to insure the contractors against losses when a new contract was negotiated. When a construction project was caught in the middle by a newly negotiated wage raise, the local union refunded the amount of the raise to the contractor. These payments, made for each man-hour worked by Local 569's members, continued until the project was completed.

The FMR of the 1980's differs from the 1940's program, in that the FMR guaranteed the money to the successful bidder before the project was bid. The amount of money to be refunded was determined by the Local Union's FMR committee, and was based on the contractors' estimated man-hours in a project. The qualified contractors were notified of this amount just before the bids were submitted to the general contractors. Secrecy of the amount to be refunded was maintained by the committee and participating contractors. That system effectively lowered the journeymen wages to a point where the union contractors were competitive with a non-union contractor on selected projects. In the opinion of the officers of the local union, the FMR removed the need for a sub-journeyman classification that was contained in a prior market recovery program.

The sub-journeyman classifications had been a topic of discussion between the union and the contractors many times. In the contractors' opinions, not all journeymen wiremen dispatched by the local union hiring hall were equal. The contractors maintained that the evaluation of journeymen wiremen qualifications to receive top wages encompassed many things. The journeyman's attitude, intelligence, loyalty, mental and physical ability were just a few of the things that made a top hand qualified for top wages, in the opinion of the contractor.

The local union leaders insisted that every journeyman wireman on the referral hall list had passed a test and, therefore, were equal in their skills. From the union leaders' point of view, the introduction of a sub-journeyman classification meant that 'all (journeymen) are still equal, but some (journeymen) are more equal than others' (The Animal Farm). The FMR, in the contractors' view,

was not an equal substitute for the sub-journeyman classification. They maintained that the sub-journeyman classification could be applied to the entire marketplace, while the amount of money required by the FMR to exert significant control over the electrical construction market was beyond the financial ability of the local union. There were also doubts about the union FMR committee members' ability to be fair in the selection of the qualified contractors. The old concerns about fraternalism, favoritism, and nepotism made the process suspect.

The leaders of the union had serious reservations about the sub-journeyman classification. They doubted the employers' ability to make fair and just decisions, especially when the decision concerned who would be a journeyman and who would be a sub-journeyman. Again, it was the old problem with fraternalism, favoritism and nepotism. There was also an underlying distrust because of a tendency of some employers to terminate certain union members. These were members who had openly expressed the opinion that the labor agreement should be complied, with without exceptions. An even greater concern was the willingness of some contractors to terminate or transfer the union stewards assigned to their projects.

The underlying problem was one of distrust on both sides. Great strides have been made in the unionized electrical industry to establish a sense of partnership in recent years. This is certainly part of the answer, but it did not address the problems of distrust. One thing is certain, until the two sides can meet at the bargaining table with a sense of equality, the workers cannot expect to receive fair compensation for their labor. The tilted playing field of the 1980's must be leveled again. Just as management successfully sought the advantage through the political system, so must the unions seek advantage through the same system. To seek the advantage in the present American political system requires money, but the politician uses that same money to get votes. Once the union members realize that a pure vote cast for the benefit of the worker is the most potent weapon they possess, the rest will be history. The major problem for the union member will then be to guard against falling into the "country club" trap again.

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