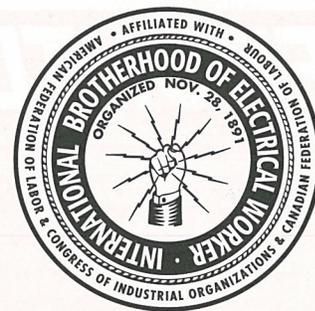
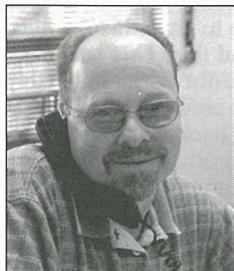


IBEW LOCAL 21 FRONTLINE



Volume 5, Number 6 • December 2002

Layoffs! President/Business Managers Report *By Ron Kastner*



It's been a difficult month at best, but I found a hidden silver lining in the gray cloud. Attendance at Union meetings is up! I can't remember a time when so many people consistently

attended a unit meeting. Thanks so very much to the many, many Local 21 members who found the time to attend a meeting in November. The officers and staff of this Union appreciate your support.

As you probably know by now, the greatest challenge faced by our Union last month was the arbitration filed against SBC/Ameritech in an attempt to bring the work now being contracted out back into the Bargaining Unit. Unfortunately, the arbitrator did not totally agree with our position regarding the immediate eradication of contractors. However, the decision did state that no new contracts could be offered after the layoffs. Currently Local 21 is consulting with our legal counsel on this subject. I offered to meet with the company to discuss this decision prior to any layoffs. Unfortunately the company interprets this decision as a win for them and refuses to discuss it any further. We intend to investigate this thoroughly with our legal counsel and to also take this issue to arbitration if we find merit.

Interestingly enough, minutes of a town hall meeting in Dallas quote SBC/Ameritech CEO Ed Whitacre as stating he does want to get rid of contractors. Obviously, I was very interested in knowing why management in Illinois differs in their thinking. When confronted with this issue, Ed Whitacre agreed to meet with Vice President Gessler and myself. On December 9th, that meeting took place. At that meeting we told Whitacre how disappointed we are in our dealings at the local level over the company's use of contractors. We went on to explain in order to get more involved in their regulatory problems, we would need some relief on their use of contractors.

Another important reason for the meeting was to explain how the IBEW Local 21 was structured and the differences with our Union as compared to others. I can assure you he knows now that there are differences. We wanted him to hear it from us, not the company. We are anxiously awaiting some feedback from Mr. Whitacre.

And, the record must be set straight. Yes, we did meet with SBC regarding a shortened work week. But, we could not agree to the many stipulations the company wanted to put on that possibility. For example, overtime pay would only begin after 8 hours of work, not 7, our scheduling language would be gutted when the company wanted every day in the week to be treated the same and all employees would be forced into a one hour lunch break. The company also wanted concessions in the area of Success Sharing plus the waiving of our negotiated 5 percent wage increase due in June 2003. Ultimately, our members would be working fewer hours, receiving less pay, and the layoff would not be completely prevented. In fact the company was not interested in any guarantees of no additional layoffs. Plus the contractors would remain on the property.

On the bright side the Union successfully brought the total number of layoffs down from 755 to approximately 600 through negotiating SIPP offerings to all jobs in the affected titles along with some job openings that became available.

Regretfully, at this time, I must say that the layoff is inevitable. But, we are not giving up on our members. First, laid off members have a two year recall right. This means that before the company hires for two years they must go to the recall list first. I have also formed a mobilization committee that will be getting the latest news and strategies out to the members, the press, and our legislators. Don't forget to check the hotline daily. And, Local 21, along with the Illinois State AFL-CIO has put together a package addressing the needs of laid off workers. Details concerning the distribution of this material will be available on the hotline. (630 415-2711 or downstate 866 423-9582)

Another issue that caused concern was the company's announcement that they were closing the Chicago Central Customer Care Center at 62nd and Claremont. However, the Union was able to negotiate enough jobs in other offices to ensure that no members lost their job because of this closing.

With the completed merger of AT&T/Comcast, the Union is cautiously optimistic about settling the contracts. We are preparing to send our first contract proposal to the company, and we are encouraged by other IBEW contracts reached with Comcast in other parts of the country. The Union has also signed an agreement with Comcast on the STIP payout. Unfortunately the company is not fulfilling its obligation under that signed agreement. Hopefully, by the time you read this, our differences will have been resolved.

Enjoy the holiday season in all its beauty and glory. As we continue to face many challenges in the upcoming year, it is my hope that all members of Local 21 find the peace and joy that are the true meaning of this season. Hopefully, the New Year will be much brighter for organized labor.

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IBEW LOCAL 21

Official Bi-Monthly Publication

International Brotherhood
Of Electrical Workers

Local 21, AFL-CIO/CLC

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Member: Illinois State Labor Press Association,
Midwest Labor Press Association, and
International Labor Communications Association, AFL-CIO/CLC

SBC VALUES EMPLOYEES ?

By Rick Gessler, Vice President/Assistant Business Manager



Tragically, at this point layoffs are inevitable at the end of December. We worked very hard to find alternatives to the layoff including the most obvious—

getting the contractors off the property. But SBC remained determined to reduce the workforce by 11,000 across the enterprise no matter what. Illinois isn't the only state affected. We've been told there are only eleven splicers left in the whole panhandle of Texas. The company continues to tell us how fortunate we are that we perform more construction work in Illinois than any other state where they operate. Our response is simply, "We aren't lucky, that is what we BARGAINED!" We may have given things up over our fifty plus years of bargaining with the company to retain that work. It is very difficult to believe that SBC has put contractors ahead of their own employees and then asked us to be loyal to them.

I'm writing this the day after we received the decision from the arbitrator on whether the company violates the Collective Bargaining agreement when they lay off employees while contracting out work we are able to perform. As you all will know by the time you read this, the Arbitrator ruled that the contractors were not the cause of the layoff and that the Company did not violate the agreement. However, in his discussion he states:

"...The Union contends that Section 1.03 must be read as a work preservation clause meant to shelter from contracting out during a layoff any work on which its members have a presumptive claim. Neither, argues the Union, should the employees affected by the pending layoffs be forced to wait 'until the axe falls' to exercise their seniority rights to work they are entitled to claim under the Agreement.

"These later arguments bring this review squarely back to the prospective question drawn from the language of Section 1.03. Specifically, the limitations on work to be contracted out serving '...to prevent the rehiring of employees with seniority standing...'

"The short answer to this question is that it obviously cannot be determined if such prevention of rehiring has resulted from new contracting out until after the fact. Stated differently, it cannot be known what bargaining unit work is to

be contracted out until, if, and when, the Company decides on such an action. Even then, no determination can be made about which employees, if any, have been prevented from being rehired until after they have first been laid off..."

Basically, the Arbitrator has stated that the Company will violate the agreement when they contract out work after they have people on layoff. We have requested meetings with the Company and hope to have this resolved by the time you read this. This has been a very difficult time for our membership and continues to be as we go through the difficult process of back filling positions left open by those brothers and sisters going on layoff. Many of our members are changing job titles and many live beyond a commutable distance and will need to relocate their families. As laid off members are recalled, they will be recalled into open positions that the company makes available, again causing stress to those who were moved out of those work locations and forced to relocate.

It wasn't very long ago that SBC/Ameritech was being fined millions of dollars because they had let the plant deteriorate to the point that our customers weren't getting the service they were paying for, and our technicians couldn't keep up no matter how many hours of overtime they worked. Soon, I can see brothers and sisters in the field again taking abuse from customers who are not getting the service they deserve and had grown to expect from what was once a proud company that provided excellent service. Understaffed, it doesn't matter how hard we work or how many hours of overtime we put in, we just won't be able to provide that excellent service.

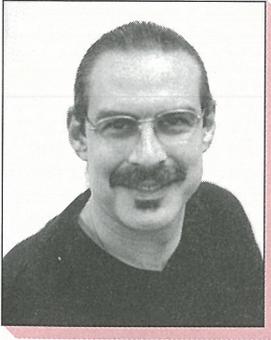
When you meet these contractors on our jobs remember, they are replacing your coworkers, because, Brothers and Sisters, SBC puts contractors ahead of their own employees. Remember, the company is calling the layoff, not the Union.

Our contract expires in 2004. We have begun preparations for Contract negotiations. These will be very critical negotiations. We all need to be prepared for whatever direction the company may go. Now is a good time to start attending Union meetings to make your voice heard.

I wish everyone the best holiday that is possible and hope to see our laid off members back at work here in the very near future!

So Long 2002

By Michael Sacco, Business Representative



Another year passed. It's the moment when editors turn back and look at the past year. I don't usually indulge myself like that, but it's past deadline and I'm over-

whelmed by how much bad stuff has happened in 2002. This is my only inspiration. 2002, in short, sucked.

We started the year still reeling from 9/11. The layoffs on the Interconnect side had started before that and continue unabated to this writing. Unemployment is 60%—that's right, SIX-OH. Telecom inside construction is in the dumper.

Late this last year our International Union made a decision on the Inside Telecom Construction and has decided to move what remains of it into the Construction locals. This appears to be a win-win for our members, most of whom are unem-

ployed or working out of Inside Construction locals already. It has been a pleasure to serve all of you. You are a patient, hard-working group. Work safe. Good luck to all of you.

At SBC Datacomm, the company tried to layoff people early in the year—and in a spooky harbinger of things to come, they tried to do it while they kept contractors employed. Fortunately, with a lot of help from our sisters and brothers on the Network side and contract language that was more forgiving than SBC management, we beat them back, not once, but three times.

In other news at SBC Datacomm, the grievance process plods along, same as on the Network side. Plus, since management couldn't lay people off, they've decided to fire whomever they can. There's a lesson in this for people on the Network (old IBT) side. Watch your asses!

As Mike DeWitt points out elsewhere in the paper, AGCS started the layoffs last Winter and they continue. We have lost 25% of the work force there so far. The grievance process is a disaster and management thinks if they ignore it it will go away.

Back in the Spring we bargained a new 18 month agreement with the "old AT&T" and although it had some decent money, it has no job security or even prospects for the future. The eight Local 21 members that remain are the tattered remnants of a workforce that once numbered 1,200 in our local alone.

At the Lucent facility in Lisle where Local 21 members work, the model shop and the computer operators are history. Everybody got a lot of money to retire, but doesn't it make you wonder why this company's stock is trading at a dollar a share? The remaining 26 members are holding the fort and hoping that the company develops some products that people want to buy and that the customers will cough up the money for.

Additionally, Lucent called us in for early bargaining in October. Seems they have a little problem: they have 6,300 active members in the IBEW and CWA and they are trying to support 125,000 retirees. They asked for health care cost concessions and promised a contract extension with no other

changes for two years. The company, in a stellar example of how formerly great companies lose their way with

rotten management, looked like the Keystone Cops at the table. It was a waste of everyone's time. We're on a death watch on this one, sad to say...

At Avaya, things are stable for the moment, thanks to solid job security language that expires next May. There isn't much work, but that may change if the company hires the promised sales force.

At JULIE, the new contract took effect without too many hitches. Seasonal layoffs are scheduled near the holidays. Unfortunately, we have some new blood in management and on the Board of Directors that feel the Union is a nuisance or that an Agreement doesn't exist. We're working on that and we'll keep you posted.

Without belaboring the point, the October announcement of the first-ever layoff at SBC/Ameritech has hit all of us hard. We, of course, are fighting it and we hope and pray for victory. I have a sense though that if this layoff goes through, it will not be the last.

November brought a mixed bag. After nearly three decades of being mostly out of power, worker-friendly candidates have taken control of the Governor's

Mansion and both houses of the Illinois Legislature. This should be great news, but with a \$3-5 billion budget shortfall to deal with, it may take some time for workers to see the payback for the support we gave the new Governor and legislative leadership.

However, in the worst piece of news yet, unprecedented victories in a mid-term election by Republicans have put them and their selected President, George Bush, in complete control of the Federal government. This is not funny and will effect us and our kids and grandkids for years to come. It will not be good either. The federal and Supreme Court appointments will send us back to the nineteenth century. The corporate giveaways and power grabs could have our kids working harder for less money and paying twice the taxes in a polluted and dangerous world.

Mark my words and talk to me in two years.

Happy Holidays!

Eureka!

Governor-elect Rod Blagojevich appointed IBEW Local 21 President Ron Kastner as co-chair of the Consumer Affairs and Regulatory Policy Committee. He appointed Tom Hopper to a Labor sub-committee dealing with organizing and collective bargaining. When he named the leaders of the 16 policy panels that will participate in his transition team, Blagojevich said, "The list includes people who are leaders in their fields and represent every part of the state. I am confident that they will help me create a state government that is responsive to the needs of every household."

The governor-elect is keeping his campaign promise that Organized Labor will have a voice in Illinois Government. President Kastner believes that a Union voice in politics can make a difference, "This wouldn't have been possible without the help and understanding of our membership. Thanks again for getting involved in the political process with your Union."

Congratulations!

Cope Report

By Larry Moeller & Rosetta Shinn, Committee on Political Education



The 2002 Mid-term Elections are over, and the COPE department would like to thank all Local 21 members and their families who took the time to vote

on Nov 5 th. A special debt of gratitude goes out to the many Local 21 staffers and members across the Local's jurisdiction who attended rallies, volunteered to staff phone banks, or work a poll on a typical chilly, rainy election day. Additionally, the COPE department is grateful for the support it received from President/Business Manager Ron Kastner.

Once again Union members voted in larger numbers than the general electorate. Only 14% of the workforce is unionized, but 26% of the electorate are from Union households. In Indiana, many pro-worker, Local 21 endorsed candidates won—including Congressman Pete Visclosky, State Senators Frank Mrvan, and Rose Antich. In the Indiana State House

Linda Lawson, Earl Harris, Charlie Brown, Ralph Ayers, and Dan Stevenson were winners. Since there were no major changes in the balance of power in Indiana, Local 21 members can expect no negative changes.

In Illinois, pro-worker Local 21 endorsed candidates were very successful. U.S. Senator Dick Durbin was re-elected. In the major statewide offices, Rod Blagojevich, Lisa Madigan, Dan Hynes, and Jessie White were victorious. Perhaps equally important, State Senator Emil Jones will now become the President of the Illinois Senate, and the pro-worker majority was increased in the Illinois House.

So what does this mean to the average Local 21 member? ...In Illinois it means the leaders of our Local will be able to sit down with Governor Blagojevich, Senate President Jones, and House Speaker Mike Madigan and discuss the unfair com-

petitive advantage the non-union competition has over SBC/Ameritech. This situation is causing the loss of good IBEW Local 21 jobs; President/Business Manager Kastner intends to discuss the selection of the Chairperson of the ICC, and possible legislative solutions.

This process is time consuming so it won't be a quick fix, but it will be the first time our Local is seeking a political solution. However, while the Republicans controlled the governor's office and the State Senate we never could have gotten in the door.

Quilt Raffle

At the January Unit meetings we will be selling raffle chances. The first prize is a quilt made and donated by Local 21 Sister Donna Schiazza. Second prize is \$200, third prize is \$100, fourth prize is \$75, and fifth prize is \$50. The chances are \$5 each, and if you can't get to a Union meeting, Business Representatives, Chief Stewards, and Area Stewards have tickets for sale. Last opportunity tickets will be available at some February unit meetings, before the drawing on February 14th. The proceeds, after expenses, will go to

IBEW COPE to support pro-worker candidates.

Yes, the election is over, but the political reality is that in order to keep the politicians' doors open it takes an ongoing commitment to provide campaign workers, votes and money. Working women and men cannot allow the deep pockets of corporate America to purchase political influence to our disadvantage. We are outspent by about 15 to 1 by the bosses. It is an unfortunate reality that it takes money to get things done in our system, but we must play with the same equipment as those on the field.



IBEW 21 Marches

By Rosetta Shinn, Chief Steward



Along with thousands of other Union workers, IBEW Local 21 members marched Tuesday November 19, 2002 at the State Capitol, to protest deep budget cuts in state services for the needy, particularly those in nursing homes. After a spirited rally, we moved the protest into the Capitol under the rotunda, raising our voices in a demand that the Spring budget cuts be reversed, even as Gov. Ryan and legislative leaders were discussing even deeper cuts for the end of the year. Union members chanted, "Show some guts, restore the cuts, it's not too late!" Ryan and some legislative leaders are not looking at the impact of the cuts, a fact that is extremely troubling to unionized nursing home workers. Local 21 President Ron Kastner said, "They only want to look at the numbers, not the whole nursing home issue." Our members who work at nursing homes are very aware of the need to restore Medicare funding. We need fair funding for nursing home residents. Please contact your representatives and let them know how you feel about this issue. If you are not sure of your representative, please call Larry Moeller or Rosetta Shinn at the Union office, and we will be glad to get you in touch with the right representative.

Labor History Alive! Mother Jones Inducted into ILHS Hall of Honor

By Nancy North, Area Steward

“The militant, not the meek shall inherit the earth.” Mother Jones was known as “the most dangerous woman in America.” She didn’t throw bombs, she made speeches and inspired workers to organize for their rights—better wages and job safety.

She was born Mary Harris in Cork, Ireland, and during the potato famine her family immigrated to America. She was raised in Toronto, Canada and trained to be a teacher. She moved to Memphis, Tennessee and married George Jones, a member of the Iron Molders Union. When George and their four children died in the yellow fever epidemic of 1867, Mary moved to Chicago and opened a dress shop on Washington Street, near Michigan Avenue. Tragedy struck again—she lost everything in the Great Chicago Fire of 1871.

There are no documents to reveal Mary Jones’ role in the events of the next fifteen years, but they formed her character as a radical. In September 1873 a financial panic started the deepest depression America had yet experienced. In July of 1877 a second wage cut triggered a railroad strike that spread into a two-week long nationwide general strike, better known as “The Great Upheaval.” Governments reacted with the local militia. A second depression hit in 1883. In 1885 anarchists and trade unions fought for an eight-hour day. In May 1886 the workers struck the McCormick reaper plant in Chicago. A meeting was held on May 4th in Haymarket Square. When a bomb was thrown, a police riot ensued, and business reacted with a wave of union busting.

The first newspaper notice of Mary Jones came from her involvement with Coxey’s Army in 1894—a march on Washington D.C. to ask the government to create jobs for the unemployed during the depression. Mary Jones was on the road.

In April 1894 the United Mine workers called a nationwide coal strike. It was especially bitter in Alabama where black and white miners marched together against convict labor. Mother Jones was in Birmingham, and orchestrated a show of support for Eugene V. Debs when he was released from prison, incarcerated for his leadership in the 1894 railroad strike.

At the core of her work was the belief that workers must engage in debate, education, and cooperation—that only together, democratically, could they create a just world.

Mother Jones’ work in the coal wars of West Virginia and Colorado were lead stories in *Appeal to Reason*, the leading radical publication.

John Mitchell appointed her an international organizer with the United Mine Workers from the late 1890’s to the 1920’s.

Mother Jones would go down in the mines, talking with the miners in their own vernacular, persuading them to join the union. She appealed not just to the mind with rational arguments, she also appealed to men and women emotionally, motivating them to take risks—she was a great orator, and her total commitment was obvious.

The UMW had four major campaigns. Central Competitive Coal—the bituminous fields of the Midwest was a success. In the anthracite region of Pennsylvania, Mother Jones organized an army of women and children armed with mops, brooms and pails of water who held off the scabs and the Pennsylvania State Militia. It was here that militant mine workers led the way while the union leadership raced to catch up. Her efforts in West Virginia failed, despite the



highest mining death rate in North America, and Europe. The Colorado strike failed.

Mother Jones organized a “Children’s Crusade” to stir up support for the striking textile workers of the Kensington district of Philadelphia. The local papers wouldn’t print stories about the strike because the mill owners held shares in the newspapers. At every stop on the march to Wall Street in New York City, Mother Jones held up the gnarled hands of the mill children, some with missing fingers. At some point, she decided to extend the march to the summer home of President Teddy Roosevelt in Oyster Bay. They never met with the President, but the march was an early moment in the change of consciousness that led to the abolition of child labor. It forced the Pennsylvania legislature to set the minimum age at fourteen for factory workers. Early national legislation was struck down by the Supreme Court until the Fair Labor Standards Act of the New Deal was declared legal in 1941.

She championed a number of causes from 1905 to 1912: the Milwaukee brewery workers, Arizona copper miners, Chicago telegraphers, Alabama textile workers, New York City garment workers, exiled Mexican

revolutionaries, and imprisoned American labor leaders.

She returned to the United Mine Workers as an organizer. She was arrested in West Virginia and convicted by a military court set up by the State Militia of “conspiracy to murder” because of the deaths arising from the strike, but a Senate Committee investigated and set the conviction aside.

Mother Jones was arrested when she returned to Colorado where the strikers had set up twelve tent cities after being evicted from their rented company housing. In April 1914 the militia descended upon the tent city of Ludlow and gunned down people before setting the tents on fire. The next day the survivors discovered the charred bodies of eleven children and two women in a pit beneath the tents. Newspapers printed the gory details. President Woodrow Wilson sent federal troops to quell the militia riot and appointed a federal commission. The miners agreed to return to work, the commission’s report urged that many of the workers’ demands be adopted, but the owners rejected the report. Wilson refused to impose the recommendations.

After 1920, rheumatism limited her activities, but Mother Jones celebrated her 100th birthday on May 1, 1930 with many friends, giving a speech exhorting women to use their power. She died seven months later and was buried in the nation’s only union owned cemetery—the Miners Cemetery in Mt. Olive, Illinois.

Mother Jones was inducted into the Illinois Labor History Society Hall of Honor at their annual dinner on Sunday November 24, 2002 at the 19th Century Club in Oak Park.

The second honoree was Chicago’s own living firebrand Mollie L. West. She roused the audience with her stories, particularly the demonstration to support striking Republic Steel workers that ended in the Memorial Day Massacre of 1937 with scores wounded and ten workers killed by police bullets. She felt the pressure of a gun in her back and was ordered, “Get off the field or I’ll put a bullet in your back.” The experience taught Mollie not to bow and scrape, and to be on all picket lines. She told us to have, “A life with a purpose. You have to know what you are for and what you are against. The workers produce the product and the bosses take the fat.”

Local 21 was represented by Louella Byrnes, Liz Hodges, Bill Lawrence, Nancy North, and Mike Sacco.

If you want to know more, read: *Labor Biographies* by Bob Breving, *Mother Jones* by Elliot J. Gorn, *Autobiography of Mother Jones* by Mary Harris Jones. Visit the ILHS website <http://www.kentlaw.edu/ilhs>

WHAT HAPPENED TO RESPECT?

By Rick Mobley, Steward Schaumburg Garage

I remember the day that we started hearing that SBC was buying AMERITECH. They came into town talking loud about how "LABOR FRIENDLY" they were, how they cared about their employees, etc., etc. I BELIEVED THEM. Wow, these guys are going to be ok. They want everyone's life to get better, and all of our kids will go to college. "PLEASANTVILLE," right here in the Midwest.

We had people of all kinds, women, men, and all nationalities working alongside each other, raising their families, and watching their kids grow up, never having to worry about what the doctor or dentist was going to charge, just what we would have to do to take care of the problem. We worked hard, played hard, and earned an honest living that paid a decent enough wage so that each generation had a higher standard of living.

No other company has ever had the nickname of "MA." I truly believe that nickname was earned by the employees who entered the homes and businesses of our communities, not some executive sitting in some high rise. Like Ivan says, "from the bedroom to the boardroom, it takes a person of the highest integrity to do this job. People let us in the most private places in their homes and businesses. They trust us."

It's been a while now and a lot of things have changed. The first thing that happened that scared me was the news that they were going to get rid of Blue Cross/Blue Shield, the most trusted and respected health insurance company there is. We were never turned away from any doctor or hospital ANYWHERE. But now, your health was the first thing they thought they should cut corners on. Thanks to our Union we still can get BC/BS. "LABOR FRIENDLY—" sure they are. Everything they do lowers our standard of living and makes it so hard to achieve what our customers deserve. A multi-billion dollar business mistake doesn't even get talked about. But if you stop to use the facilities you're being unproductive. They've degraded us to just a GJI8 number on a computer printout.

They've turned the managers into data processors who no longer have to know the job. It seems the ones who are the most computer literate seem to be the ones who succeed. Work those codes to his/her favor. If it sprinkles use storm codes, split up your multi to make me look good, and

show yourself on locates to make me look good. You tell them something needs to be fixed. They want to refer it to someone else. Now that there are choices, it's all coming back to bite them. Hell, we've been telling them to just do the job right the whole time. Now the most knowledgeable and experienced craftsman don't even want the job. That's really sad.

Billions in profits and still the expendable item is people. The young men and women who hired on these last few years felt they had reached "PLEASANTVILLE." Just like Mom, Dad, Grandpa, Uncle or a friend or neighbor, everyone knew someone or had family who worked for MA BELL. Good job, good pay, good benefits, a job for life. So now they get hired. Total happiness! They buy houses and cars; they start families. Billions in profits.

Did you know that even in the Great Depression no one was ever laid off? Until now they always trimmed from the top. Whether it was technology or economic downturn they have always shown respect for a persons life's work with a nice ride off into retirement. We would go join the "Telephone Pioneers" and continue to show the communities what kind of person did our job. "LABOR FRIENDLY," sure you are.

Shouldn't we have been figuring out a way from the start how to get through this without ruining lives? "LABOR FRIENDLY;" it constantly echoes. Billions of dollars in profits. Without the Union they would just throw you away like a piece of garbage. I BELIEVED THEM! I feel so dumb and naïve.

All we have is ourselves and our customers. Let's do our absolute best and hopefully this time will pass and one day we'll be called "MA" again and people will be saying, "Get a job at the telephone company, good pay, good benefits — job for life."

How do they sleep at night?
Could you?

SOLIDARITY-noun-complete
unity, as of opinion, feeling, etc.

Help For Laid-off Workers

By Vickie Burroughs,
Business Representative



"What do I do first?" is the natural question a person asks when the face being laid off. It's an isolating experience, but you are not alone. The Local has

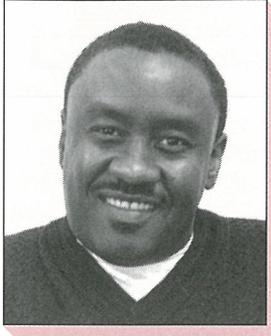
done a lot of research, and discovered that the loss of income is only one aspect of being laid off. The Union is working to ease the many impacts of the SBC layoff on our members. Fortunately, we are in contact with Dan Cosgrove, the AFL-CIO Education & Research Director, who will assist with getting information out to our members who will soon be laid off. Mr. Cosgrove, in conjunction with the State of Illinois, will be contacting these employees either by mail, phone, or both with information that should be of assistance to all. They have a program that will be presented called "Starting Over – A Survival guide for Laid-Off Workers". The program covers the many changes associated with layoffs: dealing with stress, beating the unemployment blues, social support, tips for job search, services available for laid-off workers, retraining and preparing for a layoff. Please participate in this program and take advantage of whatever assistance is offered.

In addition to the above there are contractual items that you may be entitled to dependant on your seniority. See Article 30, Training and Employment Security, Article 30.69 for Extended Medical Coverage, Article 30.55 –30.61 for Recall and Reemployment or talk to your Business Representative, Chief Steward or Area Steward. Good luck.

Complete information
about all Union Privilege
services is available online
at www.unionprivilege.org

A Union Contract Makes the Best Christmas Gift

By Jerry Rankins, Business Representative



Just ask Brother Tom Baker, who was terminated after sixteen years of employment at AT&T Broadband in Merrillville Indiana and its predecessors.

Tom was fired in November 2001 and suddenly found himself not only without income but no medical benefits. Married with three children, Tom was unable to find work but the family managed to survive on unemployment compensation. Thanks to having a Union contract Tom's case was settled at the arbitration hearing. He returned to work as of November 25, 2002, with back pay. Congratulations brother!

The workers at the Morris AT&T Broadband garage sent a strong message to the company that they are no longer deceived by the distortion that it is better to work without a Union contract. They filed proper petition papers to have a decertification petition withdrawn. These brave workers know what it means to be patient and stand with the rest of their brothers and sisters in solidarity until their change comes. Also, the company had to pay back over \$10,000 to 17 people at the Morris garage. These members worked hard to receive this money earned through the 2001 Short-Term Incentive Program (STIP). An unfair labor practice was filed after the monies were taken back from them after they were already paid in March 2002.

The case was settled with Local 21 and AT&T/Comcast at the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) in November 2002. On November 21, 2002, President Business Manager, Ron Kastner, received a letter from the AT&T Director of Labor Relations, Lorene Murray, proposing to pay-out the STIP bonus to all bargaining unit employees. Before Local 21 had the chance to respond, the management had posted the documents in every represented office and garage. President Kastner signed the document on November 22, agreeing to the STIP payout with a cover letter looking forward to working with Comcast in the future. But Lorene Murray responded with a letter stating the STIP is only to be paid to the Chicago South, Morris, and Kankakee properties. This works at the core of bad faith bargaining

and was totally unacceptable. Local 21 workers wonder, "Is this AT&T management working solo"? Local 21 will exercise every legal avenue in securing this money to the deserving workers that have earned it.

Currently, arbitration cases are pending at the former Merrillville, Jones, and Prime Cable properties for the 2000, and 2001 STIP payouts.

The new company, Comcast Corporation is here. It is based out of Philadelphia and currently has contracts with the IBEW in Alabama, Philadelphia and New Jersey. This company is majority family-owned. Local 21 and the workers are looking forward to entering into contract negotiations soon, and hope and believe that trust and morale can be restored. Comcast does not have a tradition of using union-busting consultants who undermine the Union worker. Union-busting consultants eventually erode the spirit of good relations that kill the success of a company. Just ask AT&T Broadband.

I'm back! After 15 months of being



"As your company lawyer I must advise you that you are being a jerk."

illegally barred from servicing Broadband properties, finally the moment of truth came by way of an arbitrator's ruling on October 15th. The ruling stated, "The company is hereby directed to rescind its order barring Rankins from visiting its facilities and to cease and desist from improperly interfering with Rankins right to represent bargaining unit employees in accordance (SIC accordance) with the collective bargaining agreement." Still AT&T management would not comply.

One week later while I was visiting the Wheaton garage with Area Steward Maria Garcia, the company called the Wheaton police and attempted to have me

arrested. Once again, Broadband stops at nothing in an attempt to strip the workers of their effectiveness by trying to destroy the Union. President Kastner attempted twice to get the company to comply with the arbi-

Local 21 was given no choice but to file suit against manager Christopher Beamon and AT&T Broadband on false arrest charges.

trator's decision, and demanded a cease and desist. Finally, after no response, Local

21 was given no choice but to file suit against manager Christopher Beamon and AT&T Broadband on false arrest charges. Brothers and sisters, remember "iron sharpens iron" and our strength is in unity. God is on the side of the oppressed. Let's continue this good fight for justice.

SOLIDARITY.

Labor board rules Local 21 the exclusive bargaining agent at **The Office of Emergency Communications (911)**, City of Chicago

For nearly two years Local 21 has been tied up with unfair labor practice charges at the Illinois Labor Relations Board filed by current and retired employees. Several charges were brought against Local 21, including allegations that Local 21 is not the proper bargaining agent for the employees. The board recently ruled Local 21 indeed is the exclusive bargaining agent for the unit.

As we close out the year we must prepare and commit ourselves with energy and focus on 2003. As you know, brothers and sisters, in June of this coming year the contract expires. We must come together with one accord. This is the only way we can be assured of getting a good contract. Divided we can never get there, together is where our strength lies. A special thanks to each and every one who supports our monthly solidarity meetings. The next one will be January, 2003. Stay tuned to the posting on the Union board.

The year 2002 is closing out. It's my hope that the grace and peace of God be forever with you and your family. Happy Holidays to you and yours and a blessed New Year. Looking forward to serving you in 2003. God Bless.

News from Chicago Consumer

By Kevin Curran, Business Representative



Chicago Central Customer Care Center

Last month, SBC notified both the Union and the Service Reps on the same day that the Chicago Central Customer Care Center located at 6250 S. Clarendon, would be closing. 93 Service Representatives and 2 Technical Associates work at this location. The company said that it had jobs for all employees at the Arlington Heights office, the Chicago North office, and the

Oakbrook office. 36 Service Reps were slated to go to Arlington Heights, 12 to Oakbrook, and 45 to Chicago North. Clearly, the Union felt that any member forced to Arlington Heights would be under a severe hardship. The company further claimed that Arlington Heights was commutable under the contract because the shortest route from Chicago Central to Arlington Heights was 28 miles. However, when the Union investigated this we found out that the fastest route to Arlington was 35.4 miles, so Local 21 took the position that Arlington Heights was not commutable. The day after the Union took this position, the company agreed not to force any Service Reps to Arlington Heights. Most members were able to get their first choice of new work location, however, when the office closed in mid November, it's still a very difficult situation for the sisters and brothers affected.

West LACC

SBC has dramatically escalated its discipline for failure to meet dollars collected objectives. The first two employees are being dismissed under this policy, and one of them is a member with 24 years of service. In addition, several members were suspended in the last few weeks under this policy. The Union made an information demand and requested the performance records of all Service Reps in the West LACC. Upon review of this documentation, it is apparent that the Company is guilty of disparity and hasn't even followed its own disciplinary plan. The Union has put the company on notice that we feel that SBC has declared war on our members and we will oppose this unfair and unjust policy with every legal means possible. It is extremely important that our members here exercise their rights to union representation, to file grievances, etc. I'd like to personally thank all of our members who participated in the solidarity days by wearing black on the day of the dismissal hearing for these two members.

Neutral Evaluation

So far, 6 cases have been heard at Neutral Evaluation. This is the trial process the

Union negotiated with the intent to help clear our backlog of arbitration cases. The process is informal with no attorneys allowed and the Arbitrator renders a bench decision right after the hearing. Out of the first 6 cases presented, two were settled, the Union won two, and the company won two. One of the cases that the Union lost involved a member who met with Security without a steward and signed a statement written by Security. In the end, the Arbitrator said that the member's own words in his written statement were the best evidence against him. This highlights why we continue to stress to all our members the need to utilize your right to union representation.

The Company is guilty of disparity and hasn't even followed its own disciplinary plan.

A Day at the Polls

By Winifred Brown, Area Steward

The leadership of our Local Union has made a commitment to be a player in Illinois Politics, so when I was asked if I wanted to be one of Local 21's foot soldiers on election day, I said "yes." I must admit I was apprehensive, after all, I'd never done it before and you do hear stories.

On November 5th I was up before the sun and along with a large group of workers from other Local Unions and Community groups, I reported to Operation PUSH HQ at 6 AM. My first assignment was at a poll at the Ward Chapel AME Church. There hand-billed voters, thanking them for coming out on a cold rainy day. My next assignment was at a poll at the Burnside School where I continued to hand-bill voters until the weather became worse and the precinct captain asked if I'd like to go inside to be a poll watcher. A poll watcher observes the check-in process. If there are any irregularities, you call it in to a special hot line number for investigation. A poll watcher also works with a designated Election Judge, checking the list of citizens who have already voted against a list of registered voters who have committed to vote. The list is checked several times a day, and passed on to the precinct captain

I was impressed with their determination to vote.

so they can be reminded to vote. Later, I relieved one of the Judges. A Judge checks the voter's name in the registered voters book and passes that person along so they can sign in to receive their ballot

On a lighter note, the precinct captain, who was a nice man had a habit of hanging around inside the poll, where no electioneering is allowed. Since he was not an accredited poll watcher, he was asked to leave. He always left, only to return a little later until he was caught and the routine began all over again. One problem was that due to redistricting some voters were unaware their polling place had changed, this was especially hard on senior citizens. However, as it was on the seniors, I was impressed with their determination to vote. I am proud to have been able to help them whether it was directing them to the right polling place or opening the door for them.

Late in the afternoon when I was relieved from my duties at the Burnside school, it was time for me to vote. It was a long tedious day, but I learned a lot and met some very interesting people. Perhaps, most importantly, I represented our local Union and played a small role in our democracy.

Do you have a News Story?

We need your contributions. We accept them on disk in Word format at the Union office (paper copy backup is a good idea) or simply paper copy. Or you could email an attachment in Word to both addresses as insurance.

**Nancy North nnorth@attbi.com
Larry Moeller e mail:
ljm336@ameritech.net**

IBEW Local 21 Gets Recognized!

By Dave Webster, Business Representative

During the first week of October the IBEW 6th District Progress meeting was held in Indianapolis, Indiana. At this event officers of all the Local Unions in the 6th district met and examine the progress of our Union during the past year.

Of course, this year's conference was a little different from a Local 21 perspective for two reasons. First, SBC had announced massive layoffs, a first in telephone company history, so our President/Business Manager Ron Kastner and Vice President/Assistant Business Manager Rick Gessler, were busy collecting information from SBC and trying to save the jobs of our members. They were unable to attend the conference in Indiana. Secondly, Local 21 had been nominated for an organizing award.

Despite everything happening at SBC, Local 21 was well represented by Treasurer Jacquie Fields, Recording Secretary Linda Corcoran, Area Steward Maria Garcia, AT&T Broadband and Democratic National Committee women's caucus representative. I represented the Organizing Department. Since almost all of the participants are officers of their respective locals, I felt it an honor and a privilege to be sent by the Business Manager to represent Organizing.

On the first day a reception was held at the Downtown Indianapolis Hard Rock Café where International President Ed Hill made an appearance. I found it humbling to shake his hand, and felt it was progressive on his part to be accessible to such a great number of the membership. International Vice President Pat Curley also attended, and personally thanked me, as a repre-

sentative of the Local, for our progressive stance in organizing. Brother Curley was an organizer for more years than I'm sure he cares to mention, so he is especially tuned into organizing, not only at Local 21, but also in the 6th District and at the International level. This extensive organizing experience made his compliments even more valued.

The next day was the big day. I was honored to stand with a Local 21 officer, the 6th district Vice President and the President of the entire IBEW to accept the Henry Miller Organizing award, on behalf of President/Business Manager Kastner. We received the award for our outstanding accomplishments and dedication to organizing.

International Representative Susie Barber had sent the letter nominating Local 21 for the award because we achieved and maintained industry standards in the telecommunications industry. She commended us on building political alliances to help in the fight with and adapting to the changes in corporate America, working with the Chicago Cable Commission in adding worker protection language to the Cable Franchise agreement, educating our staff and membership, assisting the district on campaigns outside our Local and more. She called Local 21

the "soldiers of solidarity." I was especially thrilled to be a part of accepting this award because it was the very first time that the award was given by the 6th district, in recognition of Henry Miller, the founder and first organizer of the IBEW. We've always had a lot to be proud of with our Local, now we can add something else to the list that helps to assure a brighter future for those who will follow in our footsteps.



IBEW Int'l President Ed Hill, Dave Webster, Linda Corcoran, IBEW 6th District VP Pat Curley

Samsonite Workers Win Settlement

A year-long struggle for justice has ended in victory for workers at the Light House factory in Thailand. Light House is a subcontractor of the U.S. luggage giant, Samsonite. Twenty-four remaining locked-out workers were reinstated to their jobs as part of a settlement that assures that the company will not "interfere with trade union activities."

The Light House battle began last October with the layoff of 600 unionized workers. The company later fired all worksite union leaders, as well as hundreds of rank-and-file workers who participated in a work stoppage. The Light House workers sparked a worldwide support campaign in June when they presented a protest letter written in their own blood to the Thai parliament.

"With more and more international solidarity support, we are getting more confident and have stronger belief in our power to change the situation in our factory and in Thailand," said Jaturong Sornroong, president of the Light House Union. "We have come to realize that the only power that management has in hand are money and time, but we are much greater in numbers and unity."

Local 21 Welcomes our Newest Members

By Melanie Probst, Business Representative

It's official! Pursuant to a Memorandum of Agreement Regarding Neutrality and Card Check between Ameritech and the IBEW, a majority of cards were presented to the American Arbitration Association and a new bargaining unit was certified on October 29, 2002.

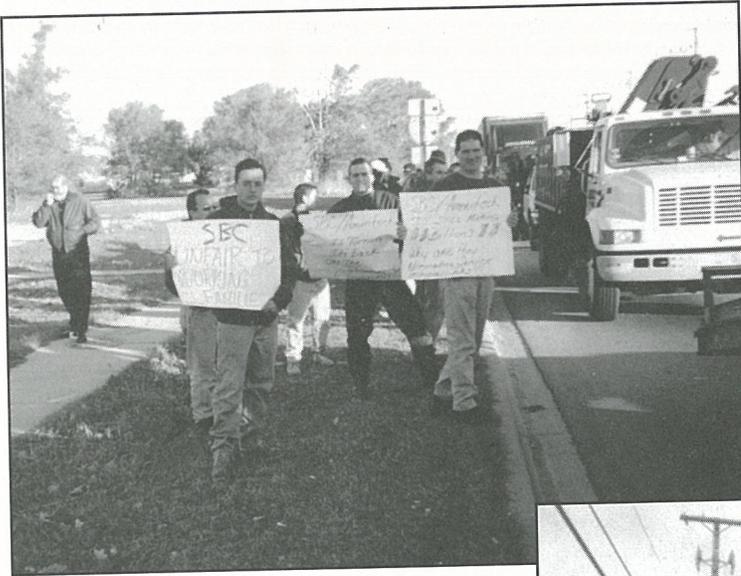
The unit consists of 165 Office Support/Associate Project Managers, more commonly known as Engineering Assistants in the Infrastructure Maintenance and Network Construction & Engineering Organization located throughout Illinois.

Our next step is to negotiate a contract for these employees and increase their standard of living and quality of life. As you see or talk to these new members, congratulate them on gaining a voice in their workplace.

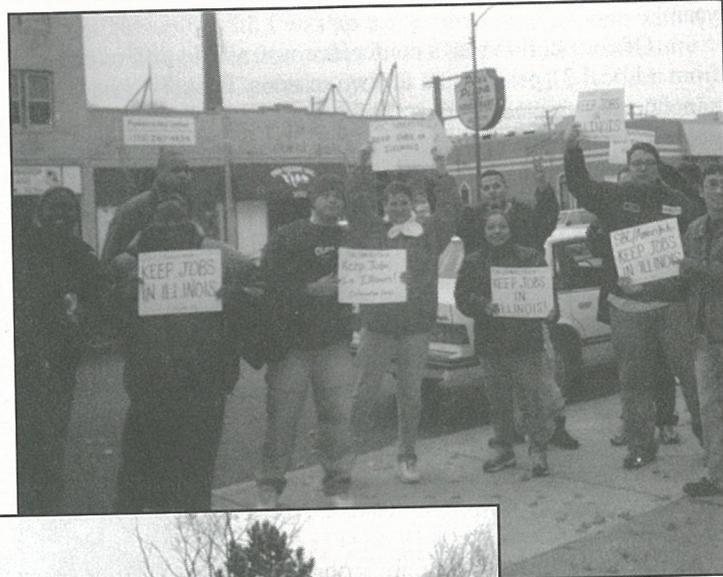
I would also like to wish the Local 21 members and their families "A Very Safe and Happy Holiday Season".

Take it to the Streets!

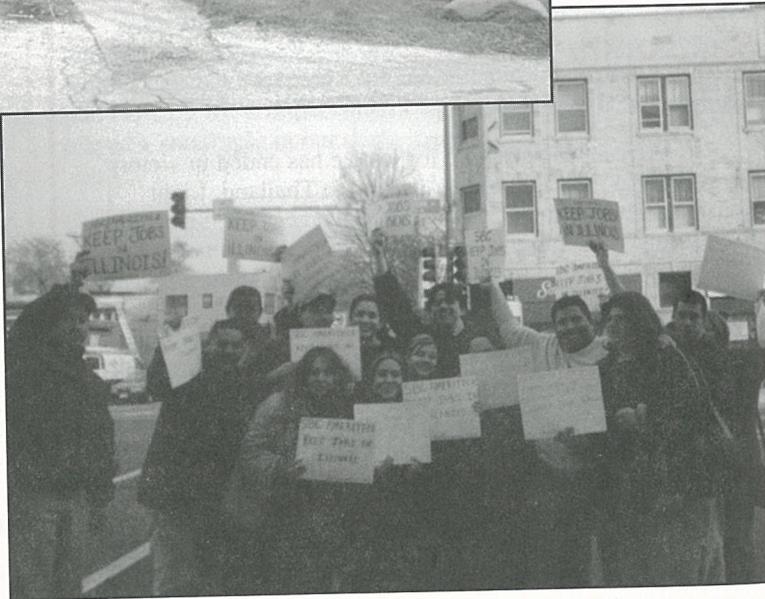
Lyons Garage



Consumer Center at Grace & Western



Barrington Garage



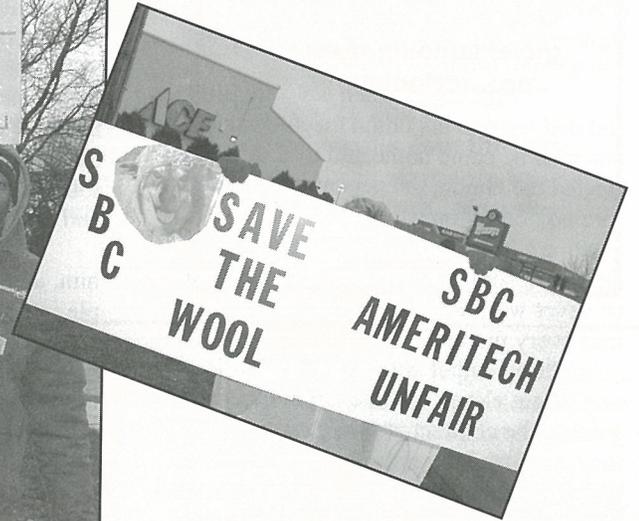
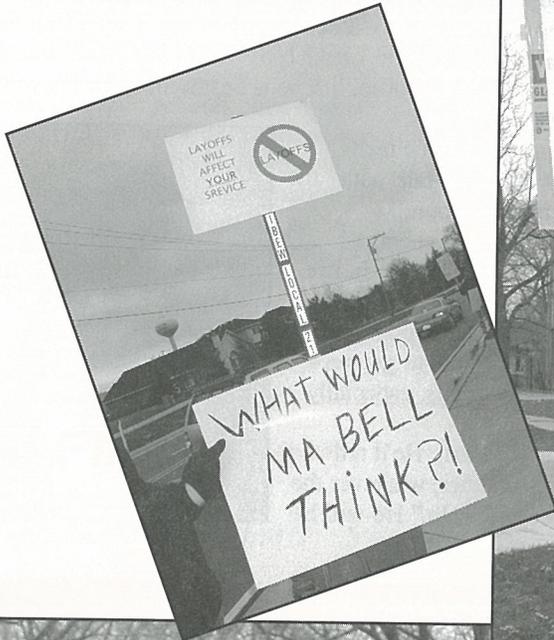
Lyons Garage

Consumer Center at Grace & Western in Chicago

Informational Pickets



Orland Hills Garage



Spread the Word!

Orland Photos by Al Smuda others by anonymous Union Photographers.

Share the Stories

By Nancy North, Area Steward



Holidays are a time for sharing stories over dinner, not just the latest news—but the old family stories, because children learn who their parents are, and so who they are through these stories. It defines what we value.

“Remember when we were little and mom told us about being a long distance telephone operator downtown, and being on strike, standing outside on the sidewalk in high heels holding picket signs—and she said nobody cared about just a small group of operators?”

“Remember when we were little and dad went to his union meetings, and one time he came home and told us he was elected the Guide, the person who made sure no non-union workers crashed the meeting? We wondered if he’d ever be elected to something more important, but he never was, but he still went to the meetings every month.”

“Remember when you were little, only about eleven and the Union was bargaining the contract at headquarters downtown, and we brought your friend to the rally in Haymarket Square, and we marched with the banner down to 212 and it made the 10 pm news?”

Are they listening? My daughter’s friends are entering the job market and she called me in high indignation about one person who, “Was hired by a company that doesn’t have a union and they don’t have a vision plan!” Your children notice.

Do you ever share your Union stories? The one about everybody wearing red on Tuesday for Solidarity? Or the one about everybody doing an informational picket? Or the one about the benefits group at the Union office straightening out the FMLA mess? You don’t have to preach. Just share the stories that show how you reach out in brotherhood. It’s the season.

Farewell Sam Couch and Joanie Waskowski



Two valued Local 21 staff members accepted the latest SBC/Ameritech SIPP offer and retired.

Joanie Waskowski is best known as “Joanie in the benefits group” by the hundreds of Union brothers and sisters she has helped. She started with Illinois Bell forty-two years ago last July, working mostly in the accounting department, but her real job was her Union work. In Local 165 in Chicago she served as a Business Rep and as Vice-President. She worked with the Health Care Cost Containment Committee.

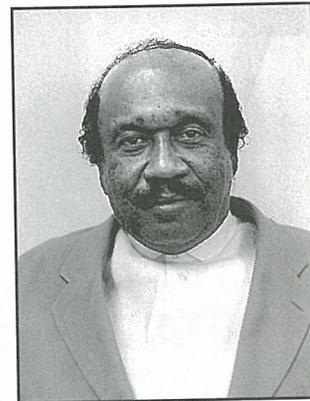
When the five locals amalgamated into Local 21 in 1998, Joanie joined the new benefits group as an Area Steward, where she helped members with FMLA problems, disability issues, and the endless stream of “just a quick question” about benefits. Joanie will be missed.

Sam Couch believed in people, and understood the pitfalls they go through. He started with Illinois Bell thirty years ago this past July, and worked out of several garages on the south side of Chicago. He served as a Chief Steward in Local 165. When the locals amalgamated into Local 21, Sam was promoted to Business Rep, but he is best known for his work as substance abuse coordinator for the past ten years.

In every garage he visited, at least two or three techs, sometimes as many as fifteen techs, came over to talk with Sam because he’d helped them turn their lives around. Seventeen years ago he made the decision to stay sober; he found a way to overcome all the bad things that happen in life, and he spent time trying to save others from those pitfalls.

He’s a church-going man, and believes that God saved him, and got him where he was, so Sam took time to get people into treatment. He worked with local hospitals, especially Little Company of Mary.

Sam could talk to people and they listened. He’d tell them, “Your job is one thing, your life is another, whatever the problem—mental health, stress—get yourself help.” He will be missed.



Information Alert

Local 21 members who retire are eligible to receive a gift certificate. Providing that the retiring member is in good standing, and a Local 21 representative requests the retirement certificate. Applications are available by calling Nancy Kopydlowski at the Local 21 office.

Has your address changed?

Do you know someone who moved, so they don’t even have the *Frontline*?

Please fill out this form and fax it to the Union office at 630 960-9607

Or mail it to IBEW Local 21, 1307 W. Butterfield Rd. Suite 422,

Downers Grove IL 60515-5601

Or call Nancy Kopydlowski at 630 960-4466

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____

Email address _____

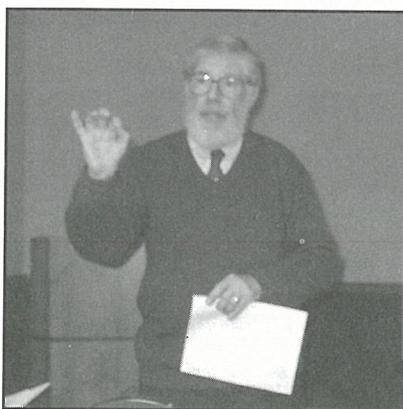
Futurist Arthur Shostak Addresses Labor Technology Conference

By Nancy North, Area Steward

“Computers are not THE answer, there are many answers, but computers make them better,” asserted Arthur Shostak, futurist, author, and professor of sociology at Drexel University. He was the keynote speaker at the First Midwest Union Technology Conference sponsored by the labor education programs of the Universities of Illinois, Indiana, and Michigan, held November 17-19.

He believes that Unions must move beyond the merely adequate use of computers if they want to reach the younger worker. Over 60% of households have a computer and Internet access. 98% of the students in public schools have Internet access. In this new world Unions are players (they have websites) with clear objectives (agreement on the kinds of information all union members need) because we are inspired (high tech is only as worthwhile as it is “high touch.”)

Cyberunionism urges creative attention to a “F-I-S-T” model. **Futuristics** is



long range planning, and we are natural futurists, always looking ahead to the next contract. **Innovation** means a learning culture not afraid to make mistakes. **Services**, which make a difference in members’ lives. **Traditions**, our past including oral history.

In a time of drastic change it is the learners who inherit the future. Arthur Shostak provided some key websites: www.cyberunions.net, www.cybersolidarity.net, www.labourstart.org, www.laborradio.org, and www.llnews@igc.topica.com. To see the possible in our own unions.

We few, we happy few, recognize the possibilities and the perils of greater computer use—instant access to information—but the threat to American privacy is staggering. However, despite the pitfalls, failure is not an option. Our Union must bravely advance.



“Looks like the smart drive is acting up again.”

Last minute shopping? Think Union at your fingertips and check these websites: www.unionable.org, www.BuyUnionNow.com. For books link to www.Powells.com through www.labourstart.com to benefit this free information website.

NAFTA Dangers

By Robert McElrath, Executive Board, Unit 7

On Saturday, September 14th, I had the pleasure to attend a Teach-In on Globalization at the IBEW Local 309 Hall in Collinsville, Illinois. This informative, yet unsettling, program was a joint effort of the Steelworkers Local #68 and the Greater Madison County Federation of Labor.

Jamie Owen Daniel, Assistant Professor, English Department, University of Illinois, Chicago and Robert Bruno, Associate Professor Institute Labor and Industrial Relations, also from the University of Illinois presented a program that discussed NAFTA and other “FAIR” trade agreements which basically remove foreign investors from any responsibility under, for or to our legislative and or legal system.

We have all seen the impact of NAFTA to American jobs and our standard of living, so I won’t belabor this point.

The really scary part of NAFTA is

Chapter 11 “investor to state provisions.” NAFTA’s Chapter 11 guarantees foreign corporations protections from any law, rule or executive order that may interfere with their profits.

Some examples of this are:

The Ethyl Corporation of the U.S. sued the Canadian government for \$250 million for the Canadian ban on the gasoline additive, MMT, an anti-knock agent. This product contains manganese, a known human neurotoxin. The NAFTA case was settled in 1998 for \$13 million and the ban on MMT was removed.

A Canadian company, Methanex, sued the U.S. government in 1999 for \$970 million because of a California executive order phasing out the use of MTBE, another gasoline additive. This additive was found in scarce water sources around the state and has proven hazardous to human health.

There are many more examples I’m sure, but what is really troubling is the process by which these suits are handled! These disputes are brought before a special NAFTA trade tribunal consisting of three “governors” appointed by NAFTA who hear

the case and make a binding determination.

These so-called governors are part of the special international arbitration bodies of the World Bank and the United Nations, which are closed to the press and don’t allow public participation, observation or input.

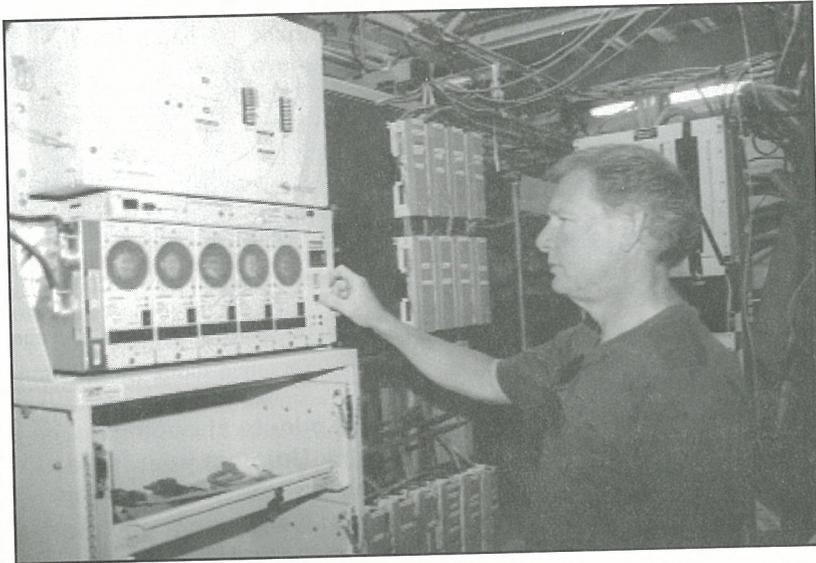
Our own government is turning our country over to foreign interests and these laws remove even them from the process.

If this isn’t unconstitutional, then we might as well not have a constitution!

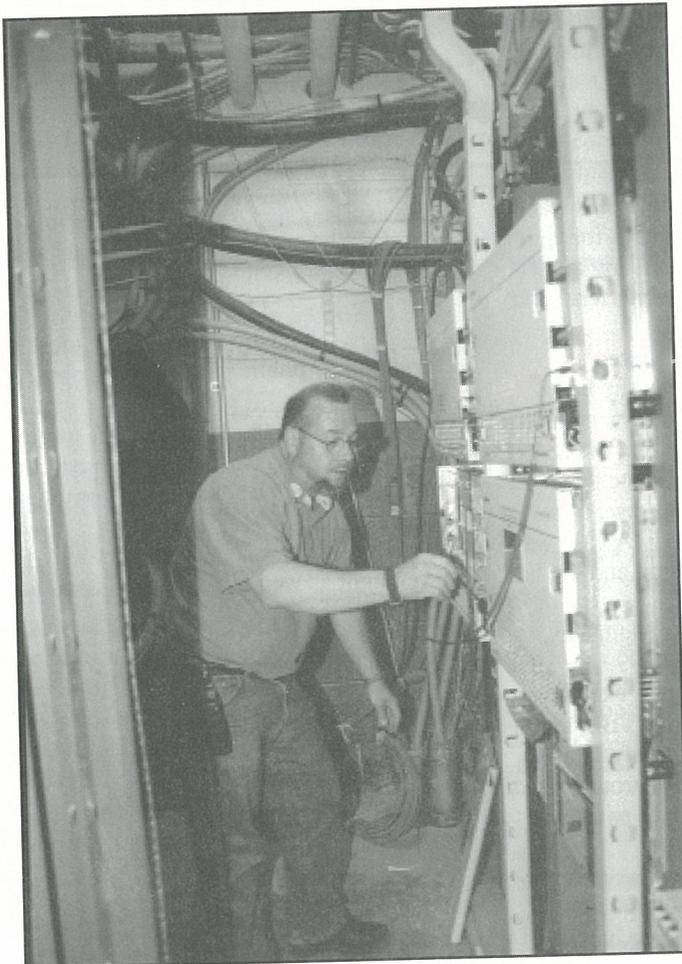


“Government protects the spotted owl but not the frazzled employee.”

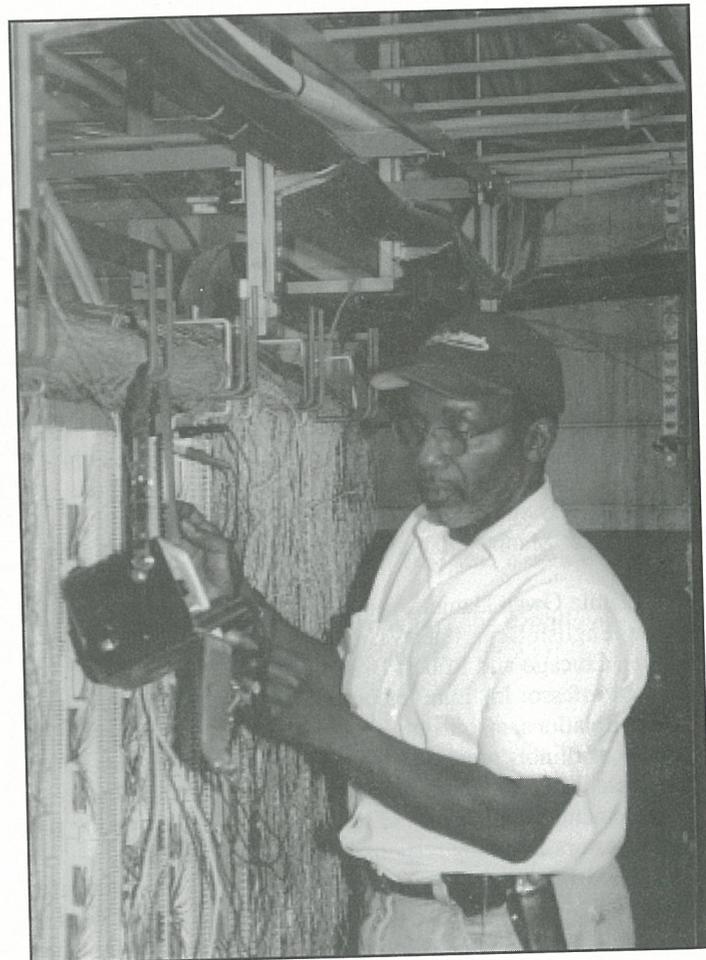
REAL TECHS DO REAL WORK



Chuck Lazzaro



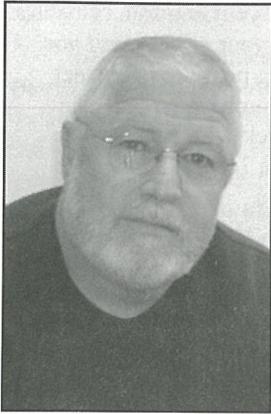
George DeMasi



Al Coleman

ME, ME only ME

By Mike McCormick, Business Representative



First of all, it's nice to be back in the area where I started. I hope to exceed everyone's expectations. Only time will tell, but if the support of each and every one of you is there, change will occur.

It seems that members today look at every issue and ask themselves, "How does it affect ME?" Members feel that if the issue is not affecting ME, then everything is okay. This is the same member, who when a problem arises looks to the Union to fix it, and fix it now. Well, everything is not okay.

Non-union companies have infested the marketplace. Management in non-union and Union businesses feels that the Union is only there for the MONEY. What's your thought? We know that's not true, at the simplest, the Union is there to monitor the contract. A contract that both the company and the Union signed.

What makes a person an active Union member? Someone who is a motivator, a communicator, and an activist. A person who sees a problem and reacts. You cannot have a strong, active Union without its members. When you have a strong Union, you have POWER. Members must come together: first by location, second by area, and third by the Local. When members come together, then the company will listen. The company won't be able to force edicts on us, but rather negotiate the concerns.

Let's look at the BIG PICTURE and see how it affects each and every one of us. There are many outside companies out there, they are non-union and they fight the fight to keep Unions out. You may not actually see this, but you hear about it. How does it affect you as an individual? All these non-union companies bring down the system standard in safety, contracting out, benefits and pay and this impacts us at the next contract negotiation. Why? Because SBC/Ameritech can contract out each and every one of our jobs. Believe it! If you don't get involved in the fight now, there won't be a time to fight later.

In addition to the industry standards going down, the political arena is pro-

business, and hurts working families. Larry Moeller writes about these issues constantly, but do we listen? Do we write a congressman or senator when asked? Do we make a phone call when asked? In most cases the sad answer is—No.

Why are we like this? I believe it is because the company hired us. The first time we meet the Union, it's in the person of the steward who signs us up, tells us to sign the cards, pay the dues, and maybe talks a little bit about why the Union is here. But what does a new employee remember? You have to pay dues.

Members with at least ten years seniority remember how when they were hired, they were placed with a senior technician, to learn about their craft, but they learned more—they learned about the Union and the struggles that were already fought. Nowadays, a new employee starts at a training school, then when they are placed in their job, they work by themselves with a so-called TDM manager to monitor their progress, all the while being kept away from the older techs. This is a problem for all of us, the younger members need the

senior employees to talk to and learn from. The corporate culture mes-

sage of ME, ME, ME, is empty—it is all of us together. To those senior techs who have cut their own deals up to this point, realize that if these non-union companies keep succeeding, the next contract negotiations will attack PENSIONS, BENEFITS, LUMP SUMS, ETC...

To the technicians in I&R, please realize that when you go out and cut in a new cable in a new subdivision to give a customer service you are doing more than "taking ownership of the order." You are taking work away from the construction department, and at a time when we are going through a layoff condition. This is their work, not yours.

It is a never-ending battle. Right now you and I need to be informed and involved. Please take this as a challenge, and talk to the new members. Please take the time to explain that it takes all of us to make the Union strong. Please realize that 50% of our Union members have less than five years of service. Please take the initiative to attend the next Union meeting, and bring a new member, because we don't know what's next from this UNION FRIENDLY COMPANY. Sometimes actions speak louder than words.

Finally, I would like to wish every member and their families, a very happy and joyous holiday season.

Another View: Media Monopolizers by Jim Hightower

Time for another Hog Report, and we've got some mighty heavy porkers poking their snouts ever deeper into the public trough.

These are the big media hogs. There's NBC, owned by General Electric; ABC, a product of Disneyworld; CBS, part of the Viacom conglomerate; CNN, from the AOL TimeWarner herd; and Fox, spawned by Rupert Murdoch's British-based empire. These global giants dominate America's airwaves, meaning they already hog the newsfeed that we get in our supposedly democratic Republic. But, hogs being hogs, the media conglomerates don't want most of the available airtime, they want all of it.

Their hoggishness has been kept in check in the past because the airwaves don't belong to them, but to We the People, and we've had the FCC — The Federal Communications Commission — setting the rules of the game to keep them from gobbling up all of our airtime ... and controlling our essential flow of democratic information.

In recent years, however, especially under George W, our FCC has gone from gate keeper to gate opener. Bush's FCC Chairman, Michael Powell, never met a hog too ugly to hug, and now he's shouting "soooooo-eeeeeee, here hog!" He's proposing to scrap the ownership rules and let even a single hog own the majority of TV stations, radio stations, and the newspaper in your city.

Like a ventriloquist's dummy, Powell mouths the line of industry lobbyists, who declare that the old rules protecting the public interest are "outdated" and that our public airwaves should be deregulated. "It's long overdue," snaps Powell, and the smiling lips of the lobbyists barely move.

Hello, we've heard this line before from outfits like Enron, which got the energy industry deregulated so they could fleece the public. Now the same laissez-faire extremists that let the Enron flim-flammers loot the public want to repeat the disaster. To stop the media monopolizers, contact the Center for Digital Democracy: 202-331-7842.

—Jim Hightower is a speaker and author.

Contractors and Privacy

By Dennis McCafferty &

Wally Pearson,

Stewards of Lake County Indiana

Now that a layoff announcement lit a fire under the membership, the fight to save our jobs and the industry standard needs your help. The Union needs us all to be the eyes and ears in the field. We need to report ALL contractor activity to the local steward, chief steward, business representative, or directly to the Union hall (630 960-4466) so we can better monitor the type of work they are performing. Right now, the contractors and SBC, claim that the contractors are only performing (without a net we might add) dig ups, conduit pipe placement, and drop burying duties.

But we have it on

good authority that they are also placing cable, and terminating the drops they are burying. This is NOT their work and any attempt to do this work on their part is TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE! If they are allowed to get away with this now, how long will it be before they start splicing the cable, running jumpers, or replacing drops and jacks? Just because the company disclaims responsibility for their actions doesn't mean that it is not occurring. We need to put a stop to this now, before it becomes a "need of the business" practice. When you see a contractor, ask for I.D., find out who he is and who he works for. You can also ask to see his Union card. If he doesn't have one, contact your steward.

When you see a contractor, ask for I.D. and his Union Card

Privacy

In this day and age where identity theft is running rampant, with people's bank accounts and credit ratings being raided by the computer thieves of the new millennium, privacy, both personal and corporate is as important as it has ever been. SBC addresses this issue in their "bible" (the code of business conduct), on many levels. They continually beat home the point that what is theirs is theirs and you'd be wise not to let it fall into the wrong hands or to misuse it. But what happens when it's your private information that we're talking about?

A while back some industrial customers in Northwest Indiana wanted the technicians' social security numbers on file for access to their plants. It was resolved that the Ameritech employee I.D. was adequate. However, managers change and

once again some industrial customers are asking for the technicians'

social security numbers. This is private information. A pamphlet from the Social Security Administration cautions people not to give the number out.

Some managers decided that they will only "limit access to the people who need the information for legitimate business purposes." This means that the company can and will produce your private information (i.e. social security number and driver's license number) to any customer who requests it, if doing so will gain you access to the facilities. This business practice is wrong on so many levels that we don't even know where to begin. If you run into a situation where your company photo I.D. is not enough to grant you access to facilities

on a job, then turn around and leave the premises. You do not have to volunteer personal information to do your job. The company does not have the right to furnish this information without your consent. This is a flagrant invasion of your privacy and you should do everything possible to protect what little privacy you have left. If you have a problem, check with Business Representative Steve Tengblad, or Chief Steward Mike Kunas.

Credibility

Not that long ago, there was a time when a person's word was his bond. Deals were made, and futures were decided over a handshake, with both parties walking away satisfied that they had gained something and what was agreed to was cut in stone. Sadly, this is no longer the case. For whatever reason, what used to get ironed out over a cup of coffee now takes grievance forms, depositions, and arbitration. What's more alarming is that even when disputes get worked out informally, prior to the first step level, this company has chosen to go back on their word, causing distrust and animosity to rear their ugly heads. For a company in as dire straits as SBC claims to be, how wise is it to alienate the membership by creating an atmosphere of hypocrisy and deceit? As far as we're concerned, this company has lost its credibility, wait—they chose to throw it away as though it meant nothing. How can we believe anything they say anymore? This started when they chose to put their money and their loyalty behind the contractors who are doing our work ahead of their own people! You can't buy credibility, no matter how many commercials or newspaper ads you run, you still have to earn it by doing what you say you will.

Here are some questions for President Ron Kastner from Indiana members:

What are we doing to prepare ourselves for the 2004 bargaining?

In anticipation of 2004 bargaining I've appointed Solidarity and Mobilization Committees, both of which will assist the Local in our ongoing preparation for the SBC contract bargaining.

When is your term up and will you run again?

All the elected Local 21 offices expire in August 2003. The answer to the second part of the question is "Yes."

The construction forces have approximately 10 grievances on contractors, are they near settlement?

One grievance was dropped, the others were evaluated on merit. At present these grievances are pending arbitration.

How come your stewards don't have any first hand information? All I hear is "I'll get back to you."

It's ok to say, "I'll get back to you." I encourage my staff to get the right answer back to membership.

It seems management breaks our contract on a daily basis, so why are we constantly taking the high road?

Simply put, in general we have more honor than some managers.

AGCS's Reflection in the Mirror

By Mike DeWitt, Chief Steward

Far too many times this year I have opened an e-mail from AG Communication System's Human Resources Department to read one of those now well worn lines, "Due to declining business trends, AG has been placed in a position to undergo a reduction in force with our IBEW members," or "AGCS is again looking at a reduction in our work force of installers represented by the IBEW Local 21" It started in January with a layoff of thirty-five installers from a represented group of four hundred and thirty-six and has continued unrelenting to a present total of three hundred and five installers nationwide

AG has stated that many factors are involved in their lower sales levels, but the most significant is the carriers' equipment budgets are drastically reduced this year, a trend that started in the first fiscal quarter of 2002, and one that remains dismal. When AG's equipment and services are required at a much reduced rate or not at all by the Verizon's, the SBC's and the Independent Telephone companies nationally, it's because those customers have slashed their capital budgets while trying to face down unprecedented, self-inflicted debt.

When you look at AG's reflection in the mirror it shows us a very difficult time in our industry with the boom years of the recent past being nothing more than a faded memory. However, our industry shows some signs of turnaround in the next year

and Business Manager Kastner and I are optimistic that many of our laid-off members will be recalled in the future. Keep your fingers crossed that it will turn around.

This past Summer and Fall we have been in front of neutral third party arbitrators to try and resolve two major issues at AG. The first issue comes out of the 2000 bargaining and involves the interpretation of the new 60 month wage progression. There are fifty-eight members who have been adversely impacted by the company's decision to not allow them to advance to top pay in sixty months or less. We are done with the hearings and the lawyers' briefs. At this printing, we await the Arbitrator's decision.

I guess they think our wallets are their piggy banks.

The second issue involves the company's use of Canadian contractors to perform bargaining unit work in the Northeast last year. We have had two days of hearings with the arbitrator so far. We will have a third (and hopefully final) day in early January. After transcripts are received and briefs are filed, we look forward to a ruling sometime in late Summer or early Fall of next year (2003).

Another big issue that seems to be sliding to an arbitrator is AG's unilateral changes to the conditions that make workers eligible for per diem payments. The company's outrageous and unequal demands for proof of residency have put a serious strain on our relationship with management.

Unrelated, but very important to the membership, are the issues of the company's recently released "Personal Automobile Usage Issue 7." A major portion of this document we feel, is a violation of our contract. The contract clearly states that "reasonable" meal expenses will be covered without producing receipts, but now the company is demanding receipts on any meal over \$15.00, and total daily meal expenses are limited to \$25.00. The company is clearly violating that language. We will fight these all the way if we need to. If you are getting stiffed by your boss, drop me or one of the stewards a line.

As you can see, AG is making all kinds of desperate moves to save money. They are even knowingly violating the contract, we believe, to stall payments to our members, knowing full well that they will have to pay these claims off someday, probably they hope, when times are better. I guess they think our wallets are their piggy banks.

Sadly, things are as bad as they've ever been at AG. On a final sad note, before Thanksgiving our Local had to file Unfair Labor Practice (ULPs) against the company at the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) for the first time in our nearly 56 year relationship. We are charging the company with failure to process, settle, and provide information in the Grievance Process. We have nearly 40 grievances, some almost two years old that the company has been dragging its feet on. We're sorry it's come to this, but all of the company's professed good intentions are nothing but a big bag of air. Stay tuned for more.

Happy holidays.

Hershey Workers, Townspeople Turn Back Bid to Sell Company

In an age of consolidation and profit-taking, the workers and townspeople in Hershey, Pa. are showing that a united stand can turn back unwanted attention from the corporate world. Their fierce reaction to the proposed sale of Hershey Foods helped convince the charitable trust that owns the company to reject bids from major candy makers, and remain independent.

The trust rejected two bids before abandoning its plans to sell the company. Chewing gum maker Wrigley had offered a \$12 billion mix of cash and shares, while a joint bid from Britain's Cadbury Schweppes and Swiss food group Nestle had valued the company at \$10.2 billion.

After a 10-hour board meeting, trust directors rejected the sale by a vote of ten to seven.

"The decision showed the world the solidarity we have here, that we can stand together and have a voice," said Bruce Hummel of the Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers Union (BCTGM), which represents Hershey workers.

Worried you aren't getting the "real" story from the news media on labor stories? Does the West Coast longshoremen's agreement guarantee that the new technology will be handled by Union workers? Get the Union side from www.labourstart.org or click on the handy link from our own website www.ibew21.org.

Regulation Now

It's time to take a careful look at the new law regulating business—it does do several good things.

It ups the penalties for corporate fraud, and creates a new felony for securities fraud that is punishable by a twenty-year prison sentence.

It bans companies from making personal loans to top executives (which Bush enjoyed while he was at Harken, incidentally).

It prohibits corporate executives from selling stock when their employees are not allowed to do so. (This should be called the “Ken Lay Provision,” since he was cashing in his stock while Enron employees were forced to hold on to theirs, even as it plummeted.)

It requires CEOs to certify the financial books of their companies.

It establishes an oversight board to regulate auditors.

It limits some of the consulting that auditors can perform for their clients.

It adds protection for corporate whistleblowers.

And it boosts funding for Securities and Exchange Commission by 44 percent.

But it doesn't go far enough.

As the watchdog group Citizen Works noted, the standard for finding a CEO guilty was raised, in conference, from “reckless” behavior to “knowing” behavior. This “will make it harder for prosecutors to prove cases,” the group notes. And the new law “does not extend responsibility for corporate fraud to accountants, lawyers, and banks, all of whom make fraud possible,” it adds.

The law also does nothing about the scandal of corporations granting stock options to executives and not counting those stock options as expenses. These stock options gave executives a huge personal incentive to pump up the value of their companies' stock. Former Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle was as much at fault as anyone on this one, since he refused to go along with draft legislation that would have forced companies to list stock options as expenses.

Nor does the bill do anything about the flagrant use of offshore tax havens to shelter income and disguise losses.

And despite Bush's tough-guy rhetoric the day he signed the bill (“No more easy money for corporate criminals, just hard time”), he immediately set out to

weaken the whistleblower provision. The Administration said it would “provide federal job protection to employees who cooperate with an investigation authorized by the House or Senate, but made no mention of protection for employees who might speak more informally to a single member of the House or Senate,” *The New York Times* reported on August 1. The two Senators who wrote the provision, Patrick Leahy, Democrat of Vermont, and Charles Grassley, Republican of Iowa, sent Bush a letter, calling this move “at odds with the plain language of the statute” and said it “risks chilling corporate whistleblowers.”

Such whistleblowers just aren't of Bush-Cheney stripe.

Much of the discussion of this new law in the media was fatuous. First of all, there is a huge myth built right into the foundation of Wall Street—that every investor in this country is privy to the same amount of information and has access to the same level of expertise in assessing a company's worth as anyone else. We are meant to believe that all of us are on an even plane with Warren Buffett, and that just isn't so. And can't be so. Corporate managers have superior knowledge of their own companies' strengths and weaknesses. And full-time market analysts know more than those of us who work forty hour weeks. What's more, wealthy individuals and vast institutional investors can make decisions that will swamp the portfolios of the unsuspecting individual investor. Equality on Wall Street is a myth.

Another unstated assumption is that if only the corporate books were made square, all would be right with capitalism once more, and Americans could go back to repeating the blessings of Wall Street. But the problems go well beyond cooked books and stock options. At the very heart is the imperative to make a profit at all costs. That imperative persists, whether a CEO has stock options or not. A CEO's position, salary, and stature depend on the ability to deliver quick profits. Thus, corporate executives have a tremendous incentive to cut health care coverage, renege on pensions, bust unions, and pick up stakes and move to any country that offers the lowest wages and the least regulation. If maximizing profits means flouting the law, many corporations are willing to take that risk.

We need to crack down on corporate crime across the board. And the only way to do that is to put the cop back on the beat. Since the days of Ronald Reagan,

deregulation has taken a terrible toll on the American worker. What the financial scandal demonstrates—once and, we should hope, for all—is the need for strong governmental oversight of business.

But this Congress is unlikely to lead the way. For all of their denunciations, our elected officials are still in the habit of giving away the store to corporations.

Around the same time that Congress was passing the bill cracking down on accounting fraud, it pushed along a bankruptcy bill that would be a huge boondoggle to the credit card and banking industry, while making it more difficult for poor and middle class people who have fallen into debt to keep their car or home.

Here's an example: The Senate recently passed a bill that would repeal the Public Utility Holding Company Act, which restricts utility companies from investing ratepayers' money in areas unrelated to electricity. You would have thought that after the Enron scandal legislators would want more restrictions on utility companies, not less. But you would have been wrong.

And then Congress rolled over and gave the President fast track authority, which the corporations have been seeking for years. This authority chisels away at the basic Congressional prerogative to debate treaties, and it enables Bush even more aggressively to do the bidding of corporations when he makes trade deals, regardless of the impact on labor rights, human rights, and the environment.

There are a myriad of other reforms that are necessary to re-regulate business and tame the corporate beast. (Those of you who have access to the Web can go to publiccitizen.org or citizenworks.org for some additional proposals.)

But none of this is likely to occur without full public funding of election campaigns. So long as the corporate class can underwrite politicians, those politicians will be beholden to it and not the American public.

It would be a pity if, twenty years from now, we looked back at this scandal and saw how little was actually done to bring corporate power to heel. Now is the time to demand much tougher regulations on corporations in every sphere of their activities. These opportunities don't come along very often. We need to make the most of them.

From The Progressive

2003 UNIT MEETINGS

JAN.

Unit 1

Thursday, January 9, 7 PM
Musicians Hall
175 W Washington
Chicago IL
312 782-0063

Unit 2

Tuesday, January 14, 7 PM
Gaelic Park
6119 W 147th St.
Oak Forest IL
708 687-9323

Unit 3

Thursday, January 16, 7 PM
IBEW Local # 364
6820 Mill Rd
Rockford IL
815 398-6282

Unit 4

Wednesday, January 8, 7 PM
American Legion Harwood Post 5
705 S Larkin
Joliet IL
815 729-2254

Unit 5

Wednesday, January 15, 7 PM
American Legion Post 979
4501 S Airport Rd
Bartonville IL
309 697-2432

Unit 6

Tuesday, January 21, 5:30 PM
IBEW Local # 193
3150 Wide Track Dr
Springfield IL
217 544-3479

Unit 7

Monday, January 20, 7 PM
Alton Sports Tap
3812 College Av
Alton IL
618 465-2539

FEB.

Unit 1

Thursday, February 13, 7 PM
Hillside Holiday Inn
4400 Frontage Rd
Hillside IL
708 544-9300

Unit 2

Tuesday, February 11, 7 PM
Location to be announced

Unit 3

Thursday, February 20, 7 PM
Best Western Elgin Plaza
345 West River Rd
Elgin IL
847 695-5000

Unit 4

Wednesday, February 12, 7 PM
Lemont VFW
15780 New Av
Lemont IL
630 257-9859

Unit 5

Wednesday, February 19, 7 PM
Days Inn
77 N Gilbert
Danville IL
217 443-6600

Unit 6

Tuesday, February 18, 5:30 PM
IBEW Local # 193
3150 Wide Track Dr
Springfield IL
217 544-3479

Unit 7

Monday, February 17, 7 PM
IBEW Local # 309
2000A Mall St (Rte 157)
Collinsville IL
618 345-5112

MARCH

Unit 1

Thursday, March 13, 7 PM
Habetler Bowl
5250 N Northwest Highway
Chicago IL
773 774-0500

Unit 2

Tuesday March 11, 7 PM
Location to be announced

Unit 3

Thursday, March 20, 7 PM
Gurnee American Legion
749 Milwaukee Av
Gurnee IL
847 244-9282

Unit 4

Wednesday, March 12, 7 PM
Holiday Inn Airport
6902 27th St
Moline IL
309 762-8811

Unit 5

Wednesday, March 19, 7 PM
VFW Post #630
1303 E Main
Urbana IL
217 367-4197

Unit 6

Tuesday, March 18, 5:30 PM
IBEW Local # 193
3150 Wide Track Dr
Springfield IL
217 544-3479

Unit 7

Monday, March 17, 7 PM
American Legion
916 Main St
Mt Vernon IL
618 242-4561

IBEW LOCAL 21

1307 W. Butterfield Rd.

Suite 422

Downers Grove, IL 60515-5601

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