

100
1912-2012

IBEW Local 269
Proudly Powering Our Community for 100 Years



100TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION
COMMEMORATIVE PROGRAM & HISTORY

LOCAL 269

INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS

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Organizer/Field Representative

Business Representative

Business Representative

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**A UNION OF HEARTS AND MINDS PROUDLY WORKING WITH
THE TRENTON AREA BUSINESS COMMUNITY SINCE 1912**



Welcome! Thank You For Celebrating 100 Years With Us

On behalf of IBEW Local 269, we extend a very special and heartfelt welcome to all who are commemorating our local's 100th anniversary with us during our special celebration; it is truly a landmark occasion cherished by all who have taken part in the brotherhood that we share in Local 269.

First and foremost, we thank everyone sharing in our celebration of 100 years of perseverance, character and craftsmanship. Since 1912, the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers Local Union 269 has maintained a strong work ethic, integrity and professionalism unsurpassed by anyone in the electrical construction trade. It is truly humbling that we are a part of this great union and to acknowledge the foundation of this union hall, we give special thanks to our founding members recognized in this 100th anniversary history book.

We are proud to see how far Local 269 has progressed, the challenges we have overcome and the accomplishments we have made. We have come so far as a union to stand together and celebrate 100 years as Brothers and Sisters in the fight for collective bargaining, fair wages and safe working conditions – and we will continue the fight for the next 100 years.

We hope you share our excitement for the journey ahead, throughout which we will continue the practices of our trade, which have allowed our membership to excel.

We congratulate all of those who have graduated our apprenticeship training program and journeyman continuing education training programs and those special members who are receiving their distinguished service awards during our most special celebration.

Fraternally yours,

Stephen M. Aldrich

Stephen Aldrich
Business Manager

Wayne P. DeAngelo

Wayne DeAngelo
Assistant Business Manager/President

This book was proudly produced by Union Histories:

Calvin Jefferson..... Head Historian
Andy Taucher Creative Direction
Steven Demanett..... Layout & Design
www.unionhistories.com

Special thanks to the IBEW Museum
and Director Curtis Bateman, and The
Trentoniana Room/Trenton Public Library
and Library Historian Wendy Nardi.

Cover photos (left to right): Local 269
crews at work throughout the years on
Harvey S. Firestone Library in Princeton,
Old Dominion project and AT&T
Lawrenceville Switching Station.



Proudly Powering Our Community for 100 Years

The History of International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
Local No. 269, Trenton, New Jersey

Photo credit - Bradley Maule phillyskyline.com

“TRENTON, like all industrial cities, owes much to the men who have labored with their hands. Brawn and muscle have builded Trenton strong and well, and the story of Trenton labor and its share in the labor movement is part of the story of the city itself.”

From “A History of Trenton, 1679-1929,” The Trenton Historical Society

Organized electrical workers have been a measurable component of Trenton’s labor movement since the 19th century, well before seventeen initial members were chartered as Local No. 269 of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) by the IBEW International Office on September 12, 1912, to represent the city’s inside electricians. In fact, a Local 30 was chartered in Trenton on July 2, 1892, just after the National Brotherhood of Electrical Workers held its first convention in St. Louis on November 21, 1891 – though the local went defunct shortly after it was founded.

The IBEW changed its name during its sixth convention in Pittsburgh in 1899 to reflect its inclusion of the first local organized in Canada, Local Union 93 of Ottawa, Ontario, on December 20, 1899. Just a couple of months earlier, Local 29 was chartered in Trenton September 7, 1899, but ceased operations in 1914. Local 135 also was chartered for the city on June 20, 1900, though it was abandoned by June 1902.

Another electrical union local was apparently formed in Trenton while the IBEW was embroiled in a bitter internal struggle, during which a large number of union locals all across the country formed a competing IBEW faction beginning in 1908. Known as the “Reid-Murphy split” after the two officers elected by the seceding group, these locals’ representatives attended a special convention in 1908 during which they refused to recognize President Frank J. McNulty and Secretary Peter W. Collins as the true officers of the IBEW. “A number of problems caused the split; such as the long-brewing dissension between wiremen and linemen, stimulated by disappointed office seekers and by a former Grand Treasurer removed from office in 1907 because of irregularities,” according to the “History of The IBEW.”

Instead, the defecting locals elected J.J. Reid as their president and J.W. Murphy as their secretary. Two IBEW conventions were even held in 1911, but a court decision in February 1912 declared the 1908 convention illegal and its actions void, and union funds were restored to the AFL-recognized group, the “History of The IBEW” reports. In the end, the IBEW 12th convention in Boston in 1913 included nearly all of the local unions that had seceded.

But according to a report in the August 28, 1912, *Trenton Times*, a local that had been formed “some years ago” in the city was affiliated with the Reid-Murphy faction and was “cut off by organized labor, with the result that the local rapidly disintegrated.” Organizer Thomas Thompson worked to rehabilitate the local after the international rift had been resolved, the article reported, but “this was found impossible and he then founded a new local.”

A Lasting Electrical Local for Trenton

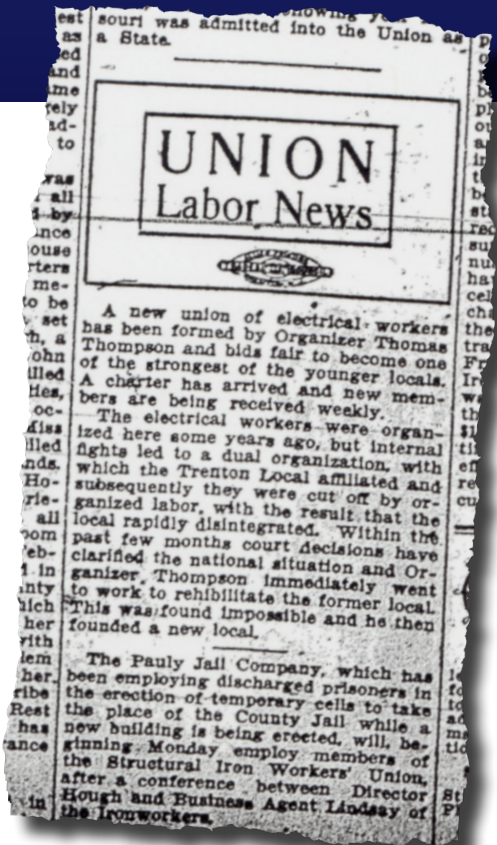
The early union was frowned upon by employers and skilled workers who joined the local sometimes promptly lost their jobs. But the contractors soon discovered that union men turned out better work...

From “A History of Local No. 269, IBEW”

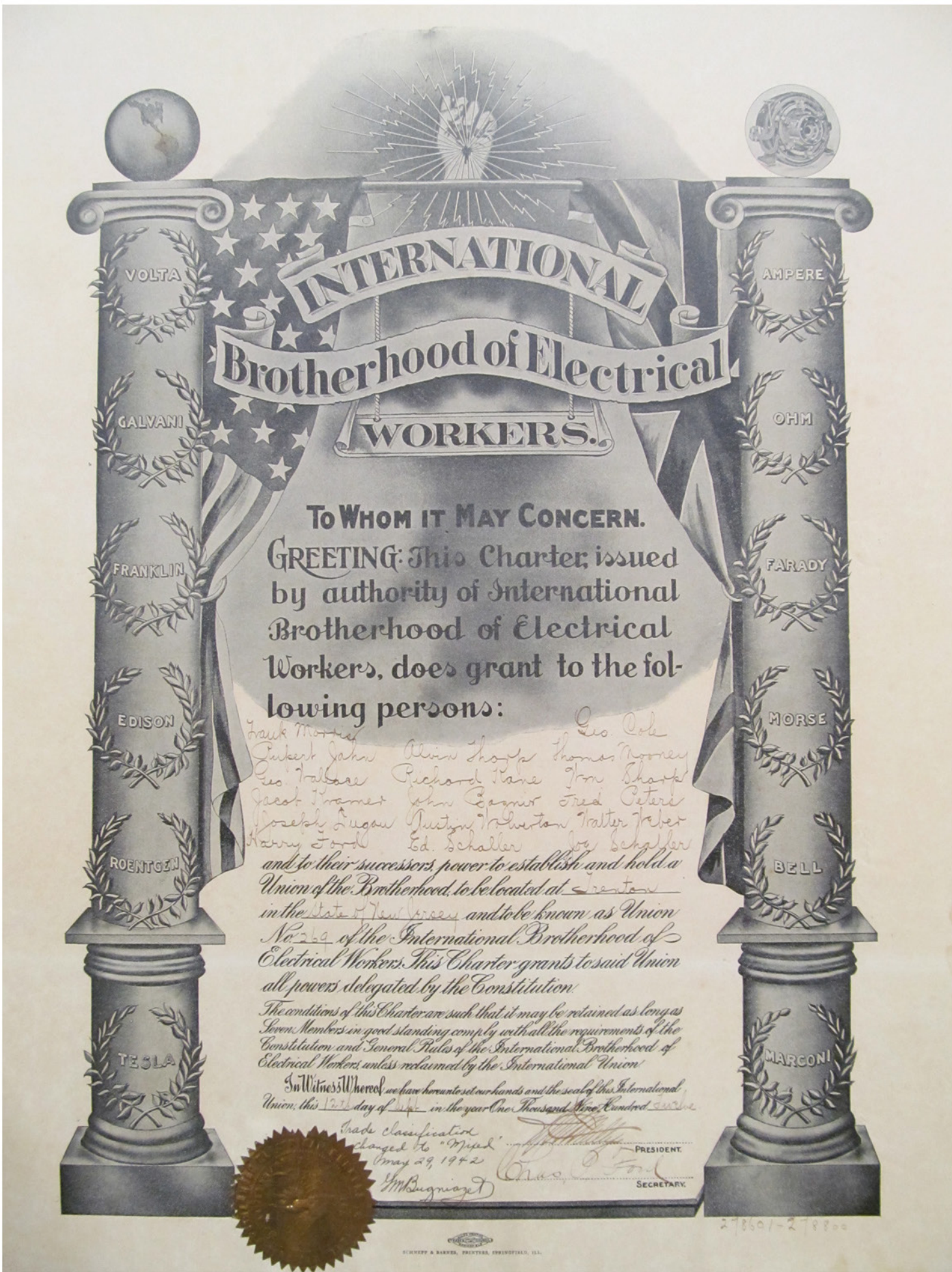
“The Electrical Workers is another organization which is rapidly forging to the front,” the *Trenton Times* declared in an October 28, 1912, announcement referring to the new Local 269, which was initially meeting on Friday nights in the Building Trades room of the Ribsam Building on Broad and Front Streets. At the time, however, the city’s electrical workers were lucky to find employment six months out of the year while making only \$3 to \$6 a week, “or as much as an average ribbon clerk in a general department store,” an earlier account of the local documented. What’s more, according to that narrative, working conditions were “primitive, with virtually no safety devices”

These 17 men are listed on the charter from the IBEW establishing Local 269 on September 12, 1912.

- Frank Morris
- Rupert Jahn
- George Wallace
- Jacob Kramer
- Joseph Dugan
- Harry Ford
- Alvin Thorp
- Richard Kane
- John Baznir
- Austin Wolverton
- Edward Schaller
- George Cole
- Thomas Mooney
- William Sharp
- Fred Peters
- Walter Weber
- Joseph Schaller



Trenton Times article, September 28, 1912.





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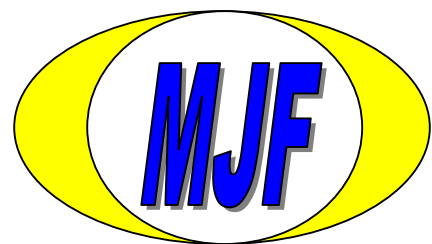
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Dennis Murphy Vice President
Tim Scannell.....Recording Secretary
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Donald Norcross, Assistant Business Manager
Michael R. Becker – Timothy Carew - Duke Collins
Daniel Cosner – Dennis Kleiner - Robert P. Nedohon, Jr.

- OFFICE STAFF -

Lynn Castellari – Karol Cohen – Kathy Doerr – Donna Zajack

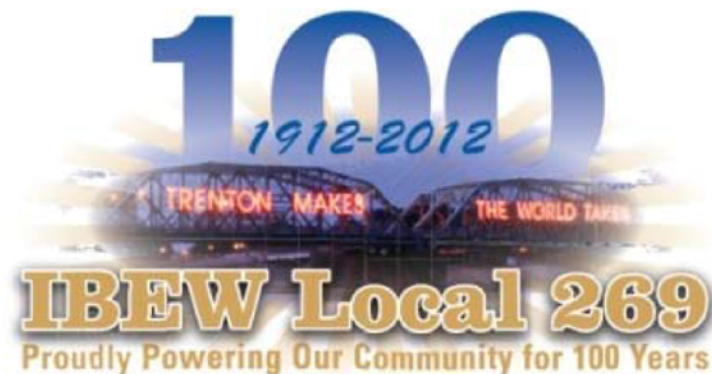
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Rupert A. Jahn, who would help guide Local 269 to prosperity for over 40 years as an officer and, eventually, business manager, was named the local's financial secretary in November 1912. In December, a full slate of officers was chosen, with George Cole as president, George Wallace as vice president, Frank L. Morris as financial secretary, Richard C. Kane as treasurer and Jahn as recording secretary.

By 1915, the wage scale for Local 269 was 60 cents per hour and a wireman worked 44 hours a week in somewhat less-than-ideal working conditions – if he could find the work. Indeed, the local was struggling, experiencing “difficulty in our jurisdiction” while having an “unconstitutional number of men out of employment,” Local 269 Press Agent John Bradford wrote in the February 1915 *Electrical Worker*, the IBEW news periodical. Summarizing the desperate situation, he also went on to write that the local's members remained determined to persevere:

“Work has been very slack here for some time; some of the men are working one and two days a week. But the most of them are doing nothing. But for a new local, the men are holding together fine.”



Modern-day photo of house at 654 Shiller Ave. in Trenton where the Local 269 charter was signed on the front porch in 1912.



The Ribsam Building circa 1910, site of first Local 269 meetings in 1912. (Image courtesy of Rider University.)

However, the local faced an equally ominous internal problem, as Bradford described, “How to get the Brothers to attend meetings is bothering us no little bit.” At the time, those members who did attend meetings were matriculating at the Cameo Hall on South Broad Street every Monday night.

Fortunes would begin to turn the next year for Local 269, which in 1916 signed a new agreement with its contractors, who by that time included Electric Contracting Co., Binder Electric Co., The Carr & Schultz Electric Co., J.P. Kelly Electric Co. and Mercer Electrical Co. Terms of the contract included 8-hour days, a wage increase of 56 9/11 cents per hour for wiremen until January 1, 1918, and an apprentice wage scale ranging from \$5 per week for first-year apprentices to \$12 per week for fourth-year trainees.

Local 169 members James M. Cannon and Albert Snyder, both of whom joined the local in 1916, recalled in “A History of Local No. 269, IBEW” that “house wiring jobs were coming in thick and fast those days” as homeowners began opting for clean, instantaneous electric light over outdated oil and gas lamps. The historical account also noted that the local benefited from a domestic job boom created by World War I, as Local 269 worked at the time

‘Competence and Courage’ ... Rupert A. Jahn

“A charter member of IBEW Local 269, Rupert A. “Rube” Jahn would gain respect and admiration throughout the labor movement as one the local’s most accomplished business agents, whose leadership and dedication brought unprecedented gains in working hours, workplace conditions and worker safety to electricians throughout the local’s jurisdiction and the Trenton region.”

– From “A History of Local No. 269, IBEW”



On October 13, 1956, Local 269 held a Testimonial Dinner in honor of Rupert A. Jahn, Local 269 Business Agent/Manager from 1915 to 1956, when he was replaced by his son, Rupert J. Jahn. The event program described his accomplishments and industry-wide esteem as such:

Four decades of continuous leadership of IBEW Local 269 is a standing record for longevity throughout the nation. Rube Jahn holds this record. Yet it is still another kind of record when considered more closely. For when it is understood that he has been re-elected time after time in the democratic manner required by the IBEW constitution, by means of the secret ballot, this record of human confidence is certainly all the more remarkable. This lengthy term of office was possible, then, only through Rube’s own achievements as his local’s leader.

As Al Smith used to say, “Let’s look at the record.” When Rube Jahn assumed the office of Business Manager in 1915, the wage scale for Local 269 was 60¢ per hour. A wireman worked 44 hours a week in somewhat less than ideal working conditions. By 1940, twenty-five years later, a journeyman electrician was receiving \$2.00 an hour and was by now working a forty-hour week. Today, Trenton’s electricians are receiving the highest wage in the country, a very satisfactory \$4.00 per hour. The record speaks for itself.

Business Manager Jahn was President of the New Jersey Association of Electrical Workers and has long been a delegate and member of the Credential Committee of the State Federation of Labor’s conventions. He is one of five men representing the nation’s organized electrical workers on the Council of Industrial Relations.

In addition to all his other duties tonight’s honored guest was able to find time to serve his city as a member of the Trenton Board of Education for several years. He served on many other civic committees and was especially outstanding in his support of the Delaware Valley United Fund. The Local Union has received official commendation from the United Fund for its one hundred per cent record of contributions under his leadership.

Surveying this more than adequate record serves to indicate clearly the high esteem in which Rube Jahn is held, not only by the members of his local, but by the men he daily faced across the bargaining table. His hard, patient and consistent efforts on behalf of laboring people have won him a host of friends in the state as well as in the nation. Only a fraction of these friends can possibly be represented here this evening. With deep regret, then, does organized labor note Rube Jahn’s more than deserved retirement.

Rupert A. Jahn passed away in 1967.

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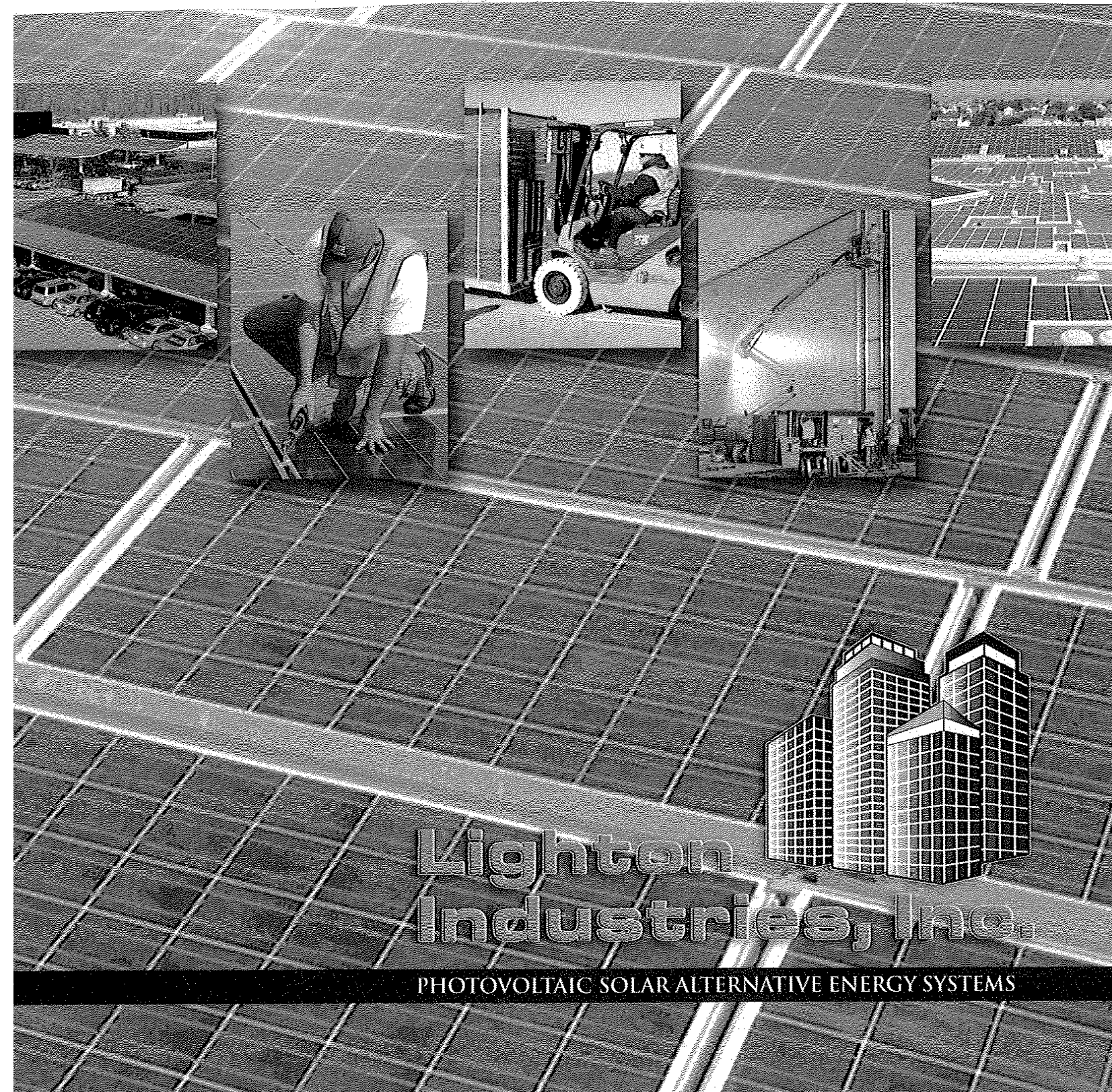
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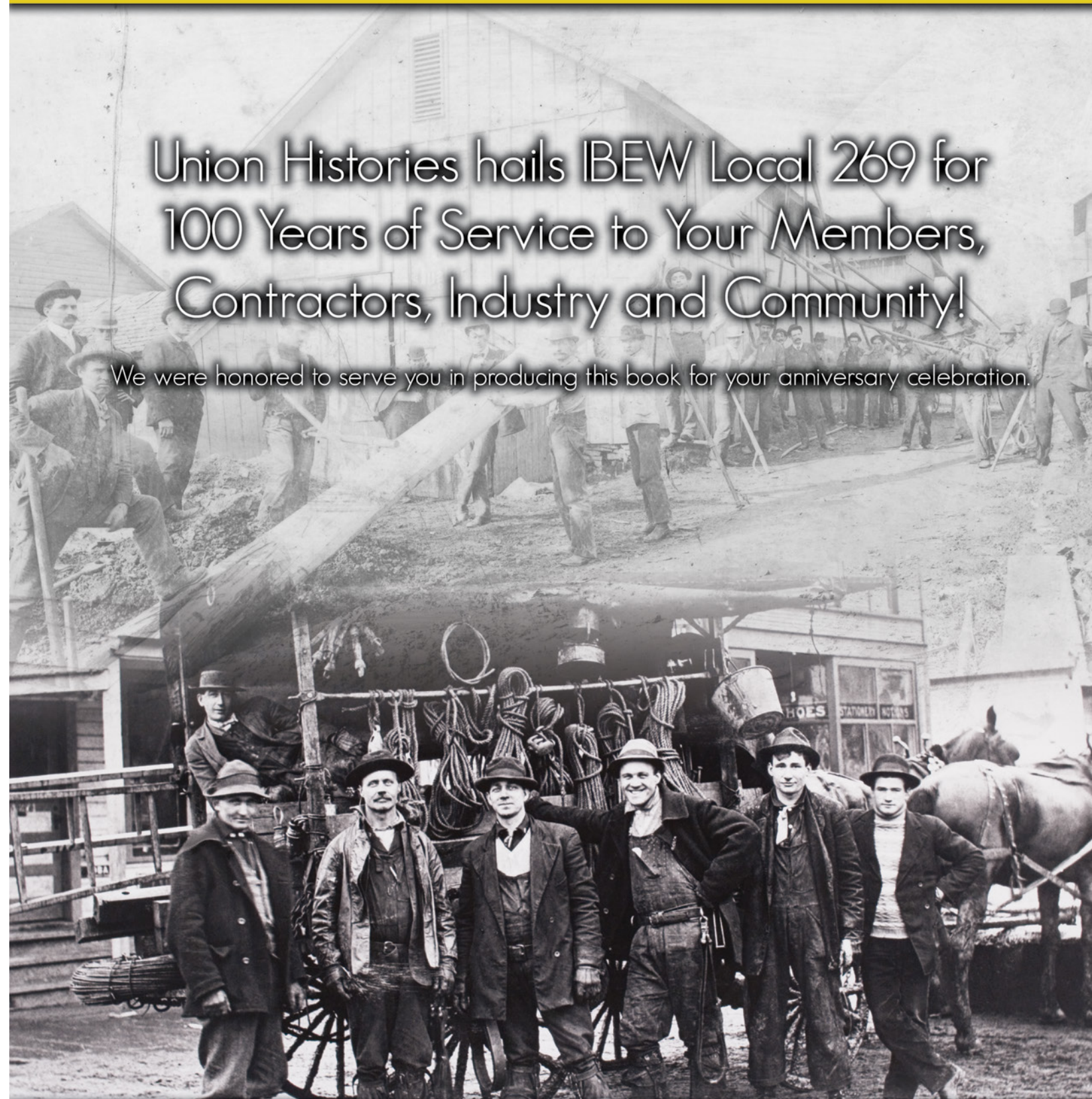
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on large jobs such as the Princeton University stadium, the Roebling Mansion on West State Street, the Bijou Theatre on South Clinton Avenue, Nevius-Voorhees Department Store in downtown Trenton, the Trenton Water Works on John Fitch Parkway and U.S. Army Fort Dix when it was established in 1917.

Less than two years later, work by 1918 was sparse and most members were working out of town, Local 269 Business Agent L.P. Marciante reported in the April *Electrical Worker* that year. The local also was involved in a rather substantial jurisdictional fight with Local 98 of Philadelphia over the control of Bristol, Pennsylvania, over which International Vice President Gustave M. Bugniazet decided in favor of Local 269 for the merchant shipbuilding job that paid 75 cents an hour.

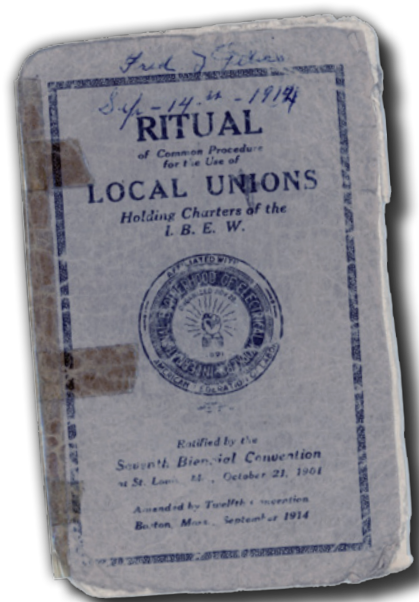
The “dollar per idea” late that year spawned the local’s first significant strike, which lasted six weeks, and while “landing the almighty was an utter failure,” the local did gain a 17-cent hourly raise, new Press Secretary Lester Dunn wrote in the April 1919 *Electrical Worker*. He went on to report mixed results from the walkout:

Throughout much of that final year of the decade, Dunn regularly conveyed the local's precarious employment situation. The local did move from Camera Hall to Wagner and Beyer's Hall on North Broad Street, a "more modern meeting room" with electric lights – a welcomed change from the gas lamps in the previous

*Letter to the editor from Local 269
Agreement Committee, Trenton Times,
January 4, 1919.*



IBEW Local 269 members pictured here were working in 1920 at the Mercer Automobile factory in Trenton, where one of America's first sports cars, the Mercer Raceabout, was made. The first Mercer was the Type 30 and the Type 35 became Mercer's second car, guaranteed to do 70 mph in a time when very few people had gone over 50 mph. The factory was eventually bought by the Roebling family, which was famous for building the Brooklyn Bridge.



Ritual Procedures Book, September 1914.

headquarters – and began meeting on Tuesday nights instead of Wednesdays, Dunn wrote in the *Electrical Worker* September 1919 issue.

What's more, the press secretary was by then also able to report, "Work is opening up a little at last and with Bristol shipyard about all our men are employed." The work on the ships there had been subcontracted to Comstock Co. and was then, as Dunn relayed in the August 1919 *Electrical Worker*, a "fair job and taking care of a good-sized gang."

Adding to the growing fervor, after a three-day walkout at Bristol, the Comstock Co. granted an increase in wages of 9 cents an hour and agreed to pay \$1 beginning January 1, 1920, and, Dunn announced in the October 1919 *Electrical Worker*, "all the contracts in the

city are favorable to the dollar rate." By decade's end, the local amended the agreement with Trenton's contractors to increase the scale of wages from 82 cents to \$1 per hour.

Improving the Local's Condition

"We could boast of a 100 percent closed town on construction, however since then four of the contractors fell by the wayside. Their greed for money led them to believe they could make more by employing scabs. Their mistake, however, soon came to them in full force as they have lost some very large and good jobs through the employment of these rats and the rumor around now is that they again intend to be good and follow the righteous path."

From October 1920 Electrical Worker column from IBEW Local 269 Press

Secretary Rupert Jahn

The "Roaring 20s" began as such for Local 269, with work reportedly very good and another agreement raising its scale of wages over \$1 an hour by mid-1920. But throughout much of the decade, work in and around Trenton remained pretty much as described by Press Secretary Lester Dunn in the February 1926 *Electrical Worker* – average.

The local on March 3, 1923, was – along with all other electrical locals in the state of New Jersey – made a party of the agreement with the New Jersey telephone company, amending the original contract originally consummated by Local 52 on May 1, 1916.



Atlantic City, circa 1920s.

Despite the lackluster employment conditions, by 1925 a large number of member electricians were working at the new W. J. Sloan linoleum plant, in Atlantic City and on a couple of other substantial jobs. That year, the local chose to forego a seventh annual banquet event and, instead, opted to assist the local Mine Workers' Union with its strike "to what extent we are able in their cause," Dunn reported. The strike ended by the beginning of 1926 and plans were on again for a banquet, which was held March 25 at the Hotel Sterling in Trenton and attended by International President J.P. Noonan.

World War I Honor Roll Call

IBEW Local 269 members who answered the country's call during World War I, as listed in the *Electrical Worker*; all returned home and none was seriously wounded.

February 1918

E. B. Reilley
A. B. Snyder
William Fallon
J. B. Witter
Harry Brown
Joseph Connelly

June 1918

Howard Austin
William C. Brindley
Eugene Fraley
Edward Shutz

Continued on page 32



ELECTRICAL-MECHANICAL
CONTRACTORS

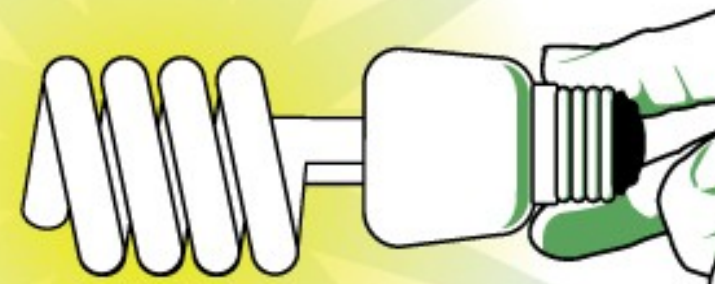
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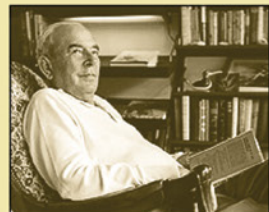
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— John B. Henkels, Jr.

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On May 1, 1926, Local 269 and electrical contractors doing work in its jurisdiction settled on a new agreement that gave journeymen electricians \$11.50 per day until May 1, 1927, and \$11.75 from that date through the following year, while apprentices would be paid in a range from \$5 for first-year apprentices to \$28 for those in their fifth year. Work still remained “fair,” Dunn wrote in the June 1926 *Electrical Worker*, noting that a big job that was about finished “will put a number on the mourners’ bench.”

The Great Depression of the 1930s that sank the nation into the longest, most widespread and most devastating economic downturn of the 20th century, also greatly affected Local 269. Nearly broke and unable to raise money, the local was reduced to seven dues-paying members by 1932 and wages for those lucky enough to get work dropped to 25 cents an hour and lower, according to “A History of Local No. 269, IBEW.” In true labor union fashion, many of the local’s members shared work with fellow electricians and paid \$5 per week to help unemployed brothers; regardless, “A History of Local No. 269, IBEW,” reported, “Oldtimers say that the years between 1932 and 1936 were the roughest.”

In late 1936, the local’s Executive Board met to discuss moving the local’s offices to Carpenters Hall, where the monthly rent was \$2.50 cheaper and included use of a phone, according to the local’s November 16 meeting minutes. Also during that meeting, it was announced that the board ordered a resolution be created to increase dues to \$8 per month “so as not to have the organization go into the red as the auditing committee proved it has done in 1936, also to try to keep membership down to 85 or 90 members.”

At the same time, the local remained active in continuing its work to impact the electrical industry as a whole; during the November 16 meeting, a committee was appointed to draft a contractor’s license bill to be presented to the state legislature. The local also joined the fight against Public Service Gas & Electric “non-union conditions” in Newark and Jersey City, and eventually its members would partake in public substation, power house and commercial office work, including a new office



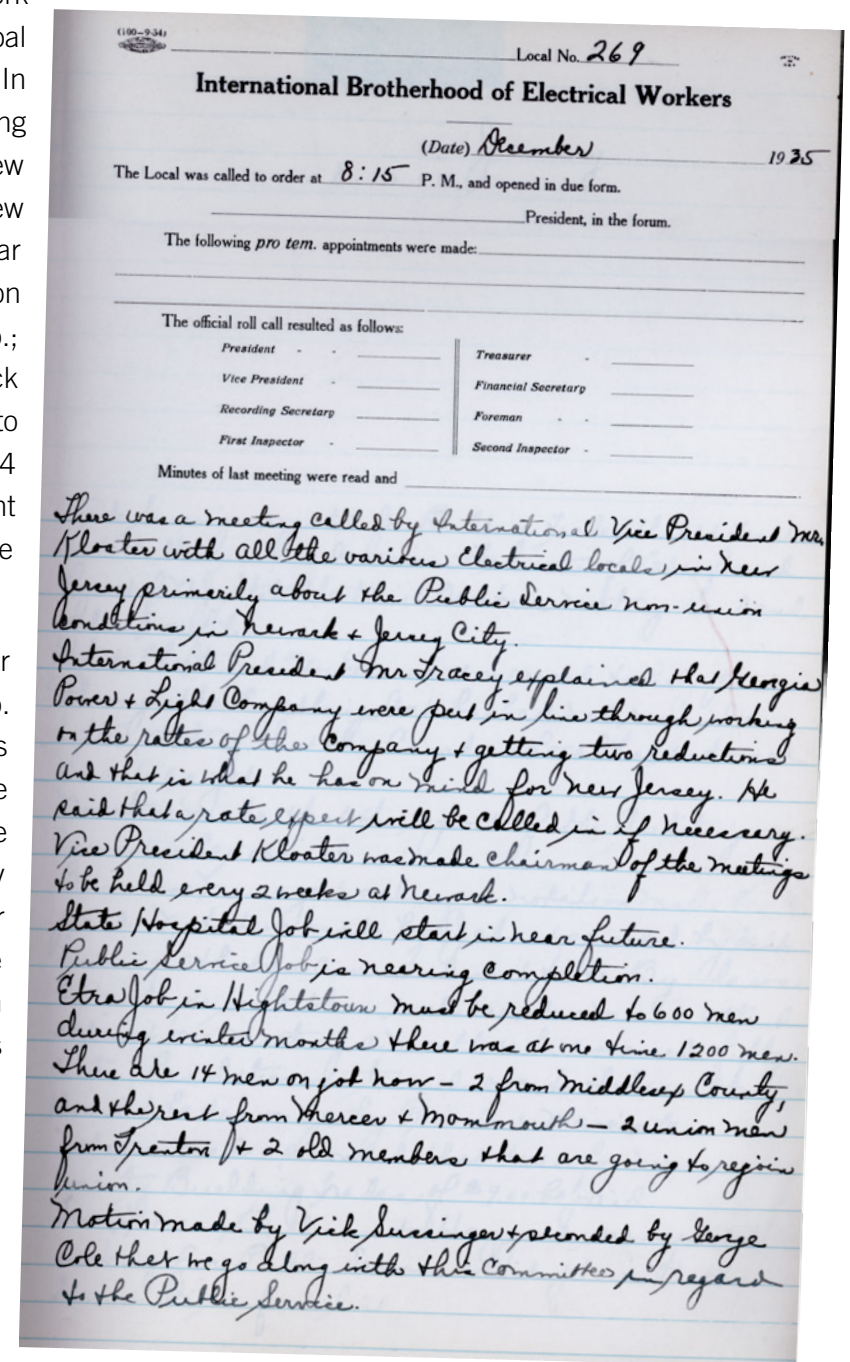
building in Burlington in 1939. What’s more, the November 16 meeting minutes report that the local’s business manager reported, “Quick action resulted from picketing the Sharlin job.”

As the decade grinded towards its close, work would pick up as the world entered another global war and the nation’s economy began to recover. In 1937 and 1938, Local 269 members began finding regular work on projects such as the new New Jersey State Hospital; Princeton University; the new Trenton Times building; Wetzels Tile Co. and Star Porcelain, who were building new kilns; Trenton Potteries; General Motors; Thermoid Rubber Co.; and the Public Service generating plant on Duck Island. By March 26, 1937, the local was able to adopt a resolution to change dues from \$8 to \$4 per month – with a 4-percent weekly assessment for its working members to help those who were out of work.

In late 1938, wages climbed to \$2 an hour for a seven-hour day, “A History of Local No. 269, IBEW” chronicled. The next year, Business Manager Rupert A. Jahn also worked to affiliate the local with the Princeton Building Trades Alliance to “get their support on all Princeton work,” May 15, 1939, meeting minutes recorded. Another outward sign that things were improving for the local was its August 5, 1939, annual outing, which “was even more of a success than in previous years,” the local’s press secretary declared in that year’s September IBEW *Journal* (which took the place of the *Electrical Worker*).

During World War II, Local 269 members were active both in defense work and military service. On the homefront and after the war, the local grew and its jurisdiction was even expanded to “mixed” electrical trades on May 29, 1942. Five years later, the local during its July 1, 1947 meeting gave the business manager the power to “vote as he sees fit” on a referendum pertaining to change in the local’s bylaws “concerning the work of the inside and outside electricians,” according to meeting minutes.

By that year, employment at Fort Dix was continuing as regularly as ever, with Peiffer Electric winning the electrical contract for the remodelling of 42 buildings there. Other work during the later half of the decade included the library at Princeton University, being handled by Ross Electric; a new addition on the Bell Telephone office building, under Buhl & Cafferty Electrical Contractors; and the installation of large gas furnaces at a toy factory in Burlington, being handled by Eastern Electric Co.



Meeting Minutes, December 1935.

IBEW Local 269 Meeting Locations

Ribsam Building, Broad & Front streets
Fridays, Sept. 1912 – Feb. 1914

Camera Hall, 205 S. Broad St.
Mondays, Feb. 1914 – May 1919
Wednesdays, May 1919 – Jan. 1920

112 S. Broad St.
Tuesdays, Jan. 1920 – May 1922

Electrician’s Hall
Mondays, May 1922 – 1930

159 Mercer St.
1st & 3rd Mondays, 1930 – 1940

Bank Building, 310 Broad St.
1st & 3rd Mondays, 1940 – 1943

Labor Lyceum, 159 Mercer St.
1st Monday, 1943 – Sept. 1958

Eldorado & Franklin Morris Ave.
1st Monday, Sept. 1958 – Sept. 1960

Union Hall, 670 Whitehead Ave.
1st Monday, Sept. 1960 – Sept. 2010

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Richard K. Dressel <i>Financial Secretary</i>	Charles Mattson <i>Treasurer</i>

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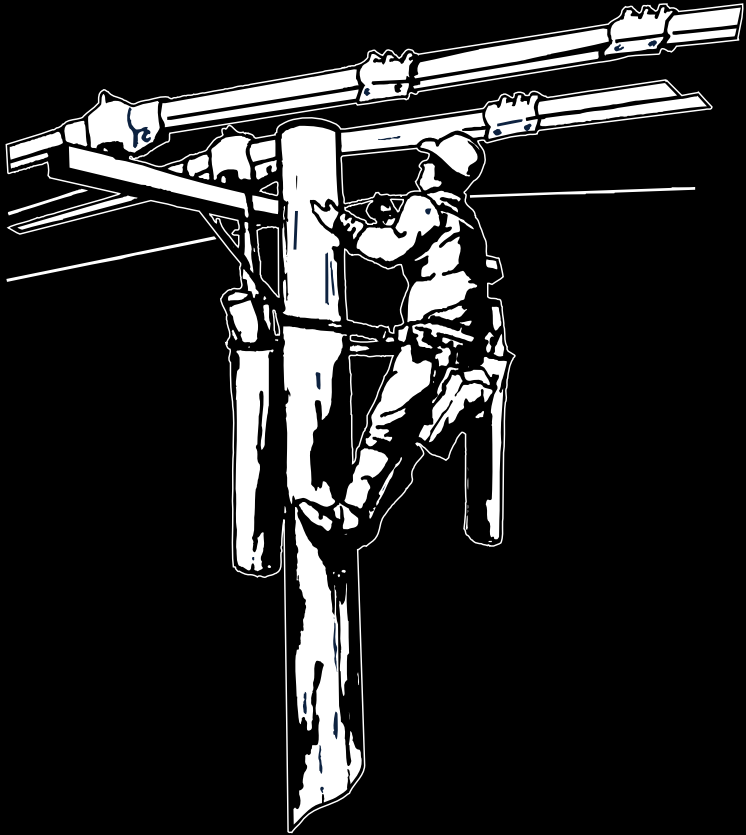
BUSINESS AGENTS

R. Jeff Gallup <i>Construction</i>	Daniel Gumble <i>Construction</i>	Charles Mattson <i>Construction</i>
Martin Schwartz <i>Construction</i>	Thomas J. Sullivan <i>Construction</i>	Thomas Walker <i>Construction</i>
Edmund B. Werner <i>Construction</i>	Kevin Marion <i>Organizer</i>	Robert Sebrovksi <i>Safety Director</i>
Thomas D. Misciagna <i>Asst Business Manager</i>	Keith Misciagna <i>Telecommunications</i>	Stephen J. Clay <i>Telecomm/Organizer</i>
	Denise L. Mandeville <i>Telecommunications</i>	

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But by the end of the decade, work was “slowing up considerably,” according to the local’s November 1, 1948, meeting minutes, and Business Manager Jahn was busy finding 25 to 30 members work out of town. By early 1950, with prospects around Trenton “not too good,” as announced during the local’s April 3 meeting, Local 269 electrical workers were in Pittsburgh, Camden, Plainfield, Philadelphia and Baltimore.

Gaining Leverage and a Pension

“Brother Jahn was informed by various contractors that they were told to cut back to five days per week. Business Manager told them that if that happened they would lose 40 to 50 of their men. Contractors then took this matter up at the Steel Company’s Pittsburgh office and they were informed to carry on at 6 days per week.”

From IBEW Local 269 October 6, 1952, meeting minutes

Local 269 made great strides in the 1950s and members were well-employed throughout much of the decade. On July 26, 1951, the local’s jurisdiction was changed from “mixed” to “inside and outside” and would be changed again on April 22, 1953 to “inside” only before being switched back again on June 17, 1953, to “inside and outside.” A new agreement with contractors raise the local’s wage rate on July 1, 1952, to \$3.45 an hour.

The McLouth Steel Mill was a major employer of Local 269 in the 1950s, with about 900 electricians working there already by April 1952 and by year’s end that number reaching around 2,000 men. Also that year among several other larger jobs, the Wickton Abbott Co. put about 140 members to work at the former aluminum plant reconnecting the building to make ordnance shell casings.

Perhaps one of the local’s most significant events of the decade, if not its entire history, was the formation and implementation of a pension plan, into which contractors started paying on January 1, 1956. During its annual

IBEW Local 269 Business Managers

- Rupert A. Jahn (Recording Secretary), 1912
- Frank L. Morris (Recording Secretary), 1912 – 1913
- Carl F. Schaffer (Recording Secretary), 1914 & 15
- J. H. Brelsford, 1916 & 1917
- Rupert A. Jahn, 1919 – 1957
- Rupert J. Jahn, 1957 – 1967
- Donald J. Kennedy, 1967 – 1996
- Charles L. Marciante, 1996 – 2007
- Dennis M. Doyle, 2007 – 2010
- Stephen M. Aldrich, 2010 – present

IBEW Local 269 Presidents

- George Cole, Sept. 1912 – Feb. 1914
- Frank L. Morris, Feb. 1914 – April 1915
- W. Brindley, April 1915 – Feb. 1916
- George Wallace, Feb. 1916 – May 1916 (at least) (1916 – 1938 no information available)
- Louis P. Marciante, 1939 (1940 no information available)
- Chris Marciante, 1941 (1942 – 1965 no information available)
- Carl Kraemer Sr., 1966 – 1976
- Charles R. Cook Sr., 1977 – 1980
- Carl Kraemer Jr., 1981 – 1994
- Clifford R. Reisser, 1995 – 2012
- Wayne DeAngelo, Sep. 2012 – present

dinner dance on February 15, 1958, the local honored eight men who had recently retired and were the first to receive checks from the local’s new pension fund; those men were Rupert A. Jahn, Fred Peters, George Wallace, Bill Perrine, Ferd Leimer, Wes Reed, Sam McDowell and Henry Jernowski.

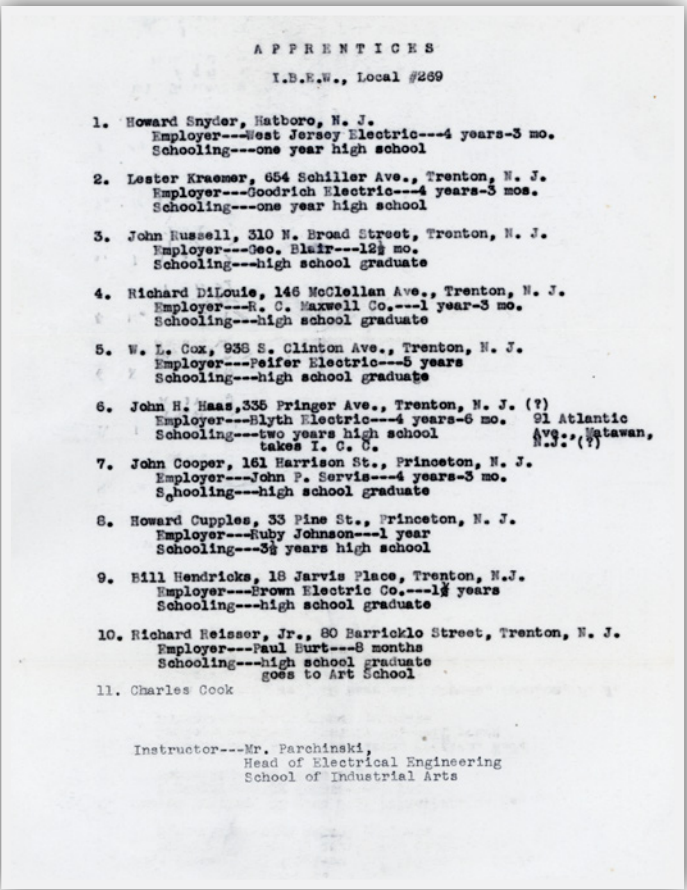
In reporting the new pensioners to in the April 1958 *Journal*, Press Secretary A. C. Cliver reflected upon the contributions of those men:

“Their tales of unionism in the past years make us stop and think. May we progress as much in the future as they have in the past.”

The workload into and through the early 1960s was “high” for the most part, as Cliver described that summer of 1965 in the February 1966 *Journal*. The local expected that year to be good, also, and also established its Sick Fund to help members who could not make it to the job.

But the following year the membership was left to face the January 25, 1967, sudden passing of their business manager, Rupert J. Jahn, who had taken over the position when his father retired in 1957. “We have lost a good trade unionist,” an obituary in the February 1967 *Journal* stated. “The IBEW and the labor movement will miss him very much.” Later that year, the local finished construction of a training center – which Rupert J. Jahn was instrumental in founding in honor of his father – onto its business office and named it the Rupert Jahn Memorial Trade School after the son, Rupert J.

During the 1960s, the local also began to partake in and work to take advantage of the IBEW Committee on Political Education (COPE) program, which solicits



Graduating Apprentices, 1945.

voluntary political contributions from members. With the help of COPE, membership would be made much more aware that they must support the election of friends to political positions, and beginning that decade, COPE was one effort to which the local turned to make that happen. But the local’s COPE committee also spread its wings to other venues, and on December 22, 1968, held its first annual Christmas party at the local union hall on Whitehead Road, which was attended by almost 300 children of all ages, according to a July 1969 *Journal* article by Local 269 COPE Chairman Charles Howell.



Union Hall, 1956.

Throughout much of the 1970s, the work situation for Local 269 was poor; Business Manager Donald Kennedy announced during the local's May 4, 1970, meeting that "there still wasn't much work around." It was a theme that would repeat itself over the next several years in meeting minutes and notices to the IBEW magazine. Press Secretary Al Bartolino reported in the November 1974 *Journal*:

"The work situation picked up a little over the early summer months, but unfortunately, not nearly on the level it should have been as in past years. Several local and visiting Brothers are constantly on the referral roll and are placed all too slowly, as dictated by the lull in work. It looks as if another tight winter will meet us head-on."



Local 269 Christmas Party, circa 1960s.

has been and continues to be very poor. The local's unemployment rolls are swelled and the average time-off is running three to four months."

But Local 269 was spurred to action by those challenging times, turning to greater organizing and even marketing efforts to improve its lot. In the summer of 1973, Local 269 formed a committee to "publicize its activities," and, as Bartolino announced in the September 1975 *Journal*, Kennedy continued to "stress the importance of COPE and its impact on various economic bills presently pending in both the state and federal Legislatures."

By the end of the decade, Bartolino was able to pronounce in the December 1979 *Journal* that fortunes were turning for the better:

"Last summer proved to be the first time in the past several years that we enjoyed almost 100 percent employment within our ranks. Hopefully, it will herald a long-awaited upswing in the economy so sorely needed. The advent of the winter months will of course undoubtedly slow the construction industry down, as it always does, but we can only hope it doesn't have the severity witnessed during the past five years."



Rupert Jahn Memorial Trade School Ground Breaking, 1967.

Bartolino gave similar accounts in the April 1975 *Journal*, describing that "the work situation is still bad with no relief seen in the immediate future," although the local did work on the new student community center at Trenton State College under the Dean Electric Co. During the local's October 4, 1976 meeting, the membership discussed the "slow" work situation and U.S. Steel laying off men as "their construction work is stopping." In November 1976 Bartolino wrote, "Work in the area

Ups & Downs Towards Y2K

"This past summer has seen the return of full employment for the local union. The work picture within our jurisdiction has been very good for the past four months despite the fall-back in the auto, steel and other large industries. ... The last five or six summers have seen us limping through and concerned about what lay ahead during the cold months. The unemployment rolls were swelled and the threat of lost medical insurance alone weighed heavily in the minds of many of our Brothers. Those who were able to traveled to other areas seeking employment while others barely got by with unemployment insurance while waiting for work that almost never came."

From December 1980 IBEW Journal column by Local 269 Press Secretary Al Bartolino

Indeed, the 1980s brought a renewed vigor and outlook to Local 269, with Business Manager Kennedy declaring at its August 4, 1980, meeting, "Work situation is good." And the prosperity continued, as Bartolino indicated in the January 1982 *Journal*, "Work in the area this past summer has been very good and we took pleasure in being able to employ several visiting Brothers from our sister locals. We remember only too well when we likewise were helped."

In early 1983, the local renewed a 12-week maintenance agreement for the Justice Complex, which it believed could become permanent. Meanwhile, February 7 meeting minutes from that year announced that the State of New Jersey "established a prevailing wage rate based on our contract." Even that winter, a notoriously slow season for 269's electricians, work was "decent," Bartolino wrote in the June 1983 *Journal*.

Continued on page 46

First Female Member Catherine Foy

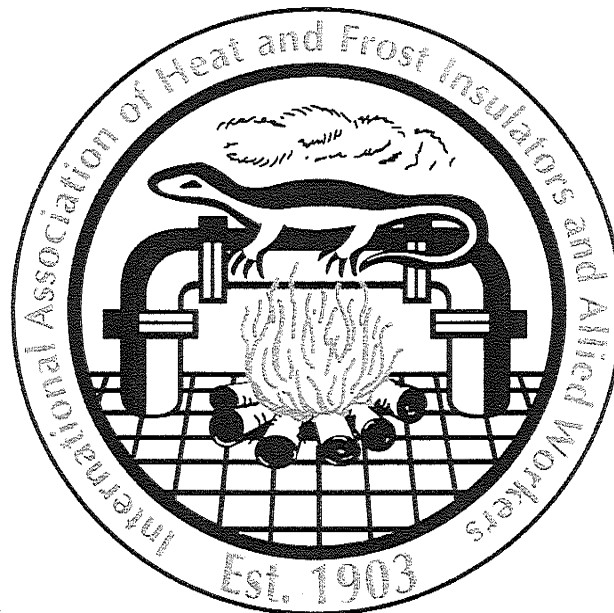
In the summer of 1979, after 68 years, IBEW Local 269 realized "a keynote first for the local union" when it inducted its first female member into the organization when it accepted the application of Catherine Foy as an apprentice. The daughter of long-standing member Denny Foy, who by then had passed away, and the sister of active member Joe Foy, Catherine went right to work on the job site of the new Justice Complex in Center City, under the tutelage of Superintendent Dick DiLouie. "Sister Catherine is quickly adapting herself to the mechanics of the business," Local 269 Press Secretary Al Bartolino wrote in the January 1980 IBEW *Journal*. "Catherine, as everyone else, is required to serve a full apprenticeship and schooling program under the terms set forth in our agreement."

Foy was also the first female dispatcher for the Burlington Township Police Department, and after her career as an electrician, she joined the New Jersey State Police, retiring as a senior operator/supervisor.

Foy passed away on Sept. 7, 2012, at the age of 66.

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Strike, circa 1980s.

Throughout the decade, meetings were peppered with reports of “good” work; the August 3, 1987, minutes even recorded that 12 of the local’s contractors had recently started new jobs. The following year, among many projects employing Local 269 electricians and technicians, the local entered into a landmark Project Labor Agreement with J.A. Jones for a job at the power plant on Duck Island. By the end of the decade, the local’s enrollment was hovering around 500 members.

The early 1990s also started out well for the local, with members working on various projects including the multi-year rebuilding program to upgrade the Public Service Electric and Gas Co. Mercer Generating Station with joint-venture contractor SM/Sargent Electric. A May 1991 *Journal* article described the work:

“To date the local has organized 85 electricians to meet the needs of the rebuild program We’ve been working on the remote assembly of a new, state-of-the-art, 2,000-ton precipitator built on a temporary steel structure 75 feet in the air and 150 feet from its final resting place. ... the move, when completed in the span of five days, was estimated to save the utility about \$4 million in capital expenses by reducing Unit 2’s outage from 52 weeks to 37, when it is expected to be back online.”

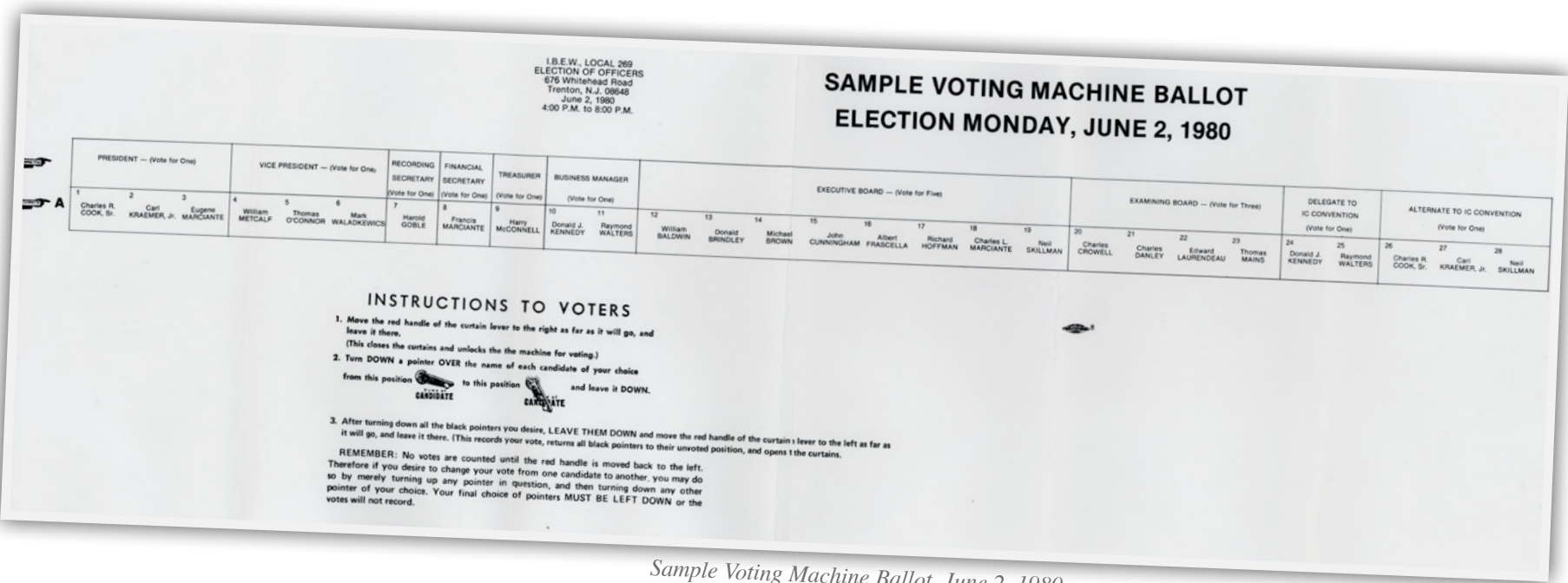
But as the decade progressed towards a new millennium, employment again decreased, with Kennedy divulging to the local’s June 6, 1994, meeting that “the work situation is terrible.” Bartolino similarly disclosed in the July 1994 *Journal*, “Regrettably, the employment outlook for the immediate future remains poor.” What’s more, among much picketing in which Local 269 members were participating during that time, lines were set up at the Discovery Zone, the Horizon Center and Giant Food stores.

As early as 1992, however, the local was hard at work to reverse the latest discouraging trend, its leadership for the next few years putting a considerable amount of time and effort into organizing non-union contractors – a venture that would eventually pay off. In spring and summer 1993, Local 269 also began to embrace the IBEW International Office effort to present the Construction Organizing Membership Education Training (COMET) program to the rank and file through its local unions on a national scale. “Local 269 is prepared to hit the ground running, due in large part to all the past organizing efforts of Business Manager Don Kennedy,” Bartolino wrote in the July 1993 *Journal*.

In 1994, concerns grew as the Bucks County, Pennsylvania, modern trash-to-steam facility, which at its peak employed 130 electricians under Riggs-Distler Electric Co. of Cherry Hill, was nearing completion (on schedule thanks in no small part to Local 269 electricians). The facility, a two-boiler operation with provisions for a possible third unit, had the capability of disposing of 1,500 tons of refuse per day.

The local’s recently instituted Market Recovery Program did not even target a job during the entire month of December 1994, and as expected, 1995 saw unemployment numbers the worse they had been since the 1970s.

But in 1996, the local’s extended organizing, COMET and marketing began to pay dividends. “Our campaign organizing is having a positive effect on the work situation,” Kennedy announced to the local’s September 11, 1995 meeting, also declaring the work was “OK.”



Sample Voting Machine Ballot, June 2, 1980.

Bartolino echoed the business manager’s conclusion in his February 1996 *Journal* column, writing, “The job outlook has changed somewhat from the doldrums it was anchored in last year. ... Our efforts in job procurement and salting must remain at a high level as a hedge against the present state of the economy.”

To that end, Kennedy and business agents Charles Marciante and Rick Aicher throughout much of the year staged or participated with other crafts of the Mercer-Burlington Building Trades Council in informational picketing at job sites that were not manned 100 percent by organized labor. Reports for the rest of the decade mostly were of “good” work.

One particularly fine “feather in its organizing hat” came in early 1997 when the local finally came to terms with Armour Electric and signed an agreement with one of the biggest non-union contractors in Southeastern Pennsylvania. “A considerable amount of time and effort by our local was put into organizing Armour’s shop,” new Local 269 Press Secretary Michael Marciante broadcasted in the May 1997 *Journal*.

The effort was so effective, in fact, that on June 2 that year, IBEW International Vice President Larry Rossa visited the local in Trenton and informed its membership during a regular meeting that the local “holds the record in the State of New Jersey in organizing” and asked Local 269 to be in the forefront of organizing the telecommunications industry in the state, according to Marciante’s September 1997 *Journal* column. Two years later, the International Office gave Local 269 a 1998 White House ornament for the most COPE contributions for the Third District – and the local was fifth in the entire nation for COPE donations.



Local 269 work crew at Old Dominion.



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Rehab for Humanity, 1995

A letter in the February 1987 IBEW Journal written by then-Press Secretary Al Bartolino, describing the local's involvement in building a playground at the Mercer County Day Training Center (dubbed the "Olympic Minipark"), perhaps best highlights the local's commitment to helping others in need:

"Every once in awhile the local union receives a plea for help from some worthwhile organization instituted and structured for those less fortunate than ourselves. Often the help needed is of a financial type such as the area's annual Delaware Valley United Way Drive, but just as frequently it is of the kind of help that we are most proficient at offering. Electrical construction, of course, is our forte, but we are willing and quite able to assist any deserving organization in all aspects of related construction and assembly."

Among many other causes to which the local contributes manpower, skills and funds, its membership has been involved over the years with such worthy causes as Habitat for Humanity; Red Cross blood drives; construction of the Mercer County Vietnam Veterans Memorial in 2002; and the Delaware Valley United Fund. In fact, in 1965 the local received the fund's "Award for Outstanding Community Service" for recognition of its 100-percent participation over the previous 14 years (though in the Journal article in which this was announced Press Secretary A. C. Cliver wrote, "Local Union 269 does not make a habit of bragging about their activities in the local civic or charitable fields.")

Continued from page 47

Meanwhile, the Market Recovery Fund was also making inroads, with Assistant Business Manager Jim Kraemer even calling it "our most useful tool on prevailing wage projects" during the local's December 6, 1999, meeting.

As a tangible sign that its programs were, in fact, effective, Local 269 swore in 80 new members from shops organized over the preceding year during its monthly meeting in September 1999. "As they were sworn in," Marciante described in the January 2000 *Journal*, "the pride in the new members' faces lit up the whole room!"

Into A New Millenium & Beyond

"Work is good."

From Business Manager Charles Marciante's reports to January 3 and December 4, 2000, Local 269 meetings

While the new Y2K millenium started out well for Local 269, it was never one to rest on its laurels and was actively embracing industry technologies for the future. Training its membership for alternative, renewable energy work, the local was better preparing its electricians and technicians to handle the newest applications. After all, as Business Manager Marciante pointed out during the local's March 12, 2001, meeting, Public Service and GPU Energy by then had \$380 million for the development of alternative energy.

To resolutely demonstrate is unequivocal support for solar energy and its potential to create jobs, Local 269 in 2002 installed a rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) system to its headquarters on Whitehead Road. "The solar industry is generating jobs throughout the country," Marciante said in a newsletter of the Union of Concerned Scientists, the self-proclaimed leading science-based nonprofit organization working for a healthy environment. "As consumer awareness and interest in renewable generation increases, the IBEW is actively training its members on the installation and maintenance of PV systems."

While work soon after tailed off, to the point by the fall of 2005 that the local was on a 32-hour work week, Local 269 persevered through the first decade of 2000 and to its 100th anniversary in 2012. Describing the local membership's work in the construction of the Dominion Co-Gen power plant in Morrisville, Pennsylvania, which



Local 269 union hall's Photovoltaic (PV) System.

at one point employed more than 300 electricians to help build and connect four natural-gas-fired turbines capable of producing 1,158 megawatts of electrical power, Press Secretary Marciante wrote in the IBEW *Journal*:

"We had many traveling members working on the jobsite. They brought with them countless years of experience and good quality craftsmanship. Hats off to all of my brothers and sisters from Local 269 who have all of these qualities and put in many long days and nights. Their expertise and leadership built a success."

Building off the expertise and leadership the Local 269 membership has worked to acquire and demonstrate throughout 100 years, the local is poised to remain a mainstay of the electrical industry and a pillar of the community as it enters its next 100 years. To maintain and strengthen its standing among its peers

Sports Programs: A Winning Tradition

Though its prime purpose is to "actively seek employment opportunities for all IBEW members," Local 269 has for many decades participated in a wide variety of sports programs "to promote good will and recreational pastimes not only for its members but for the community at large, as well." In addition to a large array of athletic teams the local sponsors in the community, for which through the years it has "carried the banner of the IBEW in all sports for the community in the 8-to-15-year-old age level," Local 269 also has provided seasonal sports for its own organization.

A look at one particular year, 1977, shows the local participating in a golfing league, a softball team, a bowling team and (the newest addition that year) a basketball team. "All of the above participate in organized, structured leagues where the competition is keen and thoroughly enjoyable," Press Secretary Al Bartolino wrote in the April 1977 IBEW *Journal*. That spirit remains today.



Local 269 softball team, 2007.

and patrons, the local looks to its past as a means to guide it into the future.

Training – as it always has – will remain a priority for the local, which will be committed to educating its apprentices and journeymen in the most up-to-date and modern technologies. This way, Local 269 will remain at the cutting edge and at the forefront of the industry as its workforce remains second to none.

The local will also continue to support its membership at the negotiating table through collective bargaining, gaining proper wages, working conditions and benefits, while also fighting for the fair and equitable external environment Local 269 electrical workers need and deserve to provide for their families. This will come in the form of political action and advocacy for workers’ rights where ever the welfare of middle-class working people is threatened.

Demonstrating true leadership in promoting industry advancements, such as alternative energies and environmentally friendly, “green” and renewable power sources, will also help propel Local 269 into a prosperous future.

The local’s focus on truly preserving its historical significance will be evidenced in all of these efforts to sustain its position as a reliable source of manpower in the inside electrical, commercial outside electrical and line utility, residential electrical and telecommunications industries. Just as it has over its first 100 years, Local 269 plans to continue to improve the quality of life for the people within the jurisdictions it served while proudly working the projects of tomorrow that will build and grow its communities for decades to come.



Rider University Solar Array, Lawrence, NJ.

1912 - 2012

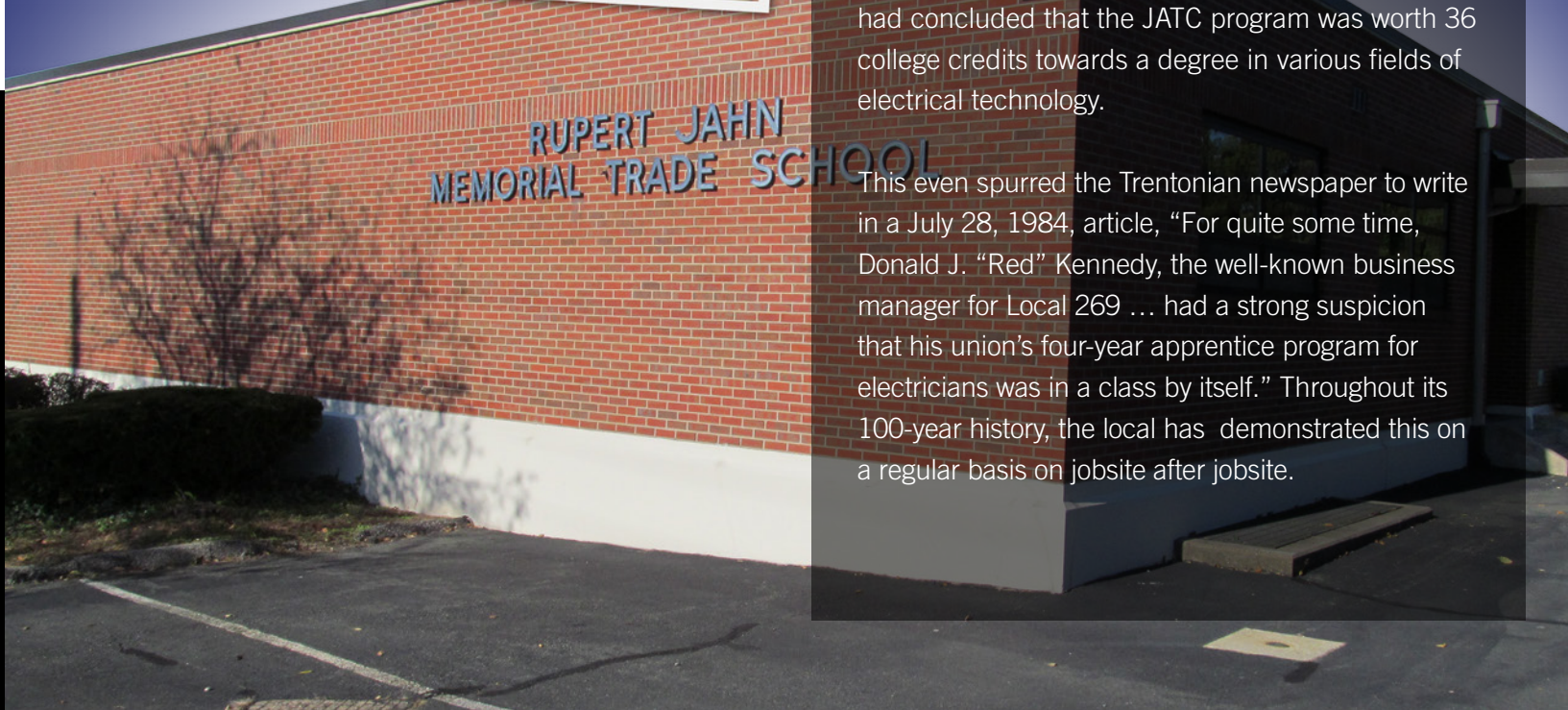


Training: The Foundation for 100 Years

“Over the years, the local union’s apprenticeship school was always looked upon to provide a solid foundation for those graduates entering the journeymen’s ranks. Based on this premise changes are instituted whenever deemed necessary whether it be in curriculum, teaching methods, testing or facilities in an effort to keep abreast of advanced technology and special areas.”

By the time Local 269 Press Secretary Al Bartolino wrote this passage in the December 1985 IBEW Journal, the local had long before built a state-of-the-art training school adjacent to its offices and meeting hall. Also by that time, the local’s Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committee (JATC) program was offering no less than 25 separate courses for its membership – and Thomas Edison College, Mercer County Community College, Trenton State College and Middlesex Community College had concluded that the JATC program was worth 36 college credits towards a degree in various fields of electrical technology.

This even spurred the Trentonian newspaper to write in a July 28, 1984, article, “For quite some time, Donald J. “Red” Kennedy, the well-known business manager for Local 269 ... had a strong suspicion that his union’s four-year apprentice program for electricians was in a class by itself.” Throughout its 100-year history, the local has demonstrated this on a regular basis on jobsite after jobsite.



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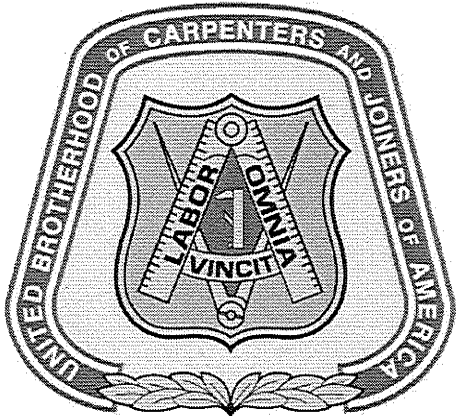
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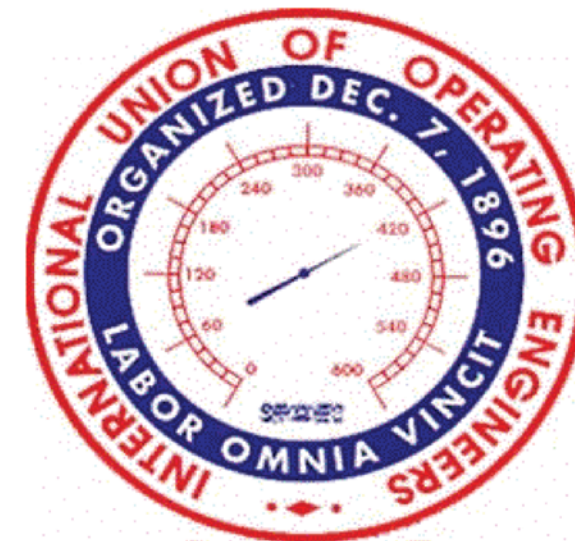
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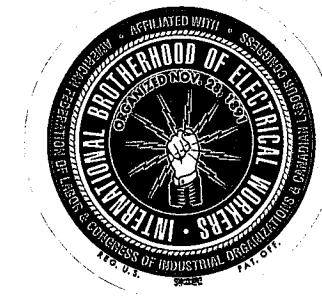
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