




Volume 6, Number 1 • February 2003

President/Business Managers Report

Fair? I don't think so!

By Ron Kastner



Unfair pricing is the single biggest reason for the layoff of almost 600 IBEW members at SBC in December, so it's time to take a look at the future of the

telecommunications industry, particularly the so-called Baby Bells. It is true that the Telecommunications Act of 1996 was designed to promote competition. However, I disagree with the changes made to the Act about a year ago. That was when the Regional Bell Operating Companies were forced to charge wholesale rates (UNE-P) for leasing of their access lines **under cost** to their competition; the true meaning of "Fair" was challenged.

At that time, some major players came into the reseller market, the MCI's and the AT&T's to name a few. Not only are they stealing access lines at an outrageously rapid pace from SBC, they create virtually no jobs in Illinois. These companies don't build networks or infrastructures. At most, this competition creates telemarketing jobs, somewhere. Out of our state? Out of our country? You tell me. We've been looking in Illinois for quite some time and haven't been able to find any centers. So our laid off brothers and sisters don't have other jobs to go to, consumers have to deal with marketing reps located who knows where, and the economies of Illinois and Indiana aren't helped. By the way, if that isn't enough, these companies don't want anything to do with Unions; in fact, they are anti-Union.

The Union is more than willing to accept the challenge of organizing companies that provide jobs for workers in Illinois and N.W. Indiana

On the other hand, companies that build networks and infrastructures are true examples of fair competition. The Union is more than willing to accept the challenge of organizing companies that provide jobs for workers in Illinois and N.W. Indiana. We will also maintain the Industry Standard for wages within telecommunications and keep these employers honest. We currently represent workers at Comcast, the new owner of AT&T/ Broadband, and although relationships aren't what I'd like to see there yet, they at least build offices, plow cable, and service customers. Yes, they create jobs in Illinois and N.W. Indiana; jobs that laid off workers may some day fill.

The major battle out there now is the battle for market share of high speed Internet. Currently it's DSL versus Cable Modem. As most of you know, SBC picked DSL and others picked the cable modem based on their hunch on who will win out. I think both will survive. I want both to be

Union. I want both to be competing fairly. Currently, that isn't happening.

Once again, the biggest reason for the layoff of almost 600 Union sisters and

brothers at SBC recently is because competition for high speed Internet isn't fair. SBC has a complete hold on expanding the capabilities of DSL. Why? The reasons are pretty simple when you put everything together. Regulatory commissioners are still out there jacking around with the term "fair competition." If DSL is regulated like telephone lines, then unfair wholesale pricing will affect DSL just like it has affected the wire line business. Simply put, Cable Modems should be treated the same as DSL service. Neither should be considered in the Telecommunications Act of 1996, in my opinion.

Currently, Local 21 is in one of its biggest fights ever— trying to organize the Chicago market of Comcast. The recent organizing win at SBC of "The DSL

Modem," means that after we win the organizing campaign with Comcast, "The Cable Modem," the Union will negotiate wages and working conditions that favor the worker in both these companies. This will level the playing field. We will protect the Industry Standard and, in our way, regulate the business. As I said, we can deal with fair competition.

Special interest groups, like CUB, care only about the lowest price. Supposedly, most consumers feel the same in this "throw away" society. However, quality must be considered when it comes to the Telecommunication and the Cable Industry. Jobs must be looked at when we talk about competition. The creation of good paying Union jobs with employment security, and good benefits is what fair competition should be about. When SBC gets into Long Distance, this will create marketing jobs. Need I say more? Creating jobs is part of what the Union is about.

In closing, when you read about these issues, the so-called critics usually refer to monopolies and how bad they were for all of us. In my opinion, breaking up the telephone monopoly has hurt both the workers and the consumers. I don't see cheaper prices. I see less quality, higher prices, and I see the spread between the CEO's and the workers wages getting much larger. I see more use of outside contractors. I see layoffs and center consolidations. Maybe bringing back the Monopolies would be wrong but without some fairness in the regulatory policies, our industry is in a major downslide. Unions and their memberships need to get more involved and we will!



"I'm sorry to hear that all your phones went dead... I can refer you to a nice funeral home, if you wish."

FRONTLINE

IBEW LOCAL 21

Official Bi-Monthly Publication

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



JUST ANOTHER DAY

By Rick Gessler, Vice President/Assistant Business Manager



The Union is facing many issues at SBC as both downsizing and consolidations continue. There are very few items remaining open from the

layoff, but we will continue to pursue the contracting out violations.

In addition, our **work is being moved out of state**, and we are pursuing those issues. The **Consumer Fraud Group in Elgin** was **surplused** and their work was moved to Texas. Fortunately, all of the CAS's were placed into jobs. The **payroll group in Chicago** had their work moved to St. Louis. We have been notified of **center consolidations coming our way** throughout the year. We'll be meeting with the company in the coming weeks to determine the impact of their intentions. The CWA has been dealing with similar actions, but now it's become a problem in Illinois and Indiana.

SBC notified us that they want to decrease the amount paid on telephone concessions for people living outside of the SBC service area, so we'll be meeting with the company over this proposed reduction in benefits.

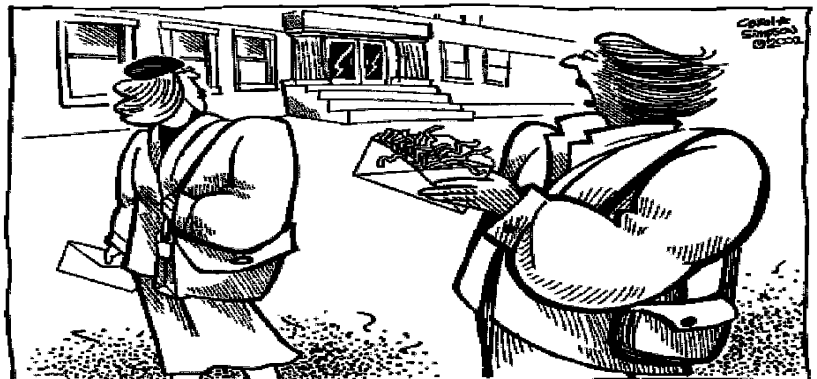
The company's conversion to "e-link" in January created major payroll issues. Hundreds of our members were shorted on both basic pay and overtime. The Union has resolved most of those pay shortages, but we still get word that some people were never made whole. We have filed a complaint with the Illinois Department of Labor.

We were notified by SBC that they will be recording calls in the centers and **using the recordings for discipline**—the Union has strongly objected.

In the outside craft position of System Tech. the company has imposed **off-hour shifts and tours** in violation of the contract. Unfortunately, when labor relations was called about this the Union was told "...if you don't like it, grieve it". This isn't what we felt labor relations was about, but then SBC never ceases to amaze us. Things are never boring around Local 21. All of this is on top of the everyday items that we are continually discussing with the company.

We currently have approximately **200 grievances pending arbitration** and are "prepping" for several of the larger cases. **We still have members talking to Asset Protection without a union steward.** They think that they are just in for a friendly chat. I've said it before and I'll say it again. **DON'T TALK UNTIL YOU HAVE A STEWARD WITH YOU!** For those of you who have **GPS** installed in your vehicles, don't give the company ammunition to fire you.

Please remember that **our contract expires in June of next year** and the unconfirmed report is that the Company is already preparing by having contractors trained in outside cable maintenance and installation. **How are you preparing?** Remember, when you see a contractor on the job, he or she is taking the place of your laid off co-worker and could be replacing you in the case of a strike or lockout in 2004! The company so far has put contractors ahead of us, yet it still expects that we will be loyal to them... Go figure!



"I see "e-link" got hold of our paychecks"

War or Peace?

By Michael Sacco, Business Representative



These days our nation is awash in the buzz of War or Peace? Personally, I'm a "peacenik," based on the values I was raised with and pass on to my children. To me,

war represents a failure of adults to work out the differences between them.

Sometimes, I admit, it's necessary though.

For politicians, war is a convenient distraction to the people who are homeless, hungry or have lost jobs or retirement savings. Whatever happened to "Let them eat cake!?" They won't even humor us. Do they really think that our bellies will be filled by CNN images of bombs raining on Baghdad?

The shooting war is also a distraction from the real class war that is raging in our country and world. This is a war waged on most of us by the few who have the gold to make the rules. A war where they try to

divide us not just with money, but also with racism, sexism and nationalism. This isn't the war you'll see covered on TV, but to see it you need only to go to the store or show up to work.

Our stores and shops are filled with products made by sweat labor in the developing world. These people may look "different" and sound "different," but what they have in common with us is they love their kids too and they're trying to get by on the crumbs "the man" throws us. Our alleged "American" companies chase this sweat labor to the far corners of the Earth. They disavow quietly and legally that they have no national home. They are "transnational" companies made up of the resources of global capital. They have allegiance to no one. But they nicely wrap themselves in the flag and hope we don't read the boxes or labels too closely.

At our jobs, the battle is even more subtle. Using the materialist culture as a carrot and the myth of the rugged individualist as a stick, our bosses divide us and pick off the weak ones to make all of us work harder, faster and unsafely. Are our bosses that smart? Not hardly. They work in

their own system of carrot and stick. And their bosses above them and those above them all have their own carrots and sticks. If you need to point a finger, it's at the system. It would be easy to point a finger at an "evil" individual, but the system just discards them and brings in another scapegoat.

Sounds hopeless, right? Not really, the lowest rung on the food chain—the worker—has a tremendous amount of power—based on human solidarity, to "throw ourselves on the gears of the machine." Will there be bloodshed? Probably not. Will there be sacrifice? Of course. The Soviet "refuseniks" spent years in the Gulag (prison) to make change. Can we win? Look at the weakest and strongest among you. You tell me.

The system that works us beyond limits and chips away at our contract and human rights, is very vulnerable at the point of production. Think about it. Let's talk about it in these pages in the coming months. Let's not wait for change. Let's make it.

AADS/DSL Workers Gain First Agreement

AADS/DSL Workers at SBC Gain First Agreement

Ninety technical workers at Ameritech Advanced Digital Solutions (AADS) who install and maintain Digital Subscriber Lines (DSL) in Illinois and N.W. Indiana ratified their first collective bargaining agreement after joining the union under the card check agreement in late winter last year.

After seven months of bargaining a tentative agreement was reached and the members ratified the deal by a 20:1 margin on December 23, 2002. The new contract went into effect on January 1, 2003.

"It shouldn't have taken this long. These workers are covered under the Core Network contract, with some minor modifications, but the company played their usual games by stalling and making ridiculous demands that they had to know wouldn't go anywhere," explained Business Representative Michael Sacco.

Because, prior to organizing, the workers were considered "management," they were grossly underpaid, had standard benefits with premiums of up to \$230 per month and had no grievance process or protections. "The company did what they wanted—when they wanted," said Sacco. He added, "Favoritism was rampant in this

group. The company made promises to these members that they couldn't possibly fulfill and they tried to turn the workers against each other when their (company) promises fell through."

With an active bargaining committee that included 11 workers, a continuous process of educating and communications during the negotiating struggle kept the members informed and involved and it paid off—most workers in the new unit received raises on January 1, 2003 equal to over 20% on the go-down of the contract. A smaller group, but still the majority will receive an additional 20-40% in wage increases over the next year. All employees will cease paying health care premiums in May 2003.

The Local 21 Bargaining Committee consisted of Chair Michael Sacco, Business Representative, Second Chair Kevin Curran, Business Representative, DSL Techs Shay Patel, Bob Royce, John Sawicki, John Marella, Chris Bridges, Dale Mottlow, Chris Kelley, Ravi Ramratten, Tom Hubbs. Broadband Operations Techs James Colon and Tim Chlopowicz were ably assisted by Volunteer Organizing Department Liaison Bill Mitchell in the back room.

Lucent Contract Extended

The Lucent National Agreement, scheduled to expire in May 2003, was extended to Fall 2004 after the company and Unions (IBEW and CWA) agreed to begin meeting last Fall so that 2003 would give the parties a clear field for working to return the once-great company to profitability.

Highlights of the deal include 2% wage increases in each year of the extension, guaranteed health care coverage for both active and retired employees and a continuation of some of the successful programs to assist employees in training and career choices.

The Unions, facing an opponent on the brink of bankruptcy, had little choice but to creatively craft minor concessions on health care that shift some burden to the heaviest users of the benefits to help the company stay afloat.

The twenty-eight Local 21 members employed at Lucent ratified the deal by a 2:1 margin. The rest of the IBEW and the CWA ratified 4:1.

Hang Onto Your Wallets

By Larry Moeller, Committee on Political Education (COPE)



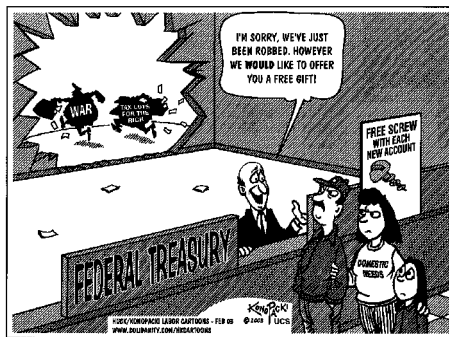
Back in January I watched the President's State of the Union address, and I must say it was refreshing to hear the President speak up about the sad state of the U.S.

economy. I was tempted to break into a hearty version of "Happy Days Are Here Again," then I remembered that the most likely beneficiaries of the President's new economic plan will be the wealthiest 1 % of the U.S. and the corporations.

Oh well, at least I have 35 years in at the old Phone farm and the pension our local Union has negotiated for me is safe and secure... **WRONG**. The defined pension plan that was to be the reward for millions of workers at the end of their careers is under siege on two fronts. First, many defined pension plans are grossly underfunded, including SBC's, because they are based on stock prices and stock prices are down. Corporations that have traditional defined plans are obligated by current Federal Government regulations to pay up. What a terrible dilemma for CEO's and CFO's! What to do? What to do? Why let's change the rules! That's what we'll do! Which leads me to the second, and most troubling attack on traditional defined pen-

sions.

The Treasury department is proposing new rules on how companies can convert traditional pension plans, which benefit those who stay at one company their entire career, to portable ones called cash balance accounts (CBA's). The problem is, converting the old style defined pension plan to a CBA is complicated. Keep in mind, millions of Americans are covered by a defined pension, and there are BILLIONS of dollars owed. If any older worker believes they will get a dollar for dollar transfer from corporations converting a defined plan to a CBA, they're **STUPID!!!** Think I'm a little irra-



tional?

OK, here are two examples. First from the December 26th *New York Times*. In 1999 IBM began processing a conversion of their traditional pension to a CBA plan. Workers quickly discovered the conversion rate being used by IBM was costing them millions of dollars. The workers organized,

protested, and persuaded IBM to change its plans. From the February 2nd *Los Angeles Times*. New Jersey resident Larry Cutrone is suing AT&T over a pension change in 1997 in which he alleges the value of his pension fell to \$138,000 from \$350,000, reducing his annual retirement income from \$47,303 to \$23,444. This kind of corporate greed prompted the Clinton administration to place a moratorium on pension plan changes so the government could adopt rules to protect workers. For more information, AT&T workers have established a website att.nac.net/index2.html

On January 29th Senators Durbin and Harkin promised to hold up President Bush's nominee John Snow as Secretary of the Treasury Department, unless they received assurances that the proposed rule changes would not allow companies to deprive long-serving employees of retirement benefits they have already earned. The senators received those assurances, and Mr. Snow is in, but the battle is not over until those assurances are in writing.

The IRS is accepting comments on the proposed rules until March 13, 2003. There will be a public hearing April 10th in Washington D.C. to hear arguments pro and con. You can bet the corporate spin doctors will be there, the IBEW and the AFL-CIO will be there, but we can all be there if we want to, if not in person then use the box containing information on where to write or E-Mail. (See below)



I am writing to urge you to oppose the IRS proposed rule change allowing employers to switch from traditional defined pension plans to a Cash Balance Plan. Cash balance plans that allow the employer to strip even one dollar of the value of a worker's pension is hardly a reward for long years of loyal service. In light of the recent corporate scandals at Enron, World Com and others, giving employers the right to tinker with the retirement security of workers is a bad idea.

All letters whether via E-Mail or regular mail must include your name and address on the envelope and the letter itself.

Mail to CC:ITA:RU (Reg-209500-86
Internal Revenue Service POB
7604 Ben Franklin Station
Room 5226
Washington D.C. 20044

E-Mail to www.irs.gov/regs

The easiest way if you have access to the internet is go on the Local 21 web page at www.ibew21.org in the directory click on COPE then under links click on Congressional Action Alert Scroll down till you see Protect workers retirement security and follow the directions

AFL-CIO UNIONS JOIN FORCES IN WASHINGTON D.C.

By Rosetta Shinn, Committee on Political Education (COPE)



More than 3,500 Union members delivered the message to Capitol Hill that the nation's manufacturing sector is in CRISIS and Congress must

take steps to revitalize manufacturing by reforming flawed policies in trade, health care and labor law that are at the root of this crisis.

The Union members delivered a checklist of actions to members of Congress on February 4th, during a lobbying blitz that highlighted the first legislative conference of the AFL-CIO Industrial Union Council (IUC). The IUC, made up of 12 manufacturing Unions, was launched in May 2002 to restore U.S. industrial strength and retain the type of family-supporting jobs that were the foundations for this nation's prosperity in the mid-20th century.

The crisis in manufacturing is growing. The United States has lost more than 2 million manufacturing jobs since April 1998, which accounts for 90 percent of the jobs lost in the past four years. In

the past six months every state has lost manufacturing jobs, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

On Capitol Hill, Union members asked Congress to support revised trade and tax policies, new investments in America's health care system, a strong Medicare prescription drug benefit, and the freedom of workers to form Unions without employer interference.

Union members urged representatives and senators to speak out about the crisis of working families.

Our message was carried loud and clear to members of Congress by President, Ron Kastner. He let them know Union members did not want the "Comp Time" A/K/A Flex Time Bill proposed by Judd Gregg (R-NH), Chair of the Senate Labor Committee, or the House version proposed by Judy Biggert (R-IL). If this bill became law, Union members would not be paid time-and-a-half for overtime hours in excess of 40 hours a week. Instead of overtime premium pay, employers could compensate workers with time off, time chosen when it was convenient for the needs of the business.

"Hands off overtime pay and the 40-hour work week. Our members also oppose the 'Comp Time' Bill," said President Kastner.

Another bill opposed on Capitol Hill by President Kastner was the so-called "Workers Bill of Rights". If passed this bill would allow non-members to vote on contracts, and to participate in strike votes. It increases penalties for some Union violations, but not for the employer violations. President Kastner's message was clear—our members oppose Rep. Norwood's so-called "Workers Bill of Rights" and we oppose any attempt to ban voluntary card check recognition. A clear message was sent to Congress—Union members oppose any trade agreements that do not contain meaningful protections for worker rights and the environment, and that do not protect all jobs in this country. According to President Kastner, "We need economic stimulus proposals that are fairer and benefit working families, that don't aggravate the long term budget deficits, that don't waste resources needed for other programs." We'll need the help of all Union members in the near future. We'll be calling on you to tell Congress that you oppose these unfair, unwise plans.

"In conclusion," said President Kastner. "Policies and programs of the federal government have a major impact on workers. What we accomplish at the bargaining table is directly affected. Health care, labor laws, trade and taxes have a big impact on the wages, benefits and jobs of



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Building Real Worker Power

By Tom Hopper, Business Representative

Like many of the industries around us, we have witnessed massive job loss in the last few years in the telecommunications industry. At the very same time, we are also experiencing a dramatic decline in real Union power. Now reaching a crisis stage, this stark reality walks with us every working day like the shadow from the sun. **Losing power - how could we have let this happen?** Who is responsible and what can we do now to stop this downward spiraling trend?

To answer these questions, if we are sincere in our efforts to understand, to learn, and to plan, we must recognize that as organized labor weakened, our employers transformed into large and powerful companies that walk over the rights of working people each and every day. It honestly comes down to one major thing - our numbers. They are down - way down, and so is Union density.

"Please don't go to sleep until you have committed to making organizing the highest priority of our unions in the coming year. I won't." AFL-CIO President John Sweeney in December 2002

In 1955 when the AFL and CIO merged, labor was at the peak of its power. Nearly a third of the workforce was organized, almost all in the private sector. Over the next quarter-century, total membership grew from 16 million to almost 21 million.

Yet, at the same time density dropped from 32% to 23%. Today, working men and women represented by a Union in the United States total 15 million members, approximately 13.9% of the overall workforce.

Union density and membership have gone through 3 distinct phases over the last 70 years.

- **1934-1954-Density and membership increase.** From 1934 to 1954 density grew from under 12% to 33% while membership grew from 3 million to 16 million. From the period of 1947-1954, real wages for production workers rose an average of 3.0% per year.

- **1954-1979 Density declines and membership increases** From 1954 to 1979 density went down from 33% to 23% while membership went up 16 million to almost 21 million. During this period real wages for production workers rose an average of 1.4% per year.
- **1979-2002 Density and membership decline:** From 1979 to today density has declined from 23% to 13% while membership has declined to 15 million total union members and 13 million in the AFL-CIO. Private sector membership has declined to 9% and 9.1 million total. During this time the income disparity between rich and poor increased dramatically: the combined wealth of the top 1% of U.S. families is now greater than that of the bottom 95%.

What is the challenge ahead? To find the ways to reverse labor's decline. Without a shred of doubt, it is the responsibility of the leadership of our Unions to focus the members on building stronger Unions. We will do this by educating, communicating, and mobilizing our sisters and brothers on the ways to use collective strength to prepare for bargaining and to preserve job security. While we organize ourselves internally, we must also organize the non-represented workers in our country -

but we must do it with larger campaigns, and we must do it faster, and better.

The historic role of unions has been to democratize society and distribute wealth more equitably. For workers this means gaining a strong voice and increased control over both their work life and the life of their communities and country.

- Imagine if the labor movement had 30 or 40 million members, instead of 15 million.
- Private sector density was 30% and growing.
- Union membership was distributed more evenly in the country and was expanding into non-union areas like the south, and Unions were increasing den-

sity in currently non-union sectors of the economy.

Union growth, in both numbers and density, has not come from slow and steady progress. It has come in dramatic "spurts" tied to changes in the economy, larger social movements, and political change. Actions and decisions that workers and Unions made at those times had a profound impact on labor's success and defined what the labor movement became in the years after those breakthroughs.

Today is another of those critical times. Working people and Unions need to ask fundamental questions about how the economy is organized, how we are organized and how we need to re-organize. In the next issue of *Frontline*, we will explain more on the plan to **Build a New Labor Movement.**

Year	Union Members	Residential Population
1900	832,000	76,094,000
1901	1,184,000	
1902	1,519,000	
1903	1,930,000	
1904	2,038,000	
1905	1,947,000	83,022,000
1906	1,931,000	
1907	2,060,000	
1908	2,052,000	
1909	1,995,000	
1910	2,188,000	92,402,000
1911	2,334,000	
1912	2,488,000	
1913	2,480,000	
1914	2,611,000	
1915	2,598,000	100,546,000
1916	2,773,000	
1917	3,090,000	
1918	3,561,000	
1919	4,259,000	
1920	4,823,000	108,461,000
1921	4,389,000	
1922	3,754,000	
1923	3,467,000	
1924	3,412,000	
1925	3,685,000	115,829,000
1926	3,742,000	
1927	3,845,000	
1928	3,790,000	
1929	3,700,000	
1930	3,750,000	123,077,000

Year	Union Members	Residential Population
1930	3,750,000	123,077,000
1931	3,580,000	
1932	3,400,000	
1933	3,481,000	
1934	4,003,000	
1935	3,649,000	127,250,000
1936	4,141,000	
1937	5,706,000	
1938	5,962,000	
1939	6,491,000	
1940	7,296,000	132,467,000
1941	6,729,000	
1942	10,187,000	
1943	11,674,000	
1944	12,130,000	
1945	12,254,000	133,434,000
1946	12,936,000	
1947	14,067,000	
1948	14,272,000	
1949	15,936,000	
1950	14,294,000	151,868,000
1951	15,139,000	
1952	15,632,000	
1953	16,310,000	158,956,000

Timecapsule 1902

Only 8 percent of the homes had a telephone.

A three-minute call from Denver to New York City cost eleven dollars.

The average wage in the US was 22 cents an hour.

Work Location Preferencing at SBC

By Steve Unterfranz Business Representative

When SBC decided to lay off our members, they triggered a never-used part of our contract. Article 30.45 of the agreement speaks to the redistribution of the affected work force after a layoff. What this means is that once the layoff is complete, the company has the right to move employees from one work location to another to balance out the work force. This is done first by asking for volunteers within an exhibit and title group (exhibits and title groups are described in Appendix B starting on page 208). Volunteers from surplus locations can preference for backfill locations. This is known as Phase 1. After that is complete the remaining openings are filled involuntarily by inverse seniority in Phase 2.

This all sounds simple enough, right? Well it isn't. This is a very complex process that takes a lot of time to complete. First, the total number of surplus employees in each organization at each location must be determined. Then the total number of backfill openings within the exhibit and title group needs to be determined. Now all of the preferencing forms need to go out and be returned within a reasonable time. Once this is done, they all need to be compiled in order of seniority and then the openings are filled. This is done for each exhibit and title group affected.

For this layoff there were a total of nine separate preferences. Take into account errors, some misinformation, (yeah, I know your boss wouldn't do that. Hell, if you

asked him a question about it, 9 times out of 10 he told you to ask the Union) faxes not received, etc. and you can see why this process is a nightmare, and on top of it all the company wants it all done within a tight timetable. Now this is only Phase 1, you still have to do Phase 2.

The point is, this whole layoff process is difficult and very time consuming. I believe it was meant to be, so that those considering a layoff would take a lot of time to contemplate its worth. Is it worth it? As of right now we are not finished with the preferencing process but we are getting close. A Union committee, consisting of Jim Foster, Jim Kassing, and myself, was assigned to work with the company on the preferencing, and we are prepared to spend as much time as is necessary to get it done right.

Through it all, there has been one goal, and that is to honor seniority. As each problem arises it needs to be addressed and corrected—some right away, and some through grievances, but in every case to honor seniority.

Has it been worth it? The guy who first thought a layoff was a good idea has since retired. The disruption to the lives of employees and their families can't be measured. The training of employees to do different jobs is huge. Around 4000 preferencing forms had to be processed. I don't know, ask your boss if it was worth it.

Remember, the company started this process; the Union's goal is to make sure it is done according to the contract.

Protest is Healthy

Taking part in protests and demonstrations can be good for your physical and mental health, a new British study suggests.

Psychologists at the University of Sussex found that people who get involved in campaigns, strikes and political demonstrations experience an improvement in psychological well-being that can help them overcome stress, pain, anxiety and depression.

The finding fits in with other studies suggesting that positive experiences and feeling part of a group can have beneficial effects on health.

"Collective actions, such as protests, strikes, occupations and demonstrations, are less common in the UK than they were perhaps 20 years ago," researcher Dr. John Drury said in a statement.

"The take-home message from this research therefore might be that people should get more involved in campaigns, struggles and social movements, not only in the wider interest of social change but also for their own personal good.

The results emerged from in-depth interviews with nearly 40 activists from a variety of backgrounds. Between them, they had more than 160 experiences of collective action involving groups of demonstrators protesting against a range of issues. These included fox-hunting, environmental damage and industrial matters.

Volunteers were asked to describe what it was about taking part in such collective action that made them feel so good.

"Many published activist accounts refer to feelings of encouragement and confidence emerging from experiences of collective action," said Drury. "But it is not always clear how and why such empowerment occurs, so we aimed to explain what factors within a collective action event contribute to such feelings."

He said the interviews revealed that the key factors were that participants felt they had a collective identity with fellow protestors. They also derived a sense of unity and mutual support from taking part.

Such was the strength of the feelings they experienced that the effects appear to be sustained over a period of time.

"Empowering events were almost without exception described as joyous occasions," said Drury. "Participants experienced a deep sense of happiness and even euphoria in being involved in protest events. Simply recounting the events in the interview brought a smile to the face of the interviewees."



Stewards pay close attention at a special meeting to prepare members for the layoff.

Photo By Bob Kacprovicz

Toy Rally Aids Laid-off SBC Families

By Lynn Arwood, Area Steward



No, it wasn't Jim Carey, but a large six-foot green Grinch joined the members of IBEW Local 21 who demonstrated to SBC just what it means to be part of a "UNION FAMILY" on December 15th. Angry and frustrated with upcoming layoffs affecting co-workers and their families, over 300 brothers and sisters of Local 21 rallied and collected toys at 225 W. Randolph in downtown Chicago on a cold Sunday afternoon.

The message was clear as the street began to fill with toys and Union members—an injury to one is an injury to all.

The rally focused on SBC's "Grinchlike" behavior—laying off

workers during the holiday season, while contractors were still working. A large Christmas card crafted by the technicians in the Schaumburg garage sent the message, "Warmest Holiday Wishes from the 11,000 workers you left out in the cold this Holiday Season."

Those who attended the rally brought toys and games to distribute to the families of the workers facing layoff. Brother Ian Niemiec dressed as Santa Claus and collected the toys. As the

Grinch looked on, Treasurer Jacquie Fields led the group in song. Brothers Mark Ceh and Burton Breazeale, workers facing layoff, traveled from as far as the Bourbonnais garage with their families and addressed the crowd.



President/Business Manager Ronald Kastner introduced Dennis Gannon, President of the Chicago Federation of Labor, and Margaret Blackshere, President of the Illinois AFL-CIO, who both pledged support to the working families of our Local.

The rally ended with member Bonnie Purkey's daughter Katie Keating, who sang "Solidarity Forever." Our message reached the public—all the local television news programs covered the rally.

After the rally was over, the toys were brought to the Union office where they filled an entire conference room. Volunteers began the task of sorting toys, and contacting as many members on the lay-

off list as possible. They worked every evening making calls, bagging toys, and plotting delivery routes. Toys were distributed all over the state with the help of the volunteers and staff.

I wish every member of this Local could have been at the rally, talked to the workers, and felt the true spirit of brotherhood displayed. The laid off workers and their families were very grateful for the show of solidarity during the holiday season. Everyone involved in both the rally and toy drive was grateful for the opportunity to demonstrate to the laid off workers and their families what it means to be UNION.

E-Link Crisis

By Linda Corcoran

The New Year started off with a bang. SBC has a new payroll system called E-link and a new job opportunity system called JOBS, previously known as Job Link. We got rid of one link and gained another. Could be, SBC's the weakest link.

First, look at the benefit items affected by the conversion to E-link. Domestic Partner benefits now appear as a taxable item. This isn't a change in what's taxable, but it now appears on the pay stub where it wasn't apparent before. Also appearing on the check, on a year to date basis, is the taxable amount for Basic Life Insurance exceeding \$50,000.00 a year. Again, this is not a change in what was taxable but it is something new on your pay stub. You'll also

The difference with E-link is there is no report generated and sent to SMAART to alert them of a disability.

have noticed by now that there are deduction changes. Instead of paying one half of an item from each check, some deductions are taken in full the first pay date and some are taken on the second pay date. We pay the same amount each month either way.

A noticeable change is how time is grouped into categories. For example, anything paid at straight time all appears under regular time. It doesn't matter if the hours were worked hours, excused workdays, vacation days or illness. The illness part has us a very concerned. In the old payroll system, your time off was coded as SICK for an off the job illness or accident and OJAC for an on the job accident. On the sixth business day, the SICK code automatically became a disability. The system would look to SMAART (the disability center) to see if there was authorization to pay disability pay. If there was no authorization, a report was generated from payroll to SMAART, who in turn, would make attempts to reach the employee to open a disability case. Having done that, SMAART would automatically authorize 21 days of conditional pay and the employee would be paid. If there was no report for an on the job accident, SMAART would call the employee's manager and initiate a Workers Compensation claim. In doing so, 21 days of conditional pay would be entered and the employee would be paid.

Under E-link, the first five days of an off the job illness is coded as **ILLF** and on

the 6th day of absence a new code of **DISU** (disability uncertified) must be entered. Use of DISU has the system looking to SMAART for a certified or approved disability case. Seeing none, no pay is issued. The difference with E-link is there is no report generated and sent to SMAART to alert them of a disability. That equates to no pay after the 6th day! This will also affect the pay for an employee who is **injured on the job**, as the time reporting **code from the first full day of absence is DISU**. If there is no report generated, SMAART can't very well call your manager to initiate a claim, can they?

Interestingly, under either situation, if the time is continuously coded as ILLF, you get paid without a disability case or Workers Comp case being opened! That's not the moral

of the story or the fix to the problem. In fact, trying to circumvent the system will more than likely cause you to be overpaid and you don't want to go there! Instead, **you, as the employee, must call SMAART and report an off the job illness or accident as soon as you realize you will be off work more than six business days or eight calendar days. If the absence is due to an on the job accident, your manager must call SMAART on the first full day of absence.** The number is 866-276-2278.

While on the subject of **injuries on the job**, make a note to remember, **in Illinois, you have the right to receive medical care from a physician or medical provider of your choice. The company should not direct you to a company physician or medical provider.** Always seek emergency treatment at the hospital and follow up with your own physician of choice. **In Indiana**, the law is different and **does allow the company to send you to one of their Workers Compensation medical providers.**

The conversion to E-link has also caused a problem with allotments for SBC Savings and Security Plan. Some employees noticed deductions taken from their checks and they aren't even enrolled in the plan! We suspect, but haven't been able to confirm, a bad feed from the Savings Plan to payroll caused this error. If you fall into this category, notify the Savings Plan Center at 800-557-3640. If you don't

receive a response back within a week, please call the benefit extension, extension 228, here at the office and we will escalate the issue.

JOBS-Job Opportunity Broadcast System replaced JOB Link and was to be live on 1-27-03. However, as of the date this is being written, it doesn't appear to be functioning properly. For those with SBC intranet access, the website is <http://jobs.sbc.com>. If you don't have access to the intranet, call 1-888-354-6547. I would suggest you have a copy of the Jobs User Guide for Non-Management Employees and a copy of the JOBS Call Tree Brochure before accessing JOBS. Some enhancements to the new system include the ability to search by title, inside or outside and by location within the Ameritech region. Anyone who has not recently updated his or her job skill profile needs to do so.

Bel-Wood Nursing Home

By Sandra Roberts, Steward

Bel-Wood is a 300 bed nursing home in Peoria county, one of only two in Illinois where the employees are represented by a Union. Bel-Wood has been around for over 150 years, it started as the County Poor Farm. In the last year three stewards resigned because of illness, but we gained three new ones: Norma Homes, Kenneth Hendricks, and Debra Moore. Joyce Arteaga and I welcomed them aboard, and look forward to working with them.

We have been able to settle a lot of problems in first step grievances, or even earlier. A big issue is getting the C.N.A.'s (Certified Nurse Assistants) every other weekend off. We hope to fill all the job openings in the near future because that would solve some of our problems with the agency (a contractor) in the building. There are still problems in the kitchen, but we are working on them. Another issue is getting workers in the laundry graded higher so they can earn higher wages.

In closing, the employees at Bel-Wood want all the laid-off Union sisters and brothers to know that our prayers are with you. Hopefully, 2003 will be a better year for everyone.

Laid Off at SBC

Just One Man's Story

By Nancy North, Area Steward



His name is Wes Pruchinski. Over nearly 600 sisters and brothers laid off—it's mind boggling, so I talked to Wes. He's part of my daughter's crowd of friends. He's

young—only 24, smart and articulate.

Ironically, he'd worked as a high voltage electrician in IBEW Local 9 for five years, reaching journeyman status. But they had regular periods of layoff—six months of work, three months without. Then his older brother, who'd been with Ameritech for twelve years convinced Wes to apply at the phone company because, "They never have layoffs at Ameritech."

So, in June of 2001, Wes put his Local 9 card in holding and started work as a cable splicer in downtown Chicago. His younger brother quit college, and hired on too. Wes was teamed with an experienced tech with 25 years of service, and they worked nights in manholes downtown, splicing cable for new construction. Other people wanted to have time with their families, but Wes liked nights. He learned a lot from his partner, who could just look at something and tell why it didn't work. After two weeks, Wes knew more than guys paired with less experienced partners.

Life was good. Wes was planning to buy a house, then the layoff rumors started, so he decided to wait. Working nights, Wes heard most of his news from his brother on the day shift. One morning, when he was ready to go home at 6:30, the manager told Wes he had to stick around for a mandatory meeting at 9 AM. The SBC managers at the meeting made it sound like he might be getting laid off, but when the list came out, only the names of workers with fourteen months of seniority or less, were highlighted. Wes and his brother Russ had seventeen months—maybe they were safe.

There were more rumors that the layoff threat was just a ploy to get employees to work harder. It didn't make sense to him that SBC would pay a contractor \$500 an hour maybe even \$900 an hour at night if SBC employees could do the job.

Wes admitted, "I didn't think I was going to go." Then there was another meeting, and the brothers learned that—yes, indeed they were going to be laid off.

Wes was in shock, "The worst part is not being able to see my son." Bud's mom won't let Wes see the boy unless he can pay the \$100 a week child support. It wasn't a problem when he was making over \$50,000 a year, but it's almost a third of his \$325 a week unemployment check. Those checks barely cover his truck payment and the rent he pays to his parents.

His younger brother, Russ, had to give up his apartment and move in with their oldest brother. He doesn't have any plans to go back to college. Russ invested in tattoo equipment, and is working as a free-lance tattoo artist—but he doesn't have many customers.

Wes knew he couldn't keep up the payments on his two motorcycles—a Harley Davidson, and a custom built motorcycle. That one was especially hard to sell because it had won at the Oak Lawn motorcycle show; 2nd place twice and 3rd place once. December isn't exactly peak cycling season, so he had to sell both bikes at a big loss.

He can't go back to IBEW Local 9 right now because they are dead slow in the winter. Since he put his card in holding, it would go to the bottom of the stack for any work. He expects it would be May 2004 before he received a job from Local 9. One of his friends offered to help him get a job at Wal-Mart driving a fork-lift, but it pays less than \$9 an hour. A job has to pay at least \$12 an hour or he'd earn less than his unemployment. "There are no jobs at \$12 an hour unless they are Union jobs." He's also been offered a job as a bouncer for \$45 a night, 2 night a week.

"It was hard giving up the bikes, but I think about the other guys who are worse off—guys who have houses or apartments, who have wives and kids to feed. It wouldn't be so bad for me if I could just see my son. I saw him on Christmas for about forty-five minutes and gave him his present—a remote control car from the Union toy drive. His mom won't tell him why he can't see me. It wouldn't be so bad if I could just see my son."

Finally, Good News

By Louella Byrnes, Area Steward

I love the holidays, don't you? Everyone has time to enjoy their relatives and friends, and in the Oak Brook Customer Care Center it is just a little happier this month. As a result of a grievance filed on behalf of Local 21, approximately 137 members of the Oak Brook Customer Care Center will be receiving premium pay for the shift the company changed the week of 12-30-02. The members either had their shift changed on New Year's Eve or had their NS day switched from Thursday or Friday to Tuesday. This is approximately \$12,500 paid to our members.

While it was a nice gesture on the part of the company to allow everyone to go home by 5 pm that day, the proper posting and canvassing as clearly stated in the contract was not followed. We need to protect our contract language and want you to know that we are looking out for the good of our membership. I also want to thank everyone in the office that showed solidarity by giving me their schedules so I was able to determine that we had a case.

In an editorial from the St. Louis Post-Dispatch 1/27

TRUTH IN LABELING

Mr. Bush spoke to an invitation-only crowd jammed into the South St. Louis warehouse. Having traveled to the heartland to talk about small business with what he likes to call real Americans, Mr. Bush wasn't about to let reality spoil a photo op. As TV cameras rolled, he stood before a canvas backdrop painted to resemble a wall of boxes, each prominently stamped "Made in USA."

Off-camera, the real warehouse boxes were neatly stacked, their "Made in

China" labels taped over by White House volunteers.

Give him credit for thinking outside the box.

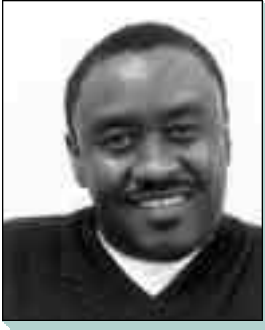
Do you have a news story?

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

Layoffs Hit AT&T/Comcast, 911 Talks Getting Closer

By Jerry Rankins, Business Representative



In January, Comcast gave workers a belated holiday present by slashing over 350 jobs in the Chicago Market, seven were Union jobs.

These cuts were a big surprise to

the laid off workers, but not to Local 21, this is something that AT&T/Broadband has wanted to do for a long time. Over half the employees were field technical people who now see this work being performed by sub-contractors.

Most of these workers were higher paid and have seniority. The seven members at the former Jones properties are part of a grievance—on the use of sub-contractors and non-bargaining unit employees performing bargaining unit work. I'm confident that the company will lose and be required to make whole on all lost wages and benefits including 401k, overtime etc. Workers are afraid throughout this company of losing their jobs, most don't have a union to defend them.

Comcast is faced with upgrading much of its systems. The Union expects there will be more cuts and layoffs in the future. In Chicago South, technician's gas cards stopped working and they were told that they were scheduled to be laid-off. At the former Prime Cable property at 4500 W. Irving Park in Chicago, workers received layoff packages in the mail, including the date, only to be told it was a mistake. Some ex-managers describe phase one of the layoffs as, "The company is desperately hoping for the Union to decertify at the Chicago South and Irving Park garages so they can make those cuts." At the bargaining table nearly two years ago the company indicated they wanted to contract out FLEET MECHANIC and CUSTODIAN work. The Union refused.

Many workers have testified at the National Labor Relations Board against lame duck managers who were ordered by the Union Buster to pressure employees to decertify the Union. These courageous workers stepped forward to protect their guaranteed right under section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act to be affiliated with a Union. As a result, the NLRB

has found Comcast guilty of violating the workers' rights in Merrillville, Indiana. At the Morris, IL property the company had to pay out over \$10,000 to 15 people, due to the issues over the employee earned bonus (STIP) in December. This huge NLRB victory made it possible for another payout of more than \$20,000 in (STIP) bonuses to 15 workers in January.

Upcoming arbitrations include the continued discrimination of not paying out the (STIP) bonus at the former Jones, TCI Merrillville, and Prime cable properties; also the Interim Wage Increase for the Jones/Merrillville properties.

Finally, after nearly 2 years, there is some significant movement in the grievance procedure. Nearly 2,000 hours of overtime rate payments are being settled, mostly due to Non-Represented employees doing bargaining unit work. These settlements are due to great work by our stewards!

Local 21 hoped that Comcast would be different from AT&T/Broadband, whereas, the name has changed, the game remains the same "Anti-Worker." In bargaining, the company reneged on promises made to the Union in October 2002, to provide total benefit parity equal to what CEO Roberts gets. Through solidarity, the worker always out lasts its enemy—remember Brothers and Sisters, it is a life style choice to fight Corporate Greed!

Chicago 911 Contract Negotiation OECM, MCC, OCC 911

Again, Local 21 has been declared the certified bargaining agent for Unit 11 by the Illinois Labor Relations Board. This is a sound victory for our Union as our contact with the City of Chicago expires June 30, 2003. It is important that everyone read, complete the membership surveys, and return them back to the union office by the stated deadline. Specially held meetings will be called soon--get involved. Our strength is in one another.

Another View: Behind the Regulatory Curtain

By Jim Hightower

The eight most frightening words coming out of our nation's capitol these days are: "The Bush administration has announced revised standards for..."

It doesn't matter "for what" — you just know that it's going to be awful news, because the Bushites are zealously taking their ideological, pro-corporate chainsaws to every rule on the books that protects us regular Joes and Janes from the overbearing greed of corporate power. Whether it's a rule to protect our health, our jobs, the purity of our air and water, our pensions, our privacy, our natural resources, our citizenship rights...you name it, Bush & Co. are ripping up the current legal standards so it will be easier for corporations to get their way.

After all, these special interests have pumped millions of dollars into Bush's campaign coffers, so George has a big debt to pay. Going to Congress to get these special favors can be too iffy, too public, too messy, so Bush's preferred way of delivering to his contributors is through executive orders and the backroom rewriting of regulatory standards.

There are so many of these anti-democratic "revisions" of regulations that the media does little more than announce them, but the overall impact is to rewrite the terms of our democratic sovereignty, further enthroning a few profiteers to rule over us.

Of course, in the Brave New Language of Bushspeak, such removal of our public protections is done in the name of "protecting" us. For example, a recent Bush ruling sets new standards for the horrendous pollution being caused in rural America by huge factory farms. "This is a major step forward to protect our nation's waters," declared a Bushite. But far from protecting the public, Bush's new standards protect the polluters — under revised standards, the corporate operators of these factories get to write their own pollution-control plans — and keep the plans secret from the public!

Pay attention to the man behind the regulatory curtain - he's a fraud.

—Jim Hightower is a speaker and author. from Texas.

Emil Jones Makes History as First Black State Senate President



When the media covered the Democratic sweep in the election in November, one face didn't trigger instant statewide recognition, but he holds statewide power. The new Senate President of the 93rd General Assembly is Emil Jones Jr. He received the unanimous support of the members of the Senate Democratic caucus on December 2, 2002 after serving as the Senate minority leader in Springfield.

The Honorable Emil Jones Jr. is not a new face in politics. He's been a member of the Illinois General Assembly since 1973, first as a member of the House of Representatives. Then in 1982, he was elected to the Illinois Senate, representing the 14th District on the south side of Chicago. Senator Jones is currently a member of the Senate Executive Committee, and he served as Vice-Chairman of General Assembly Retirement System's Board of Trustees.

Senator Jones has been a strong supporter of education issues throughout his service in the Illinois General Assembly. One of his proudest legislative accomplishments was proposing and passing the continuing appropriation, or entitlement for education. The proposal increased per pupil spending for districts throughout the state. He's also sponsored and supported legislation that would dedicate 50 percent of all new revenue to education. Senator Jones also passed legislation that directed millions of state dollars to the classroom needs of disadvantaged public school students, rather than administrative expenses.

Senator Jones also fought for, and

passed legislation to double the personal exemption on the state income tax to benefit working families in 1998. The exemption hadn't been increased since 1969. Other legislative highlights include legislation that secures an individual's right to choose a clinical social worker over a psychiatrist, and to have a third party reimburse the expenses in cases involving the state.

Because of his legislative and community efforts, Senator Jones has been honored with numerous awards from labor, educational, and business organizations.

A 1953 graduate of Chicago's Tilden Technical High School, Senator Jones graduated from Loop Junior College. He attended Roosevelt University, majoring in Business Administration. He received an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters at the Chicago State University Commencement ceremony on June 1, 2001 for his considerable contributions to public service and his efforts to promote greater educational opportunities at Chicago State.

He's a life-long resident of Chicago's South Side where he's a member of Holy Name of Mary Church, the Morgan Park Civic League, the Knights of St. Peter Claver, and the 111th Street YMCA Board of Directors. He's also a member of the National Black Caucus of State Legislators, the National Conference of State Legislators, and the Shriners. He's a 32nd degree Mason and a former Boy Scout Master.

Senator Jones and his late wife, Patricia, have four children.

Scholarship Info

The Greater Madison County Federation of Labor offers a \$2000 scholarship available for use to begin study at any accredited college or university in the United States or Canada. The scholarship is available to 2003 high school graduates from Madison county and the surrounding area. For further information on all scholarships call Nancy Kopylowski at the Union office ext. 234.

Johnson Controls Squeezed by SBC Cutbacks

By Jim Kassing
Business Representative



At the end of 2002, SBC informed Johnson Controls that they were no longer interested in using their

housekeeping services, and they intended to contract out the work to other vendors who specialize in housekeeping work. Harold Hess and I informed SBC that this work is bargained for work. Past agreements from 1994 require that the work remain under the jurisdiction of IBEW Local 21. SBC Real Estate is intent on reducing costs, and moved to give the work to other contractors. However, we are obliged to bargain with Johnson Controls over SBC proposals.

We reached a compromise—an offer of voluntary retirement to the 27 IBEW members working for Johnson Controls under the titles of Building Custodian or Group Custodian Leader. The offer includes a severance allowance of one week's pay for each year of service, up to seven years. Johnson Controls has a clear understanding that this agreement does not mean IBEW Local 21 is giving up the right to the work; it would still remain under our jurisdiction. We moved forward with the grievances filed with SBC the week of January 27, 2003. We will also grieve the loss of work that SBC contracted out to perform preventative maintenance on Controlled Environment Vaults (CEV's).

SBC's cost cutting measures affect JCI employees in other areas as well. The purchase of new vehicles has been put on hold, and a strict overtime budget has been implemented.

A letter of understanding, signed by the Unions and JCI, addressed how the positions of members on disability will be filled. The first choice is to go to the recall list. Second choice is referrals by the Union. Third choice is to hire temporary employees from outside. Fourth choice is to contract the work out. Fifth choice is a temporary agency. Prior to contracting out, the Union must be consulted. When an employee returns to work, they would be placed in a similar position within their sub-area. We'll report on this story as it advances. In the meantime, lend some moral support to our sisters and brothers at JCI.

Congratulations to Local 21 Retirees

June July August 2002	September 2002	October 2002	November 2002
Ed Zieche Pascual Luna Pearlie Liner Gene Nelson Alan M Taylor Greg Curtis Don Meuller Robert Sentaro Jeff Newman Stan Edwards Richard Buria	William Guy Len Trentz James Pruett Ron Dunlap Jurlean Market Joe Nance Ken Mikolajewski Richard Pool Curt Apgar Ted Patz Sr Joan T Dennis Rena A Oliver Jay Lipa	Charles L Jones Jr John Golding James Fitzpatrick Clarence O'Bryant Albert Chester Sr John Norris John Greer Kenneth Harold Cycholl Dennis Cox Thomas R Schnerring James Knox Jerrold D De Rose Ray Zbylski Walter L Smith John Bitner Benita Elizanda Minnie Hervey Connie Tomines William Collet	Robert Davenport Christ Steiner Harry Boike Nora Bosewell Harry Barber John V Barnes Jr Melvin C Butterfield Bessie Davis Arma J Dosier Cora English James Thomas Linda Hardy Joni Guadagno Lillie Hopkins Mary Ellen Jackson Mary Johnson-Williams Jannie Leverson Anthony Martines Linda Mendenhall Dave Henkelman Carole J Perkins Mary Ann Rago Chip Rochford Willie Mae Williams Deborah A Wooda Gloria D Woods Robert Zanger Barb Wittman John Toman Gerald Starcevic Charles Cain
December 2002	January 2002	February 2002	
Maria Hernandez June m Meyers Gloria James Robinson Joe Flores	Wanda Dwyer Juanita Maisonet Donna Christenson	Paula Kettler Jack Kubin Mardi Richey Marla Russell	

Information Alert

Local 21 members, who retire are eligible to receive a gift certificate. Providing 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 ext. 234.

Hello Hoosiers

Stop the Cancer

By Dennis McCafferty & Wally Pearson, Stewards of Lake County Indiana

Isn't it about time we all woke up? SBC with its layoffs and bad attitude is trying to break us. We need to stay strong or this apathetic attitude will be our downfall. It's dangerous to sink into an "I GOT MINE MENTALITY." As a Union, this type of thinking can only be looked on as a cancer. As a cancer it's eating away at the very core of our solidarity. And don't think for one minute that SBC isn't counting on that cancer to spread. Let's cut out the cancer before it divides us and SBC conquers us.

Unfortunately, all it takes is a few selfish, misguided individuals to undermine what took years as a Union to achieve. Every work location has them. You probably know who they are. Some of them are our friends, but don't let their actions sabotage our Union's efforts. SBC must be held accountable. They signed our contract—let's make sure they stick to their part of the bargain. One way to do this is to be Union and act Union. The simplest thing to remember is we do not perform work that is not ours. Splicers shouldn't be placing cable. Repairmen shouldn't be running jumpers. We must respect one another. You wouldn't want this done to you, so think before you do it to someone else.

Even in the face of our darkest day,

12/27/02 there were some positives.

Thanks go to all the brothers and sisters who participated in the informal picketing. Members picketed at the Arbogast garage, Hammond East, Dyer and Crown Point locations. Many even made the journey to the company headquarters in downtown Chicago. It was very encouraging to witness the unity and compassion. Our membership spoke out in one loud and defiant voice, telling the company that we are fed up with their arrogant attitude and we don't want to hear their bull—.

Now we must build on the positive. We need to show these Texans that the people in Northwest Indiana and Illinois are decent, hard working individuals who deserve to be treated as such. We are more—we are proud Union members, strong and united, who believe that whatever you do to me, you do to my Union brothers and sisters. The officers, staff, and stewards deliver this message every day. Listen. It's not a broken record. The time has come for you, the rank and file to help. The message of solidarity means more when it's spoken by person in the workplace, someone with the wisdom, experience, and respect that seniority provides. We must be able to count on one another to do the right thing—to stand up and be Union members ALWAYS.

If you have difficulty reaching the steward in your garage, call another one. They are all here to serve the needs of the membership no matter whom you work for or where. A list of all the Lake County stewards will be posted at your work locations. USE IT.

Questions for the Business Manager

Ron, why aren't lower level union reps (stewards and chief stewards) elected, rather than appointed? Don't you think there would be more accountability then?

A. Being a Steward or Chief Steward is not a popularity contest. I fill all appointments in our Union in compliance with the IBEW Constitution and Local 21 By-laws based on my experience and the experience of my staff with those members. I appoint the most qualified people to serve our members and can remove them at will if they fail in that mission.

Will we be getting rid of the "no strike" clause in our contract? It seems to be the only real leverage we have in dealing with the company.

A. In bargaining, anything can happen, so I won't predict something more than a year down the road. However, all members, when considering how easy it might be to just walk out, must remember that the other half of the No Strike equation is "No Lockout" by the employer. Give up one, and you risk the other.

Downstate News

Stewards are the First Line of Defense

By Jim Foster, Business Representative



The preferring committee for the SBC surplus issues has kept me busy. I've also been dealing with the SLRB and NLRB on issues with Vermilion

County and Charter Communications. So, I apologize for not making as many field visits as I should. I'll try to care for that in the future. Those same needs have put me behind on many 3rd step grievances. Labor Relations case workers Helwig, Hunter,

Hansen, and I are working together to set dates to address all these issues, and bring closure so we can get on to new business.

President Kastner appointed Mike Roach, Decatur Construction Steward, as the Area Steward for the north part of my area. Mike's area is Danville to Quincy. President Kastner and I are working on getting an Area Steward for the south area, who will cover Centralia to Alton, to better represent the members in the area. There are still some locations without Stewards, not only in SBC, but in Vermilion County. This position is the backbone of representation and communication for the members. The Area Stewards and I can't be everywhere at the same time, and the Stewards are vital in handling local issues, and getting information to the members. Some good Stewards quit because of frustration from dealing with management at the 1st step, and peer pressure within their locations. Hopefully, any new Stewards will get the cooperation and support they need.

Anyone who's been a Steward knows what a thankless job it can be, and I hope they will give support, or reconsider coming back as a Steward. If you are interested in being a Steward at a location that has none, you can contact Area Steward Mike Roach or me for SBC. For Vermilion County, contact Area Steward Doris Halls.

In closing, we've been through some tough times, and we need to stick together as a Union to make it through the future. The Vermilion County contracts expire at the end of 2003, and the SBC contract expires in June of 2004. With those facts in mind, it's certain we'll have more issues we can only solve together.

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

2003 UNIT MEETINGS

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
Slovak Club
6920 Broadway
Merrillville IN
219 756-5101

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
IBEW Local #145
1700 52nd Ave Suite A
Moline IL
309 736-4239

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

APRIL

Unit 1

Thursday, April 10, 7 PM
Musicians Hall
175 W Washington
Chicago IL
312 782-0063

Unit 2

Tuesday, April 8, 7 PM
Gaelic Park
6119 W 147th St.
Oak Forest IL
708 687-9323

Unit 3

Thursday, April 17, 7 PM
IBEW Local # 364
6820 Mill Rd
Rockford IL
815 398-6282

Unit 4

Wednesday, April 9, 7 PM
American Legion Harwood Post 5
705 S Larkin
Joliet IL
815 729-2254

Unit 5

Wednesday, April 16, 7 PM
American Legion Post 979
4501 S Airport Rd
Bartonville IL
309 697-2432

Unit 6

Tuesday, April 15, 5:30 PM
IBEW Local # 193
3150 Wide Track Dr
Springfield IL
217 544-3479

Unit 7

Monday, April 21, 7 PM
Alton Sports Tap
3812 College Av
Alton IL
618 465-2539

MAY

Unit 1

Thursday, May 8, 7 PM
Hillside Holiday Inn
4400 Frontage Rd
Hillside IL
708 544-9300

Unit 2

Tuesday, May 13, 7 PM
Lansing American Legion
18255 Grant St
Lansing IL
708 474-6413

Unit 3

Thursday, May 15, 7 PM
Best Western Elgin Plaza
345 West River Rd
Elgin IL
847 695-5000

Unit 4

Wednesday, May 14, 7 PM
Lemont VFW
15780 New Av
Lemont IL
630 257-9859

Unit 5

Wednesday, May 21, 7 PM
Days Inn
77 N Gilbert
Danville IL
217 443-6600

Unit 6

Tuesday, May 20, 5:30 PM
IBEW Local # 193
3150 Wide Track Dr
Springfield IL
217 544-3479

Unit 7

Monday, May 19, 7 PM
IBEW Local # 309
2000A Mall St (Rte 157)
Collinsville IL
618 345-5112

IBEW LOCAL 21

1307 W. Butterfield Rd.
Suite 422
Downers Grove, IL 60515-5601

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Join Us for the St. Patrick's Day Parade

On Sunday March 16, 2003 IBEW Local 21 will participate in the South Side Irish St. Patrick's Day Parade with a float. We invite all members and their families to join us, because the event is a lot of fun. The Parade step off is at NOON at 103rd and Western Avenue in Chicago. If you are interested in participating, please call the Union hotline 630 415-2711 a few days before the parade to check the exact location to meet at the float. If there are any questions, please contact Business Representative Mike McCormick at 630 960-4466, ext. 401.

